



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2005 NEWSLETTER

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 San Francisco Bay Area, the United States, and the world. GBF's mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

## *A Round Trip to the Bardo*

BY ROGER CORLESS

We're all going to die, and most of us would like to know what happens then. Is there just nothing, or do we continue in some form, and if we continue, will we be happy or miserable? If someone could only come back from the dead, we say, then we would know, but once we're gone, we're gone, and that's that. In truth, however, history is littered with reports of people who claim to have died for a short time and then come back to life in this human realm. A friend who is a specialist in Buddhism in Taiwan tells me there is quite a large body of popular literature in which people recount their journeys beyond the grave and back again. Usually they say that they are taken before the Lord of Death, and their name is read out. "But," they say, "that's not me; is there some mistake?" Well, yes, it is discovered that the post-mortem bureaucracy has fouled up, and the person is returned to their previous life to finish its allotted span. But before they return to us, they glimpse the sufferings of those in the hells, and their mission is to warn us of the consequences of selfish and unethical behavior.

This is a very Confucian type of Buddhism—the next world looks very much like this one, hierarchically arranged and concerned with proper conduct—and if we are not committed to traditional Chinese values we may not relate to it. Stepping back a little, however, we may see something of universal interest. After death, our life stream somehow continues, we go to a place where there are other beings, and that place is a station on the way to somewhere else. Tibetan Buddhism calls this the *bardo*, the intermediate state, and teaches that its content is dependent upon a person's karma. On Thursday, July 28, 2005, I believe I made a brief round trip to the bardo. Its content wasn't Buddhist, and I think I know why, but the feeling tone was Buddhist—not Tibetan Buddhist, but very much like the descriptions of the approaches to the Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha as described in the Chinese texts.

### **CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EXPERIENCE**

As regular readers of this newsletter will already know, I have been working with bladder cancer since last winter. I got in touch with my cancer as a Dharma teacher ("Cancer as a Dharma Teacher," GBF Newsletter, April/May 2005). It has been a stern master. Tumors were found and removed three times, and they progressed from stage one to stage two, so I was advised to have a radical cystectomy (complete removal of the urinary bladder, with associated lymph nodes, and the prostate gland). I underwent this surgery at Stanford University Medical Center on Thursday July 28, 2005. I was under general anesthesia and, having had many previous experiences with general anesthesia, I expected to wake up with no memory of anything subsequent to the anesthesiologist's statement about being given "oxygen" at the beginning of the procedure. However, on this occasion, I seemed to wake up from a

nurturing dream to find myself, to my surprise and distaste, in a harsh reality which I began to realize was the recovery room of a hospital.

Upon reflection, I believe I had a near death experience. This experience may have been related to a serious heart problem (ventricular tachycardia) event which, I was told, occurred during the surgery. I have no history of cardiac problems, so the event was quite unexpected. The surgeon told me later, “We were alarmed.” Coming from such an experienced physician—the chief of urology oncology at Stanford—such a remark is indeed notable. The anesthesiologists were quick to stabilize me, and I seem to have suffered no ill effects, but the decision was made to abandon the attempt to construct a neobladder (a replacement bladder, inside the body, made from part of the small intestine), which would have taken three or four more hours, and perform the simpler task of making an ileal diversion and urostomy. In plain English, that means I have a little red tube sticking out of my tummy near my belly button, over which I stick a plastic bag which acts as an external bladder. The technology is both intriguing and bizarre, and it takes practice to get it right—it is truly a piss-

Victorian dresses, with matching parasols. The figures were small and distant, and they were looking away from me. I did not see any faces, and the voices I heard were soft, muted, and unintelligible. I got the impression that the figures had no particular business; they were just enjoying themselves, unconcerned with time. They had no goal, no purpose other than to be, to be there in the present moment. The entire scene was slightly out of focus and resembled a painting by a French impressionist such as Claude Monet. The light did not fall on the scene but emanated from within it. The environment was very nurturing, and I felt totally embraced by unconditional love. I was completely at ease and had no desire to do anything other than relax and be calm, as one might after having wonderful sex with a lover.

