

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

GREAT CHAPTER OF THE SUTTA NIPATA

MAHAVAGGA

CONTENTS

Page	Subject
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1-8	History of the Sutta Nipata and the oral tradition
6-12	The Buddha's personal communication to individuals
12-13	Samatha, vipassana
13-14	Sila, samadhi, prajna.

Section 1 THE GOING FORTH

14-16	Going forth
17-26	A general picture of going forth, historic and practical
24-26	"Cleansed his way of life"
26-28	Ancient Indian geography and history of Magadhan, the Buddha's birthplace
28-32	Bimbisara and the Noble signs
31-32	The pars I Apollo - physical development
33-34	"Sense warded" - guarding the gates of the senses
35-36	Building up a picture of the Buddha
37-38	The Buddha and Bim-bisara
41-43	Etymology of bhikkhu
44-53	Bimbisara meets the Buddha
46-50	The Buddha tells his lineage
51- 53	Indian attitude to spiritual life

Section 2 THE STRIVING

53-54	Beginning of the text.
54-57	Mara tempts the Buddha before his Enlightenment to follow the ethnic religion
57-59	Family centred religion. A micchaditthi within the friends
59-69	Bhante' s view on Buddhist marriages
63-64	St Simeon Stylites
64-65	Is Mara real? The gravitational pull
66-67	Tendency of Buddhism towards the ethnic in terms of weddings and births etc.
69-72	The Buddha's reply to Mara, Hare's and Chalmers translations discussed
72	The faith, energy and wisdom of the Buddha
73-74	Concentration rises above physical problems

75-84	The Buddha's traditional conquest of Mara
79-84	Sasana and the natural authority of power
82-84	Modern problems of those without real power taking positions of authority
84-85	Mara's reply and retreat
86-88	The Middle way in comparison with the extremes of Indian asceticism

Section 3 GOODLY WORDS - SUBHASITA SUTTA

90	Beginning of the text. Etymology of Subhasita
91-96	The development of the Buddha's teachings into prose and ballads
94	The ease of speaking verse in Indian
95-96	Parables and similes
97-104	"When a word has four qualities it is not blamed by the wise". Who are the wise?
99-104	Having respect for the intelligent within the Sangha. Hiri.
104-	The four qualities of the well spoken word
104	1. "goodly words"
105-107	2. "speaks Dharma", as applied to speaking about Dharma
107-111	3. "speaks kindly", affectionate speech
111- 118	4. "speaks truth"
113-115	Bhante muzzled by the media!
115-118	Speaking the truth as you see it
118	"The calm and the peaceful man proclaim goodly speech supreme"
118-122	The importance of real communication
120-122	The personality people project as themselves
122-123	Vangisa rephrases the Buddha's words
123-124	The traditional act of respect - the robe
124-126	Tormenting oneself with speech - self depreciation
127	Communication is transmission of energy
128-133	"Truth is the deathless word" Etymology of Nirvana
131-133	Poetic truth
134-135	Vangisa's inspiring poetry
136-140	"The axe in the mouth" Satire and cynicism
138	Etymology of cynicism

Section 4 BHARADVAJA

141	Beginning of the text
141-143	The Vedic fire cult
143-145	Sramanas and Brahmins
145-148	Caste and labels
147-154	"The man of nought" The Buddha denies all caste labels
149-150	The Buddha describes the true Brahmin
155-156	Shaving customs

