



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

SUMMER 2017 NEWSLETTER

## Becoming Aware of Your Ridgepole

BY DOROTHY HUNT

**Dorothy Hunt serves as the Spiritual Director of Moon Mountain Sangha, teaching at the request of Adyashanti. She has practiced psychotherapy since 1967 and is the founder of the San Francisco Center for Meditation and Psychotherapy. Self-inquiry, as taught by Ramana Maharshi, led to the first of a series of awakenings. In meeting Adyashanti, she was invited to see beyond identifications with either the Absolute or the relative.**

**Dorothy is the author of *Only This!* and *Leaves from Moon Mountain*, a contributing author to *The Sacred Mirror*, *Listening from the Heart of Silence*, and the on-line journal *Undivided*. She is a featured spiritual teacher in the book, *Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Wisdom*. Dorothy offers satsang, retreats, and private meetings in the Bay area and elsewhere by invitation. For more information, please visit [www.dorothyhunt.org](http://www.dorothyhunt.org).**

**T**hursday was Bodhi Day. Did anyone of you celebrate Bodhi Day in any way? No? Then, I'll help you celebrate! Bodhi Day is the celebration of the day of the Buddha's enlightenment. Although we didn't grow up in a castle with a king who provided us everything we wanted from birth, we did have a moment, didn't we, where we also wanted to search for something more, some answer, some end to suffering, some question that began as a seed some place deep within?

The Buddha finally decided not to look to anyone else, to any teacher, or any 'way' that someone else had said was 'the way.' He decided to look within. Like many of us, the Buddha went out to try to find the answer to his questions. As you may recall, he went to many different teachers, the great meditation masters of the day, and he apparently was able to master each level of meditation that each one of these teachers was pointing to. Still, it didn't end his search. Then, he became a complete renunciate, an ascetic who, as legend goes, only ate one grain of rice a day. Still, this did not end his search. He finally decided not to look to anyone else, not to look outside of himself, not to look to any teacher, any master, or any 'way' that someone else had said was 'the way.' He decided to look within.

So, he sat under that Bodhi tree. Many things had come to him in the course of his years of meditation, looking within, and developing concentration. He had seen, even by that time, how when he looked into his body, he just found that each cell was like a little drop

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.

# On the night of his enlightenment he gained knowledge of:

- Innumerable past lives
- The existence of karma
- Interdependent origination

on this river of birth and existence and death. He couldn't find in any one of those drops, a self. He looked into his feelings. Same thing. There was a river of feelings, and then a river of perception. Each of those moments was part of this ongoing river of birth, existence, and death.

Then, on the night of his enlightenment, as the story goes, there were three watches, as they were called. During the first, he received the knowledge of innumerable past births, innumerable past lives. When we too, understand the totality of our being, we also will understand that through countless rebirths, we have been every other being. There might be specific memories that come, but still, in the river of birth, existence, and death, this is simply an ongoing, ongoing, ongoing expression, manifesting as this that we are now.

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- Innumerable past lives
- The existence of karma
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The second watch delivered to him the knowledge of karma, and how birth and death and experiences and suffering and so forth are connected to karma. And in the third watch came the recognition of the cycle of birth and death, and of what we would call interdependent origination, that everything, like all those cells, were dependent on every other one.

All of those drops were dependent on every other drop in this river that's flowing right now, right here, in all of us. There's a river of existence, and it's happening without necessarily the need for an idea of a separate self. Indeed, there are distinct and very different manifestations. I don't know your thoughts, you don't know mine. And yet, they're all happening in that which is awake within each one of us, awake to its own being, to its own manifestation, to its own life.

We don't need someone else to say that we are worthwhile or deserving. We do need to discover it for ourselves. As you know, on that night, Mara and his minions came to visit. Mara being, I would say, just the mind's activity of doubt, the mind's activity of trying to seduce us into separation, time and time again, trying to say, "This is separate from you." So there was Mara, coming as demons. We all have demons. We all have demons in our minds, don't we? The ones we want to get rid of, the thoughts and feelings we don't want to see. But Buddha sat unmoved in the face of these demons.