Suddenly, and much against my wishes, I was compelled to turn to my right again and enter, prone and feet first, a tunnel which resembled a mineshaft. The walls were supported by wooden pillars of a light brown or gray color, and each pillar held a roof beam of the same material, forming supports in the shape of the Greek letter  $\pi$  ( $\pi$ ). I felt myself being forcibly and rapidly ejected along the tunnel, and I heard a sound like

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er when it doesn’t work—but I won’t go on about it. I want to reflect on the near death experience, which is much more interesting than fiddling with what is called the Appliance.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE**

I felt that I was lying on my back (which I probably was, since I was on the operating table with my arms spread out like Jesus) and then, for some reason, I looked upward and to the left. There I saw an expanse of black, which appeared to be solid, in which was a circular spot with slightly jagged edges. The spot was intensely white, whiter than any white I had ever seen, and I understood it to be a hole through which I was seeing white light. Although the light was intense, it was what I can only call “flat” and not dazzling.

I could not guess the size of the hole, and I don’t remember a sense of movement, but suddenly I had gone through it head first and I was standing upright. I turned to my right and saw, in the center of my field of vision, a grassy meadow with a few trees on a slight rise in the distance. The dominant color of the grass was corn yellow, but its dominance was challenged by a chiaroscuro of greens, reds, blues, and mirror like sparkles of the same white light I had seen through the hole. The trees were of the color that the Chinese call *qing*—the blue-gray of mountains seen from afar, the “wine dark sea” of Homer, the basic color of nature. There were human figures strolling about, small and distant, mostly ladies in long red and blue

“whoosh, whoosh.” The tunnel sloped slightly downwards and ended in a hospital bed. I entered the bed (or perhaps re-entered my body) feet first, from the top. I was surprised and disappointed to find myself in hospital. The environment felt harsh and brittle, and it did not embrace.

### **KNOWLEDGE FROM ANOTHER WORLD**

While I was in the other reality I gained knowledge and insight without hearing words or forming concepts. The ideas came into my mind directly. This can be easily expressed in Medieval European philosophical terms: the ideas were impressed “immediately” on my *intellectus*. Since we have lost the richness of the Medieval model of the mind, I need to unpack this statement. In the Middle Ages, it was presumed that the human mind functioned on two levels. The ordinary level, which today we think of as the only level, or the only real level, was called the ratio. This is the level of mind that gains knowledge of the world by organizing sense data into concepts and words, and arranges them in a sequential, or logical, order. It builds a knowledge of the world from bits and pieces, so it takes time, and because it does not know directly, but through the medium of sense data and so forth, it was called *mediate* knowing. The other level of the mind was called the *intellectus*. Ideas, it was said, were impressed on the *intellectus* directly, without the mediation of sense data or language, and so the knowledge gained was classified as

*immediate*, in the literal sense of the word. It was also said that the *intellectus* was “illuminated” by ideas, all at once, not in a sequence, not taking time, so the knowledge was also immediate in the modern sense. Although our English word intellect is derived from the Latin *intellectus*, what we today call intellect is closer to the Medieval *ratio*, and the Medieval *intellectus* is closer to our word intuition. We tend to downgrade intuition, saying it is more vague than reason, and we even demonize it as the despised female other (“woman’s intuition”). In the Middle Ages, it was the other way round: ideas impressed immediately on the *intellectus* came from God and were therefore valued more than human knowledge constructed by *ratio*. There is a certainty associated with information received by the *intellectus*, although it can, like all information, be misconstrued, and so it is the job of *ratio* to

effulgent, without distinction between outside and inside, perfect and yet always perfectible, and it had a personality.

In a word, I felt the difference between everyday reality as unsatisfactory and sorrowful (*dubkha*) and another reality which was entirely satisfactory and blissful (*sukha*). I do not think I went to nirvana and back, but the opposition I felt resonates with a statement by the Buddha preserved in the Theravada tradition:

There is a realm which is not the physical realm, nor the realm of the infinity of space, nor the realm of the infinity of consciousness, nor the realm of nothing whatsoever, nor the realm of neither notions nor non-notions, neither this world nor

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investigate what comes to the *intellectus* and see how it fits with the rest of what we know. If it is authentic and properly construed, it will help us make more sense of things. If it is totally “off the wall,” we can dismiss it as a fantasy.

