



Gay Buddhist Fellowship

Newsletter

July/August 1996

GBF Calendar

Call 415/974-9878 for news about GBF and GBF-sponsored events. To skip the recording and leave a message, press 5.

2 July (Tuesday), Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm, at the home of Larry White,

4 July, Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick,

6 July, Saturday Sitting (East Bay), 10 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany,

11 July, Thursday Sitting, potluck at 6:30 pm, sitting at 8 pm, at the home of Lee Robbins,

14 July, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m., 273 Page St., SF. Roger Corless, Professor of Buddhist Studies at Duke University, will give a talk titled, "Dharma Quality Control."

18 July, Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Mark Marion,

20 July, Saturday Sitting (East Bay), 10 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany,

21 July (Sunday), Half-Day Sitting, 8:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m., at Kairos House, 2128 15th St. (near Market), SF. 415/974-9878.

25 July, Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

28 July, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m., 273 Page St., SF. Open discussion.

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Program of Sunday Speakers Continues

Speakers for GBF's Sunday meetings have already been scheduled through September, thanks to the efforts of Tom Moon, who has recently taken on this task. GBF will continue to schedule one speaker each month, while reserving the alternate Sunday meetings for discussions.

Roger Corless returns to GBF on July 14, at which time he will give a talk titled, "Dharma Quality Control." How do we know whether a Buddhist teacher and his or her teaching is authentic? Roger will discuss traditional Buddhist views on lineage and canon, and will suggest how they might be adapted to a pluralistic culture.

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Half-Day of Meditation Set for July 21

On Sunday, July 21, 1996, GBF will sponsor a silent morning of meditation practice at Kairos House, 2128 15th Street (near Market) in San Francisco from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The moderate schedule will include sitting and walking meditation, and a brief Dharma reading. Be sure to bring your own meditation cushion or bench. Pre-registration is required. To register, please mail a check for \$10.00 payable to GBF to: GBF Sitting-7/21/96, 2261 Market Street #422, San Francisco, CA 94114. Include your name and phone number. If you have any questions about the sitting, call the GBF information line at 415/974-9878 and someone will get back to you. We hope to see you there. ♡

Vajrapani Site of GBF's Fifth Annual Retreat

GBF will sponsor its fifth annual weekend retreat on September 13-15, 1996, at Vajrapani Institute in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

This year's schedule will include traditional practices of silent sitting and walking meditation in the mornings. In response to the growing number of new GBF practitioners, afternoon activities will consist of a mindfulness hike in the redwoods, Dharma discussion, and free time with silence optional. The retreat is a good opportunity for us to be together in fellowship, to practice together, and to enjoy the quiet beauty of Vajrapani.

Registration fees are on a sliding scale of \$90-\$120 per person, which includes housing and vegetarian meals. Housing will be in large dormitory cabins and camping areas. A small number of semi-private cabins (two to a room) are also available at additional cost. Some scholarships are available. Registration forms will be mailed out to all members in early August. We hope many GBF practitioners will be able to attend. ♡

Seeking Retreat Attendees for Article

The newsletter editor is seeking one or more Bay Area residents who have participated in Buddhist retreats over the past few years. If you have attended an extended retreat of one month or longer and would be interested in participating in a joint interview with other GBFers, please call Bob Hass

Dharma Centers

[Each center offers ongoing programs and activities. If interested, please call them directly.]

