

## 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*

Sangharakshita in Seminar

Chapter Ten of "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation"

**"The Training in an Enlightened Attitude"**

[Taken from "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation" by Gampopa  
- translated and annotated by Herbert V.Guenther. Published by Rider, London 1959]

**CONTENTS**

- 1-2 First reading of text - the five tasks to complete the training in aspiration.
- 2-3 Consciously excluding just one individual negates one's Bodhisattva-hood if they are excluded for more than one hour
- 4-5 Repairing breaches in communication as quickly as you can
- 5 Hot and cold anger.
- 5-7 "Writing people off"
- 7-8 Ksanti Paramita - patience
- Resolving any quarrels/ misunderstandings as soon as you possibly can
- 8 Different atmospheres of different occasions - after death ceremonies, name giving ceremonies, Buddhist festivals
- 10 Going through the motions of forgiveness
- 11-12 Interrupting conversations - awareness of a situation
- 12-13 Text - the usefulness of the enlightened attitude
- 13-14 Its usefulness for ourselves
- 14-15 Its usefulness for others
- 15 Do not annoy a Bodhisattva!
- 16 It overcomes all obstacles to Enlightenment (klesas)
- 17 It makes available all elements conducive to Enlightenment
- 18 The similes of the bodhichitta in the *Dasabhumika Sutra*
- 19 The Bodhichitta as the most valuable thing
- 20-24 Religion and sacrifice
- 20-23 Jesus died for you
- 23 Therapeutic blasphemy.
- 24-36 The Virgin Mary and her effect on (ex-) Catholics
- 25-29 Virginitv and voluptuousness, Virgins
- 30-36 Western pornography, advertising, beauty competitions and Eastern voluptuousness

- 36 Break in seminar recording.
- Strengthening the enlightened attitude
  - The accumulation of merits
- 37-41 The four means of conversion
- 37 Jnana - transcendental awareness
  - The ten fundamental rules - perfection in right views; proper conduct; spiritual interest; the joys of an enlightened attitude; giving concentrated attention to the unfoldment of an enlightened attitude and in the Dharma; the pursuance of the Dharma in its spirit; living in accordance with it; to abandon pride and other selfish motives and to comprehend the inner meaning of the Buddha's teaching.
- 39 The Theravada's becoming over analytical
  - The four means of conversion - Sangraha-vastus
- 41 The threefold purity
- 42 "Muttering of mantras"!
- 43 Where did visualisation meditations originate?
- 44-45 Punya (merits) as cause or effect, and jnana
- 46 Developing aspirations by many endeavours
- 47 The Bodhisattva Vow
- 48-49 How Order members' names can enable one to reflect on those qualities
- 50 Transfer/transmutation of merits
- 51 Putting one's body where it is needed
- 51-52 "to shrink from conflicting emotions"
- 53 "getting into" - the use of idioms
- 54 Different Bodhisattvas and different coloured auras
- 54-55 'Unskilful' and 'evil'
- 56 Counteracting habits
- 58 Preserving the essence of the Dharma
- 59-60 Translating of Buddhist texts by Buddhists and Non-Buddhists
- 61 Past, present and future? What is time?
- 61-62 Imagining you are in another time and place in meditation
- 62 Cheating spiritual teachers and persons worthy of worship
- 64 Offering cash at tantric initiations
- 65 Making others ashamed without cause
- 65-74 Feeling ashamed and feeling guilty
- 68-69 Trying to combine Christianity and Buddhism
- 70 Intolerance in Christianity
- 73 Christians 'sacrificing' themselves to care for the sick etc.
- 74 Eradicating guilt by being sure of unconditional affection/mettā

- 75 Remedies for colds - Black pepper tea!
- 76-77 Next Session - saying improper things to a Bodhisattva out of spite
- 79 To behave meanly to sentient beings
- 80 The four positive qualities
- 80-88 Lying. What is a lie? Why speaking the truth is so important
- 83 The path of the good and wholesome
- 84 Exaggeration
- 85 Truth and falsehood among actors
- 85-89 Leading a double life - dishonesty and deception
- 90 Do all ("spiritual") paths lead to the same place?
- 91 Having strength of conviction in one's spiritual path
- 91-92 Being wary of jargon
- 94 Proclaiming the virtues of a Bodhisattva
- 94 Remedying the evils within an hour
- 95 With precepts etc., the positive includes the negative and the negative implies the positive
- 96 Making others feel ashamed
- 97-98 General Tea Break discussion - Vegetarianism, Lama Govinda's group
- 100-101 Sarcasm and cynicism (The "Doggy View" of humanity!)
- 101 Negative jocularity
- 101-103 Monty Python films encouraging complacency?
- 103-108 The conditioning to tell lies
- 106 Having at least somebody with whom you don't have to hold anything back
- 108 Gossip and right speech
- 110 Physical manifestations of emotional states of mind - Anorexia
- 112 The mysticism of pain and suffering
- 113 The lack of mettā in the world
- 114 Jealousy - one of the most negative of all the emotions
- 116 "If you want to do anybody real harm, fall in love with them!"
- 118 Can there be positive promiscuity?
- 118-119 Monogamy in the New Testament
- Monogamy, polygamy and polyandry in Buddhism
- 119 Polygamy and the Mormons