

...While some other people believe that they are created and produced by themselves. They are created by their previous kamma. They are reproduced by their own parents. In turn, their parents are reproduced by their grand parents. The grand-parents are reproduced by the great-grand-parents, the great-grand parents are by the great great grand... finally they reach the origin of life. That is Nature, the Earth. They are the products of the environments in the ecological linkage and evolutionary lineage of all lives. Then, what is the Earth? What is Nature? What is life? What is a human being? What am I? Why does the Earth or Nature self-create; why do all beings or we, human beings, self-produce, and self-reproduce again and again?

When these questions haunt us day and night, we cannot enjoy our life: sleep, work, study, or even eat. This situation is something like this: we are crossing a log bridge spanning a deep canyon. Looking forward at the halfway point, we find a fearsome tiger growling at us. Scared, we turn to go back. Alas! Behind, a hungry wolf is snarling at us. Far below, a furious river is rushing. Of course, we cannot escape to the sky! This is confrontation. We can neither go forward nor backward, nor left, nor right. We are surrounded by invincible difficulties.

When we confront these difficulties, the tiger, which awaits us, is our destiny: death, old age, and illness. The wolf, which drives us forward, is instinct, desire, anger, and ignorance. The log bridge, which is so narrow and slippery, is the base of our life, that is to say, environment, profession, home, and so on. The furious river is the failure in life, in other words, poverty, humiliation, and so on.

This situation is exactly the reality of our lives: we die eaten by the tiger of old age, illnesses, or accidents. We are obsessed with greed, aversion, and delusion. We are depressed and humiliated by failure and disgrace. We cannot get rid of these circumstances. However, almost all people never take it seriously, and may think this is only a simile. Still, some of us recognize this symbolism as more than a truth. In due course, we never forget that we are standing awestruck, surrounded by these conditions. Naturally, we become disillusioned with our superficial understanding of life, and we certainly become sober, detached, and thoughtful.

This confrontation makes us more careful and discreet in our life in terms of mental as well as physical wholesomeness. We attentively listen to others' opinions, abstain from bad habits, and try to lead more meaningful lives. Some of us may be interested in philosophy, ethics, or psychology, while others will visit spiritual places. On the other hand, some will explore various types of meditation or contemplation. Sometimes we even renounce our mundane lives, however privileged and comfortable they may be. We become truth seekers. Getting rid of all the social bonds, we wish to solve these essential problems of ours. Hence, we sit down and brood about ourselves. We try to face, to watch, to observe, and also to investigate ourselves for the solution, sometimes successfully, but almost always in vain. We are born by ourselves, we are born by our parents, we are born from our circumstances, so we should be able to cope with all problems in our life. However, upon confronting these problems, we find that we are not mature enough to tackle them. We are not wise enough to understand ourselves. Still, if we have enough spiritual strength to maintain our wholeness -- our selves, meaning our mental sanity and physical strength, we are not overcome and confused; we are undaunted; we can persist in this apparently hopeless pursuit. As long as we do not give up on ourselves, eventually we will be able to solve all of our problems. How are we capable enough in such a great task?

Originally and ultimately, we are never isolated beings at all. We are creatures of the environment. Therefore, the environment itself hides the secret and Nature retains the key to the solution. While we are wandering in the forest of life, certainly we encounter good luck, like a stray person coming across unlooked-for sign posts, or a person who knows the way such as: a hunter, a woodcutter, or a hermit. Moreover, we could be endowed with the opportunity of encountering truly good friends, wise teachers, and awakened masters who have faced, struggled, and solved these problems and know the method and practice for solving them, because serious and sincere truth seekers definitely, deserve them.