

How many times would you have been reborn in the cycle of rebirth so far? Some think that everything will come to an end after death. It is also not known that which succession of reincarnation your present birth is. Have you ever thought about this? Some aspire to wander their journey in the future cycles of rebirth as human beings. Is this possible? Could a person always inherit a human rebirth? Some fear Nibbana. They tremble at the thought of losing themselves.

How far beings have comprehended these facts concerning transmigration? Most people have misunderstood the concepts of rebirth and transmigratory existence. Therefore, they step into to further darkness.

So what is the true nature of this never ending transmigratory existence? Is it a pleasant existence as everyone thinks?

“O’ Monks, there are only a few, who possess wisdom; who are intelligent; who could discern pure teaching of the Thathagatha (The Buddha) from the wrongful teaching. There are plenty of beings who are not intelligent; who are foolish and talkative; who could not discern pure teaching from the wrongful teaching”

Rev. Sir, What is the true nature of the transmigratory existence of all beings? Many views have been expressed about this subject in the present society. How could this be sorted out in terms of the dhamma?

“O’ monks, there are only a few charming monasteries, forests, lands, and ponds in Jambudveepa - (Indian sub-continent). However, precipices,

Only a few will be reborn as human beings after departing from this world

slopes, defiles, thorny locations, inaccessible hills are found in large numbers. Similarly, there are only a few beings that are born on the earth. Those beings that are born in water exist in large numbers. So, Monks, you must understand that beings that are born among human beings are only a few. Many a number of beings are born outside the human realm.”

This is the Buddhist teaching applicable to all beings. Birth as a human being is a rare phenomenon.

If this is so, how about the stories on reincarnation? Are those stories not true?

On account of these stories, most people believe in permanent rebirth

as human beings. But, this is a myth.

There is one common fact in all of these stories about reincarnation. Those who reveal their previous births seem to have died untimely deaths. They have died prematurely due to some tragic circumstances. None of them have died natural deaths after reaching old age. This implies the possibility of reincarnation as a human being for a person who had the good fortune to be born and enjoy longevity as a human being, even though the being died prematurely due to tragic circumstances. The remaining life span of these beings gave rise to them to be reborn as human beings. Today, the stories of reincarnation are so popular that people hold an erroneous belief that the man is capable of being reborn as a human being undoubtedly.

Some argue that the world population is so high that rebirth as a human being cannot be considered a rare phenomenon.

It is true that the current population on the globe is high. When we take one household, for example, there would be around 5 or 6 persons living there. However, how many innumerable creatures such as ants, cockroaches, mosquitoes, lizards, mice, and wandering birds and butterflies are living in the same premises.

“O’ Monks, It is only a few who are destined to receive sublime food with exquisite taste. But O’ Monks, there are many who are deprived of tasty food and who strive very hard to obtain even tasteless food.” This is the teaching of the Gautama Buddha.

Another group argues that a rebirth as a human being is a rare phenomenon in terms of the dhamma. So, how does the world population grow so rapidly?

We assess fluctuations of the world population as population has been subjected to censuses.

However, no census is being carried out to assess the overall population of animals and other living creatures. Has anyone made calculations with regard to population changes in animals and other living creatures?

“O’ monks, it is only a few who will be reborn in the human realm after departing from this world. There will be an innumerable number of beings who will be reborn in the realms of animals and ghosts”

When a being is reborn in an animal realm, would it be possible for that being to come back to the human plane easily?

Not at all. This is the most

important point that most people do not realize perfectly. Once a being is born in one of the four woeful planes (*satara apaya*), this being is compelled to be reborn in one of these woeful planes continuously. Therefore, the awakened One pointed out the dreadful states of these four woeful planes wholly

Why some cannot comprehend dhamma, despite dhamma being exhorted repeatedly?

That is commonplace. Dhamma is meant only for beings with wisdom. Only a few out of the total human race become pleased with the dhamma.

“O’ Monks, there are only a few, who possess wisdom; who are intelligent; who could discern pure teaching of the Thathagatha (the Buddha) from the wrongful teaching. There are plenty of beings who are not intelligent; who are foolish and talkative; who could not discern pure teaching from the wrongful teaching”

“Similarly, there are only a few who are able to listen to the dhamma of the Thathagatha; who could remember the dhamma; who could contemplate the dhamma. There are innumerable numbers of beings who are not able to listen to the dhamma of the Thathagatha; who could not commit to memory; who could not contemplate.”

Most people are under the impression that everything will come to an end after death. That is an erroneous view. I know that the nominal Buddhists in our country are holding this erroneous view. They are challenging the knowledge of the Thathagatha. The Thathagatha possessed the higher powers, such as “remembrance of former births of beings” and the “knowledge of the vanishing and reappearing of beings” The Thathagatha was capable of identifying the former and future births of beings with these higher powers.

The Awakened One foresaw the perils of the continuous transmigratory existence of beings. The awakened One comprehended that a birth in the human plane is a rare phenomenon, and beings take birth in the four woeful planes most of the time.

The awakened One exhorted further expounded that beings take birth in animal planes most of the time on their journey through the cycle of Samsara and the stream of blood they shed is greater than the water in an ocean; the stream of tears they shed is greater than the water in an ocean. This knowledge made the Thathagatha sympathize with the beings.

The conception that everything will come to an end is a serious myth. Unfortunately, we come across mostly the people who are holding this erroneous conception. The Awakened One foresaw this circumstance as well.

“O’ monks, there are only a few who will comprehend the dhamma with appropriate meaning; who will conduct themselves in terms of the dhamma. There are innumerable numbers of beings who will not comprehend dhamma with appropriate meaning; who will not conduct themselves in terms of the dhamma”. This is the teaching of the Gautama Buddha.

By now, you should realize the perils of the endless existence in the cycle of life and death. Our sincere effort is to guide you towards the end where you will become one who comprehends dhamma with appropriate meaning and conducts yourself according to the principles of the dhamma.

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