- **BPF:** Buddhist Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley 94704. 510/525-8596.
- **BSC:** Berkeley Shambhala Center: 2288 Fulton Street, Berkeley. 510/841-6475 or 510/549-1481.
- **BZC:** Berkeley Zen Center, 1933 Russell Street, Berkeley 94703. 510/845-2403.
- **CML:** Community of Mindful Living, P.O. Box 7355, Albany 94707. 510/527-3751.
- **DI:** Dudjom International, P.O. Box 40155, Berkeley 94704. 510/849-9928.
- **EGZC:** Empty Gate Zen Center, 5707 Oakgrove Ave., Oakland 94618. 510/653-5991.
- **GGF:** Green Gulch Farm (SF Zen Center): 1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito. 415/383-3134.
- **HSZC:** Hartford Street Zen Center: 57 Hartford St., SF. 415/863-2507.
- **LMB:** Land of Medicine Buddha: 5800 Prescott Road, Soquel. 408/462-8383.
- **NI:** Nyingma Institute: 1815 Highland Place, Berkeley 94709. 510/843-6812.
- **ODD:** Orgyen Dorje Den/Bay Area Yeshe Nyingpo: 410 Townsend #406, SF. 415/826-7181.
- **POL:** PÖL Pema Ösel Ling: 2013 Eureka Canyon Road, Corralitos. 408/761-6266.
- **RF:** Rigpa Fellowship: 816 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510/644-1858.
- **SBC:** Saraha Buddhist Center, 3145 Geary Blvd. #515, SF. 415/731-5973.
- **SCZC:** Santa Cruz Zen Center, 113 School Street, Santa Cruz. 408/457-0206.
- **SFBC:** San Francisco Buddhist Center: 37 Bartlett St., SF. 415/282-2018.
- **SFSC:** San Francisco Shambhala Center: 1630 Taraval St., SF. 415/731-4426.
- **SFZC:** San Francisco Zen Center: 300 Page Street, SF. 415/863-3136.
- **SMZC:** Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, 6367 Sonoma Mountain Road, Santa Rosa. 707/545-8105.
- **SR:** Spirit Rock Meditation Center: 5000 Sir Frances Drake Blvd., Woodacre. 415/488-0164.
- **TCL:** Tse Chen Ling Center: 4 Joost Ave, SF. 415/641-0671.
- **VI:** Vajrapani Institute, P.O. Box 2130, Boulder Creek 95006. 408/338-6654. ♡

The Local Dharma

July-August 1996

[Note: Sometimes schedules change, so we recommend you call to confirm events.]

Special Events

5-7 July (Fri.-Sun.) "Practicing Compassion: An Exploratory Forum on Socially Engaged Buddhism."

This is a workshop for Buddhists who are social activists, and for others interested in learning how Buddhist practice can invigorate social action, and how social action can invigorate Buddhist practice. It is being held on the weekend of the birthday of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, who is widely regarded for his life of compassion in action. Speakers to date include: Donald Rothberg, Diana Winston, Daishin David Sunseri, Don Marx, John Landaw, and Charlie Hinton. The day will include panel discussions, small group exercises, and sitting meditation. \$75-100 sliding scale. Info: *Kate Savannah, VI*

7-12 July (Sun.-Fri.) "Spirituality for the New Millennium." This five-day workshop exploring the connections between science, art, and spirituality will be offered by Sophia Center at Holy Names College in Oakland. It will include special presentations by Joanna Macy, Huston Smith, and Luisah Teish, as well as a variety of class options, seminars, conversations, rituals, and celebrations. Tuition: \$325. For information, call 510/449-1261.

17 July (Wed.) "Love Relationships and the Spiritual Path" with Lama Tsering Dechen. Lama Tsering Dechen has been newly ordained by Chagdud Tulku. He will be giving a dharma talk at Open Secret Bookstore in San Rafael. Cost: \$10. 7 pm. 923 C St., San Rafael. 415/457-4191.

20 July (Sat.) "Awakening the Body" with Bob Britton. This workshop in the Alexander Technique will be especially applicable to practitioners of meditation and awareness. Bob's 15 years of experience as a Zen practitioner and teacher in the Alexander Technique enables him to help others to awaken to the healing and enlivening capacity of bodily awareness while sitting, standing, or moving. This workshop may be of great benefit to those who have back pain or other postural difficulties. Cost: \$30. 1:30-4:30 pm. **SFZC**

20 July (Sat.) A Daylong Vipassana Retreat with Ajahn Jumnien (Thai forest monk) with translation by Michael Zucher and Jack Kornfield. Join the Spirit Rock Community for a day of mindfulness, meditation, and dharma talks. 9 am to 5 pm. \$25-35. **SR**