157	Buddha rejects the whole conditioned attitude
158	Brahman attempts to reply
158-159	The Savitri - a hymn of the Brahmins
160-166	The true meaning of sacrifices
166-270	The Buddha gives an account of the ideal person.
166-176	Self control, suppression or repression
172-176	Guilt
168-171	Use of positive and neurotic energies
176-179	Oughts and wants in the spiritual life.
179-184	Importance of enjoyment in the spiritual life
185-188	Positive not negative aspect of passionlessness.
188-195	Equilibrium of the faculties - Indrayas
195-196	Problems of words conveying attachment and non-attachment
197-199	Mindfulness and dreams
199-207	Seeing things as mine and not mine
205-211	Pleasures without attachment
212-216	Pleasure and greed
217	Etymology of Tathagata - Man this come
218-221	Peers and communication
223-224	Purity as a spiritual ideal
224-226	Boundless wisdom
226-227	The negative approach
228-230	Guile and pride
230-232	Hope
232-235	The negative side of grief
235-241	The public's negative view of Buddhism
241-244	"He has razed all harbours of the mind"
244-246	Unified energy
246-253	The three or four cankers - asavas
254-256	Suffering
257-259	Without external support
261-266	The Athakavagga
267	The Yakkha
267-270	Brief recap of the chapter
270-275	The Buddha rejects the brahmins offering, implications of sacrifice.
275-276	Brahmins request for advice
276-293	Buddha again describes the enlightened one
277-287	The five hindrances, nirvaranas
277- 280	Kamacchanda - sensuous craving
280-281	Vyapada - anger and hatred
281-284	Thina-middha - sloth and torpor
284	Uddhacca-kukkucca - restlessness and anxiety
284-287	Vicikiccha - doubt and indecision
287-291	Being on the brink
287-288	Milarepa and Shantideva
289-290	Meditation on death and the disciples suicide
291	Kovida
292	Muni; maha muni; Sakyamuni

292-293	The tradition of joining hands in salutation
294-301	Hare and Chalmers translation compared
295-296	The Four Vipariyasas
297	Pravitti - the deepest revolution
301-312	summing up section four
301-304	Anagarika and Lama
304-306	Going for Refuge
306-311	Psychiatrists.

Section 5 Maghasutta

313-316	Magha asks about giving
317-328	The Buddha gives a list of gift worthy persons
323-327	Anxiety
329-341	The Four Brahma viharas
329-333	Metta
333-338	Karuna
334-335	Mudita
337-341	Equanimity
336-341	Near and far enemies of the Brahma viharas
341-348	Cultivation of positive emotions alone versus with others
348	Magha asks the way to the Brahma loka
349-350	Buddha answers - by generosity
350-357	Summing up Section five
351	Taking the refuges to the next life
356	Brahma, Brahman, Brahmins

Section 6 Sabhiya

358-387	Introduction
361-371	Questions and looking for answers
372-375	The myth of age and spiritual wisdom
376-386	The Four Dhyanas
387-389	Sabhiya's requests and the Buddha's reply
390-391	Sabhiya's first question on the spiritual ideal
391-400	Buddha's answer - the self made path
395-399	The degradation of ideals and the devaluation of terms
400-411	Equanimity, egolessness and metta
404-406	The five knowledges. Especially knowledge of sameness and distinguishing vision
411-414	Growth and being in control
414-417	Seeing the rise and fall of things
418-425	Definitions of Brahmana and sramana
423-425	Conventional and natural morality
424-425	Zen master's "grandmotherly kindness"?
425-426	Buddha's definition of 'washen'.
426-427	" " " 'sinless'.
427-429	The tradition of using puns in India
430	Sabhiya asks for clarification of more terms

430-431	Khettajinam - field conqueror
431-435	Kusalam - expert
431-435	The Upanishadic tradition of body sheaths - kosas
435-441	History of the Upanishads
441-442	Pundita - the wise
443-447	Muni - the silent sage
444-448	Problems of God and Buddhism
446-447	The Brahminical neutralisation of Buddhism
449-456	Sabhiya asks further questions
448-450	Vedagu - lore adept
450-451	Anuvidatam - visioned
451-454	Virayava - vigorous
454-457	Ajaniyo - thoroughbred
457-461	Keeping energy in study.
461-469	More questions from Sabhiya
461-463	Sottiya - listener
463-466	Ariyan - noble
467	Caranava - wayfarer
468-469	Paribbajako - mendicant
470	Sabhiya's salutation to the Buddha
473-474	Sabhiya's request to go forth

