



Gay Buddhist Fellowship

JUNE / JULY 2003 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.

Gratitude, Forgiveness, and *Bodhicitta*

BY JIM WILSON

Jim Wilson, the former abbot of the Chogyo Zen Center in New York, has studied in the Chogyo, Fuke, and Soto traditions of Zen. In addition to speaking at GBF on the first Sunday of each month, he leads one weekly sutra salon in Sebastopol. He gave this talk to GBF on May 4, 2003.

From the perspective of the Buddhist path of purification, anger is something that needs to be eliminated from one's mindset. It is possible to do that through the practices that have been developed within that context. From the perspective of the path of transformation, how do you use anger for the benefit of other sentient beings? It's not as difficult as it may sound. Imagine you're taking care of a child and he runs into the street and you tell him not to. You go through this six times, and the sixth time you get angry and send the child to his room, saying, "I really mean it, and this is the consequence you're going to have to go through if you do that." This is an expression of concern for the child. It's not egoic. It might be a little egoic—there's a mixture—but primarily it's non-egoic: it's anger growing out of concern for the welfare of a sentient being. It's possible for anger to be an expression of compassion. When that energy appears, how do you transform it so that it is an expression of enlightened activity? You do so through internalizing and contemplating the bodhisattva vows. The name for this is *bodhicitta*: the transformation of our practice so that it's for the benefit of all sentient beings. When *bodhicitta* arises in one's consciousness, practice becomes very smooth, alive, easy to enter into. When *bodhicitta* is not present, it gets a little sticky because it becomes like a personal possession; possessiveness becomes an aspect of it: "it's my practice; it's my dharma." *Bodhicitta* dissolves that sense of possessiveness by transforming practice into the way of saving all sentient beings from suffering.

The text I'm going to use as a basis for talking about *bodhicitta* is called the *37 Practices of the Bodhisattva*, a Tibetan Buddhist text, but I don't consider it as a solely Vajrayana work. It feels to me when I read it that it is a work for all the Buddhist traditions. I was reading the middle length discourses and there's one where a disciple of the Buddha goes on at length about how wonderful it is that the Buddha was here for the welfare of all beings, for the welfare of deities and humans, for the benefit of all living creatures. It has a very Mahayana feel to it. This is the Pali canon. You won't find the word *bodhicitta* in the Pali canon, but you have to go past the word and look for meaning. For example,

in the Pali canon the word *bodhisattva* simply means the Buddha in a previous life, as he was striving to become a fully enlightened Buddha. In the Sarvastivada lineages or in the Sanskrit-based lineages, the word *bodhisattva* takes on a very different meaning. So you have to get past that meaning when you're reading various works.

So the *37 Practices of the Bodhisattvas* contains about 40 verses, including some introductory verses and some concluding verses, and each verse is four lines. It's a very beautiful text, and it's all about *bodhicitta*: the turning of one's consciousness so that one's practice is transformed into a path of liberation for all sentient beings. When we first come to practice, most of us—this was certainly true for me—are concerned with our own distress; we enter into a spiritual practice because we're in some kind of psychological/spiritual distress or pain and suffering. Sometimes the pain and suffering is from outside. When we experience great tragedy in our lives, for example, we might be propelled to do a spiritual practice. So we go to a meditation center, Buddhist center—or it might be Hindu, yoga, whatever it is—in order to get some sense of peace or centeredness in the midst of our lives which seem to be out of control or unrelentingly filled with suffering. We want some guidance, some method, to settle that. That's a wonderful reason to go into spiritual practice. It's important to understand that I'm not saying that's wrong, or that that's a bad motivation. But it's kind of like going to a doctor: you take the medicine, and then when you get well, you don't go back to the doctor; you just go on with your life. People whose focus on spiritual practice is like that tend to drop out when whatever was causing the distress passes; they've done the meditation, they've done the practices, it's worked, and they move on. Once again, that's not bad; it's *good* that there are places people can go in order to gain release from that kind of distress.

Bodhicitta is the arising in one's consciousness that the reason for entering practice is to benefit others. When that appears, there's a motivation to continue one's path. That's why *bodhicitta* is considered so important, so pivotal. If at some point that doesn't arise, then the practice will become dull or you will have other things to do, like go to a movie, or something like that, but when *bodhicitta* appears, then you'll think, "Now I get it; now I know why I'm doing this or why I should continue doing this." That's the function it carries.

