

“O monks, wandering ascetics of other sects might question you thus: ‘Friends, there are these three qualities: lust, hatred and delusion. Now, friends, what is the distinction between these three qualities, what is their disparity and their difference?’ If questioned thus, monks, how would you answer those wandering ascetics of other sects?”

“For us, Lord, the teachings are rooted in the Blessed One and have the Blessed One as guide and resort. It would be good, Lord, if the Blessed One himself would clarify the meaning of this statement. Having listened to the Blessed One, the monks will keep it in mind.”

“Listen then, monks, pay careful attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, Lord,” the monks replied. The Blessed One said this:

“If those wandering ascetics of other sects should ask you about the distinction, disparity and difference between these three qualities, you should answer them thus: ‘Lust is less blamable but hard to remove, Hatred is more blamable but easier to remove. Delusion is very blamable and hard to remove.’

“If they ask: ‘Now, friends, what is the cause and reason for the arising of unarisen lust, and for the increase and strengthening of arisen lust?’ you should reply: ‘A beautiful object: for one who attends improperly to a beautiful object, unarisen lust will arise and arisen lust will increase and become strong.’

“If they ask: ‘And what, friends, is the cause and reason for the arising of unarisen hatred, and for the increase and strengthening of arisen hatred?’ you should reply: ‘A repulsive object: for one who attends improperly to a repulsive object, unarisen hatred will arise and arisen hatred will increase and become strong.’

“If they ask: ‘And what, friends, is the cause and reason for the arising of unarisen delusion, and for the increase and strengthening of arisen delusion?’ you should reply: ‘Improper attention: for one who attends improperly to things, unarisen delusion will arise and arisen delusion will increase and become strong.’

“If they ask: ‘But what, friends, is the cause and reason for the non-arising of unarisen lust, and for the abandoning of arisen lust?’ you should reply: ‘A foul object: for one who attends properly to a foul object, unarisen lust will not arise and arisen lust will be abandoned.’

“If they ask: ‘And what, friends, is the cause and reason for the non-arising of unarisen hatred, and for the abandoning of arisen hatred?’ you should reply: ‘The liberation of the mind by loving-kindness: for one who attends properly to the liberation of the mind by loving-kindness, unarisen hatred will not arise and arisen hatred will be abandoned.’

“If they ask: ‘And what, friends, is the cause and reason for the non-arising of unarisen delusion, and for the abandoning of arisen delusion?’ you should reply: ‘Proper attention: for one who attends properly to things, unarisen delusion will not arise and arisen delusion will be abandoned.’”

Numerical Discourses of the Buddha

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Selected and translated from the Pāli by Nyanaponika Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi



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