



Gay Buddhist Fellowship Newsletter

MAY 1997

GBF Calendar

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

1 May, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm,
at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick,

4 May, Sunday Sitting (East Bay),
10:30 am, at the home of Geoff
McEnany,

8 May, Thursday Sitting, 6:30 pm:
potluck dinner, 7:45 pm: meditation,
at the home of Lee Robbins,

11 May, Sunday Sitting (SF),
10:30am **NEW LOCATION:** SFBC,
37 Bartlett St. Ed Brophy, Sadhana
Brothers, will be the speaker.

13 May, (Tuesday) Steering Com-
mittee Meeting, 7:15 pm at the
home of Larry White,

15 May, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm
at the home of Mark Marion,

17 May (Saturday), GBF's Feed-
The-Homeless Project at Hamilton
Family Center. To participate,
contact Clint Seiter

18 May (Sunday), "All you want to
know about Buddhism" Practice
Session, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, SFBC,
37 Bartlett St. (see article, page 2)

New Home For GBF In The Mission

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship is happy to announce we have found a new home!!! As you read in the last issue, we have outgrown our five year use of the space at the Zen Hospice. Our brothers and sisters at the San Francisco Buddhist Center (SFBC) have reaped a rich harvest of good karma by actively encouraging the GBF to use their facility, effective in May, for our Sunday meetings.

The meditation space at SFBC is larger than we now have and it is entered through a large reception area where we can gather for tea and make as much noise as we need to during the social part of our Sunday meetings. This space will also be available for special practice sessions and one day retreats.

The SFBC is housed in the heart of the Mission District, on 37 Bartlett Street. This is between 21st - 22nd Streets, and Valencia - Mission Streets. There is ample public parking located just across the street from the SFBC.

The SFBC is part of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order

(FWBO), an international Buddhist network of public centers, communities, ethical businesses and social projects. At the heart of the FWBO is the Western Buddhist Order (WBO), which is a monastic group of men and women of diverse backgrounds, who have dedicated their lives to the intense practice of Buddhism.

The SFBC provides a comprehensive program of classes and courses in meditation and Buddhism. The SFBC is part of a developing Buddhist tradition that owes its allegiance to the Three Jewels of Teachers, Teachings, and Spiritual Community, and not to any one particular Buddhist tradition. GBF is delighted to work closely with a Western based (England) Buddhist tradition which is dedicated to supporting and encouraging the development of spiritual friendship among those who wish to experience the benefits of practicing Buddhism and who believe that Buddhism can make a constructive contribution to the modern world.

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"Healing Energies" Topic for May Speaker

Our speaker on May 11 will be Ed Brophy, whose topic will be "Energies of Healing and Transformation." Ed is a body worker, counselor, Reiki Master and student of Siddha yoga. He has a special interest in the role of subtle energies in spiritual transformation, and has been a student of healing energies since 1980. His talk will include a

live demonstration of energy work.

Ed is also the coordinator of Sadhana Brothers, an umbrella group for gay and bisexual men involved in spirituality based on Hindu teachings. The Brothers meet regularly for satsang, chanting, and meditation. This is a very appropriate topic to initiate our new relationship with The San Francisco Buddhist Center. Come and experience this new meeting space of GBF. ♦



Editor's Mind

by Alan Oliver

After all the worry about leaving the Zen Hospice (over five years of history), it was wonderful and very simple to have a beautiful and suitable dharma space offered to us out of the blue. The larger size, the location in the lively Mission District and the opportunity for GBF to be more exuberant and perhaps more "gay" in the best sense of that word is exciting. The new space will shape our practice and the direction of GBF. We look forward to exploring the possibilities with all of you.



It is not desirable to break dharma talks like David Sunseri's in two parts, but because of its length along with the dialogue at the end of it we felt we had no choice. If possible go back to the previous issue and read the whole talk plus dialogue at one time. It is an important message; a step forward in understanding our relationships. Share it with friends and talk about it. We invite your insights. I have a new appreciation for the difficulty of translating the spoken word to the printed word.



