

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

DISCLAIMER

This transcript has not been checked by Sangharakshita, and may contain mistakes and mishearings. Checked and reprinted copies of all seminars will be available as part of the [Complete Works Project](#).

SONGS OF MILAREPA:

CHAPTER 38: "THE STORY OF THE YAK'S HORN"

Held at Padmaloka, November 1980.

- 1 Milarepa's vision of Rechungpa's pride
Vision defined
- 2/5 Rechungpa confuses knowledge with wisdom
Rechungpa's concern with his statue
- 6 Pseudo-equality. Elitism
- 6/8 Milarepa wonders at the cause
- 8 Rechungpa's split personality
- 9/12 Psychological or spiritual problem
Needing a spiritual ideal
- 12/39 Milarepa answers Rechungpa in song
- 12/15 The Mandala - Enlightenment in ascetic terms
- 15 A healthy body
- 15/19 Klesas - the five poisons and hindrances
- 17 The asravas
The emotional and intellectual aspects of the klesas
- 20/23 An existential ease
The painful state of turmoil
A fondness for diversion
- 23/25 "No-man's land". Living in solitude
- 25/30 "Embittered family life"
- 27 We are much more free than we think
- 28 A point of freedom - taking a spiritual step
- 29 Impotence breeds resentment
- 30/31 "No need for books1,
- 31 "Shame of heart"
- 32/33 "The saliva-splashing debate" - hypocrisy
- 32/34 "Living without forethought" - neurotic planning
- 34/35 "Wanting not fame or glory"
- 35 "To realise samsara and Nirvana"
- 36 Repa
"Has your mind been sharpened and refreshed.. ."
Singing - communication
- 37 Pride, egotism and altruism
- 38/39 Egoistic or self-confident
- 40/41 "Obeying my Guru"... Rechungpa twisting the facts
- 41/43 Rechungpa presuming to teach Milarepa
Superficial experience
- 42/43 Mothers and dakinis - hidden teachings
- 44/65 Milarepa's reproof
- 45 "Villains tend to slay
"Knowing one's limit....
- 46 Any old practice will do!
- 47 Dharma-dhara

- 48/50 Disturbing the dakinis
 Discussing ones's spiritual experiences
 The quality of communication
- 50/52 Setting up the right conditions for communication
- 52/55 The criteria for real communication
 Study groups and communication
- 55/57 "Your pride will lead you astray"
 "To preach a lot with empty words"
- 57 "To be swollen with pride..."
 Disobedience of the Guru
- 58/59 Going to meditate in solitude
- 59/61 Renouncing one's kin
- 61 Hiri and Ottappa - shame and conscience
- 62/63 Violating the rules - honouring commitment
- 64/65 "If you agree with what I say
 Coercion and individuality
- 65 "I am an old man fearing death"
- 66/70 Rechungpa beseeches Milarepa's understanding
- 68 Trying to teach one's teacher!
- 69 Investing oneself with importance
- 70 Thinking of the Dharmas as external
 Rejoicing in merits - appreciation
- 71 Are the tantric teachings of use to the FWBO
- 72 The meaning of initiation
 Beware of mystifying the Vajrayana
- 73 There's no such thing as a spiritual community - labels
- 74/76 The dharma as experienced - meditation
- 76 Reading Milarepa's song
- 77/81 "maintaining harmony with people"
- 79 The first precept - a gradation in seriousness
 Patricide
- 81/88 Vertical and horizontal relationships
- 88/91 Solitude and great artists - positive and negative effects
- 91/92 Pindar - poet of Ancient Greece
- 92/94 "Maintain harmony with your father"
 "Repay your mother' s kindness "
- 94 Being on good terms with one's spiritual brothers
- 94/95 "To be humble is to succeed"
- 95/96 Conquering all bad dispositions - Insight
- 96/97 Samatha and vipassana practices
 "Kindness is the toleration of slanders"
- 97 Modesty
- 97 Doing away with pretence and concealment
 Hypocrisy
- 100 The Formless Dakini Dharmas do not mean too much
 Intellectual understanding and practice
- 103 Projecting the spiritual life onto others
- 104 Your spiritual friend has your interests at heart
- 105 Meditate in solitude - integration
 The mandala of one's lifestyle

