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Uṭṭhana Sutta

The Rousing Discourse | Sn 2.10 (Sn 331-334)

Theme: The most urgent task of spiritual cultivation

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1 Sutta highlights

The Uṭṭhāna Sutta (Sn 2.10) comprises only 4 verses of the Sutta Nipāta (Sn 331-334). Its commentary tells us the background story [2] which is identical to that of **the (Pāsāda Kampana) Moggallāna Sutta** (S 51.14) [2.2]. These verses probably form the ending or climax to **S 51.14**. It is possible that these verses were not known to the Saṃyutta reciters, but remembered by independent elders or group of elders, and at the 1st council, formed a part of the Sutta Nipāta.

2 Background story

2.1 COMMENTARY. The origin story of **the Uṭṭhāna Sutta** (Sn 2.10) is given in its commentary, the Paramattha, jotikā II, attributed to Buddhaghosa (SnA 336-339).¹ Here follows an abridged translation of the relevant passages, with some relevant notes.

2.2 THE MANSION OF MIGĀRA’S MOTHER

2.2.1 While the Blessed One was staying , in Sāvattihī, he would go with the monks into the city to collect almsfood in the forenoon, and then leave by the Eastern Gate. He would then spend the day-rest (*divā, vihāra*) in Migāra’s mother’s mansion (*migāra, mātu pāsāda*), in the Eastern Park. Then, he would spend the night in Jeta, vana—and vice versa. In this way, he benefitted both the two families—respectively, of Visākhā and of Anātha, piṇḍika—and made examples of their great generosity and sacrifice.

2.2.2 The ground floor of Migāra’s mother’s mansion comprises 500 cells (*gabbha*), each with a gabled roof,² to house 500 monks. When the Buddha stayed on the ground floor, the monks, out of respect for him, would not use the upper floor—also with 500 cells. One day, it happened that the Buddha occupied the upper floor. Hence, 500 recently ordained novice monks (*navaka*) used the cells on the lower level.

These monks slept right through the day, getting up only in the evening. Then, they assembled on the large terrace and made such a din, engaging in frivolous talk, such as where they had their alms-meal and where they went.

2.3 (PĀSĀDA KAMPANA) MOGGALLĀNA SUTTA (S 51.14/5:269 f), SD 27.8

2.3.1 The narrative then flows into **the (Pāsāda Kampana) Moggallāna Sutta** (S 51.14), thus:

At one time the Blessed One was residing in the mansion of Migāra’s mother in Eastern Park [Pubb’ārāma] near Sāvattihī.

¹ It is also described at DA 859 f; MA 2:165, 296 f; SA 1:148; AA 2:124; ThaA 3:173; UA 158; ApA 224.

² One imagines that these cells are independent units located around the main building, with a large hall behind these cells, with an upper story with more cells.

2 Now, at that time, some monks were dwelling on the ground floor. They were restless, arrogant, vain, sharp-tongued, rambling in talk, muddle-headed, without clear comprehension, lacking concentration, scatter-brained, loose in faculty.³

3 Then, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Mahā Moggallāna,

“Moggallāna, these fellow brahmacharis dwelling on the ground floor [270] of the mansion of Migāra’s mother are *restless, arrogant, vain, sharp-tongued, rambling in talk, muddle-headed, without clear comprehension, lacking concentration, scatter-brained, loose in faculty.*

Go, Moggallāna, inspire these monks with a sense of urgency!”

“Yes, bhante,” the elder Mahā Moggallāna replied to the Blessed One.

Then, he performed an act of psychic wonder: with his big toe, he caused the mansion of Migāra’s mother to shake, quake and tremble.⁴ (S 51.14,2-3), SD 27.8

2.3.2 The shaken monks

2.3.2.1 The Sutta Nipāta Commentary on the Uṭṭhāna Sutta gives details on how Moggallāna performs his act of wonder. Following the Buddha’s instruction, the elder Moggallāna immediately went into the meditation on the water kasina.⁵ Then, he touched the mansion with his toe, so that, even as it stood on solid ground, it shook along with the earth on which it stands—like a ship struck by a gale.

The terrified monks panicked and ran out through the four doors of the mansion, leaving behind their robes and other possessions. The Blessed One appeared before them as if they were entering his own fragrant cell through its own door. Seeing the Blessed One, they at once saluted him, and stood there.

2.3.2.2 The (Pāsāda Kampana) Moggallāna Sutta narrative gives its own version of the event:

4 Then, those monks, shocked and terrified, stood at one side and said,

“It’s marvellous indeed, sirs! It’s amazing indeed, sirs!

There is no wind, and this mansion of Migāra’s mother has a deep foundation, well-founded, unshakable, immovable. Yet, it shook, quaked and trembled!”

5 Then, the Blessed One approached the monks and said this to them:

“Bhikshus, why are you standing at one side, shocked and terrified?”

“It’s marvellous indeed, bhante! It’s amazing indeed, bhante!

There is no wind, and this mansion of Migāra’s mother has a deep foundation, well-founded, unshakable, immovable. Yet, it shook, quaked and trembled!”

³ *Uddhatā unnaḷā capalā mukharā vikiṇṇa, vācā [abhihijhālu kāmesu tibba, sārāgo, byāpanna, citto paduṭṭha, mana, -saṅkappo,] muṭṭha-s, sati asampajāno asamāhito vibbhanta, citto pākat’indriyo.* This list also in **Jantu S** (S 2.25/1:61 f), where its Comy explains as follows: “**restless**” (*uddhatā*) means of a restless temperament due to perceiving unallowable as allowable, what is blameworthy as blameless (in accordance with the Vinaya), and conversely; “**arrogant**” (*unnaḷā*) means puffed up with empty conceit like a fat reed; “**vain**” (*capalā*) means vain on account of robes, bowl, adornment, etc; “**sharp-tongued**” (*mukharā*) means rough in speech; “**rambling in talk**” (*vikiṇṇa, vācā*) means unrestrained in speech, rambling aimlessly all day; “**muddle-headed**” (*muṭṭha-s, satino*) means bereft of mindfulness, without mindfulness, forgetting what has been done right here; “**without clear comprehension**” (*asampajānā*) means lacking in wisdom; “**lacking concentration**” (*asamāhitā*) means lacking access and full concentration, like a ship caught in strong currents; “**scatter-brained**” (*vibbhanta, cittā; Comy vibbhanta, cittā*) means with wandering minds, like foolish deer caught in the path; “**loose in faculty**” (*pākat’indriyā*) means with open faculties due to non-restraint like when they were still laymen. (SA 3:257 = 1:115)

⁴ Comy says that he entered into the water-kasina meditation, emerged, and determined that the ground on which the mansion stood should become water. Then he rose into the air and struck it with his toe. (SA 3:257)

⁵ On the water kasina (*āpo, kāsina*), see SD 49.5b (1.2).