And that shift is the first appearance in one's mind of the way of the *bodhisattva*. There's a work in the Pali canon called *Buddhavamsa*, which means chronicle of the Buddhas. It begins "14 million incalculable eons ago..."—quite a stenographer! When the Buddha Dipankara was teaching in a world system incredibly far from where we are

now, there was a young man named Sumedha who studied under Dipankara. Dipankara means light-bearer or light-bringer. What arose in Sumedha's consciousness was that he wanted to practice and follow the way of Dipankara for the benefit of all sentient beings. And that was the moment of the appearance of *bodhicitta* in the consciousness of the person who would eventually become Shakyamuni Buddha. So the *Chronicle of the Buddhas* is the history of all the buddhas that Shakyamuni studied under in his cosmic career that eventually resulted in him becoming Shakyamuni. Whether you believe in this literally or not is not important. It's significant that this is a Theravada work, but it is a perfect illustration of the importance of *bodhicitta*. That was the moment, the causal reason, that Shakyamuni became a buddha. It took fourteen million incalculable eons, but, hey, he had time. Once again, the *Buddhavamsa* doesn't use the word *bodhicitta*, but that is a perfect story or example of the meaning of *bodhicitta*.

The first verse of the *37 Practices of the Bodhisattva* says, "I pay constant homage through my three doors to my supreme teacher and protector, Chen Rezig, who while seeing all phenomenon lack coming and going makes single-minded effort for the good of all living beings." (The three doors are body, breath and mind.) I find it very significant that it begins with an homage, because an homage is an expression of gratitude.

You pay homage to that which you feel grateful for, not to that which you are repulsed by. And gratitude is the key, the golden door, to the cultivation of *bodhicitta*. In a way, you could say that the first practice of the *Bodhisattva* is gratitude. Why do I say gratitude is the golden door and key? Because it is an expression of heart wisdom. By heart wisdom I mean the awareness of the interconnectedness of all things. That awareness is the basis from which *bodhicitta* can arise. When you feel grateful for something, you feel connected, and there's a relationship between you and that something for which you feel grateful. Without gratitude, there is the sense of existing as an isolated being. That's why gratitude is the golden door.

It's important to identify in your own consciousness what it means to be a *Bodhisattva*. That can be difficult because in a sense Buddhist texts are not very helpful about this. One of the Mahayana sutras says, "Celestial flowers are raining down and beams of light from the third eye are illuminating incalculable realms in the Eastern Quarter." Well, I'm not doing any of that. When I'm giving a talk to you, celestial flowers ain't coming down. I wouldn't mind! But is that what I have to do to be a *bodhisattva*? To be a *bodhisattva*, do I have to ascend into the sky and do all these miraculous deeds? All of those wonderful images can serve to inspire, but on the other hand they can serve to discourage us, because I'm just an ordinary human here and the

When you experience gratitude and other forms of heart wisdom such as compassion, love, and sympathy, you're experiencing the core understanding of the Buddha, which he called dependent origination.

gaps are so great. But if you begin with the understanding of gratitude as the basic expression of the *bodhisattva*, then that's what being a bodhisattva means. It means being grateful for all sentient beings without exception. When you feel grateful for something, you spontaneously want to do something for that which you feel grateful for. That's why the *bodhisattva* activity is not strained; it's not a duty or a compulsion. If you begin to understand and appreciate all that has been given to us, instead of all that has been done to us, then you begin to think, "Oh! I will give back to existence some of what has been given to me." The cultivation of gratitude is really the key, and you can recognize that it spontaneously appears in your own consciousness when you feel grateful for someone, or a book, a movie, a garden; that consciousness is what it means to be a *bodhisattva*. Even if it's momentary, even if it fades, it's important to recognize that consciousness: "Oh, that's what being a *bodhisattva* is like." It means activity based on that sense of awareness.

