



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.

The Visualization of Home

Tony Richardson spoke to GBF on May 21, 2000. The first half of his talk appeared in the August 2000 newsletter under the heading "Me and My Lama." In the second half of his talk, Richardson guided us through a somatic visualization exercise.

A bit of preamble for this. One of the things that the Tibetans like to do is exactly the opposite of what we in the West have decided to do to be better people. The whole thing about psychotherapy and all that is, you know, the onion stuff, and the rings of the onion. You peel the rings of the onion off and therefore learn more about yourself. Tibetans are much more in favor of starting at the very center of the onion and moving out, whereas we're very much in favor of starting from the outside of the onion and moving in. Because the Tibetans are so interested in moving from the center of the onion, it's very disruptive to those rings of the onion. Those rings of the onion are the things we use everyday to say hi to each other and look in the mirror and recognize ourselves. So when Tibetans start to do stuff with you, or you start to do with them something on the center part, then there is a lot of disruption that happens, and it's an uncomfortable process. However, since we don't have a direct relationship with that center part of ourselves that we can so easily know, maybe if we grew up in another culture, part of the barrier is to look into those places. We don't do that much of that – we look at the outside much more, or the more superficial rings. We're not so practiced at it. I've been wondering how to help with this process without going all one side or the other. We seem to need our rings basically just to give ourselves some food and function every day, but we can get really caught in those things and spend all our time with them and not nurture the central part of us which is so essential to the change in Buddhism. So how are we to go about trying to do both of these? The guided imagery is an attempt to do that, distilled out of a little bit of practice, and it may not fit you and may not be something you want to do, but you may find it useful in that process.

The other thing I want to say is that the Tibetans do a lot of ritual

