

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 [Mitrans](#). These seminars were highly formative for the FWBO/Tiratna 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 Tiratna 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 [Tiratna 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

Question and Answer session on "The Order, past and future"

**Held on the Men's National Order weekend at Padmaloka
on W.B.O. day, 7th. April 1985.**

Contents

1	Did Bhante ever ordain anyone 'straight off the street'?
2	Consumption of alcohol within the Order?
3	Depth of communication within the Order
4	Using words without knowing what they mean
5-6	Which of Bhante's writings would he particularly like translated?
6-7	What the Order needs to do to survive Bhante after his death
7-8	The head of the Order after Bhante's death?
9	Order members seeking spiritual guidance outside the Movement?
10	The danger of losing one's autonomy within the context of a sexual relationship
11-13	Taking the ideal of Stream Entry very seriously
13	Passing on visualisation practices and giving names after Bhante's death
14	Where to look for Bhante's reincarnation!
14-15	Being reborn with the same people as one associates with now
16-20	Is there a Men's Order and a Women's Order or One Order?
17-18	The 'Female Will' and women
20	Anagarikas in the UK (i.e. outside India) Higher levels of ordination in the WBO?
21	Bhante passing on his responsibilities - Chairmen, the Order Office Why there are Chapter Convenors in the Order
21-22	Passing on the responsibility for giving ordinations
23	Should WBO Anagarikas wear a robe or similar dress
24	The danger of overidentifying with one particular FWBO centre The Order is primary, FWBOs are secondary, or even tertiary
25	The development of the Order Chapters
26	More rapid expansion of the Movement
26-27	Developing more Mindfulness in the Movement
28	Optimum sizes for the WBO and FWBO Centres
29	Helping aged and enfeebled Order members