



*Newsletter
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Gay Buddhist Fellowship

The 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 the world. GBF's mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

Transcending Autobiography

by Jim Wilson

During the years of my growing up, I remember vividly the international tensions focused on the border between East and West Germany. Great armies stood poised, ready to destroy each other—ready to destroy all of us—to maintain the reality of that border.

Then conditions changed, the Soviet Union collapsed, the Berlin Wall fell, and the border disappeared. Where did that border come from, and where did it go to?

The tendency would be to respond to such a question historically, to point out that at the end of World War II, the allies divided Germany into spheres of influence, etc. But this does not really answer the question. The border between East and West Germany arose from the mind of humanity; it had no other existence other than that dependent upon the mind.

To make this clear: consider that birds did not understand this border, the wind did not understand this border, only humans understood this border. Where did this border come from? From the mind. Where did it go to? It vanished when humans no longer wanted to maintain that division.

Much more tenacious than borders between nations are divisions between humanity expressed as sexual divisions. The divisions between male and female, and between straight and Gay seem to reflect basic structures of our biology. And the tensions surrounding maintaining these divisions bear a remarkable similarity to the tensions surrounding the maintenance of borders between nations. During the years of my growing up, I remember vividly becoming aware of the hostility and violence that those who violated the strictures of sexual divisions would receive. Just as someone who attempted to cross the border between East and West Germany would run the risk of being on the receiving end of great, even life-threatening,



