

LAM RIM SESSION 5 REVIEW

Meeting Summary for Demo Rinpoche – Never-ending Lamp of Liberation: A Modern Lam Rim May 13, 2025

Demo Rinpoche reminded us we are doing short Lam Rim. We have covered many topics under the value of human life. If you read bigger book there is more you can learn, don't be satisfied.

Overview

- Face The Inevitability of Death
- Thus all Created Phenomena are Impermanent
- Realize Death's Time is Uncertain

Review of Four Root Practice by Tsongkhapa

1. **Understanding the rarity of human life:** Recognizing the unique opportunity of human life motivates meaningful actions.
2. **Valuing human life:** Understanding the worth of human life encourages engaging in meaningful activities.
3. **Preparation for death:** Awareness of death's inevitability prompts preparation for the next life.
4. **Causality of karma:** Understanding karma encourages virtuous actions.

Understanding Human Life's Value

- Understand the rareness of the opportunity one has, the worth of their human life, the debt that comes every day, and the causality of karma.
- Opportunity only available through human life. Demo Rinpoche's example: Sometimes a dog lives better life than you. Meaningful human life does not mean you are like dog enjoying your food and laying around. Means doing something special that you can do only through being human being.
- Shantideva example: You can cross the ocean of human suffering on this ship/vehicle of human birth which is hard to find. Once you find, don't fall asleep/don't waste your time. Do something meaningful in this life.
- We need to prepare for the next life and to stay away from careless acts.

Meaningful Life Through Mindful Practice/Mind Training

- **Developing the mind:** The most important aspect of this life.
 - You don't become better by thinking or saying "be peaceful". Peace has to be in your heart. To be a better person you develop awareness inside your mind and train your mind with practice.

- You become aware and then act differently. Don't waste time. Focus on the practice. This beast can be trained to become kind.
- **Awareness and kindness:** Developing these qualities through mind training makes human life worthwhile.
 - Example: Practice is like a computer update. Sometimes we become unhappy. You can go back and update information, look and fix and become better and happy again.
- **Atisha's Advice:** The human lifespan is short and the time of death is uncertain. Focus on essential things.

Stages of the Path to Enlightenment: Practice Levels

Three Capacities/Levels of Practice (each with varying motivations and goals):

- **Small Capacity Practice:** Focuses on gaining freedom from immediate suffering and aiming for heaven. Not feel regret when you die.
 - Motivated by fear of lower rebirth. Don't want to go to hell, hungry ghost or animal realm-only heaven or human realm. Understand non-virtue takes to bad rebirth and virtue takes to good rebirth.
- **Medium Capacity Practice:** Aims to reduce negative emotions and eliminate negativities. Not scared of death.
- **Great Capacity Practice:** Focuses on helping everyone eliminate their sufferings. Do not run from death.
 - Strive to be a Bodhisattva. They do not go to lower realms because there is no time to practice there. We have leisure to practice only in human life.

All practitioners, regardless of their capacity, need to follow the common practices. As a great capacity practitioner you are practicing all three levels.

Virtue and Impermanence

- **Avoid non-virtuous actions and practice virtuous ones.** Non-virtue leads to lower realms of existence associated with suffering and the upper realms with happiness.
 - Lower: Hell, Hungry Ghost, Animal (Desire-craving & attachment)
 - Upper: Human, Demi God, God
 - Shantideva says in BWL, at time of death your friend, family or even the best doctor can not do anything. Only virtue will help you rest in peace.
- **Understanding Impermanence:** Helps reduce attachment and leads to greater happiness. People who understand impermanence are not scared of death. Impermanence help us slow down and think about next life.
 - If someone hurts you maybe you got disadvantage in this life. Whatever happen in this life is short term. Everything has a time limit and changes.
 - Only dharma is helpful. If you get something in this life you can not take with you.

- **Attachment:** More you focus on this life, the more attached and the more unhappy you are. If you ever feel uncomfortable there is probably attachment there if you look carefully.
 - If you understand impermanence and interdependence there is no room for attachment. The magic of dharma practice is that you will not be unhappy for long periods. You can change your mind.
 - Attachment to material possessions, names, physical appearances, and other aspects of life can lead to unhappiness and stress.
- **Virtue and impermanence:** Emphasizes the importance of maintaining virtue and understanding impermanence to reduce attachment and find peace.
 - Control emotions and make better decisions. Nothing is worth sacrificing one's virtue for.

Preparation for Death & Karma

At time of death people go to place where their mind and karma goes. If good, go to good place (upper realm). What is meaning of good person, it is not good salary etc.

- **Prepare:** If you are aware earlier you can make changes. If you are traveling, you have bag ready all the time. Be like that with death. Have a practice and purify every day.
- **Legacy and meaning:** Encourages reflection on one's actions and the legacy they leave behind. Material legacies eventually disappear.
- **Facing death:** Developing awareness and acceptance of death as a normal part of life. Awareness of death's inevitability encourages preparation for the next life, reinforcing the importance of virtuous living.
- **Practice Dharma teachings regularly** to avoid forgetting them. Do not wait till it's too late to practice Dharma teachings, as regret can be a significant burden. Do not study too much at one time, but small doses regularly.

Reminder 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
- Use your life well, and you'll die with peace and preparation.