6 “Bhikshus, the mansion of Migāra’s mother was made to shake, quake and tremble by the monk Moggallāna with his big toe, out of his desire to arouse a sense of urgency in you.

What do you think, bhikshus, by having cultivated, having developed what things has the monk Moggallāna become so powerful, so mighty?”

“Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, has the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it.”⁶ [271]

7 “Then, listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante!” the monks answered the Blessed One in assent. (S 51.14,2-3), SD 27.8

2.4 THE (PĀSĀDA KAMPANA) MOGGALLĀNA SUTTA TEACHINGS

2.4.1 The Buddha then taught the monks meditation based on **the 4 bases of success** (*iddhi,pāda*), that is, desire or will-power (*chanda*), energy (*virīya*), the mind (*citta*) and mental investigation (*vīmaṃsā*). The Blessed One taught the monks to cultivate the bases of success endowed with concentration gained through a basis of success and through striving,⁷ thus:

Here, bhikshus, the monk Moggallāna has cultivated **the basis of success** (*iddhi,pāda*) endowed with concentration gained through desire⁸ (**chanda**) and through striving, thinking, ‘Thus, my **desire** will be neither too slack nor too tense, and it will neither be constricted internally nor distracted externally.’

And he is one who dwells perceiving what is after and what is before, thus:

‘As before, so after; as after, so before. As below, so above; as above, so below. As by day, so at night; as at night, so by day.’

Thus, with a mind that is open and unshrouded, he cultivates a mind filled with light.⁹

(S 51.14,8), SD 27.8

2.4.2 The Blessed One then teaches the monks on the 6 superknowledges (*cha-ḷ-abhiññā*), of which only the last is a direct knowledge (*aññā*), thus:

(1) the various psychic powers,	<i>iddhi,vidha</i>
(2) clairaudience (divine ear),	<i>dibba,sota</i>
(3) mind-reading,	<i>ceto,pariyā,ñāṇa</i>
(4) the knowledge of the recollection of past lives,	<i>pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāṇa</i>

⁶ *Bhagavam,mūlakā no bhante dhammā, bhagavaṃ nettikā, bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhu vata bhante bhagavatañ-ñ’eva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitaṃ attho.Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantī ti.* This is stock (M 1:309 f, 317, 465, 3:115; S 2:80 f; A 1:199, 4:158, 351, 5:355).

⁷ **Chanda**, (< *Virīya*, | *Citta*, | *Vīmaṃsā*,) *samādhi, padhāna, saṅkhāra, samannāgatam*.

⁸ Here, it has a neutral, even positive, sense; alt tr: “will to act; enthusiasm.”

⁹ This para is stock: *Pacchā, pure, saññī ca viharati – yathā pure tathā pacchā, yathā pacchā tathā pure; yathā adho tathā uddham, yathā uddham tathā adho; yathā divā tathā rattim, yathā rattim tathā divā. Iti vivaṭena cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsam cittaṃ bhāveti: Pubba S* (S 51.11/5:263 ×2), **Maha-p,phala S** (S 51.12/5:267 f), **(Iddhi,-pāda) Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20/5:277 ×2, 278), **Magga S** (S 51.21/5:281), **(Iddhi) Moggallāna S** (S 51.31/5:288 ×4), **Tathā-gata S** (S 51.32/5:289 ×2). Simply, “as before, so after,” refers to evenness of practice, while “as above, so below,” refers to meditation on the 31 parts. On the meaning of terms here, see **(Iddhi,pāda) Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20/5:277) = SD 28.14. Cf *Idh’āvuso, bhikkhu āloka,saññam manasi karoti, divā,saññam adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā rattim, yathā rattim tathā divā. Iti vivaṭena cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsam cittaṃ bhāveti: Saṅgīti S* (D 33,1.11(5)/3:223, where it is one of the 4 cultivations of concentration (*samādhi bhāvanā*); **Samādhi Bhāvanā S** (A 4.44/2:44), SD 24.1, for context of the meditation; **(Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna) Udāyi S** (A 6.29/3:322), SD 24.8. Cf Pm 1:114.

- (5) the knowledge of death and rebirth or “divine eye,”
 (6) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes.¹⁰

cut’upapāta,ñāṇa or *dibba,cakkhu*
āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa

2.5 COMMENTARY ON THE VERSES

In many suttas, we find verses at their conclusion, summing up the teachings in some way or highlighting the key ideas, exhorting them to practise.¹¹ The 4 verses of **the Uṭṭhāna Sutta**, in fact, do just that: they rouse us to spiritual effort. Here are reflections on these 4 verses based on the Sutta’s commentary (SnA 337-344) with some contemporary notes for our study to inspire our own practice of the Dharma here and now.

2.5.1 VERSE 1 (Sn 331)

2.5.1.1 “Rise up!” (*utthahatha*) [Sn 331a]: “Rise up from indolence, strive, make an effort, be not lazy!” (SnA 337). This is the practice of the 4 right efforts or strivings (*samma-p, padhāna*): the efforts to *prevent* an arisen unwholesome state, to *abandon* an arisen unwholesome state, to *cultivate* an arisen wholesome state, and to *guard* (bring to fruit) an arisen wholesome state.¹²

2.5.1.2 “Sit up!” (*nisīdatha*) [Sn 331a]. The usual English translation is “Sit down!”, that is, to meditate. “Having crossed your legs, sit up to direct your mind to the meditation-object.” (SnA 33). Of course, “sitting” is merely a synecdoche (shorthand) for meditation, which, as mindfulness, involves all our 4 postures, that is, the practice of full comprehension (*sampajāna*).¹³

2.5.1.3 “What good to you is sleeping? | For, what sleep is there to the afflicted(?)” (*ko attho supitena vo | āturānaṃ hi kā niddā*) [Sn 331b].

