“Buddha and Boundaries” Workshop Scheduled for August 14, 21

Basic Buddhist teaching emphasizes seeing beyond the dualism of Western culture, beyond the boundaries of right/wrong, this/that, and me/you.

Dualism encourages the ego to separate itself from the moment-to-moment experience, often leading us away from the immediate moment to the past or the future. In that sense of separation from ourselves and our lives lies a powerlessness that prevents us from realizing our true potential. We build boundaries (and others help us), and then wonder why we feel cut off and ineffective.

If we recognize the boundaries we have created, we can build bridges over them. Then we are more likely to perceive the universe as being “radically open” and view all things as possible—or at least a lot more possible than we previously thought.

As background for our discussion, the workshop will use notes taken at workshops given by three leaders in the human potential movement: Dr. Leland Kaiser (“Beyond Boundaries”), Dr. Deepak Chopra (“Body, Mind, and Soul: The Mystery and Magic”), and Dr. Jennifer James (“All You Need for a New Universe is a New Mind”).

The messages of these three experts about the nature of the world and its potential for each of us are remarkably similar to one another, and also to what the Buddha taught about dualism. Our discussion will attempt to find the common patterns from each of these experts and from Buddhist teachings, and relate them to our lives.

The workshop will meet on two consecutive Mondays, August 14 and 21, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. at the home of Alan Oliver. Space is limited. To register, call the GBF voicemail line, 415/974-9878. A $10.00 donation is requested for the two sessions to help pay for copying costs and to raise funds for GBF.

If you cannot attend but would like copies of the three sets of notes, send $5 along with a note to GBF, and we will send them to you. An article based on the workshop discussions will also appear in the GBF newsletter this fall.

GBF Hosts Picnic in Tilden Park

On Sunday, August 27, GBF will host a potluck picnic in Tilden Park in lieu of the regular meditation and discussion at the Page Street Hospice. The picnic will be held at the Lake View Site, located on Wildcat Canyon Road.

This gathering of the Gay Buddhist tribe will provide GBFers a chance to socialize and relax in a natural setting away from the city. Anyone needing a ride can carpool with drivers who will be at the Zen Hospice on 273 Page Street at 10:30 a.m. Carpooling is encouraged.

To help defray the expense of renting the site, a $5.00 donation is requested. However, no one will be turned away for lack of funds. For further information, call Clint Seiter

Thanks to...

GBF would like to take this opportunity to thank Maurice Dockrell, who has served as our capable, reliable database manager for over four years, and Ron Ginsberg, who has prepared the Local Dharma calendar for the past several months.
Dharma Centers

- BSC Berkeley Shambhala Center: 2288 Fulton Street, Berkeley. 510/841-6475 or 510/549-1481.
- HSZC Hartford Street Zen Center: 57 Hartford St., SF. 415/863-2507.
- LMB Land of Medicine Buddha: 5800 Prescott Road, Soquel. 408/462-8383.
- NI Nyingma Institute: 1815 Highland Place, Berkeley. 94709. 510/843-6812.
- POL POL Pema Osel Ling: 2013 Eureka Canyon Road, Corralitos. 408/761-8266.
- SFBC San Francisco Buddhist Center: 37 Bartlett St., SF. 94110. 415/282-2018.
- SFSC San Francisco Shambhala: 1630 Taraval St., SF. 415/731-4426.
- SFZC SF Zen Center: 300 Page Street, SF. 415/863-3136.
- SR Spirit Rock Meditation Center: 5000 S. Francis Drake Blvd., Woodacre. 415/488-0170; 488-0164.
- TCL Tse Chen Ling Center: 4469 29th St., SF. 415/641-0671.

Do you want a Dharma center's events listed here? Send us a note with information on special events, or arrange for mailings to be sent regularly to: Local Dharma, c/o GGF, 2261 Market Street #422, San Francisco, CA 94114.

The Local Dharma
July-August 1995

[Note: Sometimes schedules change, so we recommend you call to confirm events.]

Ongoing Events

Sundays Introductory Open House. Meditation and study according to Tibetan Buddhist traditions, as taught by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. 9-noon. Free. Meditation instruction available. BSC

Sundays Community Practice Day. Open house, sitting practice session. Shambhala practice session, and talk. Meditation instruction available. SFSC

Sundays Weekly Vipassana Sitting with Eugene Cash. 45-minute silent meditation followed by discussion. 2150 Lyon St., SF. Call 979-4879, 7-9 pm.

