

## 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*

## Guhyaloka Ordination Course 1988 Questions and Answers

- 1 Ethical criterion for mitraship
- 2/3 Abstention from alcohol/dishonest livelihood/debt/abortion
- 4 Origin of the Three Jewels symbol
- 4/6 The five cakus (eyes) - opening of the dharma eye
- 7 Bhante's reading the Diamond Sutra as the opening of the Dharma eye
- 8 The point of insight
- 8/10 (Compassion and the Stream Entrant) - the seven rebirths
- 10/12 Breaking the fetters and access concentration
- Stream Entry and doubt
- 13 Philosophical term or phrase to summarize the nature of Buddhism
- Buddhism in one word - impermanence
- 14 Buddhism and Persian culture/Zoroastrianism.
- 14 Asoka.
- 15 Asoka's rock edicts - other rock edicts -Persian.
- 16 Body, speech and mind in Zoroastrianism.
- Asoka's Greek relatives.
- 17/18 The age of the edicts - pre Pali Canon Persian influence on the Jinas?
- Other influences on Buddhist art.
- 19 Brahma Viharas - metta, mudita , karuna, upekkha
- 20 Don't see the second two Brahma Viharas as successive.
- 21 Comments on metta
- John MacMurray 'Reason and Emotion'
- Insight via the Brahma Viharas
- 22/24 Upekkha Bhavana as an insight practice
- Why positive emotions are so important
- 24 Provoking violence through non-violence
- 25 Greenpeace nuclear protests non-violent protests
- 26 Order involvement in ecological groups and other groups
- 27 Maitri and non violence
- Talking about metta to beginners
- 28 "Normal human response"
- Advanced practise of metta
- 29 Behaving with kindness
- 30 Consciousness arising - at conception or birth?
- Talking about people who are not present
- 31 Substituting aversion for grasping on the nidana chain
- Uniformity of translation in Tibetan/Sanskrit terms
- 32 Chanting or singing?
- 33 Different tunes in different cultures - research into pujas etc
- 34 The Ten precepts and ten precious substances
- A jewel for the fifth precept?
- 35 Other precious stones
- 36 U Chandramani and Ambedkar
- 36/38 Bhante's relation to the Order and the Order to the Buddhist world
- The Buddhist "World"
- Arya Maitreya Mandala
- 39 Bhante's initial understanding from the Diamond Sutra and

Sutra of Wei Lang

40 Early links with Buddhism

41/42 Cosmic Going for Refuge

Evolution

42 Leading pujas etc. by those who have effectively Gone for Refuge

43/44 Levels of understanding and involvement in Pujas etc.

Leading Refuges and Precepts

45/46 Order members and mitras leading pujas etc.

Is leading Pujas good training for mitras?

47 The Ten Precepts as vows

48 Breaches of precepts/vows

49 The importance of the precepts

50 Early days of the Order - general questions

Contact with U Thittila and others

51/52 Has Bhante ever thought of disrobing?

52 Bodhisattva and Bhikshu ordinations

53/54 Stream Entry and the arising of the Bodhicitta

55 Questioning the commitment of an Order Member

56 Effective to Real Going for Refuge

Public Ordination as a vow to the world

57 Karmic effects of falling away from Going for Refuge

Metaphysical dualism

58 The terms conditioned and unconditioned

59 Continuity of Going for Refuge

59/60 A Buddhist's experience of phenomena

61 Karma vipaka and (Pala)

62 Karma and vipaka

62/64 The goal of the Theravada, if not Arhantship

64 Four to eight holy persons

65 Avalokitesvara's deerskin stole

66 The Conditioned perfumed by the Unconditioned and vice-versa

67/68 "The Awakening of Faith"

Asvagosha.