What I'm getting at in terms of heart wisdom and gratitude is that when you experience gratitude and other forms of heart wisdom such as compassion, love, and sympathy, you're experiencing the core understanding of the Buddha, which he called dependent origination, and which I like to call interdependent transformation. That teaching is pivotal. It is the intellectual expression of the reality that one experiences when one is in a state of gratitude. So, the intellectual expression is to clarify that there's no such thing as a separately existing entity of any kind. Well, that's complicated. It means that when you are experiencing gratitude, *that's the reality of your existence*. Your actual condition is that you are connected to everything, and you can understand why the Buddha felt that way when you experience gratitude. It's not just a neat idea. It's also a neat experience. So gratitude is the bridge from the cultivation of what are called the four immeasurables to the full blossoming of *bodhicitta*, which is practicing for the benefit of all sentient beings. The four immeasurables are love, compassion, sympathy and equanimity. They are called the immeasurables because they're considered qualities of consciousness that are limitless in their true nature. They're also called *brahmaviharas*, which means the homes of the gods. The idea is that the cultivation of these forms of awareness will take you to a celestial realm. Think of it metaphorically: when you are experiencing love—think of new love—the world is wonderful; everything is wonderful: it's that sense of being in a celestial domain, when you're completely experiencing that.

There are three levels of heart wisdom. One level is the spontaneous arising of that sense of connectedness. Gratitude spontaneously arises, and love spontaneously arises. Within the Buddhist context, love means wanting others to

be well and happy. Compassion spontaneously arises when you want others to be free from suffering. Sympathetic joy arises when you are happy at other people's success, and equanimity in this context when spontaneously you wish others to have peace of mind and serenity of heart. All of those arise spontaneously in our consciousness. The function of a Buddhist teacher in this context is to get you to recognize those spontaneous experiences as more important than just a *mood*. They're not a passing mood; they are your true nature. So that recognition is key, and then follows cultivation. The system of the four immeasurables is to cultivate that awareness so that it becomes stabilized and a constant presence in one's mind and heart.

Still, that awareness isn't necessarily experienced for the benefit of all sentient beings. How do you bridge, go from the four immeasurables to the four or five *bodhisattva* vows? You do that through the practice of gratitude and forgiveness. Gratitude is the most important of the two because if you feel grateful for someone, even an enemy,

then forgiveness spontaneously arises. As long as there is some person or some thing in existence—my big foible is poison oak: I always feel that Mother Nature could have done a better job in that ecological niche, and I have endless resentments against poison oak, so I have to work on that—as long as there is something in one's consciousness that one cannot forgive, then there's a limitation, and the

As long as there is something in one's consciousness that one cannot forgive, then there's a limitation, and the complete expansiveness of the bodhisattva mind and heart is not available.

complete expansiveness of the *bodhisattva* mind and heart is not available. So the way you move from the practice of the four immeasurables to the full flowering of *bodhicitta* is through the cultivation of gratitude and forgiveness. That's why forgiveness rituals are so prominent in Buddhist practice, and also the cultivation of gratitude.

When you cultivate immeasurable love and immeasurable compassion, there can still be certain constrictions on that. One of the things that happen when people practice the four immeasurables is that they run into those constrictions. I'll give a concrete example, beyond poison oak. I had a student who had a list of four people for whom she would not feel compassion and love: everyone else, but not those four. And she had really good reasons. So these constrictions can be overt, like a list of people I'm going to exempt, or it can be very subtle. The way to overcome those kinds of limitations when practicing the four immeasurables is by adding in the practice of gratitude and forgiveness. I'm not necessarily saying they have to be done in sequence; that was just a way of presenting them. Gratitude and forgiveness feed into the practice of the four immeasurables, and the four immeasurables feed into the practice of gratitude and forgiveness, and when those become merged, then one can step into *bodhisattva* activity in heart and mind. ■

Dharma Daddy Explains Beardless Youths and Maitreya

Dharma Daddy took a rest last issue to free up space for important reflections on Buddhism and the war. In this issue, he's back to answer questions from two readers.

First of all, Kenny writes from Ione, California, in response to the article “Sex for Queer Buddhists,” to request more information about the goings on of the Desert Fathers with the “beardless youths,” and to ask about *dromba*, a word—meaning passive homosexual partner—that he found in a review of an autobiography of a Tibetan.

