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Uddhacca,kukkucca

Restlessness and worry

Theme: The fourth of the 5 mental hindrances

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1. *Uddhacca,kukkucca* as a hindrance1.1 DEFINITIONS OF *UDDHACCA,KUKKUCCA*

1.1.1 *Uddhacca,kukkucca* (BHS *uddhatya,kaukr̥tya*), translated as restlessness-and-worry, or flurry and guilt-feeling, is the 4th of the 5 hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*)¹ and the 9th of the 10 fetters (*saṃyojana*) [2.1.3]. The Commentaries define the term *udhacca,kukkucca* as a dvandva, saying that *udhacca* is a state of mental agitation,² *kukkucca* is a sense of regret on account of good undone and bad or evil done so that there is a lack of mental stillness.³ Or, *uddhacca* is a state of agitation, while *kukkucca* is being preoccupied with whether we have broken a precept or not.⁴

1.1.2 While *uddhacca* is mental restlessness (arising, for example, from thinking about the future) inducing bodily restlessness, *kukkucca* arises from harping on the past, on memories or imaginations of unwholesome deeds of omissions and commissions, causing worry and guilt-feeling. **L S Cousins** thinks that the 4th hindrance, that of *uddhacca,kukkucca* seems to refer to “states of mildly manic-depressive nature.” (1973: 188).

1.1.3 A *nīvaraṇa* is a mental hindrance, that is, a mental state or bodily conduct that hinders the meditation or development of the mind. As in the case of sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), the expression *uddhacca,kukkucca* actually comprises two hindrances, that is, restlessness and worry (S 5:110). They are treated as a single hindrance (*uddhacca,kukkucca*, “the restlessness of worrying”), that is, as a tatpuruṣa, probably because the former is more mental while the latter more bodily, or that *kukkucca* is outwardly expressed as *uddhacca*.

1.2 IMAGERIES OF *UDDHACCA,KUKKUCCA*

1.2.1 A vivid illustration of the agitating effect of restlessness and worry on the mind is that of a bowl of water that is whipped up by strong winds, so that it is impossible to see a reflection of our face in it. Similarly, the hindrance of restlessness-and-worry agitates the mind and makes it impossible to see and know according to reality. Moreover, just as water stirred up in this way by the wind may easily spill,

¹ D 2,68/1:71, D 22,13/2:300 f = A 3.119,7/1:272 f = Vbh 199 (D 2:300), D 13,30/1:246 = M 99,15/2:203 = S 45.177/5:60 = Vbh 378 = Nc 13 = PmA 117 ≈ Dhs 204 = Mohv 101, D 25,16/3:49, 33,2.1(6)/3:234, 33,3.3(4)/3:269 = M 43,19/1:294 = A 3.57.1/1:161 f, D 34,1.6(4)/3:278; M 68,6/1:463; S 3.24,14/1:99, 46.2/5:64 qu VbhA 270-274 (S 5:65,3 ≈ A 1:3,24-31); A 1.2/1:3, 5.23.4/3:16, 5.51,3/3:63, 10.20,4/5:30, Nc 379; Vbh 256; Dhs 205, 1486; Peṭk 138,26; Vism 4.104/146; DA 781. See *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1.

² *Uddhaccaṃ nāma cittassa* ~o (ItA 2:177,18); *uddhaccan ti* ~e na vūpasamo ti avūpasamo (DhsA 260,22).

³ *Uddhacca,kukkuccan ti uddhaccaṃ c’eva kukkuccaṃ ca; tattha uddhaccaṃ nāma cittassa uddhatâkâro, kukkuccaṃ nāma akata,kalyāṇassa kata,pāpassa tap,paccayā vipparisāro, cetaso avūpa,samo ti* ~ass’ev’etaṃ nāmaṃ (AA 1:34,21; cf NmA 1:62,25-63,2).

⁴ ~an ti ettha uddhatâkâro uddhaccaṃ, ārammaṇe anicchayatāya vatthu’jjhacaro kukkuccaṃ (VbhA 370,17).

restlessness and worry can easily spill over, as it were, affecting those nearby with its agitated and unsettled ambience.⁵

1.2.2 The Sāmañña,phala Sutta (D 2), on the other hand, uses a human imagery to demonstrate the effect that restlessness and worry can have on our mental freedom: one under the sway of restlessness and worry is like a *slave*, one is utterly dependent on others and unable to go where one wishes.⁶ This imagery reflects the degree to which the hindrance of restlessness and worry can grip the mind, agitating it with endless activity so that, we lose any sense of inner stillness, we desperately seek and depend on external support (such as the attention, approval or authority of a father-figure, guru or God). In short, this is mental slavery.⁷

1.2.3 Another well known simile, found in the suttas, compares the presence of the 5 hindrances to various metals that corrupt the purity of gold. Here *restlessness and worry* correspond to lead, whose presence will cause the gold to become corrupted, rendering it brittle and unfit for being used by a goldsmith, as it has lost its malleability and radiance.⁸

In a similar way, says **the (Nīvaraṇa) Saṅgārava Sutta** (S 46.55), due to the influence of restlessness and worry, the mind becomes unready and disinclined to effort and energy. When restlessness and worry are present in the mind, we are unable to recognize what is good for us or what is good for others, nor are we able to remember even what has been memorized over a long time.⁹

1.2.4 Lust takes over our minds so completely that we become restless when we are unable to get what we desire, and to feel worryful after we have tasted the desirable fruit. But the worry is soon forgotten because the desire is very strong, and the whole cycle repeats itself. The snake of lust bites its own tail of restlessness and worry.

