



**Dharma for the Urban Professional**  
**by**  
**the 12th Chamgon Tai Situ Rinpoche**

The subject that I was requested to talk about is the importance of dharma practice for the urban professional.

First, what are the differences between urban professionals and rural unprofessional? Actually rural unprofessional are not that busy, they have lots of time and do not know that much, therefore they do not have that much confusion. Then urban professionals are very busy, have lots of stress and know a lot, therefore they have a lot to be confused about. If you don't know much then you don't have much confusion, but if you know a lot then you can get confused. Confusion is like being mixed up. For example, if you don't have too many books, just a few, then you cannot get them mixed up—you can find your books very easily if you only have three. But if you have a thousand books and you don't put them on your shelf properly then you cannot find the book that you want to find because you have too many. Then that is stress—trying to find them, not finding them, finding the wrong one. When I looked at the request for this subject and tried to define who an urban professional is and who is not an urban professional then this simple thing came out.

But whether you are a rural unprofessional or an urban professional the importance of dharma practice is equal, there is no difference. Because when you say important and not important, from that context it is important for both—urban professionals have lots of suffering and rural unprofessional also have lots of suffering, and both of them have limitless potential, the Buddha potential; therefore the importance of the dharma practice is equal. But somehow, when you say importance, such as a real, immediate kind of desperate need, then I would say urban professionals will get lots of immediate dharma benefit when they practice. Then vice-versa, rural unprofessional will get long term dharma benefit when they practice. For long term dharma benefit both are equal, but urban professionals will get a more immediate kind of dharma benefit.

Why I say that is because urban by definition is in a small space with lots of people, lots of activities, lots of choices and lots of competition. That is the definition of urban. In urban life you are bombarded by competition. For example, if you want to buy something there are a hundred people or a thousand shops who are selling the same thing. So each tries to make it slightly different from others by making different shapes, putting different colours on or

different price tags on—they have become so good at tackling your weakest point; they know you will buy something instead of something else because for your kind of weakness a certain one is more appealing. Although it is the same thing, and even though the other one is better, still you buy a certain one because it appeals to you. So when this competition is out there, even if you don't want to be part of the competition, still you naturally become part of the competition. And whether you are the one who is shooting or whether you are the one who is being shot at, you are the target; everybody is doing their best to pamper your weakest aspect.

In this way, with due respect, with all the respect, I would say the world is becoming more and more evil. Evil has many meanings, one is of really wanting to harm someone, wanting to cause suffering to others. But the evil that is trying to serve you is a very nice kind of evil, it tries to make you get what you want easily, and tries to pamper you in such a way that you cannot resist. I cannot say it is a negative evilness, but somehow a positive kind of evilness. Then why is it evil? Because it doesn't help you, it doesn't give you peace. In fact it takes away the peace which is within you. For example, if you go to a restaurant which is cheap, clean and has nice food, and then there is another one which is not just cheap, clean and nice, but has more sort of attraction there, then you switch to that restaurant. What that does is it sets a precedent; it sets the clock on of not being stable. That somehow sets a precedent in your life so that you don't have to be stable; it is okay and even good to change every day. It is the same thing with clothes and with everything in life. Also it is so well presented or established that it is not just okay to be like that, it is actually good to be like that. For example, today your hair is one way, tomorrow another way, the day after tomorrow another way etc, and that is cool because you look different every day.

For me this is the definition of the difference between urban life and rural life. In rural life you see somebody and their hair is one way, and then you see them after ten years and it is still that way, but less. Then after twenty years it is still that way, but more grey and even less hair—for them there isn't so many new medicines and shampoos etc to make it more, there is not so much choice, so they just do the same thing all the time.

