



Gay Buddhist Fellowship

Newsletter

JUNE 1997

GBF Calendar

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

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

5 June, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm:
meditation, at the home of Bill
Kirkpatrick,

6 June, (Friday) Steering Committee
Meeting, 4:00 pm: hike, 5:30 pm:
potluck, 7:15 pm: meeting at the
home of David Holmes,

8 June, Sunday Sitting (SF),
10:30am **NEW LOCATION:** SFBC,
37 Bartlett St. Paramananda, FWBO
will speak on "The Western Bud-
dhist Order" (see article on page 1).

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

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

19 June, Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm
at the home of Mark Marion,

Two Speakers For June - "The Western Buddhist Order" and "A Report From The Dalai Lama/ Gays Meeting"

Our speaker on June 8th will be Paramananda, a teacher in the Western Buddhist Order who is one of four teachers at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, the host site for our Sunday Practice Sittings. He will speak on "The Western Buddhist Order & The Teachings Of Sangharakshita". This will be a great opportunity to learn more about The Friends Of The Western Buddhist Order (FWBO), one of the few Western based Buddhist traditions.

The talk will review the history of the FWBO, their approach to establishing Buddhism in the West and the nature of spiritual friendships. Paramananda is the current chairman of the SFBC, has been an ordained teacher for eleven years and is author of a book on meditation.

On the 22nd we will have a report and discussion about the meeting between the Dalai Lama and a group of seven gay and lesbian Buddhists. The issue of gay sexuality and traditional Tibetan teachings has been featured in our newsletter, gay newspapers and in our local papers over the past five months. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 10th and will likely generate more newspaper coverage. Come and help us sort it all out on the 22nd. ♦



Allen Ginsberg To Be Remembered On Gay Pride Weekend

On Friday, June 27th, GBF invites you to "drop in" to a house party that will offer all of us a chance to just relax and have some fun together (also part of the dharma). Since this will be the kickoff of gay pride weekend we feel it is appropriate to celebrate the life of one of our great, gay Buddhists who recently left us physically, Allen Ginsberg. Some poetry will surely be read, perhaps a video tape and a sharing of some personal encounters with Allen. Call us with ideas or suggestions for the evening

Please bring your own choice of drink and some light food to share so that you won't have to drag dishes with you to wherever else you are going. It will be held from 7:30 p.m. till 11:00ish at Larry White's digs,

New GBF Brochure ; Audiotapes To Follow

Over the past two years, we have been trying to describe GBF in a simple and clear way. This has now been done and brochures have been duplicated on great lilac colored paper. They will be made available at our Sunday Sittings. If you live elsewhere and would like some copies to share with friends, please contact us. Our thanks go to Bob Hass for seeing the project through to completion. Watch for the announcement of audiotapes of GBF Dharma talks in our next issue. ♦



Editor's Mind

by Alan Oliver

You can consciously choose a theme for an issue or a theme can emerge from separate decisions and chance circumstances.

Thus compassion has appeared among our June decisions. Toby Johnson's article on "The Male Buddha Of Compassion" seemed particularly appropriate for our gay community since compassion is one of the great central points of the Dharma and much in need of being expressed by people who are gay. We live in a type of exile from the dominant culture although that is changing. It still makes it difficult to show compassion sometimes. Also the need for compassion towards ourselves needs to be kept bright and clear in our minds. The article reminds us of the old teachings and myths of Buddhism.

We coaxed an article from Christopher in Hyden, Kentucky because it seemed appropriate in this graduation month. Again the theme of compassion came up in his article as he sought ways to help other students who might be gay, his mother and to others who befriended him. Perhaps from a little distance and safety after graduation there is even a hint that it could be extended to the "Christians" in the school.

Paul in his letter from prison reminds us of the difficulty of living the Dharma in prison and his efforts to share it with others and Daishin David Sunseri suggests in *Dharma Gateways* that living it is better than talking about it as difficult as that can be.

Please share with the Sangha your favorite "Gateway" quotes, and start writing down your experiences along the path. We need to hear them. Be the start of a new theme in a future newsletter. ♦

It's The Early Bird That Gets To Retreat And To Take the 6th

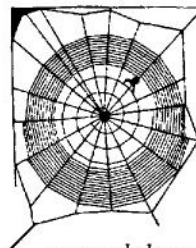
Now that we have got your attention with impossibly confusing mixed phrasing, we want to remind you to reserve time to attend GBF's 6th Annual Retreat at the Vajrapani Institute near Boulder Creek on September 5-7.

The schedule will include traditional practices of silent sitting and walking meditation on both mornings followed by sangha hikes and dharma dialogue in the afternoons. The focus of the dialogue periods this year will be on Buddhist approaches to relationships another step in the exploration of that part of our lives. More silent time is optional for individual needs.

Complete details and a registration form will be included in the July/August newsletter. This is a great opportunity for those members of GBF who live further away and can't make it to our usual programs. Enlightenment (at least a moment or two) guaranteed or your money back. We kid you not or do we? ♦

Contributors

Thanks to the following people who helped with this GBF Newsletter: Alan Oliver, Chris Alferitz, Jon Weaver, Scott Stalnaker, David Holmes, Mark Marion, Daishin David Sunseri, Tom Moon, Jack Carroll, Paul Veach, Toby Johnson - *White Crane Journal* and Christopher Osborne.



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.

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank you for publishing the article *Buddhism, Homosexuality and Renunciation*, by Ronald Martinez Lahoz in the March 1997 issue. I think it is one of the most thoughtful and level-headed considerations of sexual orientation and sexual conduct that I have read in a Buddhist publication. The fact that it is blessedly free from rant and cant contributes very much to its value.

On page five of the same issue you ask in regard to the "anti-gay letters" to the editor in *Tricycle*, "How should we respond as gay Buddhists?"

Perhaps we should respond as people who have confidence in the Buddha dharma and not look to make a special gay Buddhist response. If we are followers of the Buddha's way who are first gay/straight, male/female, European/African/Asian, and all the other "ors" that are rife in this world, then perhaps we have missed the point of Buddhadharma entirely. As human beings we all have to respond to situations, but should not we be responding as human beings in the light of Dhamma, rather than seeking a special-label-first response.

The difference between understanding our sexual orientation from within Dhamma, as opposed to considering Dhamma from the point of view of our sexual orientation first, may present many problems to our habitual mode of thinking. However, if we do not

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