Mondays-Saturdays Meditation and Services, 5-7 pm. Zazen/Evening Service, 6 pm. Zazen instruction at 5 pm on Mondays. HSZC

Tuesdays Sitting, 7-8 pm. BSC

Tuesdays Weekly Vipassana Sitting with Howard Cohn. 675 Dolores St. (at 20th St.), SF. 7:30-9:30 pm.

Wednesdays Shambhala Sitting Practice, 7-8 pm. BSC

Thursdays Weekly Vipassana Sitting, with James Baraz. Albany United Methodist Church, 980 Stannage (at Marin), 2 blocks up from San Pablo, Berkeley. 7:30-9:30 pm.

Thursdays Sitting, 7-8 pm. BSC

Saturdays Zazen & Dharma Talk, 9 am. HSZC

Special Events

21-23 July (Fri.-Sun.) "Meditation on Fear and Fearlessness" with senior dharma teacher Tenshin Reb Anderson. GGF

21-29 July (Fri.-Sat.) Vipassana Retreat with Jamie Baraz and Sylvia Boorstein, Santa Rosa. $360. Contact Paula Amsbury, 601/20 July and 3, 17 Aug. Ven. Robina Courtin returns with a four-evening discussion series on "Knowing the Mind: What's on Your Mind?" Suggested donation: $10/session. 7 pm. TCL

4-6 Aug. (Fri.-Sun.) August Desert Witness in Las Vegas and at the Nevada Test Site. Interfaith commemoration of 50th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To register, contact the Nevada Desert Experience, P.O. Box 4487, Las Vegas, NV 89127. Then, to find out about a Buddhist cuscus at the site, contact the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, 510/525-8596.

5 Aug. (Sat.) Zen Sitting with Ed Brown, 9am-5pm. GGF

6-13 Aug. (Sun.-Sun.) Seven-Day Sesshin led by Abbot Zoketsu Norman Fischer. GGF

9 Aug. (Wed.) Medicine Buddha/Healing Meditation. 7 pm. TCL


25-27 Aug. (Fri.-Sun.) Teachings with Ven. Ponlop Rinpoche on "Distinguishing the Provisional from the Definitive Meaning," a song from Jetsun Milarepa. KDK

Sept. Thich Nhat Hanh will be in the Bay Area for a "Day of Mindfulness" at Spirit Rock Center and other events. Call the Community of Mindful Living, 510/527-3751.
Indra's Net and GBF

by Alan Oliver

One of the classic stories of Hindu/Buddhist origins is Indra's Net. The story refers to the vast net over Indra's Palace where, at each connecting point in the net, there is a precious gem with many facets. In each gem can be found the reflection of every other gem in the net. Thus what seems, at first glance, to be a separation among the gems is an illusion. There is the whole net and the whole net in every individual gem.

As we build a communications system for GBF, we are part of Indra's Net. Preparing and mailing the newsletter, picking up the mail and responding to correspondence, and answering requests from the GBF voice mail line are specific tasks that are part of practice and that create additional opportunities to practice.

In fact it could be said that all of our programs, including Sunday meetings, potlucks, retreats, etc., are a continual "net" of practice and exchange. We invite each one of you to take part in this net of practice. We urge everyone who finds value in the GBF community and its activities to offer some service to our communications net.

Recently a core group of people involved in GBF communications activities met to more clearly define the crossing points of our newsletter process. We agreed that no one person should have to bear the full responsibility for this function. The following newsletter roles require a coordinator and others to help out. Call us (415/974-9878) to indicate where on our "net" you would like to practice.

- **writing**: writing about a topic that interests you; coordinating a column on Buddhist parables (stories that teach a lesson about Buddhism).
- **editing and proofreading**: editing articles for clarity, length, and mechanics.
- **layout/design**: using PageMaker to format issues of the newsletter.
- **illustration**: finding graphics and illustrations; creating illustrations to accompany specific articles; building a computer library of visual images that can be used in future newsletters.
- **data entry**: inputting articles into the computer.
- **calendar**: preparing "The Local Dharma," "GBF Events," and "Beyond the Bay" calendars.
- **transcription**: transcribing taped talks from GBF meetings.
- **database**: maintaining the growing GBF database of almost 500 members, and generating mailing labels once a month.
- **mailing**: coordinating the mailing of the newsletter; holding a monthly mailing party; finding mailing volunteers.

