4

(A) The three great evils

1 Bhikshus, if three things were not found in the world, the Tathāgata, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, would not appear in the world, nor would the Dharma-Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata shine in the world.

   What are the three?

2 (1) They are birth, decay [old age] and death.

   If these three things were not found in the world, the Tathāgata would not have appeared in the world, nor would the Dharma-Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata shine in the world.

   But because these three things are found in the world, therefore, the Tathagata, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, appears in the world and the Dharma-Vinaya, proclaimed by the Tathagata, shine in the world.

The three unwholesome roots
3 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up birth, decay and death. What are the three?
4 (2) They are **greed, hate** and **delusion**. Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would not be able to give up birth, decay and death.

**The three fetters**

5 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up greed, hate and delusion.

What are the three?

6 (3) They are **personality view, spiritual doubt** and **attachment to rituals and vows**.¹

Without giving up these three things,² bhikshus, one would not be able to give up greed, hate and delusion. [145]²

**The three wrong mindings**

7 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.

What are the three?

8 (4) They are **unwise attention**,³ **following the wrong way**,⁴ and **mental sluggishness**.⁵

Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would not be able to give up personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.

**The three wrong attentions**

9 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.

What are the three?

10 (5) They are **unmindfulness**,⁶ **lack of full awareness**,⁷ and **a distracted mind**.⁸

Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way and mental sluggishness.

¹ For def, see Vbh 915/364.
² These are the first three mental fetters, overcoming which makes one a streamwinner. The **10 fetters** (dasa saṃyojana) are: (1) self-identity view (sakkāya,diṭṭhi), (2) spiritual doubt (vicicikcchā), (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 formlessness 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 (paṭigha) is replaced by ill will (vyāpāda). The first 5 are the lower fetters (orabhāgīya), and the rest, the higher fetters (uddhambhāgīya). On sakkāya as the 5 aggregates, see Cūla Vedalla S (M 44). Spiritual doubt (vicicikcchā) is the uncertainty over what is wholesome and unwholesome, whether a deed should be done or not, etc. It is the lack of a desire to heal oneself, and taking various sides due to one’s being indecisive and unwise attention (Vism 14.177/471), in short, not making an attempt to clearly think things out for oneself. Clinging to rituals and vows (sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa) is holding on to the view that merely keeping to rituals and vows can bring one purification.
³ “Unwise attention,” ayontiso manasikāra, that is, to regard what is impermanent as being permanent, what is painful as being pleasurable, what is not self as self, what is foul as beautiful (Vbh 936/373; MA 1:64).
⁴ “Following the wrong way,” kammadha severa, that is, not keeping to the noble eightfold path (Vbh 936/373).
⁵ “Mental sluggishness,” cetaso linattam, that is, sloth and torpor (A 1:3; S 5:64=103; Vbh 345; Nm 412, 492).
⁶ “Unmindfulness,” muttha, sacca, i.e. the opp of sati or paṭissati. Vism 4.172/163 explains that full awareness (sampajañña) has the characteristic of non-confusion; its function is investigation, manifested as scrutiny. Mindfulness (sati) has the characteristic of remembering. Its function is not forgetting, manifested as guarding. Sampājāno is also tr as “fully aware,” “fully understanding,” “clearly comprehending”; see M:NB 2001 n147.
⁷ “Lack of full awareness,” asampajañña, i.e. opp of sampājañña, full awareness. See Pug 2.18/25 & prev n.
The three wrong attitudes

11 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.

   What are the three?

12 (6) They are lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.

   Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.

The three wrong conducts

13 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.

   What are the three?

14 (7) They are restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.

   Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.

The three lacks

15 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.

   What are the three?

16 (8) They are lack of faith, unfriendliness, and laziness.

   Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.

The three negative emotions

17 Without giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness, and laziness.

   What are the three?

18 (9) They are disrespect, intractability, and evil friendship.
Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.

The three unguarded acts

19 Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.

What are the three?

20 (10) They are lack of moral shame, lack of moral fear, and heedlessness.

Without giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be unable to give up disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.

(B) Why we are unable to destroy the three great evils

21 There is this recluse, bhikshus, who lacks moral shame, lacks moral fear and is heedless.

Being heedless, he is unable to give up lack of moral shame, lacks moral fear and is heedless.

As an evil friend, he is unable to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.

Being lazy, he is unable to give up respectlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.

Being immoral, he is unable to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.

Having a fault-finding mind, he is unable to give up unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.

Having a distracted mind, he is unable to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.

Having mental sluggishness, he is unable to give up personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.

Having spiritual doubt, he is unable to give up greed, hate and delusion.

And without giving up greed, hate and delusion, he is unable to give up birth, decay and death.

