

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/Triratna 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 Triratna 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 [Triratna 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 and Answers on:

Nanamoli's "Life of the Buddha"

CHAPTERS 4 & 11

CHAPTER 4

- 1 Nanamoli - monk and scholar
- 2 Differing ages of the original material
- 2/4 The letter or the spirit of the teaching
- 4/5 Worldly wisdom in the spiritual life
- 5/6 Going for Refuge in other sanghas
- 6 Bhante meets Bhagvan!
- 7/11 The Arhant and the household life
The Arhant and 'pleasurable sensations'
- 11/14 Reflecting on and exploring ones spiritual experiences
- 14 Stream Entry and the weight of conditioning
- 14/16 "The Law is well proclaimed"
Developments in handing down the tradition
- 16 "..... independent of others is the Teacher's dispensation"
- 17 Stream Entrants in the WBO
- 17/18 Traditional Triad - dana, sila, bhavana
Rahula and the Going Forth
- 19/21 Suitability for teaching the Dharma
The sixty Arhants sent forth to teach the Law
New Order members and classes
- 21/22 Yasa as the Buddha's attendant
- 22/23 'Go Two together' - differing translations
- 23 Meals in silence
- 23/30 Allowing space for thought in decision making
Worldly wisdom in managerial skills
Using one's initiative and common sense
- 30/41 Verses - Mara and the Buddha
The four Maras
Mara in our everyday experience
- 32/33 Bhante's own experience of Mara
Meditation and Mara
- 34 The Mara period of the day
- 35/38 Mara and Satan
- 38/41 The power of Mara
Evil and fear
- 41/42 "The shackle in the air that has its hold upon the mind"
- 42 The custom of shaving ones hair and beard
- 42/43 Ordered attention and ordered effort
- 44/48 "Seeking for oneself" - looking within
Allegorical interpretations
- 48/51 The Naga Serpent in the Fire worshippers tradition
Sacred fires and offerings

- 51/53 Mara
- 53/56 Demonic possession
- 56 Mara
- 57/58 Mara as the shadow in the Jungian sense
- 58/62 Moral Evil in Buddhism
- 60/61 Black magic cults - challenging evil
- 62/69 Rational and irrational guilt
Being held to account
- 67/69 Fear and Evil
- 69/71 Gradual or direct - teaching the Dharma
Positive and negative terms
- 72 Transforming evil
- 72/73 A quantum of negativity
- 73/74 The devas in the kamaloka
The hierarchy of existence
- 74/75 Neutral feeling
- 76/78 Delight in a person's potential
- 78/79 Rewards promised for sacrifice
- 79/81 Positive and negative symbolism
Fire and transformation
- 81 Symbolism of the washing of hands
- 82/84 Expansion of religious movements
FWBO expansion - Order members
- 84/92 Expanding the Order
Kalyana Mitrata
Distractions rather than depth
- 92/94 Taking for granted

CHAPTER 11

- 1 Giving, control and restraint
- 1/3 Ceto Vimutti and panna vimutti
- 4/5 Was the Buddha a human as we are?
- 5/7 The origin of the 32 marks of a great man
- 6 The thousand spoked wheel
The Buddha and Hercules
- 7/8 The Buddha - Adityabandhu
- 8/9 The Buddha continuing a tradition
- 9 The problems of the pratyeka Buddhas
- 10/15 The Buddha and omniscience
Past and future knowledge
- 12 Predictions or logical consequences
- 13 Adolescence and unusual faculties
- 13/15 Thinking in wholes
- 15/16 "Preaching the law on my personal account"
- 16/17 Seclusion - viveka
- 17/18 Hindu culture and the prediction of the Buddha
- 18/21 The size of the Buddha's robe and other legends
- 21/23 The Buddha's character and details

- 24 The Four Defects and permanent expulsion from the Order
- 24/32 Breaches of the precepts and confession
- 25/26 In the Theravadin tradition
- 26/27 In the FWBO
- 27/28 The spiritual state of Ananda
- 29 Confession and the group
- 30 The story of the monk and the executioner
- 32/34 Suicide and the Arhants
 - Sacrificing one's body for the Dharma
- 33/35 Suicide as a social protest
 - Setting an example
- 35/38 The effect of sex on mental energy
- 36/37 Kings and virility
- 38/43 Visionary experiences and their communication
 - The Buddha seeing Mara as a black cloud
- 43 Representations of the four Maras
- 43/45 "Dark and bright counterparts"
- 45/46 "Vision of unhindered knowledge"