When we are hurt in an accident or stricken with a disease that affects just a small part of our body, such as an eye ailment, we may have difficulty sleeping. Even more so when we are injured by a weapon, such as a dart (no matter what it is made of) that pierces only the surface of our flesh.¹⁴

How, then, can we sleep when we are afflicted with the diseases of numerous defilements which have arisen and hurt our whole body and, above all, our mind?¹⁵ How can there be any sleep **“for those pierced by a barb, injured?”** (*salla,viddhāna ruppataṃ*) [Sn 331cd], when they (we) are pierced with lust, hate and delusion by the 5 darts that are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body—when their (our) heart suffers the pain?¹⁶

2.5.1.4 The Upaṭṭhāna Sutta (S 9.2) contains two verses, the first of which has three identical lines, and both verses of both suttas evoke the same sentiment of spiritual urgency. These verses are spoken by a forest deity who, seeing a monk having fallen asleep during the day-rest, addresses him, thus:

¹⁰ See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (9).

¹¹ The 2nd of the 9 limbs of the Teacher’s teaching (*nav’aṅga satthu,sāsana*) are “poems” of mixed prose and verse, such as the Sagāthā Vagga (S 1) of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and Kasi Bhāra,dvāja S (Sn 1.4/12-26), SD 69.6. On the 9 limbs of the Teacher’s teaching, see SD 51.10 (2.1).

¹² On the 4 right strivings (*samma-p,padhāna*), see SD 10.16 (6).

¹³ On clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8), SD 13.3 + SD 13,1 (3.6).

¹⁴ On the imagery of the man wounded by a dart, see **Cūḷa Māluṅkya,putta S** (M 63,5.2-54), SD 5.8.

¹⁵ See **Suppati S** (S 4.7), SD 32.14.

¹⁶ There is a hint of the teaching on the “2 kinds of pain”—the bodily and the mental—for which, see **Mahā Sacca S** (M 36,20) SD 1.12; **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6) SD 5.5. On that “pain is natural, suffering is optional,” see SD 48.9 (6.2.5); SD 51.14 (3.2.3).

<p><i>Uṭṭhehi bhikkhu kiṃ sesi ko attho supitena te āturassa hi kā niddā salla,viddhassa ruppato</i></p>	S 761	<p>Rise up, bhikshu! Why lie down? What good is there for you with sleep? What sleep is there for the afflicted, pierced with a dart, injured?</p>
<p><i>yāya saddhāya pabbajito agārasmānagāriyaṃ tam eva saddhamṃ brūhehi mā niddāya vasarṃ gamīti</i></p>	S 762	<p>That faith by which you are a renunciant, one who has left home for the homeless life— grow that very faith: go not under the power of sleep!</p>

(S 9.2/1:197 f), SD 112.4

2.5.2 VERSE 2 (Sn 332)

2.5.2.1 Having spoken thus to inspire and motivate the monks, the Blessed One then said, “Rise up! Sit up! | Train yourself hard for peace. | Let not the King of Death, knowing you | to be heedless, delude you to follow his will!” [Sn 331]. By this is meant:

The first line (**Sn 332a**) means: We have been pierced by the dart of defilements. It is time to awaken! Why is that? This holy life (*brahma, cariya*) is the cream of life itself since it brings us the good life here, even the heavenly life hereafter. But properly cultivated, it will bring us the divine life (*brahma, vihāra*) even here and now. Rightly cultivated, it will bring us beyond the heavens, out of Māra’s reach—that is, nirvana.

The holy life is also the cream of the spiritual life—the best spiritual training we can possibly have. The Teacher is still with us—within our collective memory. Even after his death, his wisdom and method are still preserved intact in the suttas and handed down by the practitioners who live after him to this day. Even today, when we see the Dharma, we see the Buddha.¹⁷ The Buddha is an embodiment of the truth and reality of non-self: when we see non-self, we see the Buddha.

2.5.2.2 We have, in the past, *slept* for a long time—on mountains, on the ground, in rough places, even on tree-tops¹⁸—all because we did not see the noble truths. Hence, we should rouse ourself to make an end of this sleeping. Let us sit and train ourself hard for the true state of peace!

Clearly here, “**sleep**” (*niddā*) is a metaphor for “ignorance” (*avijjā*) which is, in turn, a synecdoche for the subhuman state. Even with a human body, we sleep like animals,¹⁹ like pretas,²⁰ like hell-beings,²¹ like death itself.²² We will examine some suttas on sleep below [3.1].²³

¹⁷ This is based on the well known Buddha’s saying: *Yo dhammaṃ passati, so maṃ passati* (abr): **Vakkali S** (S 22.-87,13), SD 8.8.

¹⁸ The Buddha and the arhats—being fully liberated—on the other hand, sleep very well, even when the body is hurt or in pain: see eg **Sakalika S 2** (S 4.13/1:110), SD 61.7; also (**Hatthaka**) **Ājavaka S** (A 3.34), SD 4.8.

¹⁹ **Seyyā S** (A 4.244) mentions 4 sleeping-postures (*seyyā*): those of a preta, a pleasure-lover, a lion and the Tathagata. The preta posture (*peta, seyyā*) is supine (like a corpse); sleeping on the left is the “pleasure-lover’s posture” (*kāma, bhogī seyyā*); sleeping on the right is the “lion-posture” (*sīha, seyyā*); and the Tathagata’s posture (*tathāgata seyyā*) is that of a lion’s, but the Sutta describes it as that of a dhyana-attainer, Not mentioned in the prone position (sleeping on the belly), as most animals do. See **Seyyā S** (A 4.244/2:244 f), SD 76.6.

²⁰ “Lying like a preta” (*peta, seyya*), the sleeping posture of preta or departed (*petā*), ie, lying supine like a corpse, **Seyyā S** (A 4.244), SD 76.6: see **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,10.2) n on “lie down lion-like,” SD 10.13.