Then, the dancing girls came. "Can we entice you with lust? Can these beautiful women that want to be with you

entice you?" (Or men that want to be with you? We can have our own version of the Buddha's story here!) But still, he responds, no, no. He stayed put in the face of these temptations, not because there's anything wrong with our longings or the movement of life and feelings and thoughts and so forth, but because he wanted to know the truth, and he knew the truth was not 'out there'. These were things that were arising in his mind, just like the things that arise in our minds that seem to draw us away time and time again from the ground that is our being. The ground of being that's here, now, out of which everything is arising, whatever we want to call it.

Then Mara questioned the Buddha's worth. When Mara saw that the Buddha was awakened, he said, "Who are you to say that you're awakened? I am the king. My minions are my witness and they will tell you that it is ME that should be sitting here." And then Buddha touched the earth with his hand, and the earth supposedly said, "I am your witness."

If you are the narrator of your thoughts, then who are you narrating to? We don't need someone else to say that we are worthwhile or deserving. We do need to discover it for ourselves. But the biggest obstacle to that is something that consciousness itself is doing. It has identified itself with this body of ours. Consciousness, pure consciousness, awareness, Buddha nature, has of itself come into form, the form of you and me. Consciousness, apparently, is so enamored of its own production, its own creation, that it identifies itself with this form that we inhabit. And then we grow up, and we're conditioned to believe that there is a separate me, a separate somebody, inside ourselves. But is it true? Can we look for ourselves? Are you the narrator of your thoughts? If so, then who are you narrating to?

The Buddha recognized this too, and soon after his enlightenment he said something to the effect, "House builder, you have been seen. You will not build this house again. Your rafters have been broken down. Your ridgepole has been demolished, too. My mind has attained the unformed nirvana, and ended the search for all sorts of cravings." (He was referring here to the cycle of rebirth and inhabiting a new 'house' or identity in each lifetime).

We all have desires. There are plenty of desires, but the craving the Buddha mentions is something that we believe we won't be okay without. But is it true? We only crave for something that we think we need, something that we think we wouldn't be okay without. It's not that we need to rid ourselves of all desires. How could we? We're thirsty. We desire water. Birds desire a worm, a bug. There are plenty

of desires, but the craving he mentions is something that we believe we won't be okay without. But is it true? Because when we come in touch with our true nature, with our Buddha nature, there's no question of worth. You are that which you have been seeking. We all are. You are that out of which the universe arises, moment to moment to moment. These bubbles, these cells, these perceptions, these feelings, flow in the river, the river of existence.]

But there is a ridgepole that holds up our identity, and that's what I want to invite you to look into with me for a few moments. When the Buddha said, "Your ridgepole has been destroyed, too," we're talking about the structure of the 'me'. We're talking about the structure of self. We're talking about this that holds up who we think we are. I would just invite you to close your eyes for a moment, as an exercise to see if you can become more and more aware of what is your particular ridgepole. If you can imagine the ridgepole of a tent or the mainstay of a structure, that structure being all the ways that we identify as a self, as an ego, as the roles that we play. All of that structure is part of who we've mistaken ourselves to be, maybe the only thing we've taken ourselves to be, and there's something that's propping that up. THAT'S the ridgepole.

Our ridgepole is whatever holds up the identity of self, who we've mistaken ourselves to be. What is it in you that brings you back to the idea that you are separate: from one another, from Buddha nature, from the world, separate even from yourself? Just take a moment and notice: what is it in you that is the ridgepole? What is it in you, on a daily basis, that brings you back to the idea that you're separate, separate from one another, separate from Buddha nature, separate from the world, separate even from yourself? Just spend a moment or two. What is it that props you up, that makes you feel you are somehow separate from this presence? What props up this identity?

I would love to hear what any of you might have noticed or seen. What's your ridgepole?

**Audience:** The body. As soon as I wake up: my bladder, physical urges.

**Dorothy:** Yes, the body. It seems, because we have a body, that we're separate from everything else.

**Audience:** I was thinking that there are countless identities that I hold onto, and one of the deeper ones is the part of me that wants to feel safe.

**Dorothy:** Safety. Yes, that's big, isn't it? The egoic desire for safety and security is really big, and to look into that is a marvelous thing, to see how that keeps us

identified as a separate somebody. That is part of the ridgepole.