2 Nature of uddhacca, kukkucça

2.1 UDDHACCA AS A MENTAL FACTOR.

2.1.1 What is uddhacca?

2.1.1.1 Uddhacca (Skt *audhatya*)¹⁰ means restlessness, agitation, flurry, excitement, distraction.¹¹ *Uddhacca*, as a mental hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*), is defined by Buddhaghosa as follows:

⁵ (Nīvaraṇa) Saṅgārava S (S 46.55,7/5:123), SD 3.12; (Manta) Saṅgārava S (A 5.193,6/3:232 f), SD 73.3. For comy on the similes of the 5 hindrances (MA 2:318-321), see SD 10.13 App. See also Nyanaponika, *The Five Mental Hindrances*, BPS Wheel no 26, 1961:27-34.

⁶ D 2,72/1:72 (SD 8.10).

⁷ On mental slavery, see **The person in Buddhism**, SD 29.6b (7.4).

⁸ (Saṅkhitta) Kilesa S (S 46.33/5:92), SD 74.6; (Nīvaraṇa) Upakkilesa S (A 5.23.1-4/3:16), SD 74.3.

⁹ S 46.55,7/5:123 @ SD 3.12.

¹⁰ Abstr fr *uddhata* (ts), pp *ud* (up, upwards, expressing intensity) + *ṽHAN* (to smite): see CPD sv; DPL sv *uddhata*¹. Kaccv 640, Sadd 863,29 wrong deriv fr *ud-dhū*, Sadd 864,1 correct: *uddhatassa bhāvo ~am*.

¹¹ A 1:256, 282; 3:375, 421 449; 4:87; 5:142, 145, 148; D 3:234; S 5:277 f; DhsA 260; SnA 492 (in sense of “haughtiness” (?) for Sn 702 *uṇṇata*); Nm 220, 501; MA 1:81, 83; 2:9, 97 f, 119, 142, 145, 169, 176; Pug 18, 59; Dhs 427, 429 (*cittassa*), 1159, 1229, 1426, 1482; Vbh 168, 369, 372 377; Vism 137, 469 (= *uddhata, bhāva*); Sdhp 459. CPD sv *uddhacca* says that “self-righteousness, haughtiness, conceit” not justified by context or epexegetis. For Abhidhamma and late explanations of *uddhacca*, see Dhs §429 f/86 f; Vbh §552/255 and Vism 14.165/469; see also John Brough, Dh:G p280. See also: D:RD 1:82; Dhs:R 110-112n; Abhs:BRS 1.6, 2.4(4); Abhs:SR 18, 45, 83 n5.

Uddhacca is a state of agitation. It has the characteristics of unstillness, like water whipped up by the wind. Its function is unsteadiness, like a flag or banner whipped up by the wind. It is manifested as turbulence, like ashes flying up, after being pelted with stones. It should be regarded as a mental disturbance. (Vism 14.165/469,5 = Abhāv 23,32 = NmA 62,25 ≈ Mohv 40,33)¹²

2.1.1.2 Since *uddhacca* is restlessness in the sense of mental agitation, distraction or excitement (like boiling water), it is as such, the negative opposite of *kukkucca*, worry or guilt-feeling, being stuck in a rut of speculative thoughts about the past or future (like being stuck waist-high in thick mud).¹³ Their wholesome opposite is the awakening-factor of *tranquillity* (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*).¹⁴

Uddhacca, kukkucca are resolved through the cultivation of mental stillness (*samatha*), which generates a profound sense of gladness (*pāmojja*). As gladness strengthens, it generates *zest* (*pīti*), which brings *tranquillity* (*passaddhi*) to our mind—our physical senses are all at peace, so that we can fully focus our mind, making it *happy* (*sukha*), which settles into mental concentration (*samādhi*).¹⁵

2.1.1.3 In learners (saints of the path) and serious practitioners, such restlessness can arise through excessive striving, which discourses, such as **the Paṃsu, dhovaka Sutta** (A 3.100a), compare to a goldsmith who keeps blowing on gold in the fire, as a result of which the gold gets burnt.¹⁶ We need to be less extreme in our spiritual quest and daily life, and it helps to be less goal-driven.

2.1.1.4 In fact, **the Iddhi, pāda Vibhaṅga Sutta** (S 51.20) clearly says that when desire for progress on the path becomes excessive (*atipaggahīta chanda*), it will give rise to restlessness.¹⁷ The same is true of excessive energy. Hence, even though desire for progress or energy must be exerted for cultivating the path, if there is too much of it, then the hindrance of restlessness will arise and obstruct progress.

As long as there is restlessness, notes **the (Cha Dhamma) Arahatta Sutta** (A 6.66), it will be impossible to reach the final goal.¹⁸ This moderate effort is famously pointed out by the Buddha in the parable of the well-tuned lute given to the monk Soṇa Kolivisa in **the Soṇa (Kolivīsa) Sutta** (A 6.55).¹⁹

2.1.2 Causes of uddhacca

2.1.2.1 According to **the Pacalā Sutta** (A 7.58), speaking harsh and provocative words, too, can bring about restlessness, as they may lead to argumentation, as a result of which restlessness arises in the mind, preventing mental concentration.²⁰ Restlessness can also arise in connection with alms-collecting, adds the Sutta, as when a monastic receives nothing because people are too busy to notice that someone has come, an unmindful monastic might become restlessness and wonder who has caused a rift between them and their supporters.²¹

¹² *Uddhata, bhāvo ~am. Tam avūpasama, lakkhaṇam, vātābhighāta, cala, jalam viya; anavatthāna-rasam, vātābhighāta, cala, dhaja, paṭākā viya; bhantatta, paccupaṭṭhānam, pāsāṇābhighāta, samuddhata, bhasmam viya; cetaso avūpasame ayoniso, manasikāra, padaṭṭhānam, citta, vikkhepo ti daṭṭhabbam* (Vism 14.165/469,5 = Abhāv 23,32 = NmA 62,25 ≈ Mohv 40,33).

¹³ See **Naḷaka, pāna S** (M 68) @ SD 37.4 (2.1.2.2).

