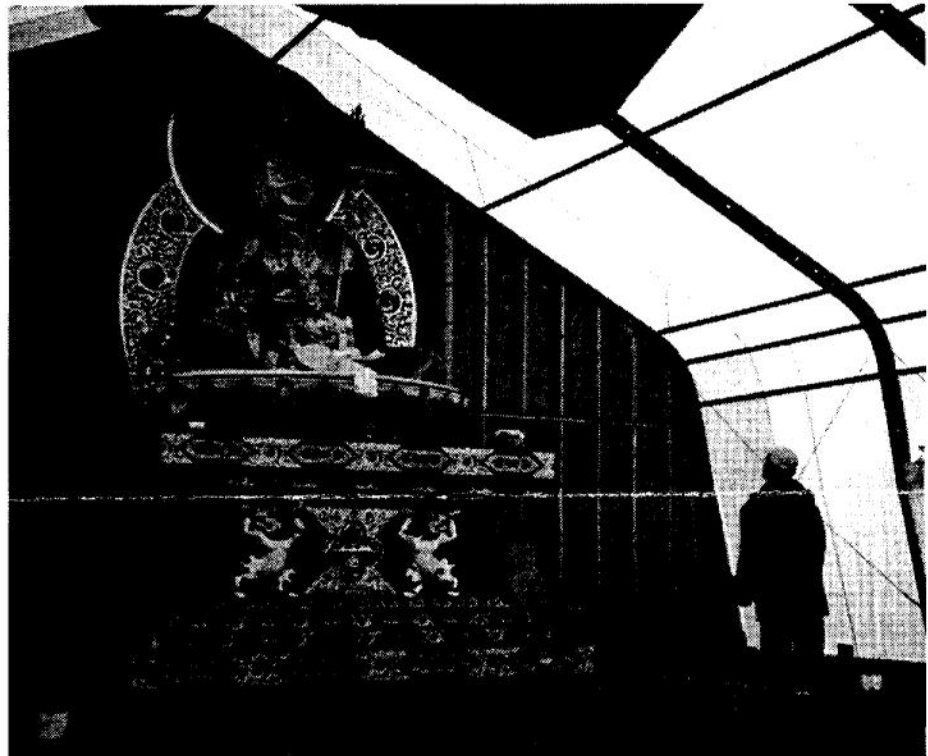


*Newsletter
April 2000*

Gay Buddhist Fellowship

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



The Practice of Deep Intimacy

*First Annual GBF Spring Retreat,
March 3-5*

GBF members gathered at Pema Osel Ling, a Tibetan Buddhist Retreat Center of the Vajrayana Foundation, in the Santa Cruz mountains, for two days of sunshine and rain, noble silence and intimate comradeship, sitting and walking, chanting and Sufi dancing. Dharma talks were given by Jim Wilson and Tulku Thubten Rinpoche of Pema Osel Ling. Dharma Daddy was also in attendance and offered a question-and-answer session.

GBF Committees

We always welcome and need interested participants, so please, **JOIN US!** Call the contact person on the committee, or talk to him (or anyone on that committee) at a GBF sitting or event. This is a great practice opportunity!

Steering Committee

Call 415.974.9878

Marty Cole	Clint Seiter
Hal Hershey	Terry Stein
David Holmes	Don Wiepert
Ding Hao Ma	

Newsletter Committee

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Marty Cole
Call 415.974.9878

The following committees are currently without chairs:

Development Committee
Social Committee
Practice Committee

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at 415.974.9878.



GBF Spring Retreat 2000



The First Year in Review

(from the September 3, 1992 issue of The Gay Buddhist Fraternity [sic] Newsletter)

It was in the mercifully rainy Fall and Winter of 1991 that a small group of Bay Area guys met and talked about starting a Buddhist club for gay men. The idea had been attempted at least once before, many years ago on Hartford Street in the Castro, and that group had over time evolved and redefined itself as Issan-ji, the Hartford Street Zen Center. Under the loving guidance of Issan Dorsey-sensei, HSZC blossomed as a center for Soto Zen practice in the heart of the gay ghetto and plunged head-on into the AIDS crisis with its Maitri Hospice.

