

The Buddha Analyzes Four Types of Life

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King Prasenajit came to hear Buddha's teachings at the Jeta Grove. The Buddha told the King that your fortunes and misfortunes are entirely determined by your actions and behavior...

Four types of Lives

The Buddha elaborated that there are four types of life in this world.

The first is the one who enters darkness from darkness. In this case, a person is born into a condition of destitute poverty; he lacks all compassion, constantly violates social norms and falls into self-degradation. After death, a person who leads such a life will descend to hell.

The second type is the one who enters light from darkness. A person may have lived in poor conditions for a long time. But, if his heart is filled with love and his actions are guided by adherence to the right principles, he will soon be born into a path of compassion and then a world of light and wisdom.

The third type is one who enters darkness from light. A person is fortunate to have lived in luxury but does not treasure this blessing; instead, he abuses others with his power. When his blessings come to an end, he will fall into the Three Evil Paths.

The fourth type is the one who enters light from light. People who have this type of life are not only wealthy in terms of monetary fortune but also are spiritually rich – they have wisdom, a compassionate heart and a passion for helping others to benefit the community.

Practicing Buddhism is about leaving the darkness and aiming for the light. All behavior arises from the heart. When the heart strives to be compassionate, then light is before your eyes. When the heart is evil, you will fall into darkness.

The Master's teachings:

A human life only lasts a few decades. If you can be content, follow moral principles and still be able to help others, you are spiritually wealthy -- despite a lack of material goods. If you live in luxury but are able to transform this material wealth into the power of love to help people, your heart will be filled with light and happiness. What a beautiful life to lead!

Master Cheng Yen's Teachings, May 28, 1997

An Extract from the Daily Journal of Dharma Master Cheng Yen, Summer 1997