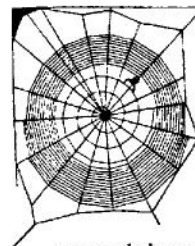
I find when I attend sessions like the half day retreat and manage to "abandon all hope of fruition", of anything special happening or concepts of what should happen I notice more. In the Buddhist

context, the signs around the Interfaith Chapel took on new meanings. YIELD, NO ENTRY, ONE WAY, and NO HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL in the dharmic sense become gateways to insight into the ego and a path. Teachers and teaching moments are everywhere. Receptivity is all. ◆

"All You Want To Know About Buddhism But Are Afraid To Ask" Is Focus Of May Practice Session

On May 18, GBF will offer a practice session similar to past mini-courses on the Foundations of Buddhism. We will begin and end with a period of meditation starting at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m. with an hour for lunch and social interaction. Experienced GBFers will be available to try to answer some of your basic questions about Buddha and Buddhism. In the six hours available we can cover a lot of ground or just stay with some basic questions. This is an opportunity if you are new to Buddhism to get a quick review of the basics and it is an opportunity for those who have served longer time at the dharma front to fill in gaps, test your understanding and help others understand Buddha's Way.

We will meet at our new space at 37 Bartlett Street (see article on new space) and we request a \$5.00 donation for the day-no signup is necessary. Either bring lunch or secure it from one of the many food sources on Mission Street. Since we will be covering many topics feel free to come for either the morning or afternoon sessions if you don't have time for both. The SFBC is fairly large so the more the merrier. ◆



Letters: Voices From Indra's Net

Indra's Net was the mythological Net

suspended over Indra's palace in which at each intersecting point in the Net was a jewel. The facets of each jewel reflected all the other jewels in the Net. The various facets of GBF opinion are reflected here.

Editors Note: We continue to receive thoughtful letters about the Dalai Lama and gay issues. Two more are printed below. Recently, there has been major articles in the San Francisco Chronicle and the Gay paper, The Bay Area Reporter. Obviously controversy attracts news coverage. The articles noted that the Dalai Lama will meet with a group of seven gay Buddhists while he is in San Francisco. We hope to report on that meeting in the July/August issue.

Dear GBF,

I had decided to keep my thoughts to myself in regards to the controversies of late which have appeared in the GBF newsletter. However, I finally feel prompted to add my own thoughts after reading the March '97 issue.

There is a campaign afoot, it seems, to pin down the Dalai Lama as to whether or not being gay is acceptable to the Buddhist religious establishment, such as it is represented in the person of the Tibetan leader himself. Since his wavering, but positive remarks of six months ago have been widely reported in the gay press, certain individuals are now pressing hard for his holiness to come out firmly once and for all in support of gayness as a positive human attribute.

In my opinion, this campaign is pure politics, and very foolish. First of all, the underlying point to be made is to get a well-respected world religious figure to make a positive affirmation on being gay in order to counteract the widely-held

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"What we call 'I' is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and we exhale,"

-Shunryu Suzuki

Midwest Men's Festival In July

The 16th Annual Midwest Men's Festival will be held from 07/15/97 through 07/24/97, in Kansas. Although the Midwest Men's Festival is attended primarily by Gay men, many of whom are involved in earth-centered spirituality, men of varied cultural or ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, or spiritual beliefs are invited and encouraged to attend. (One of our members has recently notified us about this festival and that it is a place where gay Buddhists come together.) For more information write to MMF, PO Box 32663, Kansas City, MO 64171. ♦

"Hello Dalai-Once again", Dalai Lama Visit And Conference In June On Peacemaking

On June 9-11, a conference titled "Peacemaking: The Power of Nonviolence" featuring the Dalai Lama and two other Nobel Laureates will be held at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco.

The conference will feature major talks by the principal speakers as well as numerous workshops for social advocates, activists, contemplatives and inner-city youth. It will celebrate the effectiveness of nonviolent action and innovative/traditional methods for bringing about social change. Registration fee: \$250. Call (800) 937-8728. ♦

Contributors

Thanks to the following people who helped with this *GBF Newsletter*: Alan Oliver, Chris Alferitz, Jon Weaver, Scott Stalnaker, David Holmes and Mark Marion. David Sunseri, Brian Shelly, Tom Moon, Mark Ritzenhien, Stephen Scurletis, Clint Seiter, Larry White, and all those who were part of the dialogue at the Relationship Forum. ♦

New Home (continued from page 1)

One of their teachers will be our speaker for June. For further information about their program contact the SFBC at 37 Bartlett Street, SF, CA 94110, (415) 282-2018, e-mail <http://www.bluelotus.com/sfbc/sfbc.html>. We look forward to a warm, interactive dharmic relationship and we are grateful for their support. ♦



Third Annual Northwest Gay & Lesbian Medita- tion Retreat in June- State of Wash.

