

Practice I: The Mandala of the Steps to Enlightenment (*Lam Rim*)

Je Tsongkapa Lobsang Drakpa
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The source of all my good
Is my kind Lama, my Lord;
Bless me first to see
That taking myself to him
In the proper way
Is the very root
Of the path, and grant me then
To serve and follow him
With all my strength and reverence.

Bless me first to realize
That the excellent life
Of leisure I've found
Just this once
Is ever so hard to find
And ever so valuable;
Grant me then
To wish, and never stop to wish,
That I could take
Its essence night and day.

My body and the life in it
Are fleeting as the bubbles
In the sea froth of a wave.
Bless me first thus to recall
The death that will destroy me soon;
And help me find sure knowledge
That after I have died
The things I've done, the white or black,
And what these deeds will bring to me,
Follow always close behind,
As certain as my shadow.
Grant me then
Ever to be careful,
To stop the slightest
Wrongs of many wrongs we do,
And try to carry out instead
Each and every good
Of the many that we may.

Bless me to perceive
All that's wrong
With the seemingly good things
Of this life.
I can never get enough of them.
They cannot be trusted.
They are the door
To every pain I have.
Grant me then
To strive instead
For the happiness of freedom.

Grant that these pure thoughts
May lead me to be watchful
And to recall
What I should be doing,
Grant me to give
The greatest care
To make the vows of morality
The essence of my practice;
They are
The root of the Buddha's teaching.

I have slipped and fallen
Into the sea
Of this suffering life;
Bless me to see
That every living being,
Every one my own mother,
Has fallen in too.
Grant me then
To practice this highest
Wish for enlightenment,
To take on myself
The task of freeing them all.

Bless me to see clearly
That the Wish itself
Is not enough,
For if I'm not well trained
In the three moralities,
I cannot become a Buddha.
Grant me then
A fierce resolve
To master the vows
For children of the Victors.

Grant that I may quickly gain
The path where quietude
And insight join together;
One which quiets
My mind from being
Distracted to wrong objects,
The other which analyzes
The perfect meaning
In the correct way.

Grant that once I've practiced well
The paths shared and become
A vessel that is worthy,
I enter with perfect ease
The Way of the Diamond,
Highest of all ways,
Holiest door to come inside
For the fortunate and the good.

Bless me to know
With genuine certainty
That when I've entered thus,
The cause that gives me
Both the attainments
Is keeping my pledges
And vows most pure.
Grant me then
To always keep them
Even if it costs my life.

Bless me next
To realize precisely
The crucial points
Of both the stages,
The essence of
The secret ways.
Grant me then
To practice as
The Holy One has spoken,
Putting all my effort in
And never leaving off
The Practice of the Four Times,
Highest that there is.

Bless me, grant me that
The spiritual Guide
Who shows me this good road,
And all my true
Companions in this quest
Live long and fruitful lives.
Bless and grant me that
The rain of obstacles,
Things within me
Or outside me
That could stop me now,
Stop and end forever.

In all my lives
May I never live
Apart from my perfect Lamas,
May I bask
In the glory
Of the Dharma.
May I fulfil
Perfectly
Every good quality
Of every level and path,
And reach then quickly
The place where I
Become myself
The Keeper of the Diamond.