But last year many men simultaneously became aware of a desire for a non-sectarian, pan-Buddhist fraternity to bring together gay men with new and, as of that point, unformulated goals and needs.

This new Gay Buddhist Fraternity began to meet informally twice a month and then blossomed chaotically, quickly outgrowing both the originators' expectations and capacities. By Spring, the GBF was able to hold its first weekend retreat at the wonderful new Tibetan Dharma center, Pema Osel Ling. With the

assistance of Zen teacher Tundra Wind and Lama Tarchin Rinpoche, the first Practice weekend was tremendously fruitful and rewarding for everyone.

The GBF soon made its first efforts at sponsoring a lecture series, beginning this Spring with the English Theravadin monk Ajahn Amaro and, more recently, with American Zen priest Myo Denis Lahey. Both talks were very well received.

On the fun side, members have organized a pot-luck brunch, a picnic in the park, and a group hike. Numerous friendships have evolved among the members, laying the foundation for a widening circle of Spiritual Friends.

Early on, the GBF Newsletter made its initial appearance announcing upcoming GBF events as well as Dharmic events in the Bay Area. The newsletter continues to evolve in both style and content, and will hopefully soon count on a larger staff and improved technical abilities.

Everyone deserves much credit for all that's been accomplished. May it serve to benefit! ▼



The Lojong Teachings

by David Richo, PhD

Everyone is an appreciated friend when we follow the Lojong teachings, eight verses designed in the twelfth century by Geshe Langri Tangpa to summarize Buddhist concepts. They can be found in a booklet by the Dalai Lama called *Training the Mind* (Wisdom, 1999). The central point of these skillful means for letting go of ego is in this verse: "Whenever others revile and treat me in other unjust ways, may I accept this defeat myself, and offer the victory to others." By cultivating compassion and by dissolving the illusion of an independent self, it becomes possible to love in such a humble way. The implications of this exalted teaching for intimate relating are clear once we realize that love is other-concerned. It is without hierarchy or insistence on individual autonomy. It does not cherish self-vindication. To see that leads to freedom from separateness. There is indeed an "I am" but without the conceptual limits with which we have surrounded it. "I am not a separate entity" means I am not limited by time or space. This is the real meaning of "no me." Limitation happens when we identify with any layer of ego.

Here is a summary of the eight verses of Lojong as a practice of affirmations that apply to relating egolessly:

May I consider all beings precious.

May I always respect others as superior while maintaining self-esteem.

May I face my inner darkness and turn it to good.

May I be moved with compassion for the pain behind the spite others

may show me.

When I am hurt by others, may I forego retaliation while always fighting injustice.

May I reckon those who betray me as sacred teachers.

I offer joy to all beings and secretly take on their suffering.

May all beings and I be free from ego concerns of loss and gain.

Our healthy self-esteem can increase as we look at ourselves mindfully. We do this by seeing ourselves just as we are:

I look at myself and my life without fear of what I may see or what I may find I have to work on.

I look at myself without censure, blame, or shame but with a sense of accountability for any ways I have hurt others and I make amends.

I accept myself as I am without an attachment to fixing, changing, or controlling my natural inclinations and attributes.

I let go of any attachment to the outcome of what is happening in my life right now or for the future.

I allow myself to live in accord with my deepest needs and wishes.

I love myself as I am and take care of myself.

I pay attention to my body and what it tells me about myself and the joys and stresses of my circumstances.

I am free of fear and craving.

I share with others the gifts I receive and am thankful.

May all beings have happiness because of my work, my gifts, and my practice.

When I see I am nothing, that is wisdom. When I see I am everything, that is love. My life is a movement between these two.

— Nisargadatta Maharaj ▼

