

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

The Seminar based on "Milarepa's First Meeting With Rechungpa"

- 1 The first prose portion of the text - Milarepa asks for food at a building site
- 2-3 What is work? Not doing anything
- 3-4 Not falling back into the reactive
- 5 Housebuilding as an analogy for rebirth
- 6-7 Milarepa giving the builders an opportunity to be creative
- 8 Building houses and follies House symbolism in the modern, mobile, age
- 8-9 "Songs" in Tibetan culture
- 9 Building the new self
- 10-12 Faith as emotional conviction
- 13 Lack of faith as a psychological problem
- 14 Emotional energy - virya
- 15 The building blocks of meditation
- 16-17 Situations that repeat themselves again and again
- 18 Blake's importance of expressing errors
- 18-19 The unskilfulness of many institutions
- 19-20 Clarifying our thoughts by expressing them
- 21-22 Living out one's personal blueprint/pattern/mandala
- 23-24 Giving a truer expression to one's Gestalt
- 24-34 The Gestalt
- 29 The helpfulness of autobiographies/life stories
- 30 The switchover from the reactive to the creative
Others seeing more of you than you see yourself
- 31 Finding out what you actually feel and want to do
Education A Buddhist school
- 32 Flexibility of terms - Gestalt, pattern, reflection, seed.
- 34-35 The Movement as the unfolding of a particular gestalt or common myth
- 36 Philosophy begins with a sense of wonder
- 37 The workers ask Milarepa to go into more detail
- 37-39 The Alaya consciousness
The eight types of consciousness
- 39 The Trikaya om ah hum
- 40 The Alaya and the Gestalt
- 41 Sprouting of seeds - karma and vipaka
- 42 Depositing and not depositing seeds in the Alaya
- 43 The Absolute Alaya
- 44-45 The 'fine warehouse of Sunyata'
- 45 "Sunyata is what makes everything possible"
- 46 Service and action The Asravas
- 47 Magic spells
- 48 Yab-Yum (Father-Mother) symbolism
- 49-50 "Blissful passing" like the father
- 51 Wives
- 52-53 The four stages of youth representing stages of development of the individual
- 54 Tibetan attitudes to the Dharma
- 54-55 The authorship of the life of Milarepa
- 55-56 The four levels of tantras
- 56-57 Karmic affinity

- 57-58 Uddiyana or Oujen Padmasambhava's Pure Lands
- 58-59 Being born as male or female for karmic reasons
- 60 The first meeting with Rechungpa
- 61-62 Earning the name of Rechungpa
- 62 The wholeheartedness of many Tibetans
- 63 Heat Yoga
- 64 The life of Geshe Rabten
Faith followers and doctrine followers
- 65 Rechungpa's relatives put a curse of leprosy on Rechungpa
- 66-68 Frustrated projections
Love turning to hate - a crime of passion
- 69 Premeditated unskilful action versus spontaneity
- 70 Reciting mantras for health
- 71 Rechungpa is told of a guru who can cure him
- 72 Becoming psychically sensitive through meditation
- 72-74 Psychic sensitivity to food
- 74 Not preparing food whilst menstruating in India
- 75 The head cook being an experienced monk in Zen monasteries
- 75-77 What is leprosy? What is bacteria? Disease
- 78-79 Milarepa's lineage
- 80 Rechungpa as Milarepa's 'son'
- 81-82 Addressing priest/bhikkhus as 'father'?
- 83 Comparing Tibetan and Indian families
- 83-84 'Giving up the world'
- 84-86 Working hard at the Dharma
- 86 The utilitarian and the mythical
- 87 Forms of communication
- 88-89 Chanting in an emotional state appropriate to chanting
- 90-91 A Buddhist word for 'praying' Invocation and evocation
- 92-93 The puja as a magical ceremony
- 94 Work as the Tantric Guru - harmonizing one's energies and awareness
- 95 Rechungpa's need to wander
- 96-97 What will I get out of it? A lack of Bodhisattva spirit
- 98 Keeping the non-defiled mind clean
- 99 You either go forward or you move back
- 100 The eight worldly claims/winds
- 101 Rechungpa departs
- 102 The symbolism of travel
- 103 Rechungpa returns
- 104 Meditating without food or water for months or years?
- 105 The 'I am happy' song
- 106 Family life and internal conflicts
- 108 Non-attachment or alienation?
- 109 Becoming attached to the right things
Attachment to the yellow robe/socio-ecclesiastical position
- 110 Deliberate seeking of distraction, whatever it is
The wealth of the Dharma
- 111 Owning and looking after property
- 112 Elaborating life to fill the available time

- 113 Public property being nobody's property
- 114 Vandalism
- 115 Respecting public property in Communist countries
- 116 Personal property
- 117 Bhante's reflections on the disruption of his move from India
- 118 Non-attachment has no meaning unless you are capable of attachment
- 119 The speed and potential alienation of modern travel
- 121 A modern complaint - nervous exhaustion
The Thai Sangha under governmental control
- 122 The disrobing of a famous Thai monk by the State
- 123 Not having to be dependant upon patrons
- 125 (Various lines of text dealt with rapidly)
- 126 The 'right' conditions for Dharma practice
- 127 The importance of non-action
- 128 (Various lines of text dealt with rapidly)
- 130 Rechungpa's reply and conclusion
- 132 A guru doesn't have to teach anyone
Experiences of the Hampstead Buddhist Vihara
- 133 Bhante meaning what he says in his writings