²¹ This may be described not so much as a posture but rather having a bad dream, esp a violent one, incl sleep-talking.

²² This is, of course, the “corpse posture” (called *sāv’āsana* in yoga). If this is relaxing, this is a good posture to start with, and then assume the lion-posture when we feel ready and natural about it. The allusion to death is simply by way of a reflection or perception of death (*maraṇa, saññā*), without any negative connotation.

2.5.2.3 In line 2 (Sn 332b), the **peace** (*santi*) is of 3 kinds (and their applications), that is:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| (1) endless peace | (<i>accanta,santi</i>) | the peace that is nirvana; | |
| (2) momentary peace | (<i>tad-aṅga santi</i>) | the peace of meditation; | |
| (3) conventional peace | (<i>sammuti,santi</i>) | worldly peace (based on views). | (Nm52 f) |

Technically, these are “timeless peace” (*accanta,santi*), “peace of the moment”? (*tad-aṅga,santi*) and “conventional peace” (*sammuti,santi*). Here (in Sn 332), the peace of nirvana is intended.

We shall now examine each of these 3 kinds of peace—based on **the Mahā Niddesa** (Nm 52 f) commentary on the Duṭṭh’atṭhaka Sutta (Sn 784)—beginning with the last of the three, thus:

(1) What is conventional peace (*sammuti,santi*)? “Conventional peace” is worldly peace, which is crowd-based, political; hence, limited and short-lived. Technically, it is a peace based on our views—it is an idea-based peace—especially one based on any or more of the 62 grounds (*vatthu*) of wrong views stated in **the Brahma,jāla Sutta** (D 1).²⁴

This set of 62 grounds of views is not a summary of all philosophical views possible, or even the essence of philosophy. It is basically an early Buddhist overview of the roots of human views based on meditation (and its misinterpretations), faith and pure speculation—in short, it is an overview of religious thought. In short, this “conventional peace” is an external peace based on ideas and ideology, not one that is experiential or internal—such as the “peace of the moment,” which we shall examine next.

(2) What is peace of the moment (*tad-aṅga,santi*)? This is the most profound peace an unawakened mind can ever experience. It is an inner peace that is the fruit of dhyanic meditation or a profound plunge into the moment. In meditation, such peace becomes progressively more profound as we refine our practice, that is, gradually abandon the dhyana-factors of the 8 attainments (*attha,samāpatti*),²⁵ thus:

The attainments

1st dhyana

2nd dhyana

3rd dhyana

4th dhyana

The base of nothingness

The base of boundless space

The base of boundless consciousness

The base of neither-perception-
nor-non-perception

Dhyana-factors abandoned²⁶

- the mental hindrances²⁷

- initial application and sustained application²⁸

- joy or zest (*pīti*)²⁹

- pain and pleasure³⁰

- perceptions of space, of form, of impingement, of diversity³¹

- perception of the base of nothingness

- perception of the base of boundless space

- the perception of the base of boundless conscious

²³ For a sutta fully applying the bestial imagery of creeping, see **Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya S** (A 10.205), SD 39.7.

²⁴ D 1/1-46 (D 25).

²⁵ For details on the 8 attainments, see **(Anupubba) Vihāra S 1** (A 9.32), SD 95.1; SD 8.4 (12.3).

²⁶ For overview, see SD 8.4 (5.5), Fig 5.5. On dhyana-factors (*jhān’āṅga*), see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5): see separately under each dhyana.

²⁷ The mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) are sensual desire, ill will, restlessness and guilt, sloth and torpor, and doubt. See **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1; **(Nīvaraṇa) Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12.

²⁸ *Vitakka,vicāra*, see SD 8.4 (6.1+6.2).

²⁹ On “joy” or “zest” (*pīti*), see SD 8.4 (6.3).

³⁰ Physical pain and pleasure are already transcended with the overcoming of the 5 hindrances. Here, mental pain and pleasure (sorrow and joy) are meant: see SD 8.4 (5.4.2).

³¹ This and the foll three refer to the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*): see **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1) SD 24.11 (5).

These progressive states of meditative peace arise from our ability to fully stay in the moment and savour its peace. We can call this a “momentary peace,” but since it is longer lasting than conventional peace, we can invent a new term for it: **momental peace**, the blissful inner peace of focused meditation, a profound and blissful peace when we truly and fully plunge into the moment of reality.

(3) What is eternal peace (*accanta,santi*)³²? This is the peace that is *nirvana*. It is “eternal” (*accanta*) in the sense of “having nothing to do with time” (*akālika*), time-free.³³ It is the ultimate peace in the sense of the stilling of all volitional activities (no more present karmic actions and their results); the abandoning of all acquisitions;³⁴ the destruction of craving; dispassion; cessation; nirvana.³⁵ In short, it is the non-conditioned peace that is nirvana.³⁶

2.5.2.4 Hence, we should “**train (ourself) hard for peace,**” for the attaining of nirvana. Why? “**Let not the King of Death, knowing you | to be heedless, delude you to follow his will.**” [Sn 332bcd]. Whenever we think, speak or act with *greed, hate or delusion*, we are under Māra’s power: we act on his behalf. We are doing Māra’s bidding. Then, we lose all our self-control—we have handed our remote to Māra.

2.5.3 VERSE 3 (Sn 333)

2.5.3.1 We must at once work to free ourself from Māra’s influence. Rather than fall under his control, we should “**cross over this attachment,**” abandon this clinging to existence, this craving for the enjoyment of life as we see—or sense—it with our worldly senses. This existence is diffuse, diverse, extensive: it spreads us out thinly, as it were, over a wide and variant crowdedness, to which are drawn and “**stuck to which, by which gods and humans, remain wanting**” [Sn 333bc]. We run after forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts: we are dependent on them, stuck to them. We end up being nothing but “them”—these senses, sense-objects, and so on.³⁷

2.5.3.2 “**Let not the moment elude you!**” [Sn 333d]. Do not miss this chance for living the life of a recluse, for being a true practitioner. “**When the moment is gone**” [Sn 333e]—when the opportunity misses us, or when we miss the opportunity—then, it is said of us: “**they sorrow, | finding themselves in hell!**” [Sn 333f].