¹⁴ On *tranquillity* (*passaddhi*) as an awakening-factor, see SD ***; also SD 50.4 (1.3.1).

¹⁵ On *these 5 ground of liberation* (*vimutt'āyatana*), see A 5.26 (SD 21.5); SD 10.15 (4.4).

¹⁶ A 3.100a.13/1:257 (SD 19.11).

¹⁷ S 51.20.5/5:277 (SD 28.14).

¹⁸ A 6.66/3:421.

¹⁹ A 6.55/3:375 @ SD 20.12 (2.4.2).

²⁰ A 7.58.10/4:87.

²¹ A 7.58.10/4:87 f.

2.1.2.2 The presence of restlessness, warns **the Abhabba Sutta** (A 10.76), makes it difficult for us to be inspired or motivated to visit the noble ones (the saints or spiritual teachers) and hear their teachings, or to overcome a fault-finding disposition.²² **The Aññādhikaraṇa Sutta** (A 10.86) says that restlessness is a mental blemish to be avoided by those who lead solitary forest lives, and to be obsessed by restlessness will lead to decline in the Teaching and Discipline of the Buddha.²³

Hence, **the (Sattā) Sacitta Sutta** (A 10.51) advises a monastic to regularly reflect or examine to ensure that no restlessness is present in his mind.²⁴ A key means for overcoming restlessness is the practice of mental calm (*samatha*).²⁵

2.1.3 Uddhacca as a subtle imperfection

2.1.3.1 *Uddhacca* is not only one of the 5 hindrances, but also the fourth of the 5 higher fetters (D 3:234).²⁶ Since the 5 higher fetters are overcome during progress from non-return to arhathood, the total removal of the last and subtlest trace of restlessness occurs only with final liberation.

2.1.3.2 The commentary on this passage and the Paṭisambhidhā, magga explains that this description refers to the arising of radiance (*obhāsa*), one of the 10 imperfections of insight.²⁷ Not understanding this to be an imperfection and failing to notice its impermanent nature then leads to the arising of restlessness. However, there is a form of restlessness which can have a wholesome effect, so to speak. This is known as “**Dharma restlessness**” (*dhamm’uddhacca*), a kind of spiritual angst arising from an eagerness to realize the Dhamma. If the conditions are right, this kind of angst can actually bring about awakening.

2.1.3.3 An example of this is **Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya’s** excitement upon meeting the Buddha, requesting him to teach the Dharma for his awakening (U 1.10)²⁸ [2.2.3]. Another famous example is that of the “brahmin youth” **Piṅgiya**, who while listening to the Buddha teaching, see the beauty and truth of the Dharma, which could have liberated him as an arhat. However, at that very moment, he compassionately thought of his uncle and teacher, Bāvarī, and, as a result, become only a non-returner, while all his other colleagues and their follower, and his own followers, all become arhats.²⁹

²² A 10.76.32/5:148 (SD 2.4).

²³ A 10.86.2/5:163 (SD 12.15).

²⁴ A 10.51/5:93 (SD 5.13).

²⁵ A 6.116/3:449. On *samatha*, see **Samatha and vipassanā**, SD 41.1.

²⁶ Ie, the 9th of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*), viz: (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) aversion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma, rāga*) is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*). The first 5 are the lower fetters (*orambhāgiya*), and the rest, the higher fetters (*ud-dhambhāgiya*). The abandonment of the lower 5 fetters makes one a non-returner (*opapātika* or *anāgāmi*): see **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118,10), SD 7.13. On the streamwinner, see **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3. See also **Kiṭṭāgiri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1).

²⁷ *Vipassanūpakkilesa*, viz (1) radiance (*obhāsa*), knowledge (*ñāṇa*), zest (*pīti*), tranquility (*passaddhi*), joy (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*). These imperfections arise only in a beginner to meditation, not a saint who has attained the truth. For explanations, see Vism 20.105-130/633-638; also AA 3:143; Pm 2:100.

²⁸ U 1.10/8 (SD 33.7). On *uddhacca*, see also SD 45.18 (2.5.5): Saints with residue.

²⁹ On Piṅgiya, see SD 49.6b (2.1).

2.2 KUKKUCCA AS A MENTAL FACTOR.

2.2.1 Meaning of *kukkucca*? The word *kukkucca* (BHS *kaukr̥tya*) comes from *ku-* (*kud-* or *kum-*, bad, defective) + *kicca* (that which is to be done). We find two main meanings of *kukkucca* in the Buddhist texts, that is, the physical and the psychological.³⁰

(1) The physical meaning of *kukkucca* is defective action, misconduct, bad character. Buddhaghosa defines it as “*kukkucca* is the state of what is improperly done, a misdeed.”³¹ The Commentaries generally explain this sense as literally as bad behaviour or improper conduct, such as, with our hands and feet.³²

(2) Psychological meaning: worry, scrupulousness, guilt-feeling.³³ In this sense, *kukkucca* often appears with *vippaṭissāra* (regret); and with *uddhacca*, it is the 4th of the 5 hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).³⁴ The dispelling of worry is one of the duties and virtues of a wise sage (*muni*).³⁵ The opposite of *kukkucca* is *akukkucca* (adj), “free from worry, having no worry” (Sn 850).