Well, sorry, Kenny, but Dharma Daddy doesn't know of any really good dirt on the Desert Fathers and beardless youths. It's just something that is mentioned in passing as a danger. Beardless youths are referred to along with women because, in the culture of the time, they were more or less equal as sex objects. An older free man (i.e., not a slave) could have sex, as the active, or penetrating, partner, with a woman, a slave of either sex, or a boy. When the boy became an adult, signified by the growth of a beard, he was off limits. If a free man had sex with another free man, or if a free man allowed himself to be penetrated by a man (free man or slave) or by a boy, he was ridiculed as a pervert. Very similar customs are found in ancient India, medieval Japan, and some parts of the pre-modern Muslim world. In those cultures, a man could be a mentor to a youth, and they could have sex as long as the boy was a surrogate female, but when the youth became a man the sexual relationship was supposed to end. In medieval Japan, becoming a man was signaled by a special way of cutting the hair so as to expose part of the scalp, and there are reports of youths adopting that haircut a little early in an attempt to put an end to the unwanted attentions of an older man.

As for *dromba*, Dharma Daddy had not heard of the word, so he wrote to a colleague about it. Officially there should be no such person in a monastery since monks are vowed to celibacy, but some monasteries are less strict than others. In this case, Tashi Tsering, a member of the Dalai Lama's sacred dance troupe, willingly became the sexual partner of a high-ranking monk. Tashi was not a monk, and therefore he was not himself under a vow of celibacy, and he says he isn't gay, but the relationship was a way for him to improve his social and economic standing. The account, says DD's colleague, “is very interesting and somewhat moving.” For the whole story, see *The Struggle for Modern Tibet: The Autobiography of Tashi Tsering* by William Siebenschuh, Tashi Tsering, and Melvyn Goldstein (Armonk NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000).

Tashi and the monk seem to have had “real” sex. Another

of Dharma Daddy's colleagues reports that some monks will engage in a form of frottage in which one partner grips the penis of the other between his thighs. Since the authoritative texts forbid the use of the mouth, anus, or hand for sex, this procedure can be regarded as “not sex.” (Does this remind us of the remarks of a former President of the USA?) Some abbots turn a blind eye to this strategy, but the Dalai Lama, reportedly, does not sanction it.

The second enquiry comes from Michael in San Francisco, California, who attended a peace rally at which some people were holding signs proclaiming “Maitreya is here!” The literature they passed out, he says, referred to a Scotsman named Benjamin Creme, who had been channeling higher powers since 1974 to prepare the world for the arrival of Maitreya, a sort of messiah Buddha who is said to have made a brief appearance in Nairobi, where his audience, predominantly Christian, mistook him for Jesus. Michael asks if Buddhism anticipates a messianic Buddha who will come to solve the world's problems and if we should take Benjamin Creme seriously or not.

Strange as it may seem, it's not so strange. Every Buddhist tradition identifies Shakyamuni not as “the” Buddha but merely the Buddha for our times, the most recent Buddha, and both the Mahayana and the Theravada say the next Buddha is to be called Maitreya. He is no minor figure. There is an extensive literature on him, which Jan Nattier, in a collection of essays about Maitreya (*Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, edited by Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre. Princeton University Press, 1988), has suggested can be grouped into four major categories or types of manifestation: (i) here/now (we will meet Maitreya on earth during our lifetime); (ii) here/after (we will meet him on earth in a future rebirth); (iii) there/now (he is living in the realm of the Tushita deities and we can meet him in meditation); (iv) there/after (we will meet him when we are reborn in the Tushita realm).

Dharma Daddy's library has a copy of a booklet by Benjamin Creme called *Messages from Maitreya, The Christ, 1–10*. It is undated, but he has a note that he picked it up at an occult bookshop in London in 1979. The introduction says, “The long-awaited and hoped—for reappearance of the Christ is now an accomplished fact. On July 19th 1977, the Christ, Maitreya, the World Teacher, Head of our Spiritual Hierarchy, emerged from His ancient retreat and is now in the modern world.” The messages in the booklet were not channeled, we are told, but “the method used is mental overshadowing and the telepathic rapport which is thus set up.” Then, on 11 June, 1988,

Maitreya made a physical appearance in Nairobi. Creme's Maitreya might be understood as Nattier's type (iii) leading into type (i). The web site of Creme's organization, Share International, identifies Maitreya with "Christ, Messiah, the fifth Buddha, Krishna, and the Imam Mahdi." This list is unusual, not to say perplexing, since Hindus generally expect Kalkin, not Krishna, to come at the end of the world. The Mahdi as the reappearance of the Hidden Imam is a Muslim figure, but he is only recognized in the Shi'a branch of Islam. Maitreya is called "the Buddhist Messiah" in popular textbooks, but a careful analysis of the traditions about him shows that he does not *bring in* the new age (as the Messiah may) but appears as the next Buddha to *confirm* the new age after it has arrived.