This “hell” or state of loss (*apāya*) is when our mind falls *below the human state*, and we conduct ourselves *here and now* like ever-hungry addictive pretas (*peta*), or predictable habitual animals (*tiracchāna*), or violently exploitative titans (*asura*), or the self-harming destructive hell-beings (*niraya*).³⁸ These states are real enough—we read about them almost everyday in our newspapers, and see them in our newscasts and social media.

These are states totally devoid of any true pleasure or real joy, where we sorrow and regret, then we lament: “We’ve failed to do good!” As such, the Buddha exhorts us:

³² *Accanta* (Skt *atyanta* = *ati-anta*, “beyond ends”), “(temporal) absolute, perpetual, uninterrupted, always” =

³³ On nirvana as *akālika*, see SD 15.9 (2.3).

³⁴ “Acquisitions” (*upadhi*), the fuel of life, what we see as the meaning and purpose of our worldly life. It is the objects of the “ignoble quest” (*anariya pariyesanā*): **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,5-11), SD 1.11.

³⁵ See **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4.

³⁶ On nirvana as “non-conditioned” (*asaṅkhata*), see SD 50.1 (3.3.2).

³⁷ See **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

³⁸ They are the 4 states of deprivation (*catu apāya*) (KhpA 189). On these 4 subhuman states, see SD 2.22 (1.7).

Bhikshus,³⁹ whatever a teacher should do out of compassion for the good of disciples, for the sake of their welfare, this has been done to you by me.

These, bhikshus, are the foot of trees; these are empty abodes. Meditate,⁴⁰ bhikshus! Be not heedless! Regret not later!

This is our instruction to you.”⁴¹

(S 35.146/4:132 f), SD 4.12

2.5.4 VERSE 4 (Sn 334)

2.5.4.1 Having inspired and motivated the monks (and us) to practise Dharma—to live the moral life and cultivate the mind—the Buddha then utters the last verse (**Sn 334**), beginning with “**Negligence is dust (this is ever so)!**” [Sn 334a]. In simple terms, negligence is a lack of mindfulness (*asati*). Negligence is dust (*raja*) because it defiles the mind with *ignorance*, and blinds the heart with *craving*—just as when dust gets into our eyes, we feel uncomfortable and are unable to see very well, if at all.

2.5.4.2 Furthermore, **dust** tends to attract more dust, so that it collects and piles up, and over time, we have heaps of rubbish! What does this mean? Some of us may think, “We are still young. We’ll learn and understand Dharma later.” Even in youth, negligence is *dust*, as already explained [2.5.4.1]; and the dust builds up into layers in middle age, and in old age, we have piles of rubbish!⁴² Hence, the Buddha says: “**Negligence is pursued by dust**” [Sn 334c].

2.5.4.3 Most people would often “sow their wild oats” when young or even when not so young, scoffing at spiritual practice. However, when some tragic event occurs, they have to taste the bitter fruits. Then, they turn to religion. If they meet some wise and compassionate teacher, they happily walk the path as did the early saints. The sad reality is that because they understand so little or nothing about the reality of religion, they tend to seek the kind of teacher who fits their ignorance and craving—they find a guru who is, as it were, in their own image. Then, they are disappointed all over again, or worse.

The point is clear: Never place the teacher above the Dharma. Whether we seek the Dharma when we are young, middle-aged or elderly, we should **always place the teaching (the Dharma) above the teacher**. This is our best assurance even when the teacher errs (they often do, whether we notice it or not). We must clear away the dust (*rajo’haranam*),⁴³ or the dust will pile up into heaps of rubbish! Then, our life is a dump.

Given the opportunity, we should learn and practise the Dharma in the prime of life, so that we mature with a growing understanding of it, we also see the true nature of religion and views. Then, we are

³⁹ The vocative “bhikshus” (*bhikkhave*; sg *bhikkhu*) addresses all attending (anyone who can read this): SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1); or any meditators: **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) n, SD 13.3.

⁴⁰ “Meditate!” *jhāyatha*, lit “cultivate *jhāna*” (M 1:45, 118; S 4:133, 4:359, 361, 362, 368, 373; A 3:87, 89, 4:139, 392). Syn *bhāvētha* (2nd pl), “cultivate!” See **Buddha Discovers Dhyana**, SD 33.1b (3.3.2).

⁴¹ This is stock: **Sallekha S** (M 8,18/1:46), SD 51.8; **Dvedhā, vitakka S** (M 19,27/1:118), SD 61.1; **Āneñja, sappāya S** (M 106,15/2:266 f), SD 85.13; **Indriya, bhāvanā S** (M 152,18/3:302), SD 17.13; (**Nava Purāṇa**) **Kamma S** (S 35.146/-4:133), SD 4.12; **Kāya S** (S 43.1/4:359), SD 12.21(1); & all suttas in the same **Asāṅkhata Saṃyutta** (S 43.2-44/4:360-373); **Bhikkhuṇ’upassaya S** (S 47.10/5:157), SD 24.2; **Dhamma, vihāri S 1** (A 5.73/3:87), SD 44.4; **Dhamma, vihāri S 2** (A 5.74/3:89), SD 44.5; **Araka S** (A 7.70,4/4:139), SD 16.17; cf **Mahā Palobhana J** (J 507). The sentence “regret not later” (*mā pacchā vippaṭisārino ahuvattha*), in the second para, also occurs at **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.19+20/2:147, 16,6.5/2:155 ×3, the Buddha’s last words) = **Kusinārā S** (A 4.76/2:79 f); **Devatā S** (A 9.19/4:392), SD 57.14; cf **Mahā Palobhana J** (J 507). For comy, see MA 1:195 f; SA 3:111 f, 266 f.

⁴² On the difficulties of going forth or practising Dharma in old age, see **Dullabbha Vuḍḍha, pabbajita S 1+2** (A 5.59 + 5.60), SD 51.15(1.2a+1.2b).

⁴³ See **Vuṭṭha Vass’āvāsa S** (A 9.11,4.5/4:376), SD 28.2a.

