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

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

5 Jan., Sunday Sitting (East Bay), 10:30 am, at the home of Geoff McEnany.

7 Jan. (Tuesday), Steering Committee Meeting, 7:00 pm, at the home of Larry White.
All are welcome.

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

10 Jan., News Deadline for next GBF Newsletter. Send all articles to Peter Eggenger, Co-Editor, GBF Newsletter.

12 Jan., Sunday Sitting (SF), 10:30 am, 273 Page St. Alan Senauke, national coordinator of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, will speak on "Meditation and Engagement With the World."

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

18 Jan. (Saturday), GBF's Feed-The-Homeless Project at Hamilton Family Center. To participate, contact Clint Seiter.

(continued on page 3)

Alan Senauke of Buddhist Peace Fellowship to Speak

Our speaker for January is Alan Senauke, national coordinator of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. His subject will be, "Meditation and Engagement With the World." Alan is the resident priest at the Berkeley Zen Center, where he lives with his wife and two children.

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship's mission is twofold: 1) to bring an awareness of social engagement into the dharma communities, and 2) to bring Buddhist principles to the peace movement at large. BIT is an international organization with more than 4,000 members, and has been active since 1978.♡

Newsletter Renewals Due Jan. 15

We know how much you look forward to each and every issue of the GBF Newsletter because you've told us so. To be sure you don't miss a single issue, you must return your subscription renewal form along with a check for $15 payable to GBF by January 15. The form is on page seven of the December newsletter. If we don't hear from you by then, your name will be dropped from our mailing list.♡

Thanks...

Thanks to Peter Goetz for having served on the Steering Committee during 1996.♡

In Brief
The Sangha Urgently Needs...

There are several jobs that are in immediate need of willing volunteers. If you can help, please call the GBF line at 415/974-9878, press 5, and leave your message:

- newsletter co-editor (you'd like the newsletter to keep coming, wouldn't you?)
- recording equipment operator to tape Sunday talks
- transcribers of Sunday talk tapes♡

Dharma Dinner Parties Resume in Jan.

Beginning in January, GBF will resume holding dharma dinner parties on the last Saturday of the month at 7:00 pm. Bring your favorite dish and enjoy good food and fun conversation in the company of other GBFers. The parties will be held at 791 29th Avenue (at Cabrillo). If you have any questions, please call Jeff.

(continued on page 3)
Dharma Centers

Each center offers ongoing programs and activities. If interested, please contact them directly.

- BSC: Berkeley Shambhala Center: 2288 Fulton Street, Berkeley. 510/841-6475.
- CDS: California Diamond Sangha, P.O. Box 2915, Petaluma, CA.
- CML: Community of Mindful Living, P.O. Box 7355, Albany. 510/527-3751.
- DE: Dudjom International, P.O. Box 40155, Berkeley. 510/849-9928.
- EGZC: Empty Gate Zen Center, 5707 Oakgrove Ave., Oakland. 510/653-5991.
- EHM: Enlightened Heart Meditation Center. 415/255-0798.
- HSZC: Hartford Street Zen Center: 57 Hartford St., SF. 415/863-2507.
- POL: Pema Osel Ling: 2013 Eureka Canyon Road, Corralitos. 408/761-6266.
- SBC: Saraha Buddhist Center, 3145 Geary Blvd. #615, SF. 415/731-5973.
- SCZ: Santa Cruz Zen Center, 113 School Street, Santa Cruz. 408/457-0206.
- SPSC: SF Shambhala Center: 1650 Taraval St., SF. 415/731-4426.
- SFZC: San Francisco Zen Center: 300 Page Street, SF. 415/863-3136.
- TCL: Tse Chen Ling Center: 4 Joost Ave, SF. 415/333-3261.
- VI: Vajrapani Institute, P.O. Box 2130, Boulder Creek. 408/338-6654.

The Local Dharma
January – February 1997

Special Events

4 Jan. (Sun.) Meditation and Inquiry with Howard Cohn. How we look away from ourselves for happiness. Meditation instruction, sitting, walking, and dharma inquiry. Cost: $30 (includes lunch with pre-registration). 9:30 am-5 pm. SR

25 Jan. & 15 Feb. (Sat.) “Living Peace Patch” Walks. We return to the land in the rainy season, to take our healthy seedlings out of the nursery and into the land, planting them back where they can grow and thrive with the nourishment and support of winter and spring rain. The soft gentleness of being with the rain, the fog, and the dark in turn helps us nourish our True Being with care and lovingkindness. Call for more information. LPMC

26 Jan. (Sun.) Vipassana Daylong with Jack Kornfield. Meditation instructions, guided sittings, walking, and dharma talk. Cost: $35 (includes lunch). SR

7-14 Feb. (Fri.-Fri.) Insight Meditation: An Eight-Day Residential Retreat with Howard Cohn and Anna Douglas. Insight (vipassana) meditation, taken from the teachings of the Buddha, is a practice of cultivating peacefulness in the mind and openness in the heart. It is learning to live in the present moment, to ride more easily with the ups and downs of our lives. Meditation instructions, sitting and walking in silence, dharma talks, interviews. Special emphasis on how we look away from ourselves to find happiness, thereby missing the essential peace that is available here and now. Cost: $325 plus donation to teachers and staff. SR

7 Feb. (Fri.) Mountains and Rivers Without End: A Performance by Gary Snyder and Friends. In the Fall of 1996, Pulitzer prize-winning poet and pioneer ecologist Gary Snyder published the book-length poem he’s been working on for 40 years, Mountains and Rivers Without End. To celebrate the event, Gary and his friends will perform the poem in the Green Gulch zendo. Using temple bells and drums, chanting and singing, and whatever else comes to mind and hand, the poets and assorted performers will create an improvised extravaganza with Buddha, Tara, Jizo, and Manjushri in attendance. It is an historic occasion you won’t want to miss. Donation: $10 at the door. GGF

8 Feb. (Sat.) Zen in America: the Early Days: A Conversation With Gary Snyder. Master poet and old-time Zen pioneer Gary Snyder will reminisce about his early days practicing Zen in America and Japan. Autobiography will no doubt mix with insight and advice. A rare chance to listen to and dialogue with one of our most seasoned elders of the Way. Cost: $50. Bring a bag lunch. GGF

19-23 Feb. (Wed.-Sun.) Meditation/Movement/Men’s Work with Jack Kornfield and Robert Hall. This retreat combines traditional vipassana practice with an exploration of the spirit in the lives of men. Discussion groups and meditations will focus on men’s issues and men’s inner work, enhancing the experience with movement, sounding, and sharing from the heart. Cost: $300 includes room and board. Dana for the teachers can be given at the end of the retreat. SR

“One must live as if it would be forever, and as if one might