2.2.2 Why worry?

2.2.2.1 *Kukkucca* is so closely related to thinking or worrying what is done (commission) and what is not done (omission) that the theme of worry is very common in the *Vinaya*. The origin or background stories to numerous *Vinaya* rules report that monks worry or feel guilty regarding certain actions and would only undertake them after explicit permission by the Buddha is given. Here, worry is apparently such a common occurrence that some monks would purposely try to arouse worry in others, so that a regulation has to be introduced to stop such a mischief.³⁶

2.2.2.2 The relatively frequent arising of worry among monastics is also reflected in the ruling that one of the qualifications of a preceptor (ie, one who ordains a monk, A 10.33), or for the giver of tutelage (*nissaya*) to junior monks (A 10.34), is an elder monk’s ability to dispel worry in a proper way. At least two discourses in the *Upāli Vagga* of the *Aṅguttara* record this special qualification.³⁷

2.2.2.3 Not all worry, however, is something that is negative, to be dispelled, because at times worry may be quite appropriate. Just as the influxes grow in those who worry about unnecessary things, so too the influxes grow in the case of those who are not worried over what is worthy of worry.³⁸ For example, worry and guilt-feeling arise in the monk Sudinna after he has had sex with his former wife. As such, his

³⁰ See DPL sv *kukkucca*, BHS sv *kaukr̥tya*.

³¹ *Kucchitaṃ kataṃ kukataṃ tassa bhāvo kukkuccaṃ* (Vism 14.174/470; Bdhd = *Buddhadatta’s Manuals*, 24). Nāṇamoli: “It is impossible to render into English this ‘portmanteau’ etymology, eg *kucchita-kata—kukata, kukuta-tā ... kukkucca*, which depends mostly on a fortuitous parallelism of meaning and verbal forms in the Pali. While useless to strict modern etymologists, it has a definite semantic and mnemonic use.” (Vism:Ñ 532 n69)

³² Various explanations in Nc on Sn 1106 = Dhs 1160; *hattha, pada*~ J 1:119 = DA 1:42 (in combination with *ukkāsita & khipita, satta*); *hattha*~ J 2:1420.

³³ *Kukkuccaṃ kurute*, “to be worried about” (J 1:377); *kukkuccaṃ karīmsu*, “be worried” (DhA 4:88; J 2:366); cf *kukkuccaṃ āpajjati*, “fall into worry (or guilt)” (explained by *sankati*, “to doubt, hesitate,” J 3:66).

³⁴ V 1:49, 4:70; D 1:246; S 11:9; M 1:437; A 1:134 = Sn 1106; A 1:282; Sn 925; Nc 379; DhA 3:83, 4:88; Sdhp 459; Bdhd 96. Cf *na kiñci k’r̥m na koci vippaṭissāreti*, “has nobody any worry?” (S 3:120 = 4:46).

³⁵ *Kukkuccaṃ vinodetuṃ*, “for the sake of removing worry” (A 5:72). Cf *kukkucca pahāya*, “with worry abandoned” (D 1:71 = A 2:210 = Pug 59); *chinna, kukkucca* (adj), “with worry cut off” (M 1:108); *khīṇ’āsava kukkucca, vūpasanta*, “one whose influxes are destroyed, whose worry is stilled” (S 1:167 = Sn 82).

³⁶ Pāc 77 = V 4:148 f.

³⁷ **Upasampadā S** (A 10.33/5:72), **Nissaya S** (A 10.34/5:73).

³⁸ A 2.10.11/1:85.

worry is quite appropriate.³⁹ Indeed, it would have been better if worry or guilt-feeling were to have arisen earlier and prevent him from committing the misdeed.

2.2.2.4 From **the Saṅkavā Sutta** (A 3.90), we learn that worry or concern may be appropriate in regard to even minor matters, such as when a monk is aroused by worry to approach the Buddha and make a formal confession that on an earlier occasion, when the Buddha was giving a talk on the importance of observing the precepts, this monk has disapproved of the Buddha's act, thinking that it was too exacting.⁴⁰

2.2.3 Worrying about the Dharma

2.2.3.1 At times, worry can also stand for uncertainty in regard to the Dharma. **The Gilāna Sutta 1** (S 35.74), for example, reports how the Buddha visits a monk and inquires whether that monk has any worry. The monk replies that he indeed has much worry, but clarifies that he has done nothing blame-worthy regarding which he would be worried. When asked about the source of his worry, the monk asks for clarification on some subtler aspects of the teaching.⁴¹ In such instances, the worry is unrelated to unwholesome regret but refers to a type of worry that is concerned with the wish to properly understand the teachings, perhaps similar to *dhamm'uddhacca*. [2.1.4]

2.2.3.2 The most famous example of *uddhacca* as a spiritual experience is arguably that of **Bāhiya Dāru, -cīriya**. Bāhiya, the bark-clothed ascetic, is very excited on meeting the Buddha, and urgently requests the Buddha to teach him, fearing that he might die without hearing the Dharma, or that the Buddha might die and not teach him.⁴² Although not specifically mentioned, we can take this as a sense of unease or restlessness towards the Dharma (*dhamm'uddhacca*) [2.1.4]. This is actually a form of *saṁvega* or sense of religious urgency.⁴³

2.2.3.3 Whether the mind is filled with *kukkucca* that is negative [2.2.2] or positive, the mind is diffused or weakened. The mind is unfocused; it is scattered. The best antidote for a scattered mind (*cetasi vikkhepa*) is breath meditation.⁴⁴

2.2.4 Mood swings in meditation

2.2.4.1 It has already been noted that **sensual lust** (*kāma-c, chanda*) is the mother of hindrances.⁴⁵ It is immanent (ever-present) in the unawakened mind, and can assume various subtle forms, that is,

- as ill will (towards what we dislike),
- as sloth and torpor (towards what does not delight us),
- as restlessness and worry (for fear of losing what we cling to, or regretting the loss of something we have been clinging to), or
- as doubt (sensual desire and its various forms prevent the mind from investigating beyond itself).

³⁹ Pār 1.5.10 @ V 3:19.

⁴⁰ A 3.90/1:237.

⁴¹ S 35.74.8-11/4:46 f @ SD 70.8; cf S 3:120, 3:125, 4:48.

⁴² See **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/6-9) & SD 33.7 (2).

⁴³ See **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7f).

⁴⁴ A 6.115/3:448 f.

⁴⁵ See **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1 (1.1.1).

