

Chapter Six: The Freedoms and Endowments of This Life (a.k.a. Precious Human Life)

Three points:

1. Identifying the freedoms and endowments
2. Contemplating their great value
3. Contemplating the difficulty in finding them

The Eight Freedoms

| Four unfree human states | Four unfree nonhuman states |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Living in a remote, savage land | 5. Being born in hell |
| 2. Having severe disabilities | 6. Being born as a hungry ghost |
| 3. Holding wrong views | 7. Being born as an animal |
| 4. Being born where no buddha has appeared | 8. Being born as a long-lived god |

The Ten Endowments

| Five pertaining to oneself | Five pertaining to others |
|---|---|
| 1. Being human | 6. Being born where a buddha has come... |
| 2. Born in a central place | 7. ... and taught the Dharma |
| 3. Having unimpaired faculties | 8. The teachings remain... |
| 4. Not having committed an uninterrupted action | 9. ...and are being followed |
| 5. Having faith in the Tripitaka | 10. There's loving-kindness and compassion for the sake of others |

2. Contemplating Their Great Value

We can use this precious human life to attain

- Final goals—liberation and full enlightenment
- Temporary goals—accomplishing generosity, morality, patience, etc. and create the causes for fortunate rebirths in future lives

3. Contemplating the Difficulty in Finding Them

- In terms of **causes**—most beings create non-virtue, the cause of lower rebirths. To obtain the freedoms and endowments, we need to create lots of virtue through practicing
 - ❖ Pure ethics
 - ❖ Generosity, etc.
 - ❖ Stainless prayers
- In terms of the **result**—such a rebirth is rare compared with other rebirths.

Analogy in the Balapandita Sutta

"Suppose a man threw into the sea a yoke with one hole in it, and the east wind carried it to the west, and the west wind carried it to the east, and the north wind carried it to the south, and the south wind carried it to the north.

Suppose there were a blind turtle that came up once at the end of each century. What do you think, bhikkhus? Would that blind turtle put his neck into that yoke with one hole in it?" Bhikkhus: "He might, venerable sir, sometime or other at the end of a long period." "Bhikkhus, the blind turtle would take less time to put his neck into that yoke with a single hole in it than a fool, once gone to perdition, would take to regain the human state, I say." (MN 129)

Four Important States of Mind Regarding Dharma.... (p. 64)

...to generate a fully-qualified wish to take the essence of this precious human life:

1. I need to accomplish the Dharma
2. I am able to accomplish the Dharma
3. I need to accomplish the Dharma in this very life
4. I need to accomplish the Dharma right now