

Contemplation: Precious Human Birth

First, contemplate the importance of having a precious human birth endowed with all the freedoms and conditions necessary for spiritual practice. How rare! How uncertain it is that you will find it again, since the mind could easily lead you into a nonhuman realm or into a human birth without full endowment.

Reflect on how great your virtue and aspiration must have been previously for you to have gathered these present fortunate conditions.

Contemplate until the exceptional opportunity afforded by this life, not to be taken for granted or wasted, becomes clearly apparent. Then allow the mind to rest in natural, non-conceptual meditation.

When thoughts arise, direct them toward compassion. Consider those suffering in lower realms who have little possibility of obtaining a human rebirth because dense obscurations prevent them from generating merit.

Think of those who have a human body but who are not endowed with conditions conducive to spiritual development.

Reflect on those who attain a human birth but squander it on worldly pursuits or destroy their opportunity by harming others.

Remember that, even for practitioners, the tenure of this lifetime remains as uncertain as that of a candle flame in the wind.

When contemplation leads to the deep-seated wish that all beings find liberation from spiritually impoverished circumstances, relax the mind.

When thoughts arise, ... pray that this wish-fulfilling jewel of human birth not be thrown irretrievably into the ocean of samsara, that instead it be used well to create merit and gain recognition of mind's true nature.

Pray that those suffering in other realms may find human rebirth, that those human beings not endowed with spiritual conditions may find them, that those fortunate enough to be endowed with spiritual conditions may fulfill their highest aspirations. Pray to attain the power to help them. Then rest.

Finally, as thoughts present themselves once more, direct them toward commitment. Think, "In my past lives altogether, I have had innumerable bodies, each of which I cherished, fed, and defended. If all of their corpses were piled up, they would form a mountain the size of Meru.

The blood that raced through those bodies, the tears shed in frustration would form an enormous ocean. Yet in those lifetimes I failed to accomplish enlightenment.

Now, through the accumulation of all my merit, I have attained this one extraordinary birth. This I will use well, for the greatest benefit of all sentient beings.” Then, again, rest the mind in uncontrived meditation.

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.