



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2007 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.

## The True Self

BY FURYU NANCY SCHROEDER

**Furyu Nancy Schroeder has been with the San Francisco Zen Center since 1976, was ordained a Buddhist priest in 1986, and is a dharma heir of Tenshin Reb Anderson. She is currently director of Green Gulch Farm. She spoke to GBF on November 5, 2006.**

In keeping with the season of Halloween, and the changing of our world from hot to cold and light to dark, I thought I'd tell you a ghost story. This story is from the Chinese Zen tradition. Actually it's a folk story that was taken by the Zen people to illustrate an important aspect of the human being. It was recommended to me when I was a student at Tassajara many years ago. I was probably in my early thirties and thoroughly miserable. I was doing practice periods in the monastery. We were in our winter season. I don't know how it is for some of you, but for me that time of year was a time when I really descended into the dark elements of my own mind and feelings, and a dark sense of dread would come on me. The abbot at that time was Mel Weitsman, who is the abbot of the Berkeley Zen Center, and he said to me, "You really need to read the story of Seijo and her soul."

So this is from Case 35 of the Mumonkan, the collection of koans which translated means "The Gateless Barrier" or "The Gateless Gift." The term koan actually translates as a "public case." In the Zen tradition, a koan would be a story, a teaching story, something that happened in public. Maybe some of us would have an exchange that would be memorable in some way or thought-provoking, and maybe someone else would write that down. He said, and then he said, and oh, that was interesting. So they would write it down and repeat it, and if it had a lot of juice, it might go on for several generations as these koans have. Most people think of the koan as a puzzle that is not to be solved but rather to disturb you and to challenge your usual way of understanding things, particularly yourself.

This koan is a little lengthy, but here we go. Once upon a time, there lived an old man named Chokan. Chokan loved his daughter Seijo very much. She was a beautiful girl, and he used to tell her while she was still young, "You're almost as good looking as your cousin, the handsome Ochu." So about the time these two cousins became teenagers, they had fallen in love. But the father, Chokan, announced the choice of another man as husband for Seijo, and the two young people were devastated with the news. Not able to bear the thought that the beautiful Seijo was going to marry someone else, Ochu left the village at night, setting off in a small boat. He

had rowed a distance when he saw someone running along the bank in the moonlight. At first, he thought it was a ghost, so he rowed faster. Then he realized with great joy that it was his beloved Seijo, who had followed him to the river. They reunited and decided to travel to a far-off land and become married and live a life together. And then many years later, when Seijo became a mother herself, she realized for the first time that parents' love for their children is profound. She

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began to feel a lot of remorse for leaving her own family. So she talked to her husband, and they agreed they would go back to their village and ask for forgiveness.

When they arrived in their village, Seijo remained in the boat while Ochu went to apologize to Chokan and tell him what had happened. The old man listened, but he didn't seem to understand what Ochu was saying. Finally, Chokan asked Ochu, “Who are you talking about?” The young husband replied, “I'm talking about your daughter Seijo, of course. We had run away, and now we have returned.” The old man just shook his head in disbelief. “But my daughter never left home!” the old man exclaimed. “She hasn't left her bed or uttered a single word since you left.” “You're mistaken,” Ochu replied. “Seijo followed me, and we went together to a far-off country. We are married now and have two fine children. She is in excellent health and wants to see you again and ask your forgiveness for running away and marrying without your permission. If you don't believe me, come down to the boat and see for yourself.”

The old man was reluctant, so Ochu went alone to the boat to bring Seijo back to her father's house. In the meantime, Chokan, the father, went into the bedroom to tell the sick Seijo what was happening. Without a word, the invalid rose from her bed and rushed out to meet the approaching Seijo. As the two embraced, they became one.

So the Zen master says to us, to me, to all of you, “Which is the true Seijo? Which is the true fool? Which is the true each of those names you all say to yourselves? Which is the true one of you? Is there one? Are you whole?”

