



Gay Buddhist Fellowship

Newsletter

OCTOBER 1997

GBF Calendar

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

San Francisco Events

2 Oct., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm: meditation, at the home of Bill Kirkpatrick

7 Oct., Steering Committee Meeting 7:15 pm, at the home of Larry White,

9 Oct., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm: meditation, at the home of Lee Robbins,

12 Oct., Sunday Sitting /Picnic, 12:00 am at Green Gulch Zen Center, see article on page 1.

16 Oct., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm at the home of Mark Marion

18 Oct., GBF's Feed-The-Homeless Project at the Hamilton Family Center. To participate, contact Clint Seiter.

23 & 30 Oct., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm at the home of Larry White.

26 Oct., Sunday Sitting/Talk, 10:30 am at San Francisco Zen Center, 300 Page St., Please enter by the front door. See article on page 2.

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Disruptions In Store For Scheduled Sunday Sittings In October

When we moved our Sunday sittings to the San Francisco Buddhist Center in May of this year, we were informed that there would be a major conflict in October because of previously scheduled events during that month. We knew we would have to make other plans for this month so the following alternative schedule is an October challenge to our expectations.

October 12th At Green Gulch

This month a GBF picnic will be held at Muir Beach, just west of Green Gulch Farm Zen Center on Sunday, October 12th. Meet at the beach at 12:00 noon. Many of us will make a day of it, arriving early to join in the Zen Center's Sunday morning program. Meditation is at 9:25 a.m. followed by a dharma talk at 10:15 a.m. After the meditation and talk we will convene at the 11:15 tea and muffins gathering and walk to the beach about 11:45 a.m. (about a 15 minute walk). Please carpool to avoid the \$5.00 parking fee (three or more park for free). Early arrival is advisable.

You may want to arrive early and park at the beach, then walk up to The Zen Center through their productive farm/garden fields. For the picnic, bring your own beverage and some food to share. Call 415-529-1924 indicating your car pool needs or offers. Green Gulch Zen Center is 4.5 miles west of Highway 101 on

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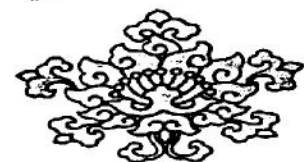
Q-Spirit Leads Off With Buddhist Panel in Fall Lecture Series-Oct. 6th

On Monday, October 6th, Q-Spirit presents a panel on Buddhism from a queer perspective as the first of seven presentations on major spiritual practices. The title of the series is "Exploring the World's Spiritual Traditions Through Queer Eyes". Besides Buddhism, it will sponsor sessions on Christianity (10/13), Hinduism/ Sufism(10/20), Earth-based Traditions(10/27), Taoism (11/3), New Thought (11/10), and Judaism (11/17).

These two hour sessions will start at 7:30 at the St. Francis Lutheran Church, 152 Church Street in San Francisco. These sessions will be a rare opportunity to examine spiritual practices from a queer perspective in a very concentrated and focused way.

The panel on the 6th is of particular interest to GBF since three of the five participants have been involved with GBF in various capacities. Daishin David Sunseri is one of our trained gay Buddhist teachers, Steve Peskind is a member of GBF and directs the Buddhist AIDS Project and Tom Moon is on our Steering Committee. Also on the panel is the Ven. Robina Courtin and Sandy Boucher who will bring a lesbian perspective on the Dharma.

Thanks go out to Q-Spirit for its recognition of all spiritual practices and its effort to support the integration of queer consciousness into spiritual practices. ♦





Editor's Mind

by Alan Oliver

This newsletter focuses on the remaining excerpt about the history of Gay Buddhism that we are reprinting from the article "The Gay Way of Buddhism". Japanese Zen Buddhism has richer sources that describe the interaction between Buddhism and Gayness than other Asian Buddhist traditions and therefore is the most provocative.

Over the past six months, we have tried to interweave several articles on relationships with some exploration of the historical background in Buddhism. As the quotes at the end of the article from the letters written by Zen monks say, those monks also were involved in figuring out and experiencing same-sex relationships within the context of their practice and daily lives in the monastery. As we continue to "do" relationship practice where ever we are, we are reminded that a balance between the unity of emptiness and a full awareness of our life at this moment must be maintained and eventually experienced as one. When you write about these issues as it appears in your life and send it for publication in the newsletter it helps all of us continue to explore these paradoxes. Hint: write an article for the newsletter.

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Thanks again to Tundra Wind for leading our annual retreat and the twenty two retreat participants for a wonderful weekend in September. These gatherings are real experiences in community (Sangha)

building and there is always talk afterward of doing more of it. However, we quickly get reabsorbed into our separate lives once we return home.

Perhaps another opportunity is the opening this month of the first of the Tibetan movies (October 8th), "Seven Years in Tibet" with Brad Pitt. Think about getting together with other GBF members to see the movie and then talk about the experience afterward. There are many gateways to Sangha. ♦

Disruption (continued from page 1)

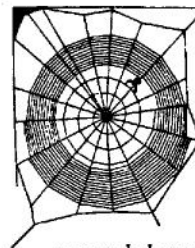
Highway 1 (Shoreline Highway). The entrance is partially hidden and requires a very sharp left turn off the highway at the sign.

October 26th- A Lesson In Tea

Cha-no-yu, popularly known as Japanese Tea Ceremony here in the West, has a long and close association with Buddhism, particularly the Zen traditions. Scott Stalnaker, our layout editor who studies *cha-no-yu* as part of his practice will share with us his experience of this practice. We will meet for meditation at the usual time of 10:30 a.m. at the San Francisco Zen Center, 300 Page Street. We will meet in the upstairs Zen-do. Please enter at the front door on Page Street. ♦

"We draw water, gather firewood, boil the water, and make tea. We then offer it to the Buddha, serve it to others, and drink ourselves. We arrange flowers and burn incense. In all of this, we model ourselves after the acts of the Buddha and the past masters."

-Sen no Rikyuu



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.

We continue to receive letters from the many people on our mailing list who are incarcerated in prisons. We are not set up to do a full prison project which would involve direct one-to-one correspondence, Buddhist materials or transitional aid after prison. However, as these two letters indicate, the newsletter is of some help.

Dear G.B.F.,

Thank you for contacting me. People don't know that being in prison is very hard and very lonely. Also, I don't have any family so anything you send is welcome. I really enjoy getting the G.B.F. newsletter. It has good and interesting articles and has helped me a lot as far as my practice goes.

Being a gay person in prison is not so easy and sometimes I feel like there's no one on the outside who knows I am alive. So G.B.F. is a good place to connect with other gay men who are practicing, and trying to live by the Buddha's teaching. Thank you very much for everything.

Sincerely, name withheld
Texas

Dear Editor,

First off, I would like to thank GBF and Daishen David Sunseri for the support they have been giving me in my spiritual walk while here in prison. Like most individuals

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