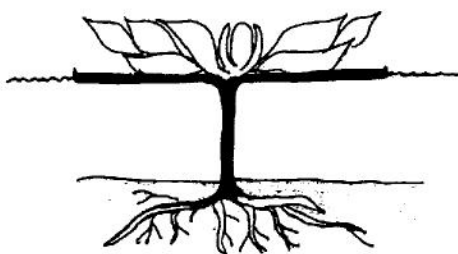
20-22 Aug. (Tue.-Thu.) "Breathing Room: A Retreat for School Teachers," with Abbot Zoketsu Norman Fischer. This retreat is for people who teach school at any level. The retreat will emphasize meditation, Buddhist teaching focusing on qualities of the Bodhisattva path that are especially relevant to teachers (such as patience and energy), and group discussion. **GGF**

28-29 Sept. (Sat.-Sun.) "Gay and Free" with Arinna Weisman and Eric Kolvig. This weekend of vipassana practice for lesbian women and gay men is being co-led by a longtime friend and member of GBF, Eric Kolvig. Eric has recently moved to Santa Fe to be the teacher of a vipassana community, but will return for this special weekend. Call for further information. **SR ♡**



The Lotus

The lotus or water lily is one of the most frequently used symbols in Buddhism. In the East and in America it is grown around Buddhist temples in natural ponds or moats. Its association with water and its seemingly effortless floating on water suggest serenity, quiet, and a certain detachment from the grounded realities of other plants. Its sudden burst from green bud to brilliant, milky white beauty is associated with the enlightenment experience.



As we reflect on this Buddhist icon, deeper meanings reveal themselves. Although the flower suggests an enlightened state, its stem emerges from the mud beneath, bringing nourishment to the flower. It is this grounding in the mud—which is part of the flower's world—that makes the flower possible.

Similarly, as humans our enlightenment moments are grounded in the suffering or "muddy waters" of our daily lives. Although at times we may be tempted to disregard or flee from difficulties, it is from this "daily mud" that we derive *our* nourishment and from which enlightenment comes. What is your relationship to the "mud" of your life?

—Alan Oliver ♡

Correction

Steering committee member David Holmes' home telephone number was incorrectly listed in last month's newsletter.

Also, steering committee member Paul Dalwigk requests that people call him days, or evenings before 8:30 p.m. ♡

Sunday Speakers

(continued from page 1)

Roger's own qualifications are that he is Professor of Buddhist Studies at Duke University, and he tries to be as honest as possible about what he doesn't know.

Zen Priest Myo Denis Lahey is scheduled to give a dharma talk on August 11. Myo began practicing in 1969 while still in high school, at which time he joined a sitting group in Los Altos that was led by Suzuki Roshi. In 1989 he served as head monk at Tassajara Zen Center. Currently he serves as treasurer for the Zen Center in San Francisco and resides at the Hartford Street Zen Center.

Howie Cohn will give a talk on September 8 titled, "Freedom: Near or Far?" Howie is a vipassana teacher who has conducted retreats since 1985, and leads ongoing meditation classes in San Francisco and Marin. He has studied with Asian and Western teachers of several traditions, including Theravada, Zen, Tibetan, and Advaita Vedanta. He incorporates a non-dualistic perspective in his teaching. Howie is a Ph.D. candidate in East/West psychology, and has a private practice in counseling.

GBF is always interested in receiving suggestions for future Sunday speakers. If there is someone you wish to recommend, please contact Tom Moon

Tse Chen Ling Center Offers Healing Meditation Program

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has said, "One of the best healing meditations is that of Medicine Buddha, who is the healing energy of all enlightened beings." Rinpoche is director of the Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in San Francisco. The center is offering an ongoing program on the third Wednesday of every month titled, "Healing Meditation/Medicine Buddha." This practice is designed to lessen the suffering of disease through one's own mind using meditation. It promotes healing, peace, calmness, and tranquility in the heart. A session of Tonglen (giving and taking) meditation is included. Tonglen practice utilizes the breath to cleanse the body of negative energy. At the same time, it builds a reservoir of compassion for all other beings.

For more information on this healing practice, please call Tse Chen Ling Center at 415/333-3261. ♡

GBF Calendar

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1 Aug., Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick,

3 Aug., Saturday Sitting (East Bay), 10 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany,

6 Aug (Tuesday), Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm, at the home of Ding-Hao Ma,

8 Aug., Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Lee Robbins,

11 Aug., Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m., 273 Page St., SF. Zen Priest Myo Lahey will give a dharma talk.