This question, or koan, serves like a light, like a lantern. If we are willing to look inside ourselves, perhaps there is a dispossessed part, a part of ourselves that stayed an invalid, that never really came to life. And then meanwhile, the other part went along and had a life, stayed busy, found a job, perhaps a relationship, perhaps not. Anyway, off you went; off she went. If this is so, the koan may resonate for you. It certainly did for me—the idea of there being maybe more than two, but at least

there are two here: one that was frozen and protective and perhaps hidden away, and one that went about her daily life feeling as though she were missing a big part of herself.

In the language of Buddhist teaching, this frozen quality that may be inside of us is called samsara. It's the frozenness of going through circles of familiarity, the same pattern day after day, the same way of thinking, the same way of reacting, over and over again. That's frozen, frozen in the familiar. So the other Seijo, the one that ran away with her lover down the river, looks like the better choice, doesn't it? “Well I'll just escape. I won't be frozen; I'll run away.” But this is the other kind of samsara, the endless circling of “I'll just run away. I'll just leave this situation and go to a better situation.” This is also a pattern. In Buddhist understanding, this is called “turning away” or “touching,” and either way we abandon one half of ourselves.

I was thinking of this part of myself that was filled with pain, and I have this image of a sow bug, kind of curled up around the difficulty and hiding away inside, very afraid and tender and protective. And then there's the daily life, as I said. You know, there we go, on with our daily life.

This feeling of separation is what this koan is about. How have we split ourselves off? For some years now I've been reading about Western psychological theory, and there is one particular teacher who basically says that the primary or the fundamental illness for the human being is duplicity, that there are two of us. This therapist, Helmut Kaiser I believe was his name, would invite a client into his office in his home, and he wouldn't say anything at all. And very soon the per-

son would get a little uncomfortable and say, “Well, don't you want to ask me some questions?” and he would say, “Would you like me to ask you some questions?” “Well aren't you supposed to find out something about me?” “Well, would you like to tell me something about you?” He would just basically leave the person there, and little by little in each case the people would begin to show these two sides of themselves over and over, so he called this the universal symptom, duplicity. That fearful one, the one who wants someone else to tell him what to do, or is just kind of hiding inside. And then there are these behaviors that we do to not let anyone know, we hope, how it is, how that protected one is inside.

This question—which is the true Seijo? Which is the true Fu?—over and over again, is the working of the koan: how to find the answer myself to this question. The teaching says there is a name that we have that is our true name. And you could say, as each of you did, that name that each of you have, but I've always felt that one was a little wrong, you know, “My name is Bob,” or “My name is Bill,” or “My name is Fu.” I don't know. Is that my name? Is that my true name? The Buddha said your true name is what you really are. It is not so much what you are called, but what you really are. And what you really are is awake. You are awake; that is the quality that you have that is characteristic of a living being.

**It is not uncommon for people when they begin meditation to encounter some fear, some dread, in fact, even terror. Maybe there's nothing there. Your true self may be something you can't find. It's not the one who is busy. It's not the one you count on, the one who likes blue better than yellow. That preferential personality you have is not your true self. . . . If we risk this person, if we are willing to risk this person that we carefully assembled, if we are willing to let that go long enough to look, there is a true self that is there. It is silent and vast and connected, and belongs, and is content and tranquil and peaceful, and it kind of looks like this image of the Buddha.**

The name for the word awake is “Buddha”; that is what the word means. That doesn't apply to anybody; it applies to life itself. We are awake. We know that; you all know that. What you are going to do about that—that's more complicated. What to do with being awake, with being alive—we are a little bit confused about that. Now what?

In his commentary on this koan, Master Mumonkan says, “When you realize what the real you is, you will see that we just pass from one husk to another like travelers stopping for a night's lodging.” And these husks are experiences that we have throughout the day. Let's just say this morning. How was it this morning? Well, you woke up. Were you surprised? Were you somewhere unusual? Or you woke up to the familiar, perhaps, to the cycle of familiarity. You got up; you did

the same breakfast that you usually do, and made coffee the way I usually make it. So all of those different experiences are what master Mumonkan is calling the “husks.” They are like these little experiential pods. We pass from one to the other. But who is it that is passing through these experiences? This is true self, awake. There is awareness that is moving through these different husks, one after the other, and as we leave one, the other one simply vanishes. Another image is going from room to room in a great house. Some rooms are red; some are blue; some are happy or unhappy. But through them all we go, awake, awake, walking through each of these different qualities of life: angry, happy, unhappy, excited, in love, angry. In and out, in and out. In this process of living, who is the one that is awake? Where is the one that's awake? Your true self, your true name?

