

## 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/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*

## **Guhyaloka Ordination Course 1987:**

### **Questions and Answers on:**

#### **Authority and the Individual in the New Society , Mitrata Omnibus and D. H. Lawrence and the Spiritual Community**

##### **Authority and the Individual in the New Society**

1/3 Would power turn the spiritual community into a group?  
Bhikkhus and lamas in authority  
3/8 Invoking power using Bhante's words  
8/11 Striving for large communities  
Benefits of small communities  
11/12 Being out of touch within the community  
12/14 Power, authority and indifference in communities and centres  
15 Workers, decision making and power in the co-ops  
15/16 Co-ops - Introducing the Dharma in a work situation  
16/18 Centres, communities and co-ops - The nucleus of the New Society  
A lack of rejoicing in Merits  
18/21 Teaching the Dharma  
22/23 The power mode - its long terms effects on the WBO  
23/28 Give what you can, take what you need - does it work?  
29/32 The shortage of Order members and spreading the Dharma  
Starting new centres, communities and co-ops  
32/33 Taking a drop in income - new workers in the co-ops  
34/36 Maintaining collective responsibility  
36/37 Taking better care of ourselves  
38 Caring for our more nomadic individuals  
38/39 Raising children in the New Society  
39/40 Following the laws of the land in the New Society  
40/43 Stream Entry and the arising of the Bodhicitta  
Irreversibility  
Attainment in this lifetime  
43/44 Media coverage  
44/47 The Vinaya - was it a mistake?  
Will the WBO need a Vinaya of its own?  
Principles and rules  
47 FWBO - the only Movement to offer unlimited growth  
48 Power in Buddhist circles  
48/49 The besetting sins of Buddhism - a distortion of the Dharma  
Pseudo tolerance.

##### **Mitrata Omnibus**

50/51 The spiritual life involves violence to aspects of ourselves  
The nature of that violence  
51/55 Beginners and meditation teaching practices

55/58 Distinctions between monks and the laity in the Buddha's time  
The gathering of the teachings after the parinirvana  
58/59 The symbolism of the stupa - is dimensionality its primary function  
What is Akasa?  
59/60 Sensory deprivation

#### D.H. Lawrence and the Spiritual Community

61 What killed Lawrence - war or illness?  
62/63 How could Lawrence have coped within the FWBO?  
Functioning artists  
63/64 What are the criteria of a neurotic relationship?  
64/65 Do sexual relationships have a detrimental effect in the WBO?  
65/66 The Mindfulness of Breathing practice - a psychological technique  
66/67 Western artists or Stream Entrants  
67/70 Lawrence, glamour and magic in the FWBO  
71 The effects of war on Lawrence's writing  
The "wan resurrection"  
71/72 Can sexual love be transformed into spiritual compassion?  
72/73 Order members, marriage and commitment  
73/75 A vision for Guhyaloka