



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

## Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 1997

### GBF Calendar

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

**2 Sept., Steering Committee Meeting** at the home of Larry White,

**4 Sept., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm:** meditation, at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick,

**5-7 Sept., GBF Annual Retreat (Vajraprani Institute).**

**7 Sept., Sunday Sitting (East Bay), 10:30 am,** at the home of Geoff McEnany

**8 Sept., Monday Sitting (Sonoma) 7:30 pm,** at the home of Avery

**11 Sept., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm:** meditation, at the home of Lee Robbins

**14 Sept., Sunday Sitting (SF), Dharma Talk, "Creating Lasting Happiness" (See article page 1), 10:30am,** SFBC, 37 Bartlett St.

**15 Sept. Monday Sitting, 7:30 pm. Call for location, Avery**

**18 Sept., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm at**

### "Creating Lasting Happiness" - September's Dharma Talk

Our speaker on September 14th will be the Venerable K.T. Shedrup Gyatso, spiritual director of the San Jose Tibetan Temple. Tipton, as he is known by his friends, is a fully ordained, openly gay, celibate, Buddhist monk. He is a disciple of Kama Tharchin and Penor Rimpoche, and a student of both the Nyingma and Kygu Schools of Tibetan Buddhism. He will be visiting us at the end of a long speaking tour of Canada and the United States. His topic will be "Creating Lasting Happiness."

Tipton has a fascinating personal history. Before he became a Buddhist, he was a Christian Pentecostal minister. He also has a long history of queer activism, and was the founder of Queer Nation San Jose. More recently, he was a member of the gay and lesbian delegation which met with the Dalai Lama in June.

### Poetry Night in Sept.

Poetry can reveal our deepest feelings or express our craziest delusions. Our Ginsberg Night in June was enjoyed by all. GBF invites you to a second relaxed evening of good company, and the opportunity to share your thoughts in verse—sacred or profane, sober or fun, penned by yourself or a favorite poet. Please bring your own choice of drink and light food to share. The "happening" will be on Friday, September 26, from 8:00p.m. till 11:00 p.m. at the home of Michael Collins,

### GBF—Sonoma Chapter Start-Up

For those of us in San Francisco who can arrive at GBF events after a short ride in the car or a convenient bus ride, there is a little awe associated with gay Buddhist who make it to events from the Peninsula, the East Bay or from the North.

In the past, we welcomed the start of a East Bay sitting group and now we are pleased to announce the beginning of a gay men's sitting group in Sonoma. Especially for those who would like a weekly evening group to practice with, a more local location is often essential. Of course we hope to still see our Dharma friends from the East Bay and Sonoma at our Sunday sittings and at special events/parties.

The group will meet on Mondays starting September 8th at 7:30 p.m.



### Web Site Installed

A new www site is now in operation. We are in the process of upgrading and adding material. Anyone who can help us with this task, please contact us. Our site address is:

<http://www.planereria.net/home/abaki/gbf.default.html>



## Editor's Mind

by Chris Alferitz

Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewel of Teachers, Teachings, and the Spiritual Assembly has the implication of fleeing from a place we know on some level to be negative, harmful and even dangerous! The literal translation in Japanese of "I take refuge in the Buddha" means "I throw myself through the door of the Buddha's house." The Four Noble Truths, and the Eight Fold Path are guides leading us from suffering to bliss! The nature of this journey is a vital topic!

With the annual GBF Retreat only days away, the *GBF Newsletter*, team once again presents the topic of *relationship* for reflection by our assembly. There is a balance and synergistic energy between various Buddhist spiritual practices (meditation, chanting, etc.), and the application of these practices. Spiritual theory and practice is only a means to an end, and never an end in itself. The primary goal of all Buddhist activity is an increase in *wisdom* and *loving kindness*.

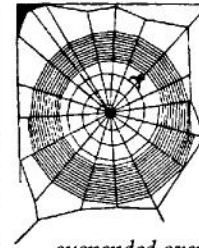
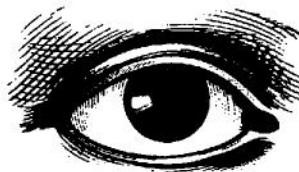
One sign of spiritual maturity should be a positive, healing, and nurturing relationship to ourselves, our community, and the universe. The most intense expression of this maturity is the ability to nurture ourselves and other people at the same time! Spiritual theory and practice is always validated by application in all spheres of life like a never ending cycle. Therefore, the subjects of spiritual theory and practice, and daily application are like an ocean, which can never be emptied or exhausted of treasure.

The gay "assimilationist" agenda

has a mixed score card! Most of the gay male community lives on the margins of this society. Even if the "assimilationist" agenda is successful, not all sub-groups in our community will have a "place at the table." How many gay males pretend to be "normal" in their quest for the Holy Grail of acceptance by the larger society?

Once the closet door to the heart is opened, most gay males experience some type of dysfunctionality. Many of our brothers are victims who endured long and intense suffering because their only "crime" was "facing the wrong way". The impact of "facing the wrong way" is further defined in the article by Tom Moon. Therefore, the daily spiritual expression of a kind, gentle, and open heart is a vital tool for healing and growth in our community.

Future issues of the *GBF Newsletter*, will present various tools used to interpret the classical Buddhist scriptures. The formal name of this field of study is called *Hermeneutics*. The recent dispute in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition points to the importance of hermeneutical exegesis (explanation of the language and thought of a literary work)! In last month's newsletter we published an excerpt of a larger work that tried to discover the homosexuality that might have been there in ancient times, but was not directly referred to in the written works of that time. How we relate to the traditional Buddhist scriptures is critical in telling our stories. The *GBF Newsletter* team shall borrow from the Jewish-Christian-Islamic hermeneutical experience in reviewing this topic because their tools are more developed in relation to American culture. As always, we welcome and appreciate any comments on the topics presented in any issue of this publication. ♦



## 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.*

## Letters: Voices From Indra's Net

*The following letter did not arrive in time to make our July/August issue of the newsletter. However, it expresses so well the rationale for attending such retreats at Buddhist Monasteries or Centers that it is worth sharing. It also keeps us up to date with Eric Kolvig's activities and reminds us that we need to ask him to put us on his schedule the next time he visits the Bay Area. Eric is a member of GBF and a valued Buddhist teacher who recently moved with his lover to Santa Fe, NM.*

Dear Friend,

For several years Arinna Weisman and Eric Kolvig have together led many Buddhist meditation retreats for gays and lesbians. This year we are fortunate to have them join us at Zen Mountain Monastery to lead a weekend retreat, August 14-17, titled "Gay & Lesbian Spirituality, A Retreat for Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals and their Friends."

Celebrating the gifts of gay and lesbian spirituality in the safety of retreats such as this creates a particular kind of joy for many participants, and brings a new dimension to taking refuge in the sangha (the community of practitioners).

Within the unique environment of Zen Mountain Monastery, and the daily monastic training schedule of zazen (formal seated meditation), liturgy, community work, and other forms of practice, we will explore