I am not against this, but since you wanted me to talk about the importance of dharma practice and urban professionals then I have to somehow address this. Now when you say urban professionals then that means you are right into it—you are not urban residents but are urban professionals, and urban professionals have to do all of this. If you are urban professionals then you are the tool for all of this, it is your job to think which way your company will do better, which way you can keep your clients or customers, and which way you can make your employees stay with you. You know they are free to go, they can just say "I quit" and find another job. Then a human asset will be lost. There is so much going on in professional life, on the high level, mid level and lower level. You have to do so much extra

stressful thinking and planning, and so many things you have to do which were not necessary but which are necessary today.

If you are an urban professional and you don't follow this then you will lose everything. You will lose your clients, you will lose your customers and if you are an employer you will lose your employees; you will lose everything. Therefore you are forced to be part of this positive evilness. You have to be. You cannot say "I don't want to think about how to attract more customers." You cannot think like that. If you think like that then you will not do well. When I was a teenager once I went to a shop in Swayambunath in Nepal when I went for circumambulation (*kora*). They had small, small things and the shopkeepers in those days, even though they were Nepalese, used to speak Tibetan very well. I didn't run around by myself then, I had a few Lamas with me all the time, but I did go to the shops and people did not flock to me in those days. So I looked and there was something that I wanted to buy, a small religious object, and in Swayambunath it cost more than what it cost in Boudhanath, where I had seen it just a day before. I told this person, "I can get this much cheaper in Boudhanath, why are you asking for more money?" He looked at me and in Tibetan said, "If I don't make a profit, why should I keep a shop?" So he must have been buying from Boudhanath and selling that in Swayambunath, so there is nothing to say.

It is very interesting because I cannot tell all of you good people not to be urban professionals. Then what will happen is that all the urban professionals will be bad people because all the good people will leave their profession and all the bad people will stay. Therefore I would rather have good people as urban professionals than an absence of good people. I am not saying that all the good people know me, no. But those of you who come here who are urban professionals I know are good people. You might make up only a half or a quarter percentage or maybe even less, maybe only one percent of a half million, you are maybe one of half a million, but you count.

So urban professionals, if you have dharma practice then that is much better than if you don't have dharma practice. But I can't see you being an urban professional and at the same time being a yogi. That is only possible if you are already an accomplished yogi and then you decide to pretend to be an urban professional. That is possible, if you have reached the level of realization of Tilopa or Naropa already and then manifest as an urban professional. Then you do your urban professional business and in that way you liberate others, that is possible. Otherwise, being an urban professional and being a yogi is only possible in your head, because in reality you cannot. You have to hire and fire people etc. Forget about being a yogi, that is not even a bodhisattva—you have to find a way to prevent your good people from becoming somebody else's employees, because you want to keep them for you and that's not even being a bodhisattva. A bodhisattva should let go of everything, you give the best for everyone and everything. But you cannot do that.

This way you have a problem, but can you prevent that problem? I don't see how you can. But by following dharma principles, that is one way of practicing dharma. Having some real dharma practice every day, half an hour or one hour of dharma practice, meditation, and then you will definitely not become a ruthless urban professional. You will be a compassionate, considerate and conscientious urban professional. Then if you meditate and all of that, you will not have that much stress because you will know what is real and what is not real—everything in samsara is a dream.

I must tell you what is real and what is not real on me right now. My jacket is not real lambskin, so don't worry, otherwise I would be wearing at least thirty baby lambs. This is synthetic. I have to clear that up. I don't know whether you noticed or not but you might think, "What is this guy talking about? He is wearing thirty baby lambs and is talking about compassion and all of that." Also my shirt is not real silk, it is also synthetic, otherwise I would be wearing at least ten thousand worms that had been cooked alive—to make silk you have to cook the cocoons with the worms alive inside, then you take them out of the cocoon. That is how one makes silk. So if you are wearing a silk sari you are wearing at least ten thousand worms that have been cooked alive.

Anyway, what's real and what's not real right? We shouldn't go too much into it because then so many things will come and we will get confused. Sometimes ignorance is good, really. Then there is not so much confusion, not so much stress.

