

# LAM RIM SESSION 8 REVIEW

Meeting Summary for Demo Rinpoche – Never-ending Lamp of Liberation: A Modern Lam Rim  
June 24, 2025

## Overview

- Remembering limitations of human rebirth

## Summary

Practicing Dharma means listening, meditating, and studying with others. This is the purpose of Jewel Heart, to facilitate learning and meditation for happiness in this life and the next, as well as the achievement of enlightenment. The teachings reflect on the nature of our problems which cause suffering, the significance of awareness and developing wisdom.

Demo Rinpoche also covered practical applications of Buddhist principles in daily life, including technology, relationships, and understanding human suffering, while highlighting the challenges people face in starting and maintaining dharma practice. The discussion concluded with an examination of different forms of suffering, along with teachings about karma and the hell realms.

- **Practice and Learning:** Practicing dharma involves engaging with teachings actively, akin to "chewing" food to digest it properly. Continuous learning is essential for understanding and applying Buddhist principles.
- **Understanding Problems:** Buddhism encourages confronting problems rather than avoiding them, as recognizing issues is crucial for personal growth and detachment from attachments.
- **Human Experience vs. Animal Life:** Human desires and attachments compared with animals' simpler existence, suggests that humans often complicate their lives with ego and desires.
- **Karma and Dharma:** The role of karma in one's life journey and exposure to dharma can lead to personal transformation, it's never too late to learn and grow.

## Understanding Suffering and Enlightenment

- Demo Rinpoche began with a discussion on the concept of emptiness and the nature of suffering, as explained through a passage attributed to Shariputra.
- The idea of highest perfect wisdom can alleviate suffering and lead to achieving enlightenment.
- It is very important to learn and practice in a degenerate age, and to dedicate virtues for the benefit of sentient beings and the teachings.

## Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center

- Demo Rinpoche explained that while many associate Buddhism with monasteries and temples, the practice at Jewel Heart focuses more on teaching, meditation, and study among friends. He clarified it is not a temple but a learning center, where people come

to understand and practice Dharma for personal growth and happiness. This is similar to Buddha's time where there were no temples, Buddha just went around speaking.

- Buddhism has adapted to various cultures over time, including Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese, while maintaining its essence.

### **Condensed Lam Rim Teaching Approach**

- Demo Rinpoche has focused on a condensed approach of teaching Lam Rim that skips the preliminary practices and begins with the Rely on Guru section.
- While the full teachings would typically require several weeks of daily sessions, this iteration is structured as a two-week program with teaching in the first week and discussion in the second week to help students internalize the material.
- The concept of transmission was discussed, described as pouring water into you.

### **Unnecessary Attachment**

- Demo Rinpoche talked about how in Buddhism we are not scared to talk about problems. We talk about problems because Buddhism is based in truth which we should not avoid. The biggest problem in life is if we don't believe there are problems.
- If you think there is no problem, you can attach to things. He gave the example of cheap and unreliable Chinese mobile phones. He also gave example of being too satisfied/attached with a job when another job might be even better for you.
- If we understand the true nature of things, we avoid unnecessary attachment, which can lead to fear and a reluctance to embrace better opportunities.

### **Animal Intelligence and Human Ignorance**

- Demo Rinpoche discussed the challenges faced by animals, nobody really cares about them. He gave example of squirrels crossing the road, lack of food and hunting.
- The relationship between humans and pets was also discussed, noting that pets are often kept for practical or selfish reasons rather than genuine compassion.
- The contrast was made between human and animal intelligence. It was emphasized that while humans may be smarter than animals, they often make poor decisions due to negative emotions and self-centered ignorance.

### **Beyond Self-Focus: Buddhist Perspectives**

- Demo Rinpoche emphasized the need for Buddhist teachings and practices to address human issues such as illness, aging, debt, and the pursuit of money and fame. We let ego lead the way and always think we need the best to be happy.
- People tend to focus excessively on themselves, leading to forgetfulness about others and a lack of awareness, which can cause problems in relationships.
- We were encouraged to look beyond personal desires and consider ways to help others, suggesting that fulfillment can be found in various forms of contribution rather than solely in achieving personal goals.

## **Human Suffering and Spiritual Practice**

- Demo Rinpoche said the more we want something the more we suffer. He gave examples such as parental preferences for children's gender and artistic ambitions.
- While animals do not experience such suffering, humans often struggle with unfulfilled desires and attachments, which can lead to happiness or unhappiness depending on their perspective.
- Developing awareness and using life's challenges as opportunities for spiritual practice can help mitigate suffering.

## **Understanding and Practicing Dharma**

- Demo Rinpoche explained that while suffering can sometimes lead people to practice dharma, it is not always the case. He used the metaphor of dharma as medicine, though beneficial, not everyone will take.
- There are limitations of human nature, noting that even those raised in dharma-rich environments may not fully understand or practice it.
- Many people struggle to know how to start practicing dharma. It is important to have good karma and the influence of friends in one's ability to connect with dharma.
- It is never too late to learn dharma. So, if we meet with it, we should appreciate it, practice it and not make excuses.

## **Challenges in Dharma Practice**

- Demo Rinpoche highlighted that many people want to practice dharma but don't know where to start, and some lack access to proper instruction or understanding. He shared his personal experience with learning to use a 3D printer.
- The true advantage of dharma practice is becoming calmer, happier, reducing negative emotions, and becoming wiser. Many people do not have the support of friends or gurus who can guide them.

## **Exploring Human Suffering**

- Demo Rinpoche discussed various forms of suffering in the human realm, including slavery, illness, torture, and the condition of "hungry ghosts" where individuals suffer from unfulfilled desires despite having everything, creating mental sufferings.
- An example was given of how young children recognized as reincarnate lamas receive special treatment including better living conditions and toys. Despite this, they express a desire to lead ordinary lives rather than following the monastic path. When they lead ordinary lives they still are not always happy.
- Advice is to keep things simple, be satisfied, be happy with whatever you have and whatever you have to deal with.

## **Q & A**

### **Q: In hell realm can we create negative and/or positive karma?**

**A:** It is possible to create positive karma in the hell realms, but it is very difficult, though not impossible. Demo Rinpoche gave example that if someone hits you in the face it is hard to

smile. It is difficult to think in hell realm. He shared stories about people in hell who received kindness and escaped. If you have subtle negative karma, it is easier to get out faster. If you have heavy negative karma, it can create mental obstructions that prevent thinking needed to get out, particularly for those born in hell realms.