On June 20-25, Arinna Weisman & Eric Kolvig will follow up their Bay Area Retreat for gay men and lesbians (May 7-11 there may still be room.

) with a similar retreat at Cloud Mountain Buddhist Retreat Center, Castle Rock, WA. This retreat is about how to cultivate a clearer mind and more open heart and how we can put these to work on all levels, so that we live happier, more empowered lives.

It will also be a chance for gay men and lesbians to celebrate together our identity and community-4 days meditation and the 5th day networking and community building.

GBF Mission Statement

Gay Buddhist Fellowship supports Buddhist practice in the gay men's community. It is a forum that brings together the diverse Buddhist traditions to address the spiritual concerns of gay men in the Bay Area, the United States, and around the world. GBF's mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

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GBF Calendar

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18 May, Sunday Sitting (East Bay), 10:30 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany,

22 May, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

25 May, Sunday Sitting (SF), 10:30 am. NEW LOCATION: SFBC, 37 Bartlett St. Dharma dialogue and open discussion.

29 May, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,



PATTERNS OF ATTRACTION AND AVERSION

A Talk On Relationships and the Dharma

By Daishin David Sunseri

Editor's Note: Daishin David Sunseri, a Zen monk and GBF member, gave a Dharma talk at a GBF sponsored Relationships Forum at Kairos House on November 11, 1996. A transcript of part of that talk was published in the April, 1997 issue of the GBF Newsletter. This is the conclusion of the talk and a discussion-question and answer session which followed.

Dharma, Interconnection and Compassion

In our practice, while we are watching the strong and seemingly difficult issues that affect us in our relationships, whatever they may be, it is necessary to go through the feelings as they arise. We need to actually experience these feelings. It is all right for me to be upset sometimes when I think about my childhood sexual abuse.

Recently, I saw on the television a news story about a Roman Catholic priest, who had a history of abusing children in Santa Rosa. Actually, I found myself being very upset when seeing this topic on television. It was very difficult for me to watch this program, but it was important that I did watch it and go through all the feelings. I realize the pain this subject brings up in other people and in me. However, the important lesson is not to be attached to the pain, but rather simply just to experience it. This is an important part of practice. We need to go through the pain of the drama of the story. But, also at the same time, we need to go through the joy of the drama too. I have not talked about this very much during this morning. There is that whole side of things that I have not touched on today, but I am sure we can talk about it during the discussion.

For example, I have a wonderful relationship. It is very beautiful, and sometimes I am quite attached to it and do not want to see it end. I do a lot to keep it together. That is another part of the drama, but it is the same as far as how the Dharma treats it. It still may be an attachment, because the truth is, it is not going to last forever. At some point, I am going to die, and my partner is going to die. Or we may split up. Other

relationships I have experienced have come to an end. This one may end the same way. For this reason we do not want to hold on to that relationship too much. Instead, we need to stay with the moment-to-moment reality of our relationships, and not worry about the outcome.

Connected with that, it is important not to have too many plans about how things are supposed to be in our relationships. That is our tendency. We might meet someone, and may become very attached to him, and want to pursue him. We might become lost in a fantasy of being with that man. Right away, be aware of what is happening, of what is arising around this situation. Just stay with the moment! Please, do not create detailed mental plans about what will happen with this person. Remember, detailed mental plans are not the way of the

Dharma. Moment-after-moment arising, this is the way of the Dharma! Rather than judging the situation, hoping that it will get to some better stage, just enjoy it where it is now. Simply be aware of your dramatic response as it occurs. Say to yourself, "There I go again responding in that particular way." We can do this over and over again, becoming familiar with our responses, instead of being caught and trapped by them.



Lastly, I want to say that the main reason we practice is, ultimately we want to be clear about who we are, and what we are doing. Our fundamental practice is to be fully where we are, here and now. We should not create some very complex future where we can be certain we will suffer, because things are not going to be the way we want them to be!

It is more like wanting what we get, rather than getting what we want. This is not so easy. But, ultimately what happens in the Dharma when we practice for a period of time, is we begin very slowly to understand our deep connections with one another, and the world as it exists. Out of that deep connection compassion arises.

We have heard all of this before. This is the most basic Buddhist teaching. The realization of interconnectedness is what brings about wisdom. Wisdom is a state of being, not a state of emotion or thought. Being in wisdom, being wise, means that we have compassion for all creatures because we have no

