

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

Tuscany Ordination Course 1986: Questions & Answers on:

Going for Refuge

- 1 References to Bhante being the most senior English Bhikkhu
Bhante - Bhikkhu or Dharmachari
- 2/3 Taking Higher Ordinations
- 3/5 Communication Exercises
- 5/9 The criteria for being a Mitra
- 9/11 'Friends' and their contact with FWBOs
- 11/13 Centres and the facilities they provide
A mix of Order members
- 13/14 Attracting people from black cultures
- 14/15 Upgrading the chanting and incorporating music
- 16 Is there a feminine form of 'Mitra'
Opening the Dharma Eye
- 17/18 Prajna-caksus, samanta-caksus and Dharma-caksus
- 18/21 Perfection in the Stream Entrant
- 21/28 Differing grades of ordination and its dangers in the WBO
Celibacy
- 28/29 Paravritti- what is the turning about from?
Positive equivalents for the first three fetters
- 29/31 The Buddha's Going Forth
5 aspects of one's spiritual experience
- 31/34 The levels of Going Forth
In context of the Puja
- 34/44 Bhikkhus
- 35 Bhikkhus and celibacy
- 36 Welcoming ceremonies for the newly ordained
- 37/38 The position of the WBO amongst traditional Buddhists
- 41/42 Bhikkhus in Japan
- 42/43 Bhikkhus in Thailand
- 43/44 Asvajit in Sinhalese society
- 45/47 Extending the precepts
Undertaking a constitution of the Order
- 47 A cosmic level of Going for Refuge
- 47/48 Continuity between the Lower and Higher Evolutions