Creme's "here/now" Maitreya has some competition. H. H. Gyalwa Jampa, a white American in his early fifties, is identified as Buddha Maitreya, Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, the Avatar Archangel Michael/Metatron, the Lord of Shambhala Sanat Kumara, Melchizedek, and the Ancient of Days. Following a minority tradition, Maitreya is here called a Buddha rather than a Bodhisattva. Amongst other activities, H. H. Buddha Maitreya imparts "metatronic healings" by (guess what?) "telepathic overshadowing." Based on Mount Shasta, his centers include an Archangel Michael's Soul Therapy Center in Berkeley.

Dharma Daddy visited the Berkeley center and, under the instruction of a fellow Brit called Lama Jake, he meditated under a sort of open tent made of metal rods while alternately holding an instrument resembling the traditional Tibetan *dorje* (thunderbolt), but much larger and made of wire and crystals, and a crystal on a thread called an etheric weaver, to the sounds of H. H. Buddha Maitreya chanting on a CD. He found it calming and curiously energizing, and awoke the next day unexpectedly horny, whether as a result of the metatronics or not he does not know. (www.buddhamaitreya.org or 877-444-7685 for more information)

The best-known form of Maitreya is the so-called Laughing Buddha, a familiar figure in gift shops. Fat, disheveled, and often surrounded by children, he carries the hempen sack from which he gets his name (Chinese: Budai; Japanese: Hotei). He was a sort of hippie monk in tenth century China who wandered about, smiling and muttering to himself, and collecting junk which he put in his sack and gave away to children, who delighted in "the sack of wonderful things." Because he was always happy he was thought to be Maitreya (the name literally means "The Friendly One"), and he is popularly regarded as a

deity of good luck and a protector of children.

Less well known in the west, and much less fun, certain kings and revolutionaries in Southeast Asia have at one time or another been identified as Metteyya (the Pali form of Maitreya).

An example of Nattier's type (ii), "here/later," is the Maitreya Project (www.maitreya-statue.org). The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Trust (FPMT), which runs Vajrapani, where GBF holds retreats, is raising funds to build a 500 foot tall statue of Maitreya as part of a temple and library in Bodh Gaya, India, near the site of Buddha Shakyamuni's enlightenment. If completed, this will be "the largest Buddhist statue in the world" and will bring "peace and happiness to the world." (Why do Buddhists have such big statues when they believe in Emptiness? That's another question, if someone would like to ask it.)

A more typical example of type (ii) is the annual Maitreya festival at the monastery established by Geshe Wangyal in Washington, New Jersey. During the ceremony a very large thangka (painting) of Maitreya is brought out and prayers are said for those in attendance to be reborn during the time when Maitreya will appear.

A famous case of type (iii), channeling Maitreya in "there/now" mode, is recounted in the life

of the Bodhisattva Asanga. He had searched long and hard for a teacher, without success, when he came across an injured dog with maggots crawling in its wounds. Wishing to help the dog but not harm the maggots (since they also were sentient beings), he bent down to lick the maggots off the dog with his tongue. He was so repulsed by this that he shut his eyes, but then he felt a change, opened his eyes, and found that the dog had disappeared and been replaced by Maitreya, who praised him for his compassion and gave him a teaching which became the first of many texts which laid the foundation of the Yogachara school.

So, in summary, reports of Maitreya being active in the world are not unusual. You can decide for yourself whether the messages transmitted through Benjamin Creme should be taken seriously or not by going to hear him. He has speaking engagements in the USA in July and August 2003 and will be in San Rafael, California, on August 3 (www.share-international.org or 888-877-8272 for more information). ■

**Send questions for Dharma Daddy to GBF
or by e-mail to: tashi5@juno.com**

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2003 Fall Retreat

GBF will return to Vajrapani Institute, Boulder Creek, California, for the popular Fall Retreat, between Friday, September 5 and Sunday, September 7 (the weekend after Labor Day). Activities (or should that be non-activities?) will include sitting and walking meditation, some simple ceremonies, Dharma talks by Jim Wilson and discussions facilitated by Roger Corless (a.k.a. Dharma Daddy). The Institute abuts Castle Rock State Park and there will be free time for hiking on the more than 33 miles of trails amongst the redwoods, or just relaxing. Registration fee includes all meals and dormitory style accommodation. A few private cabins will be available at extra cost.