2.2.4.2 On an **unconscious** level, our unawakened minds are caught in the duality of sensual lust and ill will, swinging back and forth between liking and disliking, at the mercy of our perceptions. We are drawn to what we see as pleasurable, and swing away from what we see as unpleasurable or unfamiliar.

On a **preconscious** level,⁴⁶ another duality rules the unawakened mind: when we are caught up with something that does not delight us, we fall under the weight of sloth and torpor, and when we perceive a possible or actual loss of something pleasurable, we are flurried by restlessness and worry. All this keeps us in the rut of doubt, of not knowing what to do next, except to move on instinctually, nose-led by the dominating hindrance.

2.2.4.3 Restlessness-and-worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*) are like turbulent winds that lash and stir up the mind into ripples and waves. Restlessness (*uddhacca*) manifests itself as the inability to stay with one mental object for a long time. For meditators, worry (*kukkucca*, literally “bad-done-ness”) is often a feeling of regret or guilt-feeling over breaches of moral virtue. Restlessness dredges up the past, and runs into the future with a fear of negative karmic fruits.

2.2.4.4 These two pairs of hindrances—sloth-and-torpor and restlessness-and-worry—have two general negative effects on the meditator. On account of sloth and torpor, the mind drifts “downwards” (that is, we keep losing our energy), or on account of restlessness and worry, our minds float “upwards” (we become agitated). Either way, the mind is weakened and out of focus with its meditation object. In this connection, the Tiantai⁴⁷ master, **Zhiyi** 智顛 (538-597), in his *Tóngméng zhǐguān* 童蒙止觀 (*Śamatha and Vipassāna for Beginners*), gives the following tips for dealing with two kinds of distractions:

What is a **sinking mind [sign]**? If during the meditation the mind is dull, confused or unrecordable, while the head drops, this shows a sinking mind. In such a case, it should be fixed on the tip of the nose to nail it there and to prevent it from wandering elsewhere. This is the way to regulate a sinking mind.

What is a **floating mind [sign]**? If during the meditation, it drifts about and is uneasy, while thoughts follow externals, this shows a floating mind. In such a case, it should be pushed down and fixed on the navel to prevent thoughts from rising; thus the mind will be stabilized and will be easily quieted.

Therefore, the absence of the sinking or floating state shows a regulated mind.

(Zhiyi, *Tóngmén Zhǐguān* 童蒙止觀 in Lu K’uan Yü, 1964:126;⁴⁸ emphases added)

何等為沉相？

若坐時心中昏暗，無所記錄，
頭好低垂，是為沈相。
爾時當系念鼻端，
令心住緣中，無分散意，
此可治沈。

何等為浮相？

若坐時心好飄動，身亦不安，
念外異緣，此是浮相。
此時宜安心向下，系緣臍中，
制諸亂念，心即定住，
則心易安靜。

舉要言之，不沈不浮，
是心調相。

Zhiyi’s advice on fixing the attention at the nose-tip is the same as that of **the Paṭisambhidā, magga** and **Vibhaṅga**, which interprets *parimukha* as meaning “at the tip of the nose or at the centre of the

⁴⁶ On unconscious and preconscious, see *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1 (3.8).

⁴⁷ Tiāntái 天臺.

⁴⁸ Also called *Xiūxí zhǐguān zuòchán fǎyào* 修習止觀坐禪法要 = *Xiǎozhǐguān* 小止觀, T1915 = T46.462-474. See Lu K’uan Yü 1969: 126 & Zhiyi 1997. For Chin text: <http://www.ucchusma.idv.tw/chanzong/small.htm>.

upper lip.”⁴⁹ His advice on watching the navel is remarkably similar to the Vipassana method of Mahasi Sayadaw.⁵⁰

2.2.5 A noteworthy usage of *uddhacca* occurs in **the (Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā Sutta** (A 4.170), which refers to restlessness in its description of one of the ways to attain final liberation.⁵¹ According to this discourse, we can reach the path to final liberation when the mind is under the influence of *dharm’uddhacca*, that is, restlessness related to the Dharma (but also translatable as “restlessness of mental states”).

In an ironic sense, this form of *uddhacca* is not really a mental hindrance, but merely a looming rock blocking our way, as it were, which we need to walk around or climb over, and then the view is clear again: we see the straight path before us, even nirvana. This “restlessness” or angst is a sort of existential “cry” out of a powerful desire to break free from suffering or out of compassion for the suffering world, or both. Once the mind settles down and becomes focused, the path is attained.

3 Removal of *uddhacca,kukkucca*

3.1 FREEDOM FROM UDDHACCA,KUKKUCCA IS BLISSFUL

3.1.1 The Sutta Nipāta contains a number of verses relating to worry. **The Tuvāṭaka Sutta** (Sn 4.14), for example, mentions freedom from worry together with various aspects of restraint in speech, which covers being free from anger, boasting and arrogance, as well as the use of moderate words:

<i>Akkodhano asantāsī</i>	Without anger, without trembling,
<i>avikatthī akukkucco</i>	not boasting, <u>without worry</u> ,
<i>manta,bhāṇī anuddhato</i>	speaking in moderation, ⁵² <u>not restless</u> , ⁵³
<i>sa ve vācā yato muni</i>	he is indeed a speech-restrained sage. (Sn 850)

3.1.2 Another Sutta Nipāta verse, found in **the Purābheda Sutta** (Sn 4.10), relates the removal of worry (*kukkucca*) to the diligent practice of meditation in secluded spots:

<i>Jhāyī na pāda,lol’assa</i>	The monk should be a meditator, not foot-loose.
<i>virame kukkuccaṃ, na-p,pamajjeyya</i>	Abstaining from worry, ⁵⁴ he would not be heedless.

⁴⁹ Pm 1:171,19; Vbh 537/252,13. For further discussion, see **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118), SD 7.13 (2.4), & **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22; M 10), SD 13.1 (3.9.4).