Now dharma practice, for example, if you are saying mantras like OM MANI PEME HUNG<sup>1</sup> or if you are doing meditations like Shinay and Lhaktong, or if you are following a real long term practice like the preliminary practice and going through the practice step by step, taking the journey on the path, it will play two roles in your life as an urban professional. You will be a person with morals and ethics, you will still hire and fire, but you will fire them fairly. For example, instead of firing somebody who doesn't do a good job and giving them nothing you might give them three months' salary so that they have time to find another job and in the meantime they can live. But you will not spoil them and give them one years' salary, that is no good. That's not compassionate actually, that is harmful. You are spoiling the person, it is unrealistic. Compassion has to be responsible compassion, you shouldn't be irresponsibly compassionate. That is no good, it is harmful to the other person. So you will have this kind of wisdom and you will have this kind of conscience. You might even send your bad employee for special training so that it will make him or her better, then you will take them back instead of firing them and getting someone else and not caring about what happens to them. So in this way you will become a good person. That is one way it will work.

Another way is, true dharma progress from within. That is that you will not only be a good

person but your primordial wisdom from within will step by step manifest and you will get closer and closer to enlightenment. Even if it is one billion miles away, if you are only one inch closer then you are one inch closer, it is not further away. That way it is worth it. If you get closer by one inch every month then that billion miles will be maybe only a million lives away. That's not bad. A million lives, each life a few feet closer, or a few meters closer to the destination is good. You can't expect to be in samsara and not to be in samsara at the same time—when you are in samsara, you are in samsara. But to be in samsara with progress is better than with no progress, and no progress is better than going down. To be born zero and die zero is better than being born zero and dying minus zero. Plus is good, minus is bad and just remaining is okay.

So by having formal dharma practice as well as practicing the dharma principles, both together, then you as an urban professional are able to say "I am an urban professional who is practicing dharma." Also you will be sort of like a precedent maker for future urban professionals. You will make a precedent, you will start something. It's not a movement but it's a new mindset, which is not naïve, which is not extreme, and which is not impractical. It is practical, productive, mature, yet compassionate, devoted and responsible. So dharma is very important for everyone, as well as for urban professionals.

Then especially meditation, even simple meditation will help you overcome your stress. But meditation just to help you overcome your stress is like taking a sleeping pill. But if meditation is together with an understanding of dharma then it is not like taking a sleeping pill. You don't get addicted to your meditation; you don't get dependent on your meditation. You will not say "Oh, I have to do my half an hour meditation otherwise I can't stand my stress." It's like saying "I have to take my glass of wine every evening otherwise I can't go to sleep." So though you get addicted to dharma that is good, but still it is an addiction. You are dependent on it. We are meditating so that one day we don't have to meditate. We are not meditating in order to become a meditation expert.

This way your dharma understanding will help you not to be so caught up and attached, and not to take everything so seriously as a real thing—whatever you are doing, whatever your profession is, it is a dream. But in that dream you can make things happen in a better way or you can make things happen in a worse way. But we are only making things happen in a better way. This way then, as a professional, a large part of your stress which is coming from attachment and ego and jealousy and all of those things, will not be there. But stress from having to wake up early, having to go to sleep late, having to do so many things at the same time, those things will be there because they are on the physical and mental level. But the emotional part of stress will not be there because nothing means anything, it is just a dream. If somebody says you are good and wonderful, it doesn't make you good and wonderful if you are not. If somebody says you are bad and terrible, it will not make you bad and terrible if you

are not. In this way it doesn't mean anything, what you are is what you are.

Also what you are selling and buying, all of this that you are doing, all of this is an illusion—an illusion of an illusion. For example, what is money? We all have to have money today, but it is our own fault. It is a fault of all of our forefathers, and foremothers if you like to put it that way, because they made the money. They worked very hard for tens of thousands of years to make something called money, so now we have to have it. Without it we end up on the street. We have to know this, and by knowing this then it will not be that important, it is just something that we have created, a condition that we have created. But we have to follow it, and we are following it because of that, nothing more.