There is a larger communications function in our network that involves increasing contact between GBF and other gay Buddhist individuals and groups in the Bay Area, in California, on the West Coast, across the country, and even around the world. GBF is often looked to as one source of information, insight, and contact for a gay Buddhist flowering that is taking place within the Buddhist community, in the gay community, and in the larger community.

We need to know who in GBF would like to help us facilitate this flowering of communication. Whether you live in the Bay Area or on the other side of the world, you can participate in our communications practice. Just let us know that you are interested and we'll find some way for you to "practice" with us.

As we work on our inner practice, we also can work on our outer practice. The division or boundary between the two is an illusion.

Database Managers Make Better Lovers

See? It worked. Now that we've got your attention, we're looking for someone to take over the job of maintaining our computer database of almost 500 members.

Whether you are computer literate or a computer novice, we can teach you how to keep the GBF database up-to-date. Your only other job would be to print out a set of mailing labels each month so we can send out this newsletter.

Sound intriguing? Want to learn new skills? If so, call the GBF voice mail line at 415/974-9878 and leave a message.

Contributors

Thanks to the following people who helped with this issue of the GBF Newsletter: Maurice Dockrell, Ron Ginsberg, Bob Hass, John Krowka, Alan Oliver, Roger Osborne, Clint Seiter, and Daishin David Sunseri.
Letters
Practicing Intimacy:

This is a familiar phrase to many of us. It depicts moments of a very personal experience, often of a sexual nature. Let’s explore this concept through our practice of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

I propose we embrace the feeling of being intimate with our whole body, mind, and spirit. Have we discovered the true nature of being the Buddha Mind? Has it manifested itself in our daily lives? If we are diligent in our practice, we come to experience firsthand that oneness of no separation. It may happen so subtly we may miss it.

I was sitting at my window watching ants moving bread crumbs I had thrown to the ground. How earnestly they trucked back and forth until all the crumbs had been carried off. I had thoughts of 108 prostrations. For those moments, I became the ants’ hunger. I realized the importance of the Sangha, working together for the benefit of all, selflessly.

Living in the moment-to-moment experiences of our daily lives affords us the ability to be intimate whatever the circumstances may be: happiness/sadness, wellness/illness, anger/compassion, greed/unselfishness. We just accept it for what it is, not discriminating. It is from this practice that we are able to free ourselves from the bondage of conditioned thinking.

Aren’t each of us Buddhists manifesting the Dharma, sitting on a bench feeling the gentle breeze as it brushes our face? Isn’t our Sangha the mountains, rivers, animals, plants, and us?

As gay Buddhists, how can we manifest this wonderful practice amongst ourselves? How can it become the flame that ignites our passions and strengthens our community, thus enabling us to experience the liberation of the Buddha Way?

Time is short. Each of us should strive to awaken, take heed, and not squander our lives. Gassho,

Jack Taian Madden
Stormville, New York

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What’s Going on in Buddhism 101?

by Roger Osborne

Now that GBF’s Foundations of Buddhism Study Group is at mid-point, we can see both where we’ve been and where we’re going. From my perspective, every Buddhist practitioner, no matter how advanced, is well-served by an occasional “refresher course” on the subject. This facilitates the Zen concept of “beginner’s mind,” which enables us to see the particular objects and ideas of our focus in a new way—“fresh” as the Dalai Lama is fond of saying.

Our 15 or so members are fortunate to be studying under the auspices of group facilitators David Sunseri and Alan Oliver, two practitioners of long standing. Through their collective experience with study and engagement, we have gleaned a good idea of both monastic and lay practice.

The course deals with Buddhism’s historical background, precepts, and practical aspects of practice, and integrates these in both an ancient and modern context. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of these meetings is found in the observation that, together, we embody great diversity, even though we are all gay men who might otherwise be considered a small minority.

Many traditions are represented, among them Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, Tibetan, and Nipherin, in addition to some members’ related experience with Taoism, Bon, Judaism, Vedanta, and Christianity. The dharma of diversity has sparked some lively debates. These are crucial to attaining a clear and deepened understanding of our beliefs, as we work to reconcile our many ideas and approaches, which are sometimes in conflict.