Suzuki Roshi says, “Your true self is always on your side. It is not the object of anything. It is always the subject.” These are clues wherever you look for your true self, for awake. What is it to be an awakened being? But you are. I am. Why do we forget? It is so simple, like water running through our bodies. It is just clear awakened awareness. It is clarity, this clear thinking of the mind. But we get very drawn to the objects. We get all involved in the objects of our lives, objects like thinking, objects like colors, sounds, objects that we think

we don't have, that we want. If you turn the light around, onto yourself, onto your awareness itself, that's your true self, awake. I am awake.

Part of the difficulty we have encountering this quality of ourselves, this true self, is the “busy one,” the one who is going about the day, making coffee, taking care of things, answering the phone, doing their jobs, driving the car. So the busy one has an important function. He kinds of keeps us ahead of that anxiety we might feel when the business stops. It is pretty common for human beings to get a little scared when it gets too quiet. I have a mom who talks a lot, almost constantly. I was driving in the car with her one day, and I said to her—it felt very brave to say it —“Mom, would you mind being quiet for just about five minutes and see what happens? How is that for

you?” She said, “Oh, I can do that; I can do that.” About two minutes later she said, “Has it been five minutes?” and I said, “No, no, I’ll let you know.” So then I asked her, “How was that for you?” and she said, “I get scared.”

It was such a revelation for me. It is not uncommon for people when they begin meditation to encounter some fear, some dread, in fact, even terror. Maybe there’s nothing there. Your true self may be something you can’t find. It’s not the one who is busy. It’s not the one you count on, the one who likes blue better than yellow. That preferential personality you have is not your true self. In fact, you don’t even know who that is. It’s sort of evolved from when you were little, and you

**To my teacher one time I said, “Is this Zen thing fast enough? It just feels like the world is getting worse! It hasn’t stopped the fighting; it hasn’t stopped anything. It’s just as bad as it always was! I don’t feel like it’s making a big change.” And he said, “Well, perhaps the world is safer from you.”**

packed it in and made some choices, and then you stuck to them, or they stuck to you. So there you are; you’re a person. If we risk this person, if we are willing to risk this person that we carefully assembled, if we are willing to let that go long enough to look, there is a true self that is there. It is silent and vast and connected, and belongs, and is content and tranquil and peaceful, and it kind of looks like this image of the Buddha. That’s a human being at peace. Just like us, same shape, same number of arms and legs and toes. It’s a person at peace. That’s what each of us looks like when we find that place. Dropped away, dropped off, a person dropped off. It’s a great relief. It ought to be a great relief, and you don’t have to worry because, he’ll come back. He won’t stay away for long. It’s like a coat in the closet. He’ll come right back. So it’s nothing really to be worried about.

So we practice tranquility. That is what we were doing this morning, practicing tranquility, so we can have access to this experience of ourselves, as the peaceful one, as the one who is awake, the subject without the object. We call the kind of meditation we do in Zen the “objectless awareness.” We take no object. Object would mean subject, two things, split off. There is no object, subject only, mind only. No separate external thing. When the Buddha looked at the night sky as dawn was breaking, he saw a star and he said, “I get it.” What did he get? This is the big question. What did the Buddha see when he saw the star? I say he saw nothing outside. The star wasn’t outside himself; it was co-extensive with himself. You don’t have seeing without an object and a subject. You can do away with one of those—either object only or subject only; either way it doesn’t matter. There is no separation between seeing and that which is seen. We’ve never seen a thing outside. We’ve never heard a thing outside. Hearing and sound are one. Seeing and that which is seen are one. We don’t learn

that in high school. We are not actually taught how we really are, what it’s really like, but we know it. We actually know it because we are that, but our language doesn’t tell us and our schooling doesn’t tell us. We are uncomfortable because, wait a minute, I am this non-separate, aware being.