So many things in life are like that, created by us over the centuries—this is supposed to be good, this is supposed to be bad, this is supposed to be correct, this is supposed to be wrong etc. All of these things are created and we have to follow them, but at the same time we have to know they are just created. I'm not going to go further than that. If I go further than that then everything is emptiness<sup>ii</sup>, but that is little bit far-fetched at this point.

At first glance I felt, what can I say about the importance of dharma practice for urban professionals? But then once I really thought about it carefully I could go on talking about it for a month, even more, with each profession and with each professional. It is a full lifetime job, really. It is a very vast and very relevant subject and it is not going to become less, it will become more, in number and in relevance. Also this urban professional positive and negative aspect, the contrast will become more and more, it will not become less. Competition will become more and more, it will not become less. Also choices will become more and more, not become less, consumers will become more and more, not less. Therefore it will be more and more relevant. That is what I have to say, generally.

Now if I am a little bit specific then I will give a traditional guideline, which is the six paramitas: generosity, morality, patience, diligence, contemplation/meditation and wisdom. If you try to practice and remember these every day in everything that you do, then I think you will be a positive seed for the future of urban professionals. Whatever level we can reach in this will be for every professional person—part of being a professional is to be conscientious, to be kind, to have far sight, to have wisdom, to be responsible. So all of that will become part of the urban professional's qualification. This is not impossible.

For example, twenty years ago if we thought about cigarettes and non-smoking it was an almost impossible thing, but today, look how many people are smoking and how many places are non-smoking zones. Almost every airport and every public place in the world has become a non-smoking zone. But twenty years ago we couldn't even imagine that would be possible. But it became possible, it happened.

In that way, if all of you who are in different professions, if you make this as a tool of your success and if your mind is clear and your mind is calm, if you are kind, if you are devoted, if you are responsible, then you will be productive. Instead of just firing your bad employees you will send your bad employees on a special program to train them to become good employees. That is responsible. But if you just fire the person then they will be very upset, their whole family will be fighting with him or her because there is no income, and then the person will feel very bad and negative. There are even cases where some employees have come back with a machine-gun and shot their bosses and colleagues and everybody, and at the end shoot themselves. This has happened several times, if the news media is correct. I think in bad things everybody is correct—when they talk about something bad that has happened it is almost always guaranteed to be correct, it happened. But good things are questionable, that is unfortunate. But bad things are quite true.

So now that kind of thing will never happen. If you hire somebody and the person is not capable and you just dump them, don't even talk to the person, then that's not good, that's not good professional practice. I think this way there is a possibility to naturally evolve a new way of doing business, a new way of being professional. Then once it reaches a certain level then it will have a weight and gravity of its own, that will somehow make things happen that way. If it is the other way, then it will have weight and gravity of its own and it will make everything happen in the other way. So unless you really want to be a yogi, I don't want to stop you, but if you want to keep your job and be a professional yourself, and continue, then be that, but be a good professional, a professional with dharma practice. Also you might influence at least five other professionals every year, and each of them should influence another five professionals each year. Then these things will spread and it will have an impact for the whole of humanity. I'm talking about one kind of professional here, but there are so many different levels of professionals: professional politicians, professional teachers, professional doctors, professional lawyers, and even soldiers, they are professional soldiers.

So everyone can be what they are but be that in a better way, a good way, not a bad way. Then some time in the future, if all sentient beings' have good karma, then it might be much easier to be good than bad. Today unfortunately because of everyone's karma it is much easier to be bad than good. But if the forces of good prevail then it will be much easier to be good than bad. Who wants to be bad? I think this is a very relevant subject and I am very happy to talk about it. I will take your questions.

## Questions

**Question:** Something is bothering me that I wanted to share. A few years back we had an incident five hundred meters from where we are sitting today, where a man used to lure children.

