

Venerable Master Chin Kung: What determines us to be reborn in the human realm? How to gain good fortune? What are the consequences of being greedy, arrogant, angry and envious?

The Buddha told us that all beings are reincarnated in the six realms because of two types of karma. One is directing karma. The other filling karma. Directing karma directs us to be reborn in one of the six realms. There are countless karmic seeds in our alaya consciousness. These seeds (are buried) deep (in our alaya) and their force is huge.

The Buddha told us that (the karma resulted from) the upper level of practising the Ten Good Deeds directs a person to be reborn in the celestial realm (or heaven). If they have not entirely ceased their desires, they will surely be reborn in the desire (celestial) realm. If they practise meditative concentration and have truly attained a good level, even though they have not completely ceased their afflictions, so long as they are able to control their afflictions and the afflictions do not arise, they will be reborn in the form (celestial) realm. If their level of meditative concentration is even higher, they will be reborn in the formless (celestial) realm.

Underneath the celestial realm, there is the asura realm. (In fact,) asuras are found in the celestial realm, the human realm, the animal realm and the hungry ghost realm. The asura realm mentioned in the term 'Six Realms' specifically refers to asuras in the celestial realm. These beings also practise the upper level of the Ten Good Deeds. But how did they turn into asuras? It is because they have two afflictions, i.e., arrogance and a strong desire for competing. These two afflictions resulted them to be reborn in the asura realm.

These asuras enjoy the same amount of good fortune as what other beings in the desire (celestial) realm enjoy. But they are arrogant and can easily get angry. They have a strong desire for competing and killing. They enjoy heavenly good fortune but have no heavenly virtues. Heaven is kind and unconditionally loving. (To be reborn) in the upper four levels (of the desire realm), one needs to practise four types of infinite minds. From this, we can tell that celestial beings are virtuous. They practise the upper level of the Ten Good Deeds, and have a mind of unconditional love, a compassionate mind, a mind of being happy to see others doing good deeds, a mind of letting go of liking and anger. But asuras do not have these four types of infinite minds.

To be reborn in the human realm, one needs to practise the Five Precepts and it results in gaining a human body. (Moreover,) practising the middle level of the Ten Good Deeds results in being reborn in the human realm and gain a human body. If one is very greedy, the karma of this affliction directs one to be reborn in the hungry ghost realm. No ghost is not greedy. (The karma of) anger and envy directs one to be reborn in the hell realm. (The karma of) being ignorant (of sages' teachings) directs one to be reborn in the animal realm. (Being ignorant means to) go with the flow (without any sensible judgement), be unable to tell right from wrong and have no wisdom. All these are directing karma which directs one to be reborn in different realms.

After being reborn in the human realm, although all human beings have human bodies, but we differ in wealth, social status and life expectancy. This is to do with filling karma. We differ in filling karma. How to practise the causes of good filling karma? The Buddha often taught us to practise three types of giving. Practising wealth giving results in gaining wealth. Practising dharma giving results in intelligence and wisdom. Practising fearlessness giving results in good health and a long life. Everyone differs in (the levels of) practising (the three types of giving). From this, (we can tell that) being reborn in whichever realm, our living conditions and our life expectancy are entirely the consequences of our own doing. It has nothing to do with anyone else.

To pray to Buddhas, bodhisattvas or deities for good fortune is also a good deed. We serve them with a good heart. But in fact, it is (practising what is good and) correcting ourselves that truly helps

us. Serving deities results in good fortune. But serving those who are poor and suffering results in much more good future. Whatever we do, we should follow our conscience. We should remain calm and think it over carefully. People share the same conscience, and our conscience follows the same principle. Buddhas, bodhisattvas, deities and ghosts are also the same.

(For example,) in the human realm, loving and respecting one's parents is most important. It is also the case in the celestial and hungry ghost realms. If a person does not love and respect their parents, and does not respect elders, no matter how many good deeds they practise, they reap only a little amount of good fortune. Why? Because they have no roots. All celestial beings admire loving and respectful children. They respect this kind of children. Therefore, if a person can look after their parents with love and respect and can respect their teachers and elders, deities and ghosts will help them. Even if you do not serve those deities and ghosts, they will still look after you. Because you are a good person. We must understand this principle.

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