- 108 Marriages and projections
- 110 The Path and the Palace - symbols
- 111 Rechungpa's infidelity to Milarepa
The Vajrayana attitude to pleasure
Pleasure and craving - Insight
- 116 Collecting the Yak Horn
- 117 Milarepa shelters in the Yak Horn
Beyond space and time
- 119 Spiritual practice and the transformation of the physical body
- 121 The miraculous body and the five-coloured Buddhist flag
- 123 The "Grace of my Guru"
- 124 The speech principle transformed
- 124 Milarepa reprooves Rechungpa for his infidelity
Spiritual stability
- 129 Spiritually gifted
- 130 "If one's mind can master the domain of space"
- 133 Rechungpa begins to learn his lesson
- 134 View, practice, action and accomplishment
- 135 The encounter with the fierce old woman
- 138 The song of Transiency and Delusion
"Conquering the demon of laziness"
- 140 The ephemeral dream of life
Emptiness and despair
- 142 Disgruntlement or disillusionment
- 143 "The pleasure-yearning human body is an ungrateful creditor"
- 145 Errant thoughts
- 146 Comments on the day's study
Ecclesiastical success and spiritual attainment
- 149 The clinging mind
- 150 Refuge - sarana, sharana
- 151 The precariousness of human life
- 153 "To be close to wicked kinsmen causes hatred"
- 153 "Friends and companions appear as passers-by"
- 154 "A rich man seldom enjoys his wealth"
- 155 "Open the treasury within your mind"
The growth movement
- 157 The deliverance of the old woman's soul to the Dharmadatu
- 159 Rechungpa relates his meditation experiences
- 160 "Numerous thoughts... "
". . an experience like a sharp knife"
- 161 Inner and outer deceptions
- 161 "I felt as if I was a radiant lamp"
The fourth dhyana and insight
- 170 "Predominating and surpassing all others in the world"
The intoxication of a positive experience
- 171 "..I have conquered the fearful expanse of sea"
- 172 "..an immaculate lotus standing above all filth and mud"
"..rolling mercury. . ."
- 173 " I felt as if I were the Jetsun Mila1,
"Resting one's mind at ease" - the Mahamudra practice
Real relaxation

- 175 Milarepa's comments on Rechungpa's experience
- 176 "When the great compassion arose" - Compassion and Insight
The five imprisoned Three Realms
- 180 Motives for leadership
Helping others and self development
- 184 Ways of doubling the Order every two years
- 186 "The dissolving of salt into water"
Receptivity
- 187 "I was awakened from both the main and ensuing Samadhis"
Prolonging dhyana states
- 189 "When one secures the great bliss through viewing..."
The Maha-Sukkhā
In terms of Dharmas
- 191 "The shining Wisdom of Reality" - knowledge of the Dharmadatu
The Mandala of the Five Buddhas
- 196 The importance of the Mandala of the Dhyani Buddhas and its complexity
- 198 The central figure
- 198 Personal response to one of the Buddhas
- 198 "... illumines all like the cloudless sky"
- 199 "...as in a silvered mirror"
- 200 "When the alaya consciousness dissolves into the Dharmakaya"
The eight vijñānas and transformation
- 203 Metaphorical language
The language of potentiality
- 205 Alienation - emotions and energy
- 212 "When the rope of clinging is cut loose"
- 213 "When I act without taking or leaving I,
- 214 "I feel as if I were a lion"
- 215 The illuminating Voidness, Wisdom and Manifestations
- 216 "The string of mind and skandhas. ."
"Having fully utilised the human form"
- 217 Energy - acknowledgement and expression
Paranoia, aggression
- 224 The song of the six sufficiencies
- 224 Reaching a point of exhaustion
Willed effort
- 227 "One's own body suffices as a temple"
The chakras
- 228 "All things are symbols of the Liberation Path"
- 229 Dūmo - Heat meditation
- 229 Meditation will supply all your needs
Don't do less than you really can
Advice from a spiritual friend
- 233 False sympathy
- 236 "To talk with honesty and straightforwardness"
- 237 Rechungpa's song " The Eight Needs"
- 237 Stretching the disciple
- 237 "We need a place for cover and sleep"
Meditating in the open air
Meditating independent of conditions
- 244 We need teachers and sutras

- 246 "On food this delusory body must live"
- 248 "Something to cover the body is necessary"
Shame and disgrace of nakedness
- 250 Support and aid from one's friends
- 251 Protection from one's enemies
- 252 Pathological hatred
Capital punishment and politics
- 253 The three yanas differing attitudes to taking life
- 254 In the event of violence against the WBO
- 256 Spreading the word!
- 257 The hindrances and the ego
- 258 The compromise and being uncompromising
- 260 FWBO fame in India
- 261 The scientific approach to Buddhism
- 262 Pride and conceit
- 263 The FWBO presentation to others