⁵⁰ See **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118), SD 7.13 (2.4.2).

⁵¹ A 4.170,5/2:157 (SD 41.5).

⁵² Alt tr “a speaker of wisdom” foll Comys: *mantā vuccati paññā*, “wisdom is called *mantā* (mantra)” (Nm 1:219, 2:346; DA 669, 852, 892; AA 3:329; DhA 4:93; SnA 2:402; ThaA 1:33; ThīA 219; ApA 275); cf *sammita,bhāṇī*, “moderate in speech” (Tha 209d). On *manta,bhāṇī* (Tha 2, 117; Thī 281) as “speaking in moderation,” as orig it was prob *mita,bhāṇī* (Uv 29.45, Uv (Pischel) 55, Uv:T Beckh 49): see John Brough Dh:G 1962: 249, 280; Tha:N 117n (ad Tha 2); Thī:N 281n (ad Thī 281).

⁵³ Here, an allusion to *kukkucca*: see native gloss, where *anuddhato* means “without restlessness” (*anuddhato ti uddhacca,rahito*, SnA 549,13). Alt tr “nor arrogant” (Tha:N). Uv 26.8b reads *na vikanthxi na kaukr̥tiḥ* (which supports my reading). See also J Brough Dh:G 1962: 280, which I follow.

⁵⁴ On the ending of *kukkucca*, see: *ajjhataṃ vūpasanta,citto ~ā cittaṃ parisodheti*, “the mind that is internally stilled is a mind purified of worry” (D 1:71,28 = M 1:81,22 = A 2:211,3 = Vbh 245,1 = Pug 59,22); *uddhacca,kukkuc-cassa pi suppaṭiviniṭattā na andh’andhaṃ viya jhāyati*, “his restlessness and guilt have not been fully removed, so that he meditates, as it were, dimly” (M 127,16/3:151,30); *uddhacca,kukkuccañ ca me suppaṭiviniṭaṃ*, “and thoroughly removed restlessness and guilt” (S 46.8/5:76,26); *bhikkhuno abhijjhā vigatā hoti ...uddhacca,kukkuccaṃ*

*atha āsanesu sayanesu
appa,saddesu bhikkhu vihareyya*

And in places for sitting and lying down
where there is little noise, he would dwell. (Sn 925)

Though these verses do not show any explicit relation between removing worry or guilt-feeling and other hindrances, the fact that they appear together clearly suggests that they are conducive to effective meditation. Indeed, we would expect one who consistently dwells in peaceful solitude, diligent in his practice, and letting go of the past (keeping away worry), would succeed in his meditation.

3.2 FACTORS THAT HELP TO REMOVE *UDDHACCA,KUKKUCCA*

3.2.1 Not feeding restlessness and worry

3.2.1.1 The (Bojjhaṅga) Aggi Sutta (S 46.53) gives a set of brief but instructive strategy on dealing with restlessness and worry. The Sutta refers to a mind afflicted with this hindrance as one that is “restless” (*uddhata*). The strategy is taught in terms of the 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*), that is two-fold: what is “untimely” (*akāla*) and what is “timely” (*kāla*), meaning respectively what should not be applied and what should be applied, thus:

17 Bhikshus, when the mind is **restless** (*uddhata*),

it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is <u>dharma-investigation</u> ;	<i>dhamma,vicaya s.</i>
it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is <u>effort</u> ;	<i>viriya sambojjhaṅga</i>
it is untimely to cultivate the awakening-factor that is <u>zest</u> .	<i>pīti sambojjhaṅga</i>

17.2 What is the reason for this?

The mind, bhikshus, is restless; it is *hard* to be settled by these states. (S 46.53,17), SD 51.13

The Buddha then gives **the parable of fire-quenching**. When there is a large blaze, we will not be able to quench it by adding dry grass, dry cowdung and dry wood, exposing it to a dry wind and not scattering dirt over it.

3.2.1.2 It is “untimely” (not strategic) to apply the “activating” awakening factors, that is, dharma-investigation, effort and zest (the 2nd-4th awakening factors).⁵⁵ **The timely strategy**—directed at the moment of the hindrance arising—is to apply the “restraining” awakening factors of tranquility, concentration and equanimity.⁵⁶ This is like adding wet grass, wet cowdung and wet wood, exposing it to a moist wind and scattering dirt over it, so that the big blaze is put out. This is an imagery of calming the mind “restless.”

vigatam hoti, “for a monk...covetousness has departed...restlessness and guilt have departed” (It 118,14); *te ... avikkhepena uddhacca,kukkucam pahāya gatā*, “they had abandoned restlessness and guilt through non-wavering” (UA 129,9); *uddhacca,kukkucam...pahāya pajahitvā vinoditvā*, “having given up, dispelled restlessness-and-worry, it is abandoned” (Nm 19,28); *iti idaṅ ca uddhaccam idaṅ ca kukkucam santā honti samitā vūpasantā atthaṅgatā abbatthaṅ,gatā appitā vyappitā sositā visositā vyantīkatā, tena vuccati ~am pahāyā ti*, “thus this restlessness and this worry are appeased, calmed, stilled, settled, disappeared, ended, destroyed, withered, withered out, terminated; therefore, this is called ‘the abandoning of restlessness and guilt’” (Vbh 255,11).

⁵⁵ On the 7 awakening factors, see **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

⁵⁶ See SD 51.13 (2.1).

