

## 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.