

## General Introduction to Sangharakshita's Seminars

### Hidden Treasure

From the mid-seventies through to the mid-eighties, Urgyen Sangharakshita led many seminars on a wide range of texts for invited groups of [Order members](#) and [Mitrās](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Triratna as Sangharakshita opened up for the still very young community what it might mean to live a life in the Dharma.

The seminars were all recorded and later transcribed. Some of these transcriptions have been carefully checked and edited and are [now available in book form](#). However, a great deal of material has so far remained unchecked and unedited and we want to make it available to people who wish to deepen their understanding of Sangharakshita's presentation of the Dharma.

How should one approach reading a seminar transcription from so long ago? Maybe the first thing to do is to vividly imagine the context. What year is it? Who is present? We then step into a world in which Sangharakshita is directly communicating the Dharma. Sometimes he is explaining a text, at other times he is responding to questions and we can see how the emergence of Dharma teachings in this context was a collaborative process, the teaching being drawn out by the questions people asked. Sometimes those questions were less to do with the text and arose more from the contemporary situation of the emerging new Buddhist movement.

Reading through the transcripts can be a bit like working as a miner, sifting through silt and rubble to find the real jewels. Sometimes the discussion is just a bit dull. Sometimes we see Sangharakshita trying to engage with the confusion of ideas many of us brought to Buddhism, confusion which can be reflected in the texts themselves. With brilliant flashes of clarity and understanding, we see him giving teachings in response that have since become an integral part of the Triratna Dharma landscape.

Not all Sangharakshita's ways of seeing things are palatable to modern tastes and outlook. At times some of the views captured in these transcripts express attitudes and ideas [Triratna has acknowledged as unhelpful](#) and which form no part of our teaching today. In encountering all of the ideas contained in over seventeen million words of Dharma investigation and exchange, we are each challenged to test what is said in the fire of our own practice and experience; and to talk over 'knotty points' with friends and teachers to better clarify our own understanding and, where we wish to, to decide to disagree.

We hope that over the next years more seminars will be checked and edited for a wider readership. In the meantime we hope that what you find here will inspire, stimulate, encourage - and challenge you in your practice of the Dharma and in understanding more deeply the approach of Urgyen Sangharakshita.

*Sangharakshita's Literary Executors and the Adhithana Dharma Team*

SANGHARAKSHITA IN SEMINAR  
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS

MEN'S ORDER CONVENTION 1985

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4	What did vedanta absorb from Buddhism?
6	Comparing Buddhist and Hindu visualisation and mantra recitation Bodhisattvas are a manifestation of sunyata Sunyata is <u>not</u> an ontological principle Chastity - of body, speech and mind
6	The historical importance of chastity in Buddhism
7	The modern devaluation of friendship and overemphasis on sex Working towards a higher degree of chastity from wherever one is
10	The historicity of Sakyamuni, Gautama, the Buddha Why historicity is questioned
11	Healthy and unhealthy competition
12	The history of mantra chanting in the FWBO The Padmasambhava mantra
13	The Tara mantra
13	The possibility of structured training in visualisation
14	Meditation posture Meditation cushions
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16	Visualisation, especially of Vajrasattva, as a cure for serious illness?
16	Dharmachari Mahadhammavira - reflections on the dead Order member from India's happiness and goodwill
19	Suicide and Buddhism
21	Next Session Using English literature to possibly enhance one's experience of the Dharma
22	Music in Sufism and in Buddhism Using music in small quantities to contact positive emotions
23	Could the development of a musical tradition in the FWBO be encouraged?
24	"How does friendship relate with Stream Entry?"
24	The first fetter - habit - sakayadrsti
25	Doubt - vicikitsa 'Going through the motions' - silavrataparamarsa
25-26	Visualisation, especially of Vajrasattva, as a cure for serious illness? (the same question as the previous session with a similar, but slightly different, answer from Bhante)
26	Where is Devadatta at the moment and will he gain enlightenment?!
27	People finding their way back to the Dharma even if they have previously abandoned it
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28	Maintaining one's awareness when travelling on the London Underground The use of personal stereo systems (Walkmans/men/people) and the ensuing

- possible alienation and 'schizophrenia'
- 29 The expressing of 'negativity'  
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- 38 The difficulties of asking potentially libellous questions!
- 39 Some other Buddhist groups not succeeding in communication Dharma  
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