Section 7 Sela

478-481	Introduction
481-483	Standard descriptions of the Buddha
483-486	Teaching, advising, arousing and gladdening.
486	Matt Hared Keniya's invitation.
488-501	Brahman Sela and the 32 signs
492-493	Mahapurisa - the choice of great ruler or great teacher
502-505	Sabhya's praise of the Buddha's body, speech and mind
505-512	The symbol of the wheel-turner
510-512	The wheel of dharma cannot be turned back.
513-527	Sela's salutation continued
519-522	Ethnic prejudices amongst Brahmins. Lack of ethnic representation in the FWBO.
527-530	Why was the Brahmin life a good background for the Buddha's teaching?
530-533	Summary

Section 8 The Dart

533	Chalmers' translation
534	Hare's translation
535-548	People's existential situation and the creative or reactive response.
541-543	The Micchaditthi of exploring one's negative states
543-545	Present day lack of positive ideals
545-548	Positive emotion the whole of the spiritual life.

Section 9 Vasettha

- 549-553 The sutta
- 553-568 Brahmin by deed not birth
- 558 No inheritance of spirituality
- 558-562 Buddhist by deed not birth.
- 562-565 Transmission or not of the Dharma. Speaking off rather than giving.

Section 10 The Kokalikan

- 569-571 The sutta
- 572-574 Slander
- 574-575 Rejoicing in merit
- 575-578 Appreciating beauty; metta and beauty
- 578-580 Balance of metta and discriminating wisdom
- 583 Boils and the mental state
- 584 Hell as a mental state
- 585-586 Metta leads to Sukhavati
- 587-589 Expressing one's appreciation
- 590-595 Jealousy
- 596 Rejoicing in demerits. The current fad
- 597-599 Blind faith - projection
- 600-604 Authority figures, father figures and positive ideals
- 604-607 Britain's lack of energy and vigour/ America's vigour.

Section 11 Nalaka

- 608-611 The Sutta
- 612-613 The legend of the Buddha's
- 615-621 Subjective states correlated with objective worlds.
Myth/Fact
- 618-620 Sudhavasas, the pure abodes: Sukhavati
- 622-623 The Bodhisattva ideal
- 623-624 'Something happening' in the Universe.
- 624-627 Bracing oneself for the Dharma
- 627-631 Lead the simple life. Ideas for then and now.
- 631-633 The story of the monk and the Kulpin.
(How the means can become the end!)
- 634-635 Cultivation of talents
- 636-638 The silence of wisdom. Silence

Section 12 Of Dual Viewpoints

- 641 The sutta
- 642-647 'Uposatha days.
- 643-644 Ajatasattu meets the Buddha
- 648-649 Migara' S mother - Visaka
- 649-652 The Buddha and the Sangha

653-665	The dual teachings and principles, cyclical and spiral order of existence, Reactive and creative.
666	GraspIng
667	No 'h~oly fool' in Buddhism. Ignorance
668-673	The intellectual element in the spiritual life
674-679	"The moulders cause the ill" The samsakaras. Especially Sankharas.
680-683	Discriminative awareness - vijnana The subject/object type of consciousness
683	Touch, contact
684	Feeling
685	Craving
686	A cosmic principle - purusa versus prakrti
687	Attachment, zest-to-do
688-694	Nutrimint - you are what you absorb
695-697	Turmoil
698-699	The cessation of the conditioned. . "The better is the enemy of the best"
699-701	The transcendental in opposition to the mundane
701-703	What is considered bliss
704-705	The importance of the twin principles of reactive and creative mind.

Conclusion of Seminar

700-754	General discussion of points from the whole of the Great Chapter
707-718	Alternative texts that may be relevent for the FWBO to study.
711-712	The Mahasanghikas
713-715	Responsibilites in the context of going forth
716-718	Parasitism in society
719-721	Equal opportunities for all?
723-724	Pali is not a language
725-728	Relevant text for study, continued
730-731	Sukhavati
731-734	The four reliances.
734-748	Defining contemporary going forth and the ideal situation for the movement.
748-754	About studying