**Audience:** I've always found that I am a witness. I witness everything.

**Dorothy:** And who is the witness?

**Audience:** It's my consciousness.

**Dorothy:** And is your consciousness just yours?

**Audience:** It's just opening up my eyes and seeing what it is and feeling what it is. Just observing and feeling.

**Dorothy:** Yes. So often we're not aware that this witnessing is actually everywhere, and so it becomes something else that we get identified with, as though it's unique to us. Yet consciousness itself is what we share. It's universal. We think it's just about me, MY consciousness, MY awareness.

**Audience:** My ridgepole might be the thing that I'm perfect at.

**Dorothy:** And what would that be?

**Audience:** I don't know exactly, but I might have this idea that that there's one thing I'm better than anybody else at, or I do better than anyone else.

**Dorothy:** Yes, the feeling of either superiority or inferiority can definitely be attached to that ridgepole.

**Audience:** For me, it's peace. When I feel like I'm not at peace, then I'm not okay. Everything else is a disturbance.

**Dorothy:** Yes. I'm really glad you mentioned that because we so often imagine that when the mind is confused or in conflict, that means we must be separate from what's at peace, or that we're looking in the wrong place. But the nature of the mind in general is NOT peace. The mind is restless. So the mind is not where we're going to find peace. It's nature is to be restless, and yet we're continually looking there even though the mind often generates the feeling of lack of peace.

The nature of the mind in general is NOT peace. The mind is restless. So the mind is not where we're going to find peace. The Buddha said, "I have attained," but attainment does not arise from a place of ego, that's not what awakens. A self is not what awakens. This that we are, awakens to itself. Peace is its nature, and to know that is to be at peace, even when the mind is in conflict. That's very difficult to describe until we experience it for ourselves. But some of you, I'm sure, have experienced that life can be moving however it is, and something is still okay within. The mind may be in conflict, in turmoil, in judgment, in reactivity, but the awakened awareness is simply noticing it. It's not judging it. This that notices, this

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that is aware, this that is awake. It doesn't have a preference, it just observes.

**Audience:** I don't know how deep this is, but what's important for me is to return to my creativity, and stop my mind from wandering, not in judgment, just purely looking at things, and in my case, photographing them. That's kind of my ridgepole.

**Dorothy:** I would wonder if it's your ridgepole, or if it's actually the way that you're in touch with your deeper nature. Because all of us have been at one with something, where we have moments in our day where we're not attributing the moment to a "me." For example, if we're in the creative mode, photographing or painting or writing, we're just at one with that activity. We're not stepping back at that point to be self-conscious, to be the one who's "doing" it. We're just in the flow. Running, or some activity of the body can put us right there in non-separation. The thing about our true nature, it isn't separate from a single moment. The mistake is that we think there's a somebody that has to there for those moments to occur, and if there is a thought or feeling of conflict then the moment must be lost.

**Audience:** I have a vision of my ridgepole as being covered with little post it notes.

**Audience:** What's written on each post it note is one of the labels that's been applied to me throughout my life, queer, student, manager, father, grandfather, elder, sick person, all these labels that I can identify with, but there is a part of me that just doesn't accept them. It knows they're just labels.

**Dorothy:** Yeah, that's a great image!

**Audience:** I think for me, what came up is this urge to understand everything around me and explain it, and even more importantly, be correct in that assessment. And without that, I feel ungrounded and lost.

**Dorothy:** Absolutely. Yes, our intellect and desire to have knowledge in the intellectual realm is very much part of what holds this up.

Now, I just want you to close your eyes for minute, and then imagine the ridgepole coming down. Just spend a minute. Here you have this tent or this structure of your mind, this structure of a self. Something's been holding it up. And now, it comes down. What's still here? What remains when the ridgepole is destroyed, demolished, or comes down? What is this that remains, without all of that identification? What's still here without your ridgepole?

**Audience:** You know what occurred to me was: when a tent comes down... is a tent still a tent if it's just fabric laying on the ground?

**Dorothy:** Exactly. Who are you when your tent comes down, however?

**Audience:** It's just the fabric. It's like this membrane, that can be filled up with anything.

**Dorothy:** And what's noticing that experience? That's where our freedom is. What's noticing it?

**Audience:** Well, there's a part of me that sees that and actually feels very peaceful. I imagine laying prone on the ground and just feeling, "Ahhh."