**Rinpoche:** Yes, I saw that on television.

**Same Student:** A serial killer killed thirty children. A few days back somebody asked "Suppose this man needed a defence lawyer, would you work for him?" My first most spontaneous thought was "Of course I would do it." I am convinced that he has done this, the evidence is against him. But my first thought was if he pays my fee I'll do it, but when I said that my wife said "I think you need to move into a different bedroom," and my children said "Dad, we will not talk to you again if you do this." I didn't have the case of course, I didn't do it. The point is that I was still in that conversation when I made this request for you to teach this subject. So it has been very, very valuable for me listening to you here, and I just wanted to open up what really was occurring to me when I made this request for you to teach this subject. So thank you.

**Rinpoche:** I would like to say something about this. I would rather have you as his lawyer than someone else. Why? Because you know he has done it so you will make sure that it will be proven in court that he has done it. If you were his lawyer, be his lawyer with conscience, with principle, with responsibility, that instead of just blah, blah, blah, here a picture, there a picture, here a photo, there a photo, here complaints, there complaints. So prove it, that surely he has done what he has done. Therefore I would rather have you as his lawyer than somebody else who would try to prove that he hasn't done it; then if the lawyer was good maybe he will get away.

**Same Student:** Quite possible.

**Rinpoche:** It's possible. That way I would rather have you as his lawyer, but I'm not saying that you should take the job. And you shouldn't think that you will do it because he will pay you, no. But you do it because he is wrong and you want to make sure that in court he will be *proven* wrong, point by point. Then all the people who lost their children will get justice, and all the children who have died, everybody will know how they died so they can pray for them. Because sometimes you might not know if they are dead or not—in a picture it says they are dead, but how can one be 100% sure? Somebody can have my picture and say I'm dead and after ten years I might show up. This I'm sure it is not like that but somehow this world is a very strange world today. Because of everyone's karma definitely, otherwise it would not be like this.

**Question:** Rinpoche, for the last few years I've been deeply concerned and somewhat distressed about religious leaders and religious teachers who regard religion as a profession and who regard themselves as professionals.

**Rinpoche:** Really?

**Same Student:** Do you feel that's true?

**Rinpoche:** Not me. I'm ready to quit! Actually I don't like this job! I take it with a great honour and sacrifice, but I would rather be a professional painter and photographer. Also I like to analyse things. If there were such a thing as an 'analyser', I would take that job. But religion is not a profession. But if you are a professional religious teacher you can call it a

profession, because maybe somebody has practiced and has lineage, has learned, has received so much, so that they really know what they are saying, they know everything very, very clearly, so as a kind of nickname the person can say they are truly a professional. You can say that. I don't consider...

**Same Student:** But I feel that some religious teachers and leaders see religion as a means towards name and fame, towards money and making a living, and I wondered if you'd have any comment?

**Rinpoche:** Okay. You haven't been to many of my talks. I used to say, "Our dharma centre should not become our chai shop." I have said this many times. I used to call it a tea shop, it should not become like that. Religion is a very abstract word. It is a translation from Latin I think. But dharma is... we can all here understand dharma very clearly, but then 'religion', we follow but we don't really know what it means. *Re-li-gion*, something like that. I don't really understand the meaning of the word religion. 'Re' must have something to do with read, right?

**Student:** To bind, to tie up.

**Rinpoche:** To tie up, wow! It is not. We want to be free, we don't want to be tied up! It is the opposite, it is not to tie up; it is to be free.

**Question:** Rinpoche, to what extent do we take on the karma of the companies that we work for? For example, if we work for a company that makes soap that's something helpful. I mean being clean is a good thing. But in the manufacture of that product, it pollutes the water and the air. Very few things are either wholly good or wholly bad, at least in my experience, but to the extent that they harm life, do we participate in that karma?

**Rinpoche:** Absolutely and absolutely by all means. But having said that you did not see one more thing, when we say 'clean,' what does that mean? It means getting rid of all the germs. That means you kill them all. You can't avoid this, we can't avoid this. If I drink a glass of water, I smell it first and then look, is it drinkable or not? That means the water in which all the germs are killed is drinkable water, and if I drink it I will not get sick. So you cannot worry about these things, but you have to know, karma is in everything, there is nothing that does not involve karma. That is why we are in samsara. Absolutely flat, like a bread (chapatti) on an oven. There isn't any millimetre of space of us which is not touched by samsara. We have to know this.