Gradually, through meditation and observation, we come to see that we are all in the same boat, and that whatever course we set will bring us to the same destination, however different our voyages may be.

Our classes have been a fortunate occasion to come together, forming a sangha of sorts where everyone is welcome to freely inquire about the Buddha’s many remarkable discoveries on the nature of existence. I think it safe to say that we all feel gratitude for the opportunity to attend these meetings, which broaden our understanding of the dharma and of each other. This, in turn, helps us reflect, more often and more strongly, the teachings of the Enlightened One.

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Coordinator Needed to Prepare Local Dharma Calendar

The newsletter committee is seeking an energetic, naturally curious individual to take on the job of preparing the Local Dharma calendar each month. GBF is already on the mailing lists of many dharma centers, so this person would already have most of the information available to him. It might also be valuable to check if we are omitting any major centers from our calendar. We would also be grateful if this person could enter this information into a computer (we’ll help you locate one if you don’t have access to a Macintosh).

This is a wonderful opportunity to be of service. Past calendar coordinators have told us the job also keeps them incredibly well informed about Buddhist activities. If this is your calling, then call Bob Hass at
A Visit to Shasta Abbey

by John F. Krowka

During a recent vacation, a friend and I visited Shasta Abbey, which is located just off Interstate Highway 5 near Mount Shasta City. It is the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives and serves as a monastery in the tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation (Soto Zen).

The revered Master Jiyu-Kennett, founder, abbot, and spiritual director of Shasta Abbey was ordained in 1962 by the Very Reverend Seck Kim Seng of the Cheng Hoon Teng Temple in Malaysia. She received the dharma transmission from the Very Reverend Koho Keido Chisan Zenji in Japan.

Shasta Abbey serves as a seminary for both men and women who are training for the Buddhist priesthood. It also offers retreats and training for lay people throughout the year. Introductory retreats focus on the simple and practical aspects of Buddhist training that are needed to develop a firm spiritual base. Meditation retreats emphasize both sitting meditation and bringing stillness and reverence to every aspect of daily life.

Prior to its reincarnation as a monastery in 1970, Shasta Abbey was a motel, and many of the original stone cottages still remain. Upon arrival at the Abbey Gate we were greeted cheerfully by Rev. Berthold who served as our tour guide. He showed us the recently-constructed guest cottages which looked like they would provide a comfortable environment for retreat participants. The dark brown buildings and stone cottages under

the pine trees provided a relaxing ambiance as we toured the facilities.

Small altars and gardens dotted the Abbey grounds. One altar of the “Six Worlds” contained hundreds of toy figures and was constructed as part of a local children’s dharma project. It reminded me of “sandbox therapy” I had done with a psychologist a few years ago.

Inside the Ceremony Hall, stained glass windows cast a soothing light. Inspired by the teachings of Rev. Master Kennett, one of them proclaimed, “Nothing Matters”. At another end of the hall stood the main altar with a huge golden Buddha and other sacred ritual objects. To the left of the altar was a statue of Achalanatha Vidya-raja with his sword held high to remind us of the need for determination amidst the flames of greed, anger, and delusion.

This altar serves as a reminder of the benefits of mindfulness in all daily actions.

On the right was a statue of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Near this statue were shelves containing memorials of many of the dogs and other animals who had lived at Shasta Abbey. One statue commemorated two canine residents named "Psychedelic Sam" and "Dog".

The Meditation Hall, the spiritual center of the Abbey, was connected to the Ceremony Hall. We were only able to peer into this hall, which is off-limits to outsiders, and is used by the monks for their daily meditations as well as their sesshin.

As we left the Ceremony Hall, Rev. Berthold pointed out the “Bath Altar” which was inspired by a monk who experienced a kensho (enlightenment) while in the bathroom. This altar serves as a reminder of the benefits of mindfulness in all daily actions.

We continued our tour and were greeted with traditional gassho (bows) by the monks who were going about their daily activities. A few dogs— including a cute little black puppy— also came up to say hello.

Next we toured the spacious kitchen facilities and dining room, which has a breathtaking view of snow-capped Mt. Shasta. Rev. Daishin, a former college football-player and senior monk who is now in charge of the kitchen, gave us cookies to take with us and we said good-bye to our most gracious hosts.