**Dorothy:** Exactly. Oh my gosh, when the ridgepole comes down even for a minute, there's incredible relief. There also could be fear, of course, depending on our readiness for such a thing to happen. What other experiences?

**Audience:** Spaciousness.

**Dorothy:** Yes, spaciousness is still here, isn't it, without the ridgepole.

**Audience:** Emptiness awaiting the new ridgepole.

**Dorothy:** Beautiful. Or maybe seeing that the ridgepole is made of the emptiness and really isn't what it thinks it is.

**Audience:** Just being aware. There's still a tendency to grasp, but there's just awareness.

**Dorothy:** Right. Awareness. With or without a ridgepole. Noticing what the ridgepole is. Noticing what tethers us.

**Audience:** It just brought me back to my younger days when I used to do LSD. You took it, and you didn't know where you were gonna end up or who you were gonna become, and just kind of let it go. I guess a part of the ego knew that the ridgepole would eventually be set back up, but there was a part that just wanted to let go...

When you take away the ridgepole, there is the spaciousness of your own being, the spaciousness of your Buddha nature, which is manifesting as all the things that we're talking about.

**Dorothy:** Yeah. See, we think we are this tent and the fabric flapping in the breeze and the weather is coming and it's doing whatever it's doing, and we think that inside that, there is a separate somebody. But when you take that away, there is the spaciousness of your own being, the spaciousness of your Buddha nature, which is manifesting as all the things that we're talking about. That's the thing that you don't know. When you think you have to be someplace else, you have to

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have a different experience, you have to never be in conflict, you have to never have a sad feeling or ever feel angry or whatever it is that is our human experience. This is here, having a human experience. We think we're looking for Buddha, but Buddha's here being this, being us. Somebody had their hand up over here. Yeah?

**Audience:** Just seemed like there's a flaw in the metaphor.

**Dorothy:** Tell me the flaw in the metaphor.

**Audience:** The metaphor is there is such a thing as a ridgepole. Actually, it's just a concept. And maybe the real truth is there is no ridgepole.

**Dorothy:** Exactly! That's what the Buddha saw through when he said, "The ridgepole has been demolished." He saw that there wasn't one. That's the understanding.

The point I'm getting at is that this expression—whether it's an expression of being as a tree, a leaf, a dog, a cat, a bird, a human—these expressions of life, these expressions of our divine nature, these are expressions of the mystery that has no name. "The Tao that has a name is not the eternal Tao." We can't name it. The reason we can't name it is because the intellect can't go there. It can go to the edge of the unknown. It can take you just so far, like any inquiry, such as "who am I?" Because until we discover, who it is that we've called ourselves, we aren't going to be free.

But if we're looking for who am I, we can only go so far. And then we come to the unknown. And now what? Most egoistic minds will back up or go left or go right, not stay right there at the edge of the unknown and let yourself be taken. You see, we don't find it, we're taken by it. We might say, "Oh yes, I'm ready to surrender," but the mind doesn't know how. But we're being surrendered in this spiritual search. I often say that the spiritual search is a grand failure: it's a failure to stay separate.

Until we discover who it is that we've called ourselves, we aren't going to be free. Things will keep falling away in this so called journey of ours. Things will be stripped away. Life will do it. And many of you have had many things stripped away, I'm sure, as have we all. But in this inner search for the truth of what I am, we may not have to do what the Buddha did, eat one grain of rice a day, or master so many techniques. We may just have to sit and want to know the truth for ourselves. What's really true, not what did someone else say was true. What is true

about who I am, or what is life, or any other of those existential questions.

The fact that you all, or most of you had some recognition of a ridgepole, or you had an experience of what it might be if it weren't there, the thing that was awake to that, that's the light. That's the light of your own awareness. That's the true heart.

This year, Hanukkah begins on Christmas Eve, and I thought that was an incredible thing, that the lighting of the candles in both traditions will begin on the same evening. This light that continued on when it wasn't supposed to, or this light that came into the world... Jesus didn't say, "I alone am the light of the world." He said, "You are the light. Don't put your light under a bushel." But he knew, and saying, the light of the world, that's what we all are. This that's awake has come into form, as you and everything else. It's awake to itself.