Let one not pursue [not dwell on] the past, for what is past has passed away,	nor hold fond hope for the future. and the future has not yet come.
The present state as it arises, immovable, unshakable,	with insight see each of them; having known that, let one be sure of it,
Work at the task this very day! For, there is no bargaining whatsoever	Who knows, death would come tomorrow? with death's great horde.
One who dwells thus ardently, he is <i>bhaddeka,ratta</i> [who delights in says the peaceful sage.	relentlessly, day and night— the auspicious oneness (of mind)],

(M 131,3+10-13), SD 8.9; cf Dh 348

2.5.4.7 The Uṭṭhāna Sutta culminates with an allusion to the attaining of **arhathood**, the final end of the path that both the Buddha and the arhats have reached. The Buddha's awakening and the arhats' awakening are the exact same one—freedom is freedom to anyone who is free, without any difference. Historically, the Buddha comes first, discovers and declares the path of awakening, which the disciples follow.⁵¹

At the end of the Uṭṭhāna Sutta, the 500 monks feel a sense of spiritual urgency (*saṃvega*) and practise just as the Buddha has taught them. They all cultivate insight and, in due course, become arhats.

3 Related suttas

3.1 SUTTAS RELATED TO SLEEP

3.1.1 Negative aspects of sleep

3.1.1.1 The Appaṃ Supati Sutta (A 5.137) astutely observes these 5 kinds of people who keep awake at night, sleeping very little, that is, (1) a woman who is after a man, (2) a man who is after a woman, (2) a thief intent on stealing, (4) a king engaged in royal duties, and (5) a monk intent on cutting off the bonds. There is a bit of irony here: we expect that “not sleeping” is a bad thing, as clearly is the case for the first four kinds of people. But the 5th and last person is a meditator who does not sleep, or sleeps just enough, since he is working for awakening here and now. (A 5.137/3:156), SD 103.11.

3.1.1.2 The Muṭṭha,sati Sutta (A 5.210) warns us of the 5 dangers of falling asleep unmindfully and without clear comprehension:

(1) one has troubled sleep;	<i>dukkhaṃ supati</i>	
(2) one has trouble rising;	<i>dukkhaṃ paṭibujjhati</i>	
(3) one has bad dreams;	<i>pāpakaṃ supinaṃ passati</i>	
(4) the deities do not protect one	<i>evata na rakkhati</i>	
(5) one (a male) emits semen.	<i>asuci muccati</i>	(A 5.210/3:251), SD 103.12 ⁵²

The significance of such advice may be understood as follows:

- (1) We do not have good or sufficient rest, and our health is affected.
- (2) We are not able to rise early, well rested, for our practice or chores. We lose time.

⁵¹ See **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58), SD 49.10.

⁵² Also at V 1:295,14-24.

- (3) Our bad dreams reflect a troubled mind, especially just before falling asleep.
- (4) This is probably a culture-based way of saying that we, the sleeper, may be showing symptoms of personal trouble or illness.
- (5) The wet dream probably means that we have erotic dreams or the result of body chemistry, especially in a mature male.⁵³

3.1.1.3 The Soppa Sutta (A 6.17) records how one evening, in Jeta,vana, the Buddha and some great arhats and Ānanda, sit together throughout the night (that is, until dawn). Then, when the Buddha rises and leaves for his own quarters (for his solitary meditation), so do other great elders.

However, the novice monks, those newly ordained, continued sleeping in the assembly-hall until sunrise. The Buddha, with his divine eye, notices this. He goes to the assembly-hall and admonishes the novice monks, thus:

A head-anointed kshatriya rajah (*rājā lhattiyo muddhā,vasitto*), beloved of his people, is diligent and sleeps little; so, too, a royal officer (*ratthiko*), a family heir (*pettanika*), a general (*senāpatika*), a village headman (*gāmaṇī*), or a guild-master (*pūga,gāmaṇika*). The idea here is that these people in responsible positions are diligent in the tasks so that they benefit their charge and are loved and respected in return (A 6.17/3:298-301), SD 92.9.

3.1.2 When sleep is better

3.1.2.1 The Āditta,pariyāya Sutta 2 (S 35.235)⁵⁴ is a discourse, like the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta 1 (S 35.28), that applies the imagery of fire (*āditta,pariyāya*) to admonish us not to get caught up with being sensually attached to any of our sense-experiences. The Buddha tells us that it is better to burn up the physical sense-faculties than to be enticed into being drawn and attached to them as sense-objects. However, in the 6th sense-faculty—the mind—the Buddha declares that it is better to “sleep” than to be sensually attached to it.

3.1.2.2 Here is a summary of **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta 2** (S 35.194):

It is better that the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, and the body, be blotted out (*sampalimaṭṭham*) by a hot glowing blazing iron peg (*ayo,salākā*) or sword (*tiṇha*) than for us to grasp any of their signs or features of the respective sense-objects.⁵⁵ In the case of the mind, it is better to sleep than for us to grasp any sign or feature of a mind-object. (Such a grasping is always rooted in lust, ill will or ignorance, which will bear unwholesome fruits.)

For, if consciousness were to remain clinging to the gratification in the sign or feature, and we were to die at that moment, then, it is possible that we will go to one of two destinies: hell or the animal womb.

“**Sleep** (*sutta*) is better, bhikshus. For, bhikshus, sleep is barren to life itself. It is fruitless to life. It dulls life, I say. Indeed, to think such thoughts would make one fall under the power of such thoughts, so that one would even break up the sangha!”⁵⁶

⁵³ This is merely a statement of fact, and advice for “good sleep.” A wet dream is not an offence even for a monastic, but masturbation is, as stated in **Saṅgh’ādi,sesa 1** (V 3:110).

⁵⁴ **Āditta,pariyāya S 1** (S 35.28), SD 1.3, is the famous 3rd discourse of the Buddha that brought arhathood to the fire-worshipping Kassapa brothers (Mv 1.2.1 @ V 1:34 f; J 1:82, 4:180).