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21 “Lack of moral shame,” *ahirika*, that is, opp of moral shame, *hiri* (Skt *ḥṛṛ*?) is a sense of disgust with evil. The Abhidhamma defines moral shame as “to be ashamed of what one ought to be ashamed of, to be ashamed of performing evil and unwholesome deeds” (*yam hiriyaṭi hiriyaṭabhaṇa hiriyaṭi pāpakāṇāṁ akusalāṁ dhammānāṁ sam-āpattiyā, ayam vuccati hiri*), Pug 24; cf Vism 14.142/464; J 1:129 f; DhsA 124); cf Dhs:R 18 f. It is one of the 7 noble treasures (*ariyā, dhana, DA 2:34; ThaA 240; VaA 113*), ie treasures of generosity (*cāga, dhana, D 3:163, 251; A 4:5; VaA 113; cf A 3:53*): faith, moral conduct, moral shame, moral fear, learning, generosity, wisdom. Cf Sn 77, 462 (= D 1:168), 719. Moral shame is often paired with moral fear (*ottappa*) (eg M 1:271; S 2:220; A 2:78; It 34; Tikap 61; J 1:127; Vism 221; DhsA 3:73), and, as the foundation for morality, called “the world-protectors” (*loka,-pālā, A 1:51*), since they are the preconditions for a functional society. The term *ottappa* is derived from *apa + √TRAP* (to be abashed) [Skt *āpaprāpya > apatrapā* (Trenchner)]. Andersen suggests that this etym must be preferred to that of Childers: *ātappýa > utāpā, ut + √TAP* (heat) (PG 62). Edgerton (BHSD) has *apatrāpya* and the cpd *hrṛr-apatrāpya* (*P hiri,ottappa*). According to *Visuddhi, magga*, the proximate cause for moral shame is self-respect, while for moral fear it is respect for others. Out of self-respect (*attāṇa garu katvā*), one, like the daughter of a good family, rejects evil-doing through moral shame. Out of respect for others (*parai garu katvā*), one, like a courtesan, rejects evil-doing through moral fear (Vism 14.142/464 f). The former is sometimes known as *self-regarding moral conduct* (motivated by the *shame* the deed entails), while the latter as *other-regarding moral conduct* (motivated by the healthy *fear* of karmic repercussion). As such these two actions are known as the two bright states that protect the world, if not for which “one would neither respect one’s mother, nor one’s mother’s sister, nor one’s brother’s wife, nor one’s teacher’s wife…” (A 1:51). [In his tr, Nānāmoli renders *hiri* as “conscience,” but apparently mistranslates *ottappati* as “is ashamed” and *ottappa* as “shame,” Vism:Ñ 524 f.] See *Hiri Ottappa S* or *Cariya S* (A 2.1.9/1:51) = SD 2.5c.

22 “Lack of moral fear,” *anotappī*, ie opp of *ottappa*, moral fear. See prec n.

23 “Heedlessness,” *pamādā*, that is, wrong conduct of the doors (body, speech and mind) and being habitually under the control of the 5 strands of sense-pleasures (Vbh 846/350), ie not working for one’s spiritual development.
(C) How to destroy the three great evils

22 (1) Bhikshus, by giving up three things, one is able to give up birth, decay and death.
What are the three?
23 (2) They are greed, hate and delusion. By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up birth, decay and death.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up greed, hate and delusion.
What are the three?
25 (3) They are personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up greed, hate and delusion.
By giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.
What are the three?
27 (4) They are unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.
What are the three?
29 (5) They are unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.
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By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.
What are the three?
31 (6) They are lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.
What are the three?
33 (7) They are restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.
By giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.
What are the three?
35 (8) They are lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.
By giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.
What are the three?
37 (9) They are disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.
By giving up three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.
What are the three?
39 (10) They are lack of moral shame, lack of moral fear, and heedlessness.
By giving up these three things, bhikshus, one would be able to give up disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.

40 There is this recluse, bhikshus, who has moral shame, has moral fear and is heedful. Being heedful, he is able to give up disrespect, intractability and evil friendship.

As a spiritual friend, he is able to give up lack of faith, unfriendliness and laziness.

Being assertive, he is able to give up restlessness, lack of restraint, and immorality.

Being morally virtuous, he is able to give up lack of desire to see the noble ones, lack of desire to listen to the noble Dharma, and a fault-finding mind.

Not having a fault-finding mind, he is able to give up unmindfulness, lack of full awareness, and a distracted mind.

Having an undistracted mind, he is able to give up unwise attention, following the wrong way, and mental sluggishness.

Being without mental sluggishness, he is able to give up personality view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.

Being free from spiritual doubt, he is able to give up greed, hate and delusion.

And having given up greed, hate and delusion, he is able to give up birth, decay and death.

— evam —

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24 “Assertive,” āraddha,viriya.