I was particularly taken by the warmth, sincerity, and light-hearted spirit of the monks I met during my visit to Shasta Abbey. I had previously felt that Zen was too austere for my tastes, but my attitude has softened considerably since this visit.

Shasta Abbey is only about a five-hour drive from San Francisco and it is quite close to Ashland, Oregon. Rev. Master Kennett and her followers have created a nurturing environment under the benevolent gaze of Mount Shasta and near the worldly rush of traffic on Interstate 5. The Abbey’s sangha emanates a good energy, and a visit there is time well spent.

Individuals interested in the Abbey’s retreat schedule, resident lay training, hours, or their mail order catalog of Buddhist supplies can write to them at PO Box 199, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067-0199. They can be reached by phone at (916) 926-4208 or by FAX at (916) 926-0428. Shasta Abbey also has branch temples in California (Berkeley-Albany, Santa Barbara, etc.), Oregon, Washington, Montana, Canada, Holland, England, and Germany.
Hello, Dalai

A conversation with Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, about sex, AIDS, and the fate of the world.

by Scott Hunt

[The following interview was excerpted from the February/March 1994 issue of Out magazine.]

The Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama was born in a cow shed in the village of Takster in the northeastern Tibetan province of Amdo, beginning life as a typical farm boy. But in 1937, at age two, his life was forever changed when a search party of monks was led to his house by visions and auspicious signs.

In accordance with Tibetan tradition the young boy was given an array of tests that confirmed that he was the reincarnation of the Holder of the White Lotus. At age four, Tenzin Gyatso was taken to the Potala Palace in Lhasa, seated on the Lion Throne, and proclaimed the Dalai Lama (meaning “ocean of wisdom”).

Having left the isolated kingdom that inspired the myth of Shangri-la, the Buddhist leader now travels extensively, giving lectures on Universal Responsibility and teaching Buddhism to eager Westerners, including Richard Gere, Harrison Ford, Allen Ginsberg, Loni Anderson, Philip Glass, and John Cleese.

His high profile invites comparison to another well-known Holiness, the Pope. The Dalai Lama himself has noted the similarities between Catholic and Buddhist monastic orders, particularly their strict vows of sexual conduct, and between the ritual traditions of the two religions. The Dalai Lama, however, is clearly much more receptive to change and more tolerant of differences than is his Catholic counterpart.

On the issue of birth control, for example, he declared in our interview, “A further increase in population is out of the question. In order to save a better future and our fight for precious life, our conclusion must be that we have to take birth control measures.”

He spoke in a rich baritone voice, leaning back regally in a simple chair in his receiving room. “If some religious tradition is against birth control, we have to study and find ways to get past these... I have already shared this thought with my Catholic brothers and sisters.”

The Dalai Lama is also more liberal on issues of sexuality. “Using one’s hand is not harming on others, and if you have no vow, then it is simply for temporary satisfaction,” he said.

This principle apparently applies equally to homosexuality, a topic that caused noticeable discomfort for the translator and the assistant, who sat in small chairs on the side of the room.

At first the Dalai Lama seemed to say that homosexuality was prohibited by traditions proscribing sexual misconduct. “Blow, here,” he said in broken English, pointing first to his mouth and then to his groin, “is wrong.” After giving the issue more thought, however, he arrived at an answer that modified his initial response.

“If someone comes to me and asks whether it is OK or not, I will first ask if you have some religious vows to uphold. Then my next question is, ‘What is your companion’s opinion?’ If you both agree”—he laughed heartily—“then I think I would say, if two males or two females voluntarily agree to have mutual satisfaction without further implication of harming others, then it is OK.”

This may seem a surprising statement for one of the world’s foremost religious leaders. But in Buddhist teaching, the Dalai Lama pointed out, “individual rights means we have the individual right to engage in any action that gives satisfaction, provided it does not harm others. We cannot say on the basis of individual rights that it is OK to steal from someone or to kill someone. Why? These also give individual satisfaction, but this is not sufficient, because it creates harm on others.

“Any action or activities that do not create a problem for others, and even for the temporary satisfaction of the individual if it does not create suffering in others, then that kind of action is all right,” he said.

Far from the Christian concept that the Bible is unquestionable, Buddhists are encouraged to debate the dharma (Buddha’s teachings).