⁵⁵ *Na tv-eva (cakku,viññeyesu rūpesu ... sota,viññeyyesu saddesu ... ghāna,viññeyesu gandhesu ...)*

⁵⁶ *Varaṃ bhikkhāve suttarā. Suttarā kho panāham bhikkhave vañjham jīvitānaṃ vadāmi, aphalaṃ jīvitānaṃ vadāmi, momūhaṃ jīvitānaṃ vadāmi, na tv-eva tathā,rūpe vitakke vitakkeyya yathā,rūpānaṃ vitakkānaṃ vasarā,-gato saṅgham bhindeyya.* The import is that causing a schism in the sangha is a heinous karma with immediate effect

Understanding thus, we should rather only attend to this reality: that the sense-faculty (eg, the eye) is impermanent; the sense-object (eg, a visual object) is impermanent; the sense-contact is impermanent; the feeling arising with that contact—pleasant, painful or neutral—is impermanent.⁵⁷ Properly done, revulsion arises, then dispassion; with that, the mind is freed, and the knowledge, “It is free!” Our work is done; there is no rebirth or karma—this is awakening and arhathood.⁵⁸

3.1.3 The Buddha sleeps well

3.1.3.1 The (Buddho’ti) Sudatta Sutta (S 10.8) recounts Anātha,piṇḍika’s first meeting with the Buddha in the Cool Grove (*sīta,vana*), outside Rāja,gaha. Upon hearing, “The Buddha, it is said, has arisen in the world!” (*buddho kira loke uppanno’ti*), Anātha,piṇḍika wants to meet the Buddha at once. However, as it is late, he feels it is not the right time to do so, and instead to do it early the next morning.

That night, however, Anātha,piṇḍika is so excited about the meeting that he is unable to sleep well. He gets up three times thinking it is morning. Before dawn, despite being terrified as he walks through the charnel ground—a short cut from the city to Sīta,vana—Anātha,piṇḍika braves on. As he approaches Sīta,vana, the Buddha is walking back and forth for his morning exercise.

The Buddha sees Anātha,piṇḍika and declares, “Come, Sudatta!” Sudatta is Anātha,piṇḍika’s personal name, known only to him. He is clearly impressed and elated. He at once bowed at the Buddha’s feet and says, “I hope, bhante, that the Blessed One slept well!”⁵⁹

The Buddha then replies:⁶⁰

- | | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| S 840 | The brahmin, fully quenched,
who clings not to sensual pleasures, | ever, indeed, sleeps happily,
cool, life-fuel gone. |
| S 841 | Cut off are all dependence,
the peaceful sleeps happily, | the heart’s care removed,
whose mind has won peace. |

(S 10.8/1:212), SD 87.10

3.1.3.2 The (Hatthaka) Āḷavaka Sutta (A 3.34) records a meeting between Hatthaka Āḷavaka, prince of Āḷavī. The Buddha is sitting on some leaves beside a cattle-track in a simsapa forest on a cold wintry day. Āḷavaka asks the Buddha the same question as the one that Anātha,piṇḍika asks the Buddha on their first meeting: ““I hope, bhante, the Blessed One slept well.”

Hatthaka adds that the weather is cold, and the Buddha is sleeping in the open, thinly robed—how can he have slept well! The Buddha then explains to Hatthaka that even though one may live in a very comfortable and luxurious palace, but the heart burns with lust, with hate, with delusion—how could such a person ever sleep happily!

As for the Buddha he has abandoned all the 3 unwholesome roots. Hence, he sleeps happily. At the end of the Sutta, the Buddha utters the same verses that he says to Anātha,piṇḍika in **S 10.8** [3.1.3.1], thus:⁶¹

(*ānantarika kamma*) that arises only from the mind, not any of the physical senses. Hence, sleep seems to be a much safer alternative.

⁵⁷ S 35.194/4:168-171 [S:Jackson 2014, 4:168-171] (SD 72.16); Vism 1.100/36.

⁵⁸ This last para is a summary of *viveka,nissita* formula: see **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4.

⁵⁹ *Kacci bhante bhagavā sukhaṃ asayitthāti*. The verb *asayittha*, “he slept” is the aor 3rd sg of *seti* or *sayati*, “he sleeps, he lies (down)”; however, it obliquely means “to live, to dwell, to behave.” For example *dhama,cārī sukhaṃ seti*, “The Dharmafarer dwells happily” (Dh 169). On the Buddha’s dhyana as his “great high heavenly couch,” see **Venāga,pura S** (A 3.63,5), SD 21.1.

⁶⁰ The Buddha utters these same 2 verses to Hatthaka Āḷavaka: (**Hatthaka**) **Āḷavaka S** (A 3.34,13), SD 4.8.

<i>Sabbadā ve sukhaṃ seti brāhmaṇo parinibbuto yo na lippati kāmesu sīti, bhūto nirūpadhi</i>	The brahmin fully quenched ever indeed sleeps happily, who clings not to sensual pleasures, cool, life-fuel gone. ⁶²	<i>b</i> <i>a</i>
<i>Sabba āsattiyā chetvā vineyya hadaye daraṃ upasanto sukhaṃ seti santiṃ papuyya cetaso'ti</i>	Cut off are all dependence, the heart's care removed, the peaceful sleeps happily, whose mind has won peace.	(A 3.34/1:136-138), SD 4.8

— — —

Uṭṭhāna Sutta

The Rousing Discourse

Sn 2.10

For [commentaries](#) on the verses, see (2.5).

1 <i>Uṭṭhahatha nisīdatha</i> ⁶³ <i>ko attho supitena</i> ⁶⁴ <i>vo</i> [F59] <i>āturānaṃ hi kā niddā</i> <i>salla, vidhāna</i> ⁶⁵ <i>ruppataṃ</i> ⁶⁶ [58] 331	Rise up! Sit up! What good to you is sleeping? What sleep is there for the afflicted, pierced by a dart, injured?	[2.5.1]
2 <i>Uṭṭhahatha nisīdatha</i> <i>daḷhaṃ sikkhatha santiyā</i> <i>mā vo pamatte viññāya</i> <i>maccu, rājā</i> ⁶⁷ <i>amohayittha</i> ⁶⁸ <i>vasānuge</i> 332	Rise up! Sit up! Train yourself hard for peace. Let not the King of Death, knowing you to be heedless, delude you to follow his will!	[2.5.2] <i>d</i> <i>c</i>
3 <i>Yāya devā manussā ca</i> <i>sitā</i> ⁶⁹ <i>tiṭṭhanti atthikā</i> <i>tarath'etaṃ visattikaṃ</i> ⁷⁰	Cross over this attachment, stuck to which, gods and humans remain wanting.	[2.5.3] <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>b</i>

⁶¹ The Buddha utters these same 2 verses to Anātha, piṇḍika at their first meeting: (**Buddho'ti**) **Sudatta S** (S 10.8), SD 87.10; SD 51.24 (3.1.3.1). Cf **Cūla Dukkha-k, khandha S** (M 14,21 f/1:94), SD 4.7.