So tranquility practice, or *samatha* practice, is the practice of calming the mind, the human mind which runs almost non-stop with what we call discursive thinking, like the radio program that is on all the time—we each have one, probably in your own voice. For English speakers, it speaks English; for Spanish speakers it speaks Spanish. Isn’t that funny? On and on and on. So the idea for practice, for meditation, is to quiet

that discursive mind, to turn it down. The best I usually can do is a mumble. Somebody is mumbling in my right leg. Shhhh! It’s tolerable. And when that happens, when this discursive thinking actually quiets, there is this spaciousness, this openness that is always there. We get distracted by our thinking. Thinking is very powerful. Thinging. *Think* and *thing* come from the same root. We make things by thinking. I just made this pillow. It wasn’t there until I said so. It wasn’t there for me. I give it a feeling. I give it a color. So we “thing” the world into being, and then we complain! That’s not the way I want it to be! There’s a little tension there.

Samatha practice, tranquility practice, is one of the two major elements of meditation. Calming the mind is step one. In all traditions of Buddhism, that practice is taught. It’s primary—samatha, tranquility. And the basic practices are almost all the same. There are lots of subtle variations, but in the four foundations of mindfulness the Buddha teaches the first foundation of mindfulness is mindfulness of the body because it is the grossest level of our experience of ourselves. You can locate the body; most can find it somewhere around here. So you locate your body, your experiences of your body, and you focus on those. The first foundation of mindfulness, and the element of the body that is the most available to us and the most reliable as an object of meditation, is the breath. (I’m contradicting myself a little bit. I said no objects, but this is a preliminary practice to enter into objectless meditation. We start with objects, so the object of our meditation is the breath.) You can feel your breath, so it is very handy. At any time of the day, if you’re feeling agitated, if you’re driving or sitting at a desk, or whatever you’re doing, find your breath, and just stay with it. If you’re arguing with somebody, find your breath, and stay with your breath. Quite naturally you’ll begin to calm. This is tranquility practice. I generally give

introductory Buddhist meditation as breath practice: follow your breath; follow your breath, until the questions are gone, until the “then what’s” are gone.

Once you calm, you don’t want to leave that space. That’s why we ring the bell. Otherwise, you wouldn’t want to get up. How pleasant it is to be calm. Our practice is to come from tranquility back to busyness and then back to tranquility. Some people call it yo-yo Zen. You calm down, and then you do a lot of work, fast. We sometimes get students who think meditation is about going really slow. So they go in the kitchen, you give them a carrot, and then they go in slow motion. And we go, “No, no, no. You can do it really fast, without losing your tranquility.” It’s not about speed; it’s about concentration—*samadi*. It means one pointed concentration. You’ve calmed down, and you’re focused and concentrated, and now you can work from there, and you don’t get distracted, and you don’t snip your fingers.

I guess it’s an exciting part of our practice to bring it into our lives, bring that tranquility and focus into your daily life, into your work, into your driving, into your walking. So again, mindfulness of the body: How is your spine? How is your head? Are your ears lined up with your shoulders? Is your spine straight? I usually suggest you take a look at a two-year-old if you want to remember how to hold your body when you walk. They’re perfect! They’ve just learned how to walk, and they’re totally upright, perfectly balanced. Then, when they get

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to be about fourteen, they go like this—curling up—the sowbug starts to come in. Teenagers are amazing. It’s almost like a law that you cannot stand up straight if you’re a teenager—at least not in our culture. They are required to collapse. So we have to kind of decide which way we want to go—toward the natural alignment of our body? It’s a healthy way to hold yourself. Your lungs are open, your head is balanced, and you’re not carrying your weight on your shoulders. Your head is very heavy. If you carry it forward—if you watch people walking, especially in downtown San Francisco, their heads are forward; they’re late. It looks like that, like everybody is late. You know, you can be late with your head above your shoulders. You can be on time the same way too, you know. Feet go first. But there is something about that willingness to

claim your upright posture—I think there is something more going on there. I was talking to someone this morning, and I said, “How would it feel if you just stretched your spine up and sat up straight?” And she did it. It looked very nice, and then she said, “This is scary.” I said, “OK, I understand. It is scary.” She said, “I feel exposed.” I said, “Yeah, that’s right, we are exposed. We are the sowbugs uncurled.” We have to rely on strangers for kindness—to protect us.

