

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

ASPECTS OF THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL STUDY LEADERS QUESTION AND ANSWER 1986

Tape 1 The Origins and Development of the Bodhisattva Ideal

1-3	The meaning of 'sattva' Rethinking standard translations
4-7	Bhante's writing - doing and being Creative writing - the function
7-10	The Buddha - levels of communication
11-13	What the Sangha lost at the Buddha's death
13-15	The practical consequences of the 'split' at the first council
16-17	Theravada and Mahayana emphasis on the Buddha's life and teaching
18-19	What does an Enlightened being feel?
20-21	Ananda as the first example of the Bodhisattva Ideal
21-24	The tradition that the Buddha could not be killed
24-26	To face or not to face the Buddha in the shrine room

Tape 2 Awakening of the Bodhi heart

26-27	What is 'gotra'
27-28	What is ('adhimutti'?)
28-30	A symbolic representation of the arising of the Bodhicitta?
30-31	Confusing the Bodhicitta with the Holy spirit
32-36	Debating the accuracy of the Relative and Absolute Bodhicitta having the same name
35-36	Does ultimate Reality exclude time
37-38	Creative or productive
38	The reflections of the moon
38-44	Setting up the conditions for the arising of the Bodhicitta Effective and Real going for Refuge
44-46	The Dharma-niyama
46-48	The scope of Buddhist liturgy
48-50	The Puja
50-51	Vasubhandu's four factors
51-55	Are there examples of Bodhisattvas in Western biographies?

Tape 3 The Bodhisattva Vow

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57-58	The necessity of vows in a Bodhisattva's practice
59-62	The limitations of the Bodhisattva's vow
62-63	The Bodhisattva precepts - practical or cosmic?
63-64	The Bodhisattva vow - a doctrinal development?
65-66	The relationship between the Bodhisattva vow, precepts and ordination
66-67	Bhante's Bodhisattva ordination
67-69	The ten great vows of the Dasabhumika
69-70	The asravas or nivaranas
70-71	The decomposition of the corpse meditation
71-73	The stupa meditation
74-78	Helping the old, sick, prisoners and the psychologically disturbed

Tape 4 Altruism and Individualism in the Spiritual life

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- 81-84 Guarding against misunderstandings of Buddhist texts
- 84-89 Giving to non-Buddhist religions
- 89-94 Buddhism and marriage - and within the FWBO
- 95-98 What is appropriate to an older person

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- 106-109 Questioning Buddhist tolerance in Buddhist countries
The church and its lack of repentance for past intolerance
- 109-110 The position of the FWBO in terms of criticism
- 110-112 Examples of intolerance in the gospels
- 112-115 The Gnostic quote from the gospel of St. Thomas integration

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- 120-122 Experiencing dhyanic states
Writing from experience
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- 128-129 Archetypal form as a term for the rupaloka
- 129-130 The Prajna-Paramita Hradya mantra
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- 131-132 Visualization of the mandala of the five Jinas

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