⁶² "Life-fuel is gone," *nirūpadhi*.

⁶³ See Tha:N 195 n441.

⁶⁴ *Supita* is past part of *supati*, "to sleep," used as an action n. See Tha:N 129 n36; Thī:N 115 n261; Dh:N 89 n104; H Hendricksen, *Syntax of the Finite Verb-forms of Pāli*, Copenhagen, 1944:152 f.

⁶⁵ *Vidhāna*, "pierced," poetic ger of *vijjhati*, "to pierce; to shoot an arrow" (J 6:77). Its loss of terminal *-m* is metri causa (mc), ie, to give it a short syllable to keep the rhythm.

⁶⁶ *Ruppataṃ* (= *ruppato*, S 9.2/1:198,8) (VRUP, to destroy; see PED: *ruppati* & *lumpati*) is a case of *l/r* alternation: see *kira* (Sn 357); *ruppa(n)ti* (Sn 767, 1121; *rajassira* (Sn 980). Cf *ruppati* (Sn 767d); *ruppanti* (Sn 1121b).

⁶⁷ Fausboll (Fsb) excludes *maccurājā* metri causa, but this still leaves a 9-syllable line (*pāda*). Ee prefers to exclude the closing *-ttha vasānuge* (Sn:Ee 58 n3). H Smith takes this as a case of "Śloka rhythm continued" (SnA:H 642,41), where the ref should read (Sn) 332d.

⁶⁸ Be:Phayre *amohittha*; Ce *amosayittha*; Be Ee Se *amohayittha*.

⁶⁹ *Sitā* (pl), past part of *sayati* ("to lean on; be supported by"; only in *sita* here, and prep cpd *nissayati*, "to lean on, rely on, pursue, Sn 798): (1) (lit) stuck in or to: *hadaya~salla* (Sn 938); Nc 412; (2) (fig) reclining, resting, depending

<p><i>khaṇo ve</i>⁷¹ <i>mā upaccagā</i>⁷² <i>khaṇ'ātītā hi socanti nirayamhi samappitā</i> 333</p>	<p>Let not the moment elude you! When the moment is gone, they sorrow, finding themselves in hell!</p>	
<p>4 <i>Pamādo rajo (sabbadā)</i>⁷³ <i>Pamādā'nupatito rajo</i> <i>appamādena vijjāya</i> <i>abbahe</i>⁷⁴ <i>sallam attano'ti</i>⁷⁵ 334</p>	<p>Negligence is dust (this is ever so)! Negligence is pursued by dust. By vigilance and knowledge one should remove one's dart.</p>	<p>[2.5.4]</p>

— evaṃ —

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on, attached (to), clinging (to) (D 1:45, 76, 2:255; M 1:264; J 5:453; Sn 229, 333, 791, 944, 1044). Opp *asita*, “not clinging.” See CPD: ³a-sita.

⁷⁰ On *visattikaṃ*, Comy explains: **Visattika** is the craving for the enjoyment of existence, clinging (*visaṭa*) to its various realms, in their extensive and extended states (*nāna-p,pakāresu visayesu visaṭa,vitthiṇṇa,visālattā visattikaṃ bhava,bhoga,taṇhaṃ*, SnA 338 f). Cf comy on **Sn 768**, which refers to “it is craving that is the attachment to the world, the state of being stuck, wandering in all the world” (*sabbaṃ lokam visarivā thitattā loke visatti(kā) saṅkhātā taṇhaṃ*, SnA 513,6-7); comy on **Sn 857b**: “great craving is regarded as attachment by way of this clinging to existence and so on” (*imaṃ visaṭ'ādi,bhāvena visattikā,saṅkhātā mahā,taṇhaṃ*, SnA 550,9).

⁷¹ Ee *ve*; Be Ce Se *vo* (from Skt *vas*), see Lüders, *Beobachtungen* §22; Sn:Ee 58 n6. Here and in parallel passages *ve* seems to mean *vah*, see Senart's nn on Dh 315, 337 (MS Kharoṣṭhī, 1898:11+18), and Dh:Fsb 1855:398. For such Easternisms, see Sn:N 151 n7.

⁷² This is stock: A 8.29/4:228,1* = Dh 315 = Sn 333 = Tha 403 = 653 = B 2.42/11; Dh:Patna 234 (13.19) *khaṇo vo mā upaccagū*; Uv 5.17, *kṣano vo mā hy upatyagāt*.

⁷³ Be:Ka Se *pamādā*, Be Be:M(andalay) Ce *pamādo* (= Tha 404, where see Tha:N 190 n404). The missing word is likely to be *pamadā*, “since its loss before *pamādānupatito* would be explicable by haplography” (Tha:N 190 n404). But *pamādo rajo pamādā* is difficult. It may be rendered as “Negligence is the dust from negligence,” but it's a difficult sentence. Comy explains “dust” (*raja*) as “absentmindedness or lack of mindfulness” (*sati,vippavāso*, SnA 339). Metrically, this line is defective, missing 3 syllables at the end (prob due to haplography, the omission of a repeated word). It may be corrected either with an additional *pamādā* (Be; foll SnA 339,12) or with *sabbadā*, foll SnA 339,28.

⁷⁴ Be:M *abbhuye*; Be Ce Ee *abbahe*; Se *abbūlhe*. = 592d (see Sn:N 231 n334 & 285 n592). Opt of (√BARH): *abbahati* (Tha 162), *abbuhati*, *abbūhati*, “to pull out, draw out.” Comy glosses *abbahe* by *uddhare*, “(to) pull out” (SnA 339,31 = 461,22).

⁷⁵ Recurs at Sn 592d.