3.2.2 The Commentaries speak of 6 things that are conducive to the removal of restlessness and worry,⁵⁷ which are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) deep learning | (<i>bahussutatā</i>) |
| (2) constant questioning | (<i>paripuccha,katā</i>) |
| (3) being well versed in the Vinaya | (<i>vinaye pakataññutā</i>) |
| (4) associating with the elders | (<i>vuddha,sevitā</i>) |
| (5) spiritual friendship | (<i>kalyāna,mittatā</i>) |
| (6) conducive conversation | (<i>sappāya,kathā</i>) |

The Majjhima Commentary explains “deep learning” as the mastering of the suttas (in the 5 Nikāyas). The rest of the factors are interpreted in connection with monastic discipline. A monk should constantly question over what is allowable and what is not by associating with the elders (especially Vinaya experts such as Upāli). He should cultivate spiritual friendship with them and have conducive conversations with them (MA 1:285).

3.2.3 The Sāmañña,phala Sutta (D 2) says that the most effective way to overcome the hindrance of restlessness and worry is to cultivate a mind that is internally calm (*ajjhataṃ vūpasanta citta*).⁵⁸ As such, notes **the (Nīvaraṇa Bojjhaṅga) Āhāra Sutta** (S 46.51), this hindrance stands in direct opposition to the awakening-factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*).⁵⁹

The (Bojjhaṅga) Aggi Sutta (S 46.53), as we have noted, adds that besides tranquillity, the other awakening-factors that should be cultivated when the mind is restless are concentration and equanimity. In this way, restlessness can gradually be overcome, like properly putting out a big fire. [3.2.1]

3.2.4 Even at a high level of spiritual development, there is a need to remove restlessness and worry. A good example is **the (Arahatta) Anuruddha Sutta** (A 3.128), which recounts Sāriputta’s well known instructions to Anuruddha. The latter complains to Sāriputta that in spite his having unshaken energy, well-founded mindfulness, bodily tranquillity and mental one-pointedness, he is still unable to reach liberation from the influxes.⁶⁰

In reply, Sāriputta remarks that Anuruddha’s obsession with having energy, mindfulness, tranquillity and mental one-pointedness is simply a manifestation of *restlessness*, and his concern about not having reached the destruction of the influxes was merely *worry*. Once Anuruddha recognizes how restlessness and worry are obstructing him in this way, he is able to realize direct knowledge of liberation.

3.3 Guilt-feeling and healthy fear

3.3.1 We now come to a very important point as it concerns basic mental health. We need to know the difference between guilt-feeling and normal fear. We have already discussed how a feeling of guilt is likely to be common if we believe in “sin” or a God-idea, or where family upbringing or religious indo-

⁵⁷ *Cha dhammā ~assa pahānāya samvattanti* (“he brings about the 6 things for the abandoning of restlessness and guilt, namely”): *bahussutatā, paripucchakatā, vinaye pakataññutā, vuddha,sevitā, kalyāna,mittatā, sappāya,-kathā* (DA 3:781 = MA 1:285,8-22 = SA 3:167,16-30 = AA 1:50,26-51,11 = ItA 2:181 = VbhA 273 f; *idaṃ ~aṃ nāma mahā,anatta,karan ti cha dhamme bhāvetvā pajahati*, “having cultivated six things, he abandons this doer of great harm called restlessness and guilt” (DA 216,20 (DAPṬ 1:339,17-21)).

⁵⁸ D 2,678/1:72 (SD 8.10).

⁵⁹ S 46.51,12/5:104 (SD 7.15).

⁶⁰ A 3.128/1:281 f (SD 19.4).

trination has been rather stern and lacking real love and communication. This easily starts and feeds the hindrance of ill will.⁶¹

Guiltless fear, however, is something else, and can be very healthy. It is said that a burnt child dreads the fire. We neither hate the fire nor feel guilty about the pain. Guilt is a negative emotion imposed upon us by some higher authority through some kind of dogmatic belief of a supreme being. Fear, or better, guiltless fear, is a natural response to what brings us pain and suffering, or what is not conducive to our personal or spiritual development.⁶²

3.3.2 Then, there is bad fear and there is good fear. Bad fear is not helpful, and can also be dangerous and destructive. In this connection, **Brahmavamso** relates his experience, as a lay Buddhist, when he attended a Zen retreat in the north of England. As it was very cold then, the meditators used warm blankets, but it made some of them sleepy and they started nodding off. The teacher who was walking up and down with a meditator's stick,⁶³ then slapped the shoulders of the person next to Brahmavamso. The sound, as it were, woke everyone up. "The problem was that the fear that woke me up remained with me, preventing further progress." (2006:42)

Some meditating monks in the old forest tradition of Thailand would go to dangerous places, such as platforms high in the trees, on cliff-edges, or in tiger-infested jungles. The ones who survived claimed that they had good meditation, but we never hear from the monks who did not survive!

3.3.3 Sense of urgency. Healthy fear, on the other hand, is helpful, even inspiring. Here "healthy fear" can be taken to be a mild form of samvega (a sense of spiritual urgency).⁶⁴ An example of such a teaching is found in **the Anāgata, bhaya Sutta 2** (A 5.78) (given in brief in the Samaya Sutta, A 5.54), which is a beautiful reflection on the urgency of spiritual practice, here summarized, that is, to say, we should reflect thus:

- (1) "Now I am young, but old age will soon catch up with me. Let me master the spiritual practice now so that I will live comfortably *in old age*."
- (2) "Now I am healthy, but a time will come when I will fall sick. Let me master the spiritual practice now so that I will live comfortably *even when I am sick*."
- (3) "Now food is easy to get, but a time will come when it will be difficult to get food. Let me master the spiritual practice now so that I will live comfortably *even when it is difficult to find food*."
- (4) "Now people dwell in good fellowship, but a time will come when fear will reign, crime is common, and people live in groups. It is then not easy to turn to the Buddha Word, or to go for meditation retreats. Let me master the spiritual practice now so that I will live comfortably *even in time of fear*."
- (5) "Now the order dwells in spiritual fellowship, happily united in one teaching, but a time will come when the order is divided. It is then not easy to turn to the Buddha Word, or to go for meditation retreats. Let me master the spiritual practice now so that I will live comfortably *even though the order is divided*." (A 5.78/3:103-105): see SD 1.10 (3.2)

⁶¹ See *Vyāpāda*, SD 32.5 (4.1).

