

## 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*

## THE "HEARTFELT ADVICE TO RECHUNGPA" SEMINAR - CONTENTS LIST

### PAGE SUBJECT

1	The first song
2	Son disciples
3	Milarepa advises the debating disciples to listen to his song
4/5	Studying texts without a teacher
6	Always remembering the guru
7	Always in contact with higher spiritual realisation
8	The realm of action External understanding
9	Connecting internal and external understanding - intellect and feeling
10	Urizen - the alienated reason - the basis of modern civilisation
11	From simple to self consciousness
12	The alienated intellect and ideals
13	Ideals can be compensatory
14	Nietzsche's view that Socrates was alienated Clearing misunderstandings
15	The 'infinite view' and the 'limited view'
15/16	Sources of authority in Buddhism - scriptures, reason, experience
17	Syllogisms
18	Nhamdog - ceaseless thought flow The Dharmakaya Two types of dissolving of thoughts
19	What meditation is really all about
20	The dhyanas soften the alienated intellect
21	The higher imagination Fantasy
22	Reflection after dhyana experience
23	Visualisation practices happen outside the dhyanas
24	Purifying the senses
25	The one taste
26	Seeing things 'as they are'
27	Thinking as a sense
28	Neurotic mental activity
29	The mind as a reflector of mental activity
30/31	Where do thoughts come from?
32	The Bliss Void Sunyata Reality as subject and object
33	The Mahayana seeing Voidness mentally and the Vajrayana in terms of energy
34	Brightening sunyata - refining sunyata
35	The use of the word 'Nirvana' in the Mahayana
36	Brightening sunyata - the progressive overcoming of alienation
37	Speaking in terms of growth as opposed to negation
38	The four bodies of a Buddha

- The Svabhavakakaya
- 39 'Pith-Instructions'
  - 40 Lineage
  - 41 Nirvana and enlightenment used as verbs
  - 42/43 Producing Pith-Instructions by having the heart, to see peoples' needs
  - 44 Use the Dharma to communicate your experience and not vice-versa
  - 45 Prejudice to 'religion'
  - 46 Compassion and Great Faith - compassion in the Theravada
  - 47 Can you cut yourself off (i.e. in a monastery) and still follow the Bodhisattva ideal?
  - 48 Encouraging disciples to do better than the guru
  - 49A Not to be spiritually dependent on the guru
  - 49B Every Order member should think in terms of being a chairman  
View, path and fruit
  - 50 View
  - 51 Is meditation activity?
  - 52 He who knows one knows all
  - 53 Is debating useful?
  - 54/55 Using just one text as the basis for all studies
  - 56 Milarepa's song to Rechungpa on how he should practice
  - 57 The Vidyadhara - Illumination holder
  - 58/59 Merits  
Different amounts of merit accrued by giving to different types of people
  - 60 Esoteric and exoteric refuges
  - 61 The Dharmakaya - the authentic body
  - 62 The Dharmakaya within the guru
  - 63/64 Communication between Dharmakaya and Dharmakaya
  - 65 The importance of conviction
  - 66 The Five Poisonous Desires - Maha klesas - distraction, hatred, anger, ignorance,  
conceit and their antidotes
  - 67/68 Do one's beliefs affect one's actions?
  - 68 Being misled by appearances
  - 69 Inspiring people before suggesting ways of changing
  - 70 Nirmanakaya  
Teaching through actions
  - 71 What is a guru?
  - 72/74 The three kinds of truth/reality - illusory, relative, absolute
  - 75 'Unwavering mindfulness'
  - 76/77 The Theravada concept of the mind
  - 78 'The real ground of the mind is the void itself'  
The void as an operational concept
  - 79 A spiral of thoughts
  - 80 The reificatory nature of the subject/predicate structure of the sentence
  - 81 Poetry - Shakespeare's creating of verbs from nouns
  - 82 'Continuity' of the mind
  - 83/84 The arbitrariness of conventional reality
  - 85 Positive attachment  
Paradox in Buddhism
  - 86/87 True happiness - seeking it in samsara
  - 88 Seeing the limitations of pleasure  
'Divine Bliss'

- 89 The rarity of leisure
- 90 Inspiring people with a sense of urgency
- 91 The wrath of God  
Self punishment
- 92 Ignoring the fact of death
- 93 Merely paying lip-service to things
- 94/95 Winning approval of the group  
Missionaries in India
- 96 The next section - the patrons are shocked by Milarepa's nakedness
- 97 Reasons for nudity being 'taboo'
- 98 Not recognising one's animal nature
- 99 Nudity in Ancient Greece
- 100 Different class/caste attitudes to nudity?  
Nudity in ancient Egypt
- 101 Nude beaches - exhibitionistic and natural nudism
- 102 Milarepa's reply
- 103 Giving up national ties/customs/norms  
Territory
- 104 Cutting off from blood relations  
Staying away from worldly things
- 105 No need for diversion  
Household chores
- 106/108 Conforming to and flouting accepted manners and customs
- 108 Not hiding things away
- 109 'Skeletons in the cupboard'
- 110 Milarepa seeing things from the viewpoint of wisdom  
Spontaneity
- 111 Bodhi doesn't compromise  
Milarepa continues to sing
- 112 Pretending to be decent by covering things up
- 113/114 'If you're in the nude you've nothing to pin your medals on!'  
Being socially recognised
- 114 Being 'presentable' when nude
- 115/116 Trying to do things in accordance with your ideals and trying not to compromise  
when faced with society's rules
- 117 Reverence for the robe  
Did the Buddha concede to public opinion?
- 118 Government control over bhikkhus in Thailand  
Conclusions from the song  
Conviction and not submitting to the group
- 119 Rechungpa returns to find Milarepa's door shut
- 120 Rechungpa's song  
The Immanence of Dharma  
Sahaja
- 121 Reading the stars
- 122/123 Monks reading fortunes in the East
- 124 The Buddha's attitude in the Pali texts to astrology
- 125 One's state of mind affects how one perceives the world
- 126 Consulting the stars
- 127 Resisting what the stars 'predict'

- 128 What the stars cannot tell you
- 129 Speculation  
The Great Perfection - Mahasampanna
- 130 Dogmas
- 131 Not transmitting teachings on a purely doctrinal level
- 132 The mental state is the crucial factor
- 133 The Sahajas  
Going through the motions
- 134/136 The second fetter - superficiality
- 137 Seeing the spiritual community as a group
- 138 The pressure of God
- 139 Damnation  
'Indulgences' in Catholicism
- 140 Recognising one's superficiality  
Stretching oneself
- 141 Using FWBO terminology to one's own ends
- 142 Great Bliss
- 143 What is the Middle way a Middle way between?
- 144 Not jumping to conclusions  
Not going by externals
- 145 How long does it take to get to know someone?  
Milarepa's reply
- 146 'The ultimate authority is the authority of your own mind'
- 147 The transformation of energy
- 148 Seeing the Three Jewels in terms of power  
Grace waves
- 149 Practice  
Conviction
- 150 Making a firm resolution - the opposite of doubt
- 151/152 People agreeing to do things and not following them through  
What is a rationalisation?
- 153 Coming to decisions in meetings
- 154 Needing insight to really help people
- 155 Acknowledging the guru as something higher than oneself
- 156 Misuse of terms i.e. the word 'communication'
- 157 'Vajra-speech'
- 158 Using quotations  
Going through the motions again
- 159 Contrasting Milarepa's and Rechungpa's songs  
The parable of the wise and foolish elephants
- 160/161 Being honest about one's experience when teaching or giving talks