

Contemplation: Karma

First, thoroughly assess your karmic situation. Survey the circumstances of this life to discern the karmic patterns established in the past, then check your current thoughts and actions as an indication of what will come.

No sentient being in the six realms prefers suffering to happiness, yet almost all of us create the causes for misery. We act, oblivious to karmic consequences, seeking gratification in the moment, then blame our bad fortune on negative outer circumstances as if these represented random occurrences of fate rather than direct results of our own conduct.

Now, without equivocation, without hope of evading negative results if non-virtue remains unpurified, bear honest witness to your own conduct. Others may praise you for your fine behavior, but only you truly know if your actions are tainted with impure motivation or poisonous emotions.

Sooner or later you must journey through the after-death *bardos*, stripped of everything except consciousness and the forces of karma. Why sheathe yourself in hypocrisy and rationalizations now when you must stand naked then? Contemplate in this way, then rest the mind.

When thoughts arise, use them to arouse compassion. Imagine the karmic forces that overtake cruel aggressors when they die, the multiplicity of aggression that rebounds upon them, the aeons of torture in hell.

Think of those whose comfortable lives are suddenly overwhelmed by tragedy, the unexpected consequence of unsuspected karma. Think of those whose lives remain comfortable and neutral, who extinguish possibilities for future well-being by using up the fruits of past good karma and not planting seeds for more.

Contemplate lives almost devoid of opportunities to act with virtue—hell beings whose torment only infuriates them further, deprived spirits whose insatiable craving obsesses them, animals that are predatory by instinct. When the power of compassion motivates you to alleviate in any way possible all the sorrow arising from ignorance of karma, relax into uncontrived meditation.

When thoughts arise, direct them toward prayer. Pray that all beings may refine perfectly the sense of what to accept and what to reject. Pray that you may cease blaming others and begin purifying your own mind. Pray that through well-disciplined physical activity, well-chosen words, and beneficial intention, you may create the causes for fortunate circumstances.

Pray that, ultimately, we may all escape this bewildering tangle of karma altogether and enter a state of pristine awareness. Then rest.

Finally, harnessing your thoughts once more, commit yourself to acting in accord with the most refined conduct and meditating until you establish the highest view. Then, again, rest.

Source: Tromge, Jane. *Ngondro Commentary: Instructions for the Concise Preliminary Practices of the New Treasure of Dudjom*. Compiled from the teachings of H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche. Junction City, CA: Padma Publishing, 1995.