When we have an awakening, it's not the egoistic self that wakes up, although it frequently co-opts the experience called the awakening for the me, but that isn't complete, is it? This that's awake in us wakes up in its own experience. It wakes up to itself. What's separate, which is our little mind idea of separation, our egoistic consciousness, what's separate is not going to be able to find the wholeness of being. But the whole is what is awake to everything. It sees our mind's activity. It's the light that shows us what we're feeling, what we're thinking, what the moment is like. It's that that's arising, intimate with every single experience, the good ones and the bad ones.

Especially in the West, we have this idea, if awakening has happened, then it will only be the good, the beautiful, and the true that will present itself. That's impossible in duality. Especially in the West, we have this idea, if awakening has happened, then it will only be the good, the beautiful, and the true that will present itself, don't we? That's a very Western idea. But that's impossible in duality, and these relative lives are being lived in duality, aren't they? The minute we have light, we have dark. The minute we have health, we have illness. The minute we have you, we have me. The minute we have this, we have that. These opposites are constantly defining each other. We can't get away from that, as we're living in duality. But there's something that's not two, not dualistic, and that's what is the seed of enlightenment, or the seed of awakening. This seed of birthing the spirit that didn't come from two. Our bodies came from two, but the spirit, that's like the Virgin birth. The spirit comes in each of us undivided from itself and undivided from the moment, undivided from you, actually. ■

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# Sunday Sittings

10:30 am to 12 noon

Every Sunday at 10:30am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12pm Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize over refreshments till approximately 12:30pm, after which those who are interested usually go somewhere local for lunch. Our sittings are held at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett Street (Look for the red door near 21st St between Mission and Valencia Streets).

**MUNI:** 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 22nd St, walk 1 1/2 blocks.

**BART:** 24th and Mission, walk 3 1/2 blocks.

**PARKING:** on street (meters free on Sundays) or in adjacent New Mission Bartlett Garage The Center is handicapped accessible.

## 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.

## How to Reach Us

[www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org)

Mail correspondence:

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[programcommittee@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:programcommittee@gaybuddhist.org)

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GBF Newsletter Send submissions to:

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### 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](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/gaybuddhistfellowship)

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The Gay Buddhist Fellowship is a charitable organization pursuant to Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) and California Revenue and Taxation Code #23701d.

# Calendar

## Sunday Speakers

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### June 4 **Bill Scheinman**

Bill Scheinman has been teaching mindfulness since 2001 and leads corporate mindfulness workshops throughout the Bay Area as well as classes in mindfulness-based stress reduction. He is a senior facilitator with the Potential Project, teaches online mindfulness classes with eMindful, and works with individuals as a mindfulness coach. He is a graduate of Spirit Rock's Community Dharma Leaders program and is a former president of the Board of the San Francisco Insight Meditation Community. He is the author of the mindfulness guide, *Moment By Moment*, and he blogs about mindfulness and dharma on his website, [stressreductionatwork.com](http://stressreductionatwork.com).

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### June 11 **Dorothy Hunt**

Dorothy Hunt serves as the Spiritual Director of Moon Mountain Sangha, teaching at the request of Adyashanti. She has practiced psychotherapy since 1967 and is the founder of the San Francisco Center for Meditation and Psychotherapy. Self-inquiry, as taught by Ramana Maharshi, led to the first of a series of awakenings. In meeting Adyashanti, she was invited to see beyond identifications with either the Absolute or the relative. Dorothy is the author of *Only This!* and *Leaves from Moon Mountain*, a contributing author to *The Sacred Mirror*, *Listening from the Heart of Silence*, and the online journal *Undivided*. Dorothy offers satsang, retreats, and private meetings in the Bay Area and elsewhere by invitation. For more information, please visit [www.dorothyhunt.org](http://www.dorothyhunt.org)

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### June 18 **Joe Rodriguez**

Joe Rodriguez is a Zen practitioner in the Suzuki-Roshi lineage, studying under Fu Schroeder, the Abiding Abbess, at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center. He serves as a board member of the San Francisco Zen Center. As an executive and a LGBT activist, his practice is to bring awareness, truth, and forgiveness to daily life. His topic will be "Pink, Proud, and Present: Realizing our Buddha Nature as LGBT Practitioners."