Reserve the dates now and plan to join your gay brothers in a time of spiritual renewal. Full details and registration forms will be included in the next newsletter. ■

Prisoners Urgently Need Buddhist Books

The most frequent request from gay Buddhist prisoners, other than pen pals, is for books. In many prisons, they are circulated among small groups and are used in daily and group practice. All books are welcome, particularly those suitable for beginners. If you have any available, please call Don Wiepert at (510) 540-0307, or email him at GDWiepert@aol.com. Don will arrange to collect them and get them to prisoners. ■

Your Thrift Store Donations Earn Money for GBF

GBF members can donate their quality cast-offs to the Community Thrift Store (CTS) and GBF will receive a quarterly check based on the volume of items sold. This is a great way to support our Sangha, and the community. So far this year we have received over \$800 through members' generosity. Bring your extra clothing and other items to CTS at 623 Valencia St between 10am and 5pm, any day of the week. The donation door is around the corner on Sycamore Alley (parallel to and between 17th and 18th) between Valencia and Mission. Tell the worker you are donating to GBF. Our ID number is 40. Information: (415) 861-4910. ■

Calendar

San Francisco / Bay Area Events

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 (75¢ first hour, then \$1 per hour, \$5 max). The Center is handicapped accessible.

June / July GBF Sunday Speakers

June 1 Jim Wilson

Jim Wilson, the former abbot of the Chogye Zen Center in New York, has studied in the Chogye, Fuke, and Soto traditions of Zen. In addition to speaking at GBF on the first Sunday of every month, he leads two weekly sutra salons here Sebastopol.

June 8 Diana Elrod

Diana Elrod, an active member of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), will speak about the Nichiren tradition.

June 15 Open Discussion

Steve Peskind, co-founder of the Coming Home Hospice, the San Francisco Shanti Project, and the Buddhist AIDS Project, has practiced meditation since 1973.

June 22 Roger Corless

Roger Corless is Professor of Religion, Emeritus, at Duke University. Having retired to the Bay area, he contributes to the GBF Newsletter under the nom de plume Dharma Daddy. He is the author of several books, including the widely praised *Vision of Buddhism: The Space Under the Tree*.

June 29 Justin Hecht

Justin Hecht is a psychologist who practices in San Francisco, specializing in stress reduction and personal growth. He has practiced Vipassana meditation for many years and seeks to integrate his Western psychological training with Buddhist spirituality.

July 6 Jim Wilson

July 13 Bill Weber

Bill Weber is a senior vipassana student who is currently training in the Community Dharma Leaders program at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. Also a film editor and director, Bill co-directed the award-winning documentary *The Cockettes*.

July 20 Open Discussion

July 27 Losang Monlam

Losang Monlam is a monk and spiritual program coordinator for the Tse Chen Ling Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in San Francisco. He will lead us in a traditional Tibetan Buddhist meditation at 10:30 and give a dharma talk at 11:00.

Miss a Dharma Talk?

You can listen to it on the Internet. Audio files of Dharma talks are available on the GBF website.

How to Reach Us

For 24-hour information on GBF activities or to leave a message:

415 / 974-9878

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For address changes or to subscribe or unsubscribe to the Newsletter send email to:

mailinglist@gaybuddhist.org

GBF Newsletter

Send submissions to:

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

Steering Committee Meeting

The next Steering Committee Meeting will be July 7, 2002, following the Sunday sitting, at the San Francisco Buddhist Center.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteer host needed one Sunday per month. Contact Peter at (510) 531-7131 or **petersfo@aol.com**

Other positions: We also need volunteers to organize potlucks, to help record dharma talks, to publicize the sangha, and to serve on a practice committee. If you're interested in helping out, please send an email to **volunteers@gaybuddhist.org**, or you can volunteer in person by approaching any steering committee members at one of the Sunday sittings.

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