At the same time what is samsara, what is karma? Ultimately what is the difference between karma and being free of karma? That's where emptiness comes in, that's where primordial wisdom comes in. So relatively everything is happening but ultimately nothing is happening. So we do our best to avoid direct negativity. I try to avoid killing baby lambs for my jacket, but making this synthetic has also killed millions of germs, because making synthetic is very, very poisonous. In order to make my jacket, both outside and inside, instead of thirty baby lambs how many lives must be destroyed by polluting the air and by polluting the water and all of this? So if it is not this way it is that way. That is why Buddha described samsara as

suffering; it is the home of suffering. There is nothing in samsara that does not have karma. We have to work on this level and try to avoid as much as we can, and then on another level try to do as much good as we can, and on another level try to reach the ultimate essence of samsara, the ultimate essence of everything, which is primordial wisdom, and try to have that realization. So these three ways.

So don't worry too much and keep working for the soap company. But don't forget that by using soap to make people clean, that means you've got rid of all that is not clean and killed all that is not clean. That is like ethnic cleansing! We are wiping out some species. But we do it for a good purpose; we eat, be healthy and do good, we keep clean and be healthy and do good. But we don't eat and be healthy to harm more, and we don't keep clean and be healthy to cause more harm, no. So I think that is what we can do right now.

If I made an offering to everybody, I would not offer you a microscope. Seeing all the tiny life forms then you would not dare do anything, you would not dare even breathe or move.

**Question:** Rinpoche, a lot of businessmen and professionals say they cannot do their work without bribing people. How is it possible for them to practice karma and deal with the bribing if they feel they have to give it? Is that possible?

**Rinpoche:** I have never bribed anybody so I don't have that experience. But if somebody really says that and if that is true, if they have no choice, then think about it as dana (generosity)! Don't think that you are bribing, think that you are giving dana. I mean, what can you do? It is dana, generosity. If that is true, I personally don't think that has to be true, because in my life I did not bribe anybody, I'm totally against it. For me it is like, if you bribe, that means you are as guilty as the one who takes the bribe; you are the same. If a person is guilty of taking money then you are guilty of giving the money. Both broke the law in my opinion. That's my principle; don't bribe. But who am I to say that and who am I to judge?

**Question:** Rinpoche, professionals have little time. I'm a professional as well and have little time. Is there a way for short retreat?

**Rinpoche:** Yes of course. You can be any kind of professional, employer or employee. Always you have some breaks, that is always there otherwise it's not productive; you cannot go on without a break, they call it leave or a vacation or whatever. So you can use that break for a retreat, you can have a nice vacation, a calm retreat. It will be a good thing for the whole family. When the wife is doing retreat the husband is looking after the children and when the husband is doing retreat the wife is looking after the children, and if the children are big they all can do retreat together. Yes, you can make it a professional family tradition.

Also certain holidays are exhausting, much more exhausting than your work. Certain holidays really beat you down, you are totally finished at the end of the day, you just collapse because there was such a busy schedule to be followed for your holiday package. But you can have a

nice *real* holiday. Of course only if your partner and your whole family agrees with you. It all has to be harmonious; it has to be a happy one.

**Question:** Are all kinds of germs sentient beings?

**Rinpoche:** Of course, if not then what are they?

**Same Student:** They can become Buddha?

**Rinpoche:** Whether they can become Buddha or not I am not sure, they have the potential. I can say this, each one of us has been a germ countless times. The definition of a germ is... once a doctor showed me my saliva on a plate. It was frightening, it was like spaghetti but moving, all of them were alive and moving. It was unbelievable. But it did not stop me from over brushing my teeth; I had to go to the dentist once to put an extra coat on my teeth because I had brushed them too much, it became a habit. But by looking at what the doctor showed me, then each time I brush my teeth, how many of these germs am I killing? They looked like earth worms but almost transparent, and each one of them were single pieces moving in different ways. So definitely germs have life, they are alive, because each one of them are moving in different ways.