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### June 25 **Jonathan Reynolds**

Jonathan Reynolds has trained extensively in the fields of Buddhist meditation, classical yoga, and both Eastern and Western philosophies. His teaching of meditation is influenced by Jack Kornfield, whose wisdom has infused him with compassion, playfulness, and story. Jonathan earned his Masters Degree in Holistic Counseling Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, and his ongoing interests are focused upon integrating the practices of meditation, therapy, embodiment, and conscious relationship. His professional offerings include therapy sessions at Grateful Heart Holistic Therapy Center, personal meditation instruction, and professional consultation. Jonathan is also co-founding editor of the *Journal of Holistic Psychology*. For further information on his work, please visit: [www.ayogisway.com](http://www.ayogisway.com)

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### July 2 **Open Discussion**

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### July 9 **Daigan Gaither**

"Healing and Oppression"

Rev. Daigan Gaither began Buddhist practice in 1995 in the Vipassana tradition and then began to study Zen in 2003 with Ryushin Paul Haller Roshi. He received Lay Ordination in 2006, when he was given the name Daigan or "Great Vow." He received Priest Ordination in July 2011. His work, practice, and free time include many hours devoted to community service in a variety of ways, including his work as one of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and as a volunteer at Zen Hospice Project. He has spoken nationwide on a variety of issues and has sat on a number of boards and committees that serve community and social justice.

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### July 16 **Pamela Weiss**

Pamela Weiss has practiced in the Zen and Theravada traditions of Buddhism for over 25 years, including several years of Zen monastic training. She completed teacher training with Jack Kornfield through Spirit Rock, leads a Wednesday evening sitting group at SF Insight, and teaches classes, workshops and retreats internationally. Pamela is also an executive coach and the Founder of Appropriate Response, a company dedicated to bringing the principles and practices of Buddhism into the workplace.

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### July 23 **Laura**

Ryuko Laura Burges, a lay entrusted Buddhist teacher in the Soto Zen tradition, lectures and leads retreats at different practice centers in Northern California. A teacher of children for 30 years, she trains other teachers to bring mindfulness practice into the elementary classroom. Laura co-founded the Sangha in Recovery program at Zen Center and has a particular interest in the intersection of Buddhism and Recovery. She is the abiding teacher at the Lenox House meditation group in Oakland.

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### July 30 **David Lewis**

David Lewis has been following the dharma path for over 40 years and has a degree in comparative religious studies. He started out in the Tibetan Shambhala tradition and has been practicing vipassana meditation since moving to San Francisco 30 years ago. For the past 10 years he has been teaching and practicing intensively. David is a member of the Mission Dharma sangha, where he teaches an introduction to insight meditation class. He is a long time member of the Gay Buddhist Fellowship and also leads a weekly sitting group for seniors every Friday morning. David is currently enrolled in the Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Advanced Practitioners Program and has been on the teaching team for Spirit Rock retreats.

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### August 6 **Open Discussion**

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### August 13 **Sr. Merry Peter**

Sr. Merry Peter, SPI, found her vocation through the Radical Faeries in 1987, and served as a missionary in Toronto before moving to San Francisco in 1999. Her life-long activism focuses on HIV-AIDS, queer youth, civil rights and social justice. Her efforts include partnerships to provide street-level health services to sex workers, legal aid for LGBTQ refugees and resistance to police violence. She is a poet, writer, and former sex-worker. As an ordained minister, she joined the fight for equal marriage in San Francisco in 2004 and regularly performs wedding ceremonies. She lives on the coast with her husband of 18 years. You can reach her directly via email at [merrypeter@thesisters.org](mailto:merrypeter@thesisters.org)

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### August 20 **Eve Decker**

Eve Decker began practicing Vipassana meditation in 1991. She has been teaching dharma since 2006. She has released two CDs of original, dharma based music. She leads groups on 'Metta-for-Self' and a monthly 'Sit-and-Sing-Sangha' in her hometown of Berkeley CA. She is a graduate of the Path of Engagement and Community Dharma Leader training programs at Spirit Rock Center in California. For more on Eve see her website at [www.evedecker.com](http://www.evedecker.com).

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### August 27 **David Lewis**

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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, believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF Dedication of Merit