To my teacher one time I said, “Is this Zen thing fast enough? It just feels like the world is getting worse! It hasn’t stopped the fighting; it hasn’t stopped anything. It’s just as bad as it always was! I don’t feel like it’s making a big change.” And he said, “Well, perhaps the world is safer from you.”

Suzuki Roshi said, “Sooner or later we die, and we go to the same place we go when we sat Zazen.” I think that’s such a relief, and I think it’s true. When that discursive mind is quiet and you’re not thinking, “thinging” the world, that’s the perfect peaceful place. And I think when we die, that’s where we go. I trust him. I’m going to hold him to that.

I think that’s most of what I wanted to say. I would like to close with a poem. This is from the koan, Seijo’s koan. So Seijo is now of a piece. She has come home; she has reunited with her parents, with her village, with her own family, her own children, her spouse of her choosing, herself—she has become whole. So this is the outcome of a life with practice. If you have no other aspiration, that’s really the aspiration I

think we’re all really longing for: to be whole, to be at home, to belong, wherever we are, to belong. So that every moment, we are embracing and embraced by all the colors and textures and sounds, so that there is nothing other than sound and texture and color. You are that: you are all you see; you are all you hear; you are all you feel; you are all of that.

Here is a poem from this koan:

The clouds and the moon are the same.  
Valleys and mountains are different from each other.  
All are blessed. All are blessed.  
Ten thousand blessings. Ten thousand blessings.  
Is this one?  
Is this two? ■

# GBF

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## GBF Theatre Party on February 17th

There will be a theatre party on Saturday, February 17, to see Sam Shepard's classic *True West*, hailed by the New York Times as "a great American play, arguably Mr. Shepard's finest." The play is directed by GBF member Paul Shepard, who describes it as "a dark comedy about two feuding brothers: Austin, an aspiring screenwriter, and Lee, a vagrant flimflam man who attempts to sabotage a film deal that Austin is making with a movie producer. As the play progresses toward its violent climax, we see each brother's identity morphing into the other's."

The play begins at 8:00 at Live Oak Park Theatre. Complete information about the play, including directions to the theatre in Berkeley, can be found at [www.aeof-berkeley.org](http://www.aeof-berkeley.org). After the play, GBF facilitator Marvin Snow has offered to host the closing night party to which GBF members are invited. He lives in the Berkeley Hills above the theatre at 2 Northgate Ave., Berkeley, 94708. GBF members are asked to RSVP to Marvin at (510) 898-3229. Use our e-mail group if you need to arrange for a ride, or ask at announcement time at the Sunday meetings.

We had a prior theatre party on January 6 which was most successful. We found it was a wonderful way to build sangha.

## The Uncertain Future of LGBTQ Retreats at Spirit Rock

BY LARRY YANG

I have received a letter from Urusa Fahim, who is the Diversity Coordinator at Spirit Rock. After many years of dialogue about the LGBTQ retreat, my understanding of the situation is that Spirit Rock is unable to maintain the future 2008 LGBTQ residential retreat as it has been handled in the past (the up and coming 2007 LGBTQ retreat is planned as it has been in previous years). Much of this is related to the increasing financial burden of running retreats and the growth of Spirit Rock as a meditation center. You should be aware that the LGBTQ retreat is not the only retreat facing these issues. Other retreats that have not filled to capacity (about 85 participants is a "full retreat") are also in a similar position of being pulled off-site to smaller retreat facilities. [FYI, the LGBTQ retreat currently draws around 50-55 participants each year.]

The two options in Urusa's letter that Spirit Rock has come up with are: (1) to have the retreat off-site at the Angela Center in Santa Rosa, but have lower levels of financial assistance available for off-site retreats due to current financial aid policy determined by the Board (i.e. the retreat would cost at minimum \$35-40 per night for a 5-night retreat), or (2) to keep the retreat at Spirit Rock with the current levels of financial assistance uncompromised for those who need it, but to have a concurrent "parallel" retreat happen at the same time (to fill all available retreat spots).