15 Aug., Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Mark Marion

17 Aug., Saturday Sitting (East Bay), 10 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany,

22 Aug., Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

29 Aug., Thursday Sitting, 8 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

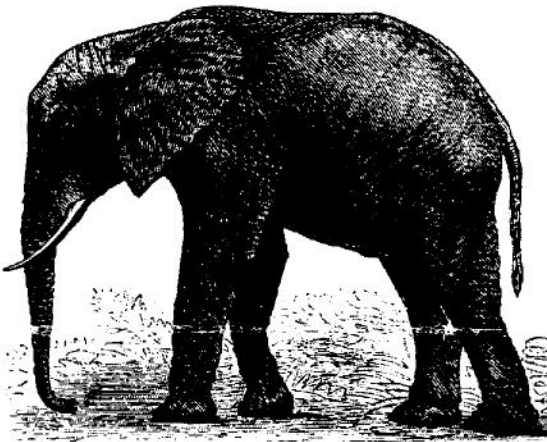
3 Sept. (Tuesday), Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

India:

Through Four Eyes and One Heart

by Alzak Amlani

This past winter I was graced with almost six weeks of travel throughout India. India has been calling me for years. Towards the end of last fall all signs pointed East, even the dollar sign. I had to go; it was scheduled. Dreams of chaos and death woke me at 4:00 a.m. The familiar wrappings of a well-known Western world were being removed. The severing had begun.



I went to India as an Indian who had never been there to find my roots. I went to India as a mindful "western foreigner." I also went under the tutelage of a Jungian analyst, Robert Johnson, who has spent the last 17 winters in South India. I went to research cross-cultural human development from a psychoanalytic perspective with my Indian friend, Renuka Sharma, M.D., who is a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley. Thus, it is from these four perspectives or "eyes" that I discovered and am now writing about this ancient and complex culture.

Through the eye of a mindful western foreigner I found India to be a land of paradox, ironies, and extremes. Upon arrival a visitor is immediately assaulted by the chaos of this ancient civilization that is being thrust into the fast modern world. The disarray sends even a practiced traveler into days of shock. One's logic collapses in the face of such dichotomies. Both worlds co-exist in full vigor:

The bullock cart curls between the diesel trucks. Graceful women in colorful saris balance gravel-filled pots on their heads

alongside a Lufthansa jet at Delhi International Airport. Aromatic curry cooks over dried cow patties. Husband and wife will rarely embrace in public, while male friends walk arm-in-arm. A brusque government officer turns into a *bodhisattva* when he sees someone truly in need.

It appears that nothing functions, yet electricity powers a VCR in the remotest village. A people who hardly erect any psychological boundaries still maintain an exquisitely sensitive, inner private self. Poverty and dysentery remain rampant, yet the children exude joy at every opportunity. These extreme combinations defy familiar, rational modes of thinking and living. My Western trained mind was baffled. I found myself waging an inward battle between my preconceptions, judgments and fears, and my heart which simply wanted to accept, appreciate, and enjoy. The fight waged on for several days. Fortunately, India won and I surrendered. I would tolerate this side of outer India—a small price for the gold she would offer. Her doors opened and I stepped into inner India. I saw things I never saw before. I felt profound feelings at the most unusual moments with the most unexpected people. Beautifully India was revealing her inner treasures. I fell in love.

Through the eye of a Jungian, Robert Johnson, I understood why my love for India lingered and grew. I spent almost two weeks with Robert in Pondicherry, South India. We stayed for two days at a small fishing village where he does his philanthropic work. When I asked him how long this village had been here, he answered without hesitation, "Forever." It is timeless. Robert is revered as an elder who "comes from America on a large bird that drinks oil."

Robert has observed that Indians as a collective are Introverted-Intuitive-Feeling types. Imagine a whole country of INF's. Nothing works, outwardly that is. Inwardly, one breathes a sigh of relief. Home at last. It is safe here. A quiet and profound relatedness tightly weaves a person into India's intricate culture. Physically one is quite vulnerable to accidents and illness. Inside, one is constantly held and protected.

Feelings are primary; all else can wait. And all else does wait. The sensate world hangs together

