

LAM RIM SESSION 3 REVIEW

Meeting Summary for Demo Rinpoche – Never-ending Lamp of Liberation: A Modern Lam Rim
April 15, 2025

Overview

- Embrace Human Life
- Cultivate a Pure Relationship with Guru

The Blessing of Online Teachings

- Online Dharma teachings are a leisure in this precious human life because Dharma is more accessible:
 - Easier to attend
 - No travel needed
 - Less expensive and faster
 - The future: instant translation into any language

Precious Human Life

- Encouragement to make meaningful use of your life and leisure time—don't squander it.
- Atisha's Advice on the Human Condition: The human lifespan is short and there are too many things to do. The time of death is uncertain. Therefore, take care and do the essential things well.
- What really matters is developing your mind and knowing what to do with your life.
 - Watching a movie before death doesn't matter.
 - Dying without having trained your mind does matter.

Why Lam Rim Matters

- Of all choices in life, practicing Lam Rim is the best:
 - Helps in this life and in future lives
 - Guides you in the stages of the path to enlightenment
- Be okay with average clothes, house, car but never be okay with poor spiritual development.
- Use your life well, and you'll die with peace and preparation.

Essence of Dharma Practice

- Three Core Commitments: 1) Practice virtue; 2) Avoid non-virtue; 3) Purify your mind
- Need wisdom and compassion, being "nice" isn't enough.
- Need to become someone with mental control and high ethical standards.

The Role of the Guru

- Advanced Dharma levels require proper guide. Like needing a qualified coach for Olympics.
- Vajrayana = “microwave path”
 - It’s fast, but wrong teacher can be a long detour instead of shortcut.
- A guru is not just an instructor but your spiritual companion until enlightenment.
- Their role is lifelong, deep, and personal relationship. A guru isn’t temporary or casual.
- Serious ethical issues or teachings that contradict the Buddha = a sign to step away.
- If advice is non-virtuous—be cautious. Don’t follow the path of Angulimala (evil advice).

Why Faith and Trust Matter

- No trust = No learning
 - Just like you won’t accept treatment from a doctor you don’t trust.
- Faith acts as protection—like a mother, stops you from doing wrong out of respect.
 - Example: “Would His Holiness approve of this action?”
- True faith makes you recall what your guru teaches before acting.
- You must be humble and open to learn anything new.
- Without faith, the guru is just a lecturer.

Misguided Judgments and The Danger of Fault-Finding

- Judging things you know little about reveals ignorance.
- Bias, criticism, and taking sides contradict the Dalai Lama’s teaching of equanimity.
- Looking for faults gives your mind permission to abandon the guru leading to disconnection.
- Physical traits, personal preferences, gender, or style should not override Dharma teachings.
- Problems often stem from cultural misunderstanding or attachment.
- Deluded mind exaggerates problems.

What You Focus on Grows

- If you focus on the guru’s faults, you inherit those faults.
- If you focus on their qualities, you cultivate those in yourself.
- Accumulating criticism is like accumulating blood—you end up with pus.

Recommended Next Steps for Meditation

- Bring your judgments to the surface
 - Is this their problem or mine?

- Am I judging based on gender, race, nationality, culture, etc.?
 - Most dislikes reveal problems with the critical mind, not actual flaws.
- Always remember: “I think I’m right” is not the same as actually being right. Only a Buddha is always right—everyone else has bias.
- Ask does the guru give authentic Dharma? Is the guru honest, compassionate, a good practitioner and teacher?
- Ignore petty annoyances. Guru might be wrong about geography but gives perfect Dharma.
- If you are physically close to guru you can assist but if you are not you can make offerings and do visualizations through guru yoga practices. Sometimes physical distance is easier to see guru as guru.
- Follow guru’s teachings and put them into practice.