⁶² On the role of guilt and sin in promoting ill will, see *Vyāpāda*, SD 32.5.

⁶³ 香板 *xiāngbǎn*; Jap, *keisaku*, lit "fragrant board."

⁶⁴ On samvega, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7f).

3.4 ACCEPTING OURSELVES

3.4.1 Overcoming worry and guilt-feeling

3.4.1.1 Worry is the result of our wrong conduct or omission in what we have said or done or in what we *thought* we have said or done. When this negative feeling is directed to someone who is an authority-figure—especially that of a God-idea or guru-figure—or for whom we have high regard, then, it easily becomes **guilt-feeling**.⁶⁵

Both worry and guilt-feeling (especially the latter) are the result of how we perceive ourselves and others, that is, seeing oneself as “less than” and the other as “more than” oneself. Worry and guilt-feeling arise when we habitually measure oneself against others.⁶⁶

3.4.1.2 One healing exercise that helps us to overcome **guilt-feeling** is the cultivation of lovingkindness. First we cultivate lovingkindness in the normal way, that is, generating a deep sense of joyful and unconditional love. When we have this strong feeling of lovingkindness, we go on to cultivate **compassion** towards oneself.

Compassion towards oneself is basically cultivated by saying or subverbalising such words as: “I forgive myself all my wrongs (commission or omission),” or “I forgive myself completely ... ,” or “I accept myself just as I am; I forgive myself” Vary the words or choose suitable wholesome words that helps us generate compassion—accepting oneself even when we seem not to deserve it.⁶⁷

3.4.2 It is useful to understand the nature of self and actions here: we are what we do. But all actions (whether mental, verbal or bodily) are impermanent. Even when we have done some terrible evil deeds, we can still change, that is, if we accept the evil as evil, bad as bad, have a great desire to change, and make the effort to do so. Sometimes, someone (a wise person) or something (the Dhamma) comes along and gives us a second chance, as it were—we should be humble and joyful in responding positively to such an opportunity.

3.4.3 The best known example of such a miraculous change is that of Anguli, māla, the erstwhile serial killer. He is looking for his last victim, for the thousandth human finger to give as an offering to his foolish teacher, that is, until the Buddha compassionately appears to him and shows him that there is a way out for him. Anguli, māla then confesses that he has always thought of goodness, but is unable to access or express it, until the Buddha comes along, telling him to *stop* his evil ways.⁶⁸ The Buddha’s teachings and minding methods are still with us. We only need to practise them by stopping our unwholesome habits and cultivating our inner goodness.

3.5 THE JOY OF DOING NOTHING

3.5.1 In terms of contemporary urbanized society, it helps to understand the hindrance of restlessness and worry as the failure to appreciate *contentment*, that small is beautiful and that doing nothing at the right time is a joyful experience. Most people swallowed up by the lonely business of urbanized society do not seem able to acknowledge the pleasure of simply being themselves, doing nothing.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ On the difference between guilt and fear, see *Thīna, middha*, SD 32.6 (3.4.3).

⁶⁶ See **Me; The nature of conceit**, SD 19.2a.

⁶⁷ On the cultivation of compassion, see SD 38.5 (4).

⁶⁸ See **Āṅguli.māla S** (M 86/2:97-105), SD 5.11.

⁶⁹ See Brahmavamso 2006: 43-46.

When we are part of a group, as in an urban society, we tend to see faults in others who are different from us, or who disagree with us. This leads us to become restless and stressful. And when we notice there are others apparently ahead of us in material way or in terms of status symbols (cash, credit cards, cars, country-club membership, and a condominium),⁷⁰ then we are likely to worry about being left behind. We might even become worried and blame ourselves for being incompetent or even a failure.

We are living by external standards, taking others as our measure of life-quality. But people's tastes and fortunes change; hence, such standards are really false. Happiness is an inner joy, and can only be truly experienced within ourselves through self-understanding.

3.5.2 Similarly, restlessness in meditation is a symptom of not seeing the joy of the present moment, of what is here and now. We are caught in thinking and planning about the future, what to do next, and feel like springing into action. So we become restless.

This is where we need to remind ourselves that the process of meditating is just the opposite of what we do in our routine of work, socializing, even recreation. In a way, meditation is our permitting ourselves to do nothing. If our meditation is the same as our routine life—being busy with all sorts of things and yet not feeling that we are in charge of our lives—then it is *not* meditation.

3.5.3 In olden times, when villagers wanted to catch monkeys, they would use a coconut (bored with a small hole) or some kind of large heavy pot with a narrow neck, and leave a banana or fruit inside. An inquisitive and greedy monkey would then put its hand into the trap and hold on tight onto the fruit. The trapper comes along and easily catches hold of the monkey, slowed down by its grasping onto what it desires. All the monkey needs to do is to let go of the fruit and flee to freedom.

3.6 SEEING THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE

Restlessness and worry arise when we do not allow ourselves to see things as they truly are. The mind works very fast so that information that comes to us is often incomplete or are not fully grasped. As a secondary schoolboy, I cycled to school, and noticed the many smaller roads and lanes that led away from the road that I usually took.

My curious mind kept wondering where those roads and lanes led to. During my free time, I would cycle down one of them and go wherever it led. Often, I would stop to look closer at the trees and plants, the streams and marshes. It was an exhilarating experience to be up close with nature. Such beauty however could only be felt when I stopped and studied the scenery. Then, happily I would cycle on and on, and then to my surprise, I had reached right where I had started—I'm home—a much happier person with a clear sense of inner peace, knowing where I had been to and where I am!

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⁷⁰ See **Skillful Means**, SD 30.8 (8.1).