What these two options do not articulate are any other possible solutions to the intersecting, complex needs of the LGBTQ community and those of Spirit Rock. It is critical for you to become involved in this discussion, if you have any interest in the LGBTQ retreats at Spirit Rock. I highly encourage you to present any ideas you have that address the multiple needs of both LGBTQ communities and Spirit Rock. It might require some out-of-the-box thinking, collaboration, and commitment on the part of our collective LGBTQ communities. Two other ideas that are not part of what Spirit Rock is considering are as follows.

(1) What prevented the People of Color retreat at Spirit Rock from experiencing a similar compromise of dedicated culturally-specific retreat space is that the POC retreat found major donors to completely subsidize the retreat so that it became an all-dana retreat. Spirit Rock got their costs reimbursed and the community had all financial barriers to access alleviated—a win-win situation. The POC retreat subsequently filled to capacity, which never occurred in the past (this might also happen for LGBTQ communities). This requires either the support of foundations, grants, or private donors to step forward or express interest in

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# Calendar

## 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. The Center is handicapped accessible.

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### February 4 **Sylvia Boorstein**

Sylvia Boorstein has been teaching since 1985 and teaches both vipassana and metta meditation. She is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center and a psychotherapist, wife, mother, and grandmother who is particularly interested in seeing daily life as practice. Her books include *It's Easier Than You Think, the Buddhist Way to Happiness*; *Don't Just Do Something, Sit There, A Mindfulness Retreat*; *That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist: On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist*; and *Pay Attention for Goodness' Sake, Practicing the Perfections of the Heart—The Buddhist Path of Kindness*.

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### February 11 **Panel on Aging**

GBF members Harv Whitten, Don Wiepert and Jim Stewart will be interviewed by Dean Bellerby about their various perspectives on aging.

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### February 18 **Discussion on Aging**

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### February 25 **Jesse Wiens**

Jesse Wiens draws his inspiration from six years of training in Zen Buddhism, under the guidance of many wonderful teachers, including Tenshin Reb Anderson and Toni Packer, and five years of training in Nonviolent Communication (NVC) with founder Dr. Marshall Rosenberg and trainers John Kinyon and Robert Gonzales, among others. Jesse offers "ZENVC" through workshops, classes, and groups around the country. (See [zenvc.org](http://zenvc.org) for current offerings.) He is currently participating in LIFE, a two-year program focused on integrating and embodying NVC consciousness, and is a student and resident at the San Francisco Zen Center

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### March 4 **All Sangha Meeting**

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### March 11 **Pamela Weiss**

Pamela Weiss has practiced Buddhism for 20 years, including several years of Zen monastic training. She is a meditation teacher, professional coach, and leader of coach training programs. She is currently in teacher training with Jack Kornfield at Spirit Rock.

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### March 18 **Discussion**

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### March 25 **David Carr**

David has been sitting with and organizing retreats for the northern California circle of insight meditations teachers for

more than twenty years. Since 1986, he has coordinated Jack Kornfield and Stan Grof's Insight and Opening Retreats, which integrate the depth of practice and ancient wisdom of Buddhism with contemporary experiential psychological perspectives. Since 1993 he has trained in the Diamond Approach, an original path for self-realization which complements many ancient spiritual traditions, including the Buddhist understanding of the nature of mind, while building on the maps of modern depth psychology.

## How to Reach Us

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

For general questions about GBF write to:  
[inquiry@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:inquiry@gaybuddhist.org)

To reach our Program Committee with suggestions for speakers and comments, go to:  
[www.gaybuddhist.org/programs](http://www.gaybuddhist.org/programs)

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GBF Newsletter. Send submissions to:  
[editor@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:editor@gaybuddhist.org)

### **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)

### **SPIRIT ROCK, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

this. If you have any contacts to any potential individuals or LGBTQ foundations (like Tides or Horizons) that would support such a community event, please let Spirit Rock know.

(2) If the retreat is moved to the Angela Center, there can be a case for advocating that there be an exception made to the financial assistance limit set by the Board for off-site retreats, especially because the financial demographics of our LGBTQ communities are not the same as Spirit Rock's traditional audience. People would need to organize and advocate for that policy change.

Please use Ursula's contact information below to let Spirit Rock know what would most benefit your practice and the practice of the larger LGBTQ communities:

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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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