“If someone introduces someone better than Buddha, then you may accept another one,” the Dalai Lama said matter-of-factly.
"From a Buddhist tradition that is the most correct position. In the beginning your attitude toward Buddha should be somewhat skeptical and questioning, not accepting. And then if you have a questioning attitude, that attitude will automatically lead to more investigation...That is the democracy of Buddhism."

Unlike religions that can compel their numbers to abide by doctrine through the threat of expulsion, the Dalai Lama noted that Buddhist belief in individual freedom also means "it is not dependent upon someone else's power whether to accept you as a Buddhist. No one can expel you. It is not an organization. If a person accepts Buddha...that person is automatically Buddhist, so long as the faith is there, even if he kills someone."

Buddhist respect for the individual also leads to respect for other religious faiths. "Sectarianism I think is not good," the Dalai Lama declared. "Buddha, as one person, himself created contradictions. It seems almost that we have to ask Buddha, 'Which is real teaching?'"

He laughed. "Anyway, Buddha was quite clever...The purpose of his teaching was to help each person, and he respected each individual's right. So now this creates a new perspective toward other religions like Christianity. In the past, millions of people have gained from that teaching, so the right of millions of people must be respected. We must accept the potential of different religions.

"To me Buddhism is best, but this does not mean that it is best for everybody. That is clear." In fact, according to the Dalai Lama, religion itself will not be suitable for everyone. The important thing, he declares, is to treat people with simple kindness.

These sentiments have made the Dalai Lama popular in the West, where people are increasingly reluctant to follow Judeo-Christian religions but still seek some form of spiritual practice. Moreover, the Dalai Lama put into words what many Westerners have begun to realize: The insatiable material appetite of the West has led to widespread inhumanity and environmental destruction.

"In Buddhist teaching, we have the right to engage in any action that gives satisfaction, provided it does not harm others."

"Basically, I believe that the material lifestyles of Western society have developed problems," he said politely but firmly. "The whole lifestyle of the society—of producing and consuming and the concept of promoting a higher level of living standard—must change. It looks like you are going in a vicious circle and no one knows how to break out of that circle."

Part of the problem, he noted, is the tremendous gap between the wealth of the industrial nations of the Northern Hemisphere and the poverty of the less-developed nations in the South.

"Because of the gap with richer nations, there will be a refugee and immigration problem with political consequences. If the living standard of the South improves to a similar standard that the North has already achieved, nature's resources will be inadequate. So the richer nations have to sacrifice something. This is not based just on morals but on our own long-term existence."

With characteristic honesty, he added, "Where to start, I don't know. It is much easier to see the problem than to find the answer! But if people recognize the tremendous negative consequences of their present lifestyle through use of their intelligence, they will realize that they must change the present economic system."

Equally difficult to solve is the AIDS epidemic, and upon my mentioning the disease a sense of sorrow overcome the Dalai Lama's face. To answer, he relied on his knowledge of Tibetan medicine, which is legendary in Northern India for curing terminal illnesses. According to Tibetan medicine, he explained, the causes of disease may be divided into two types, long-term and immediate. The long-term causes are anger, desire, and mental darkness, which create an imbalance in the body's constituents. Immediate causes are such things as diet, use of the sense organs, sleep, and daily conduct.

"To Tibetan physicians," said the Dalai Lama, "AIDS is really something new, and the immediate cause is negative sexual liberty. That is the way one receives the disease. Tibetan medical experts say that the present use of more chemicals, air pollution, and contaminants on vegetables is another part of the immediate cause."

"Like most diseases," he added, "such a major illness or major negative event also has a karmic cause, no doubt. But," he said frankly, "I think AIDS also has a positive aspect. It has helped to promote some kind of self-discipline."

With this statement, the Dalai Lama's assistant imposed discipline on His Holiness' schedule and asked us to end the interview. The Dalai Lama took my hands in his and bowed his head close to mine.

As I left the room, returning into the hot, thin Himalayan air, I heard his vibrant laughter one last time. I turned to see his face in a brilliant smile. In spite of my many memories of despair, with so many reasons to be angry, I had a newfound hope that the world just might begin to listen to this simple Buddhist monk. ✰

Buddhist Scott Hunt is writing a book on the Nobel Peace Prize laureates. He has contributed to The Advocate and Christopher Street.