**Question:** How does the mind develop, because a worm doesn't have a mind?

**Rinpoche:** How do you know? It's like one of my friends saying that it is okay to eat fish, there's no bad karma because fish don't have a brain. But fish have a brain. Bengali people know that very well. They make fish-head soup, which is very good. They say it's very good for the memory, to pass exams and to get good grades.

I think they all have life. According to Buddha we call them *sinbu* (amoeba). They describe how many types of *sinbus* there are in the body, the number of which I don't remember right now, but a huge number of different *sinbus* are in the body. Even the holes in our skin (pores) are like caves and many of them are living there. Also there are tiny rivers flowing there, otherwise our skin would be earth-dry. That's why I wouldn't give you a microscope as a present. I have seen this myself. My doctor also told me that I should cut my fingernails—he was showing me why I should keep myself clean, otherwise this is what is happening—the fingernails are like rotten meat with worms. So I cut my nails very nicely and I brush a lot. Anyway, don't worry, please. I don't want you to stop brushing from tomorrow. We all have to make the best use of our precious human life. Because to be able to sustain it, even if we do our best, still there is so much karma that is committed. So don't waste this life, make the best use of it on behalf of all of those beings as well.

**Question:** The way I have always been working is almost spontaneous, but to practice what that dharma says means confusion, means delay, and very often means asking someone to confirm whether or not it is practice. So everything gets postponed and there seems to be a lack of wisdom about how to practice dharma in a particular situation?

**Rinpoche:** How to practice dharma in a particular situation you don't have to ask anybody, just use your common sense. You know what is wrong, you know what is right, you know the six paramitas, you know the ten virtues and you know the ten non-virtues.<sup>iii</sup> So by knowing all of that you can make your decision, your basic decision. But for your dharma practice decision, if you want to be simple, then just practice OM MANI PEME HUNG, that's all. You don't need too many practices, that is enough.

But if you want to go step by step and go deeper and deeper into it, according to step by step dharma practice, then yes, you have to receive the first teaching, you have to receive the second teaching, practice the first and finish it and then do the second and finish it, which is also very, very productive and very, very progressive. You will have lots of knowledge, lots of wisdom and lots of experience at the same time, which is very good.

Anyway, I think you can still make your worldly life decisions according to the dharma, spontaneously, you don't have to wait for anybody. Then you should have a simple practice like OM MANI PEME HUNG, that you don't have to wait for anybody. And when you say OM MANI PEME HUNG one million times, each time it is different. Also one hundred million times, each time it is different. A thousand million times, each time it is different, if you say it sincerely. So you progress each time. Then your traditional step by step... everything is traditional, but how do you say, step by step progressive practice, then for that you have to wait until you are ready for the next thing and until the teaching is available etc.

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- <sup>i</sup>. Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig is the bodhisattva embodying the compassion of all the Buddhas, and is depicted holding the wish-fulfilling gem between folded hands. The mantra associated with this bodhisattva is known as the king of mantras, OM MANI PEME HUNG.
  - <sup>ii</sup>. A central theme in Buddhism. It should not lead one to views of nihilism or the like, but is a term indicating the lack of any truly existing independent nature of any and all phenomena. Positively stated, phenomena do exist, but as mere appearances, interdependent manifestations of mind with no limitation. It is not that it is just your mind, as mind is also free of any true existence. This frees one from a solipsist view. This is interpreted differently by the individual schools.
  - <sup>iii</sup>. The ten non-virtuous actions are: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, abusive words, idle gossip, covetousness, ill-will and wrong views. Acts are non-virtuous or unwholesome when they result in undesirable karmic effects. Thus, this list of ten unwholesome acts occurs generally in discussions of the functioning of karma. The first three are actions of

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body, the next four of speech, and the last three of mind. The ten virtuous actions are the opposites of the above ten non-virtuous actions.