Buddhism does not divide up the mind in quite this way, but its approach is similar. The Buddha, it is said, comprehended reality completely and all at once, with a holistic mental faculty which the Tibetans call *rigpa*. He told us what he saw, but warned us not to take him at his word but to try on the ideas ourselves, to test them in our daily lives and see if they work for us. I encourage you to do the same here. I will

another world, and where there is no time. There, monks, I tell you, there is neither coming nor going, permanence nor impermanence, nor anything which arises. It has no support, foundation, or basis. This is the end of *dubkha*. (*Udana* 8, my interpretive translation)

I understood that the meadow which I saw was not itself another reality but what I would call a “symbol screen” which arose from my own thought patterns. Upon reflection, I think the arising of the meadow was dependent upon my

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explain my experience as best as I can. Take as much of what I say as you yourself find useful, and leave the rest.

### **THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE WORLDS**

The rapid juxtaposition of physical reality and the other reality made them stand out in sharp contrast. The main differences, which I felt at once, were:

- physical reality is composed of a substance which we call matter: it is harsh, impersonal, opaque, intractable, truculently responsive, fragile, impermanent, prone to sickness, decay, and death;
- the other reality was composed of a substance which felt like the precipitation of unconditional love: it was soft, supple, enduring, resilient, instantly and constantly responsive and interactive, nurturing, enfolding, embracing, luminescent and

attempt to work with the Buddhist-Christian dialogue in myself by placing it in the context of Gaia, the common matrix of all human experience. Had I stayed longer in that other reality, I believe that the symbol screen would have been removed or dissolved, or I would have traveled into the scene and over the hill, and another reality, independent of my personal history, would have appeared. That reality would be unconditioned, non-referential, and non-Cartesian; it would not appear as “this” or “that” but as multidimensional and synesthetic. It might have been the realm which the Buddha described to his monks.

### **REALMS OF REBIRTH AND THE PURE LAND**

The Buddhist universe is very crowded. There are many realms in which beings may be born, die, and be reborn somewhere else. Six of these realms are called the Sensual Realms, because the beings are dominated by sense desires: they include the realms of peaceful and restless deities, humans,

animals, hungry ghosts, and the realms of extreme suffering (“the hells”).

Above them (or beyond them, depending on how they are visualized) are the four realms which the mind enters as it becomes more and more concentrated. They are called Form Realms because, if one is reborn there (rather than just going there mentally during meditation) one finds a world of shapes, colors, and symbols, but nothing solid.

Above or beyond those again are the four Formless Realms mentioned in the quotation from the Buddha—the states of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing at all, and neither-consciousness-nor-non-consciousness. The Formless Realms are so subtle that nothing seems to happen there, and they are called the Motionless Realms. The inhabitants experience little or nothing, and some non-Buddhist religions identify them as states of final liberation. The Buddha denied this, saying that karma is still operative there and a being in one of the Motionless Realms eventually dies and is reborn in another realm. Since the being cannot remember a previous life (for, indeed, there was nothing going on and so nothing to remem-

related. For a short time, my consciousness (soul, spirit, or what have you) left my body and visited another realm. After my condition was stabilized, my consciousness returned (through the crown chakra, apparently) and I woke up in the recovery room.

If that is so, then what realm, according to Buddhist cosmology, did I visit? It might have been a deity realm, but it did not have the ecstatic sensuality, like the ultimate drug high, which is the main feature of a deity realm. My senses were delighted, but they did not, as sensual delights usually do, lead to craving for more (*raga*). True, I returned unwillingly, but I felt a zest for the spiritual life (*dharm-priti*), and I returned with a sense of having been ennobled rather than seduced.

The description of Sukhavati, the Land of Bliss or, as it is more usually known, the Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha, closely resembles what I felt. The Pure Land has considerable witness in the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures (three major texts entirely devoted to it and many references to it in other texts), and it has become the basis for Pure Land Buddhism, the most popular form of Buddhism in East Asia. The first

**Although the other reality and this reality were clearly different, I did not get the impression that they were necessarily separate. The opacity of physical matter, however, hides the other reality from us when we are in ordinary consciousness.**

ber) that being regards the teaching about rebirth as false.

These three groups of realms—the sensual, the form, and the formless—collectively called the Triple World, constitute the entire universe of *samsara* (cyclic existence). The quote from the Buddha should now be clearer. He is saying that the realm of liberation from suffering (*dubkha*) is *outside* the universe.

So, where was I in all of this? At first, I think I entered, mentally but not bodily, one of the Motionless Realms. Under general anaesthesia, nothing seems to happen. The body is immobilized and the mind, I now think, is immobilized with it, but karma still operates, the life stream (*bhavana-sota*, the stream of becoming) goes on. On awakening, we reconnect with our conscious life before we were wheeled into the operating room, but we remember nothing of the time when we were anaesthetized. I have often puzzled over what was happening, if anything, when I was out cold. Why didn't I dream? If my consciousness had been snuffed out, how did it come back so that I could remember my name, recognize that I was in a hospital, and correctly identify the current President of the USA? I now think I have the answer. I may be wrong, but I believe it is worth discussing.

During this particular operation, there was a life-threatening event, and when I woke up, I was certain that I had gone somewhere and come back. It was not as if I had dreamt. Dreams seem real at the time but they dissolve when we waken. We have no difficulty saying, “That was vivid, but it was a dream.” My experience was self-authenticating in a way that dreams are not, and the more I reflect on it, the more real it seems.

I believe that the cardiac emergency and my experience are

systematic interpretation of the Pure Land tradition was composed by Tanluan (6th century). The sutras say that the Pure Land is the product of the extended meditation of Dharmakara Bodhisattva, that it is produced by the power of his mind, and that Dharmakara has now become the Buddha Amitabha. Tanluan expands on this by commenting that the Pure Land is, in effect, the clothing of Amitabha Buddha, who is himself the personal face of perfect wisdom and perfect compassion. If the Pure Land is an emanation of Amitabha, and Amitabha is, Tanluan says, wisdom and compassion made visible, I think we could say that the Pure Land, like the realm which I experienced, is a precipitation of unconditional love, and that it has in some sense a personality.

Tanluan describes the Pure Land as being free from sensual desire, having form, and having “ground to stand on.” None of the realms of rebirth have all three of these characteristics, so the Pure Land is “outside of the Triple World.” The Pure Land, he says, “exists extra-phenomenally” (*chuyoueryou*) and is therefore called “subtle” (*miao*). Also, he says, through the incomprehensible power of the Buddha, the Pure Land is full of sensual delights (in particular, it sparkles with brilliant jewels which are as soft as swansdown to the touch), but they do not feed our craving but stimulate us to the practice of the Dharma. All this is reminiscent of the feelings I had about the realm to which I went. There is, of course, a big difference in content: the Pure Land is decidedly Buddhist, and my experience was not Buddhist in any traditional sense. As I have said, this may be because I was experiencing Gaia as the matrix for Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

The Pure Land is centered on Buddha Amitabha, but there are “border regions” where beings stay until they are ready to advance to final liberation. Perhaps I experienced something like a border region which was the forecourt to a realm where the dialogue between religions is taken to a new level of mutual intimacy.

#### **STAYING THERE OR COMING BACK**

If I will go to that wonderful realm when I die, what am I doing here? The bladder is gone, but it was found to have a stage three tumor, so I was told there is an even chance that

happened to him when he took LSD, but the vision was dependent on the drug and it faded. Jim Morrison tried to take us through those doors with his music, and we caught a glimpse of what lay beyond, but he stumbled and got lost in addiction. Great art can sometimes alert us to “the dearest freshness deep down things” (Gerard Manley Hopkins), but meditation is the surest way to learn to see clearly.

When we meditate, we need not force ourselves, straining for insight. The Buddha Nature is already in us. Even in a speck of dust, says the Flower Garland Sutra, there are hun-

**This reality is the hallucination, created by karma and our deluded consciousness. When we allow the mind to become calm and clear, the deities and their palaces appear. “If the doors of perception were cleansed,” wrote William Blake, “everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.”**

some cancer cells have escaped, and if they colonize another part of the body, I could die in eighteen months. If I undergo prophylactic chemotherapy, the chances of the cancer coming back are reduced by eighty percent. Wouldn't it be better to refuse the chemo and hope to die soon? Well, maybe, but I have taken Bodhisattva vows, darn it, and I'm supposed to

dreds of millions of Buddhas on lotus thrones, teaching Dharma. We just need to allow ourselves to see them. When we are healthy, in love, well fed, and having a great day, it is easy to see the Light. When we are sick, lonely, hungry, and depressed, the Light is still there, but we need to make an effort to see it. An effort to relax, that is, and let the doors of our perception

**When we meditate, we need not force ourselves, straining for insight. The Buddha Nature is already in us. Even in a speck of dust, says the Flower Garland Sutra, there are hundreds of millions of Buddhas on lotus thrones, teaching Dharma. We just need to allow ourselves to see them.**

stick around in samsara as long as there are beings who need help ending their suffering. It's tempting to want to leave, however, especially when I'm tired, ill, and the piss bag is leaking.

But there is another consideration. Although the other reality and this reality were clearly different, I did not get the impression that they were necessarily separate. The opacity of physical matter, however, hides the other reality from us when we are in ordinary consciousness.

This resonates with the teaching about visualizing Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, intra- and extra-samsaric deities, and their mandalas or palaces. When listening to their descriptions and trying to see them, it may seem as if we are exercising what Carl Jung called creative imagination. We are trying to con ourselves into hallucinating. In fact, we are told, it is the other way round. *This* reality is the hallucination, created by karma and our deluded consciousness. When we allow the mind to become calm and clear, the deities and their palaces appear. “If the doors of perception were cleansed,” wrote William Blake, “everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” Aldous Huxley quoted this when he tried to explain what had

be cleansed. Then, we don't need to leave here and go to a wonderful world of light and love somewhere else. This realm of suffering is shot through with life and love: samsara is totally pervaded by nirvana. Even when a urostomy bag leaks. ■

**Further Reading:** The classic book on near death experiences is *Life After Life: The Investigation of a Phenomenon — Survival of Bodily Death* by Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D. (Mockingbird Books, 1975). *Death and Dying: The Tibetan Tradition*, by Glenn Mullin (Arkana Paperbacks, 1986) presents an anthology of texts from various traditions. The so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which has become popular in the west, may be read in the translation of Francesca Fremantle (Shambhala, 1975) or Robert Thurman (Bantam Books, 1994). The curious version of W. Y. Evans-Wentz (Oxford, 1927) is best avoided except for its historical interest.

**Roger Corless is Professor of Religion, Emeritus, at Duke University. He contributes an occasional column to the GBF Newsletter under the by-line “Ask Dharma Daddy.”**

# GBF

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## GBF Thanksgiving Potluck

Thursday, November 24, 2005,

4 p.m. at Kei Matsuda's in the East Bay

Celebrate Thanksgiving Day with the Gay Buddhist Fellowship. This will be a time for GBF members and friends to come together and celebrate sangha over an abundant meal. The gathering will start on Thanksgiving Day at 4:00 p.m.

GBF members planning to attend should call Kei in advance to help coordinate dishes. Kei's telephone number is (510) 237-5091. Kei's address is 7341 Pebble Beach Drive, El Cerrito, California.

See you there!

## Meditation Workshop Offered Every Second Sunday of the Month

All are welcome to join us for discussion, instruction and practice in various styles of meditation. This group is a forum for those who are interested in beginning a meditation practice as well as for experienced meditators who are interested in keeping their practice fresh. The ongoing workshops take place on the 2nd Sunday of each month from 9:45 to 10:15 a.m. in the meditation hall just before the larger group meets at 10:30 a.m. Questions? Contact Darin Little at 415-250-2991.

## How to Plan an Activity or Event with GBF

At the March All Sangha Meeting, members made a number of excellent suggestions for a variety of activities, including book discussion groups, mid-week sitting groups and social activities. The Steering Committee enthusiastically endorses these kinds of activities. There are four ways you can promote an event:

1. Create your flyer with the pertinent information to be made available at our Sunday meetings;
2. Put out the word on the Internet with our yahoo group;
3. Announce the event on Sundays;
4. Ask that the event be publicized on our bi-monthly newsletter.

If you need assistance organizing an event, consider asking someone in the sangha to help. The Steering Committee is seeking volunteers for an Activities Committee that would coordinate and publicize these monthly events. Service on this committee should not involve a huge time commitment, since publicizing an event involves little more than facilitating with the publicity steps listed above. If you're interested in volunteering for the Activities Committee, please contact a member of the Steering Committee.

## Your Thrift Store Donations Earn Money for GBF

GBF members can donate their quality cast-offs to the Community Thrift Store (CTS) and GBF will receive a quarterly check based on the volume of items sold. This is a great way to support our Sangha, and the community. So far this year we have received over \$800 through members' generosity. Bring your extra clothing and other items to CTS at 623 Valencia St between 10am and 5pm, any day of the week. The donation door is around the corner on Sycamore Alley (parallel to and between 17th and 18th) between Valencia and Mission. Tell the worker you are donating to GBF. Our ID number is 40. Information: (415) 861-4910.

# Calendar

## Sunday Speakers

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### October 2      Eve Siegel

Eve Siegel, M.S., CMT, is the founder of Kailas Body Therapy—an integrative approach for helping people create new ways to envision and embody their purpose and heart's desires through skillful, compassionate consulting and hands-on support. Her Tibetan Buddhist meditation practice—under the guidance of the Venerable Chhoje Rinpoche—has convinced her that people can actively learn to experience their own energetic aliveness. For further information, please visit her website at [www.kailasbodytherapy.com](http://www.kailasbodytherapy.com).

### October 9      Kirsten DeLeo

Kirsten DeLeo, M.A., is a longtime student of the Tibetan master Sogyal Rinpoche, author of classic bestseller *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, and a senior educator in Rigpa's Spiritual Care Program. Kirsten organizes and co-facilitates hospice and nursing home volunteer trainings, as well as workshops for medical professionals and the public on healing, aging, illness, bereavement, and death and dying. She has volunteered at the Zen hospice and Maitri in San Francisco for many years and is trained in the Hakomi method of psychotherapy.

### October 16      All-Sangha Meeting

### October 23 and 30      Tempel Smith

Tempel Smith began practicing meditation in 1989. In 1997, he ordained as a monk in Burma with Sayadaw U Pandita and Pa Auk Sayadaw. Now, back in the Bay Area, he is working on integrating these deep meditative practices into daily life and in his work with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. Tempel is the founder of both the West Coast Teen Meditation Retreat and BASE House, an intentional community dedicated to Socially Engaged Buddhism. He will be leading a gay-friendly teen retreat near Santa Cruz over the New Years holiday, introductory days of meditation in San Francisco, as well as supporting courses on mindful sensuality and sexuality.

### November 6      Carol Osmer Newhouse

Carol Osmer Newhouse has studied Insight Meditation for more than twenty years and has been teaching for ten. Her root teacher is Ruth Denison, who was empowered by the great meditation master U Ba Khin of Burma. She has also studied with Dr. Rina Sircar at CIIS and Dr. Thynn Thynn in Daily Life Practice. She is the founding teacher of the Lesbian Buddhist Sangha in Berkeley.

### November 13      David Richo

Dave Richo, Ph.D., M.F.T., is a psychotherapist, teacher, and writer California who integrates Jungian and Buddhist perspectives in his work. He is the author of *How Be To An Adult in Relationships* (Shambhala, 2002) and *The Five Things We Cannot Change and the Happiness We Find By Embracing Them* (Shambhala, 2005).

### November 20      Open discussion

### November 27      Jim Wilson

Jim Wilson, the former abbot of the Chogy Zen Center in New York, has studied in the Chogye, Fuke, and Soto traditions of Zen.

## Sunday Sittings

### 10:30 am to 12 noon

Every Sunday followed by a talk or discussion, at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett Street (near 21st St between Mission and Valencia).

**MUNI:** 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 21st St, walk 1/2 block.

**BART:** 24th and Mission, walk 3 1/2 blocks. Parking: on street (meters free on Sundays) or in adjacent New Mission Bartlett Garage (75¢ first hour, then \$1 per hour, \$5 max). The Center is handicapped accessible.

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## Miss a Dharma Talk?

You can listen to it on the Internet. Audio files of Dharma talks are available on the GBF website.

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## How to Reach Us

For 24-hour information on GBF activities or to leave a message:

**415 / 974-9878**

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World Wide Web Site

**[www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org)**

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GBF Newsletter

Send submissions to:

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## GBF Yahoo Discussion Group

There is now a GBF discussion group for the general membership (and others) on Yahoo.

Join the discussion at:

**[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/gaybuddhistfellowship](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/gaybuddhistfellowship)**

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By the power and truth of this practice, may all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness, may all be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow, may all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is without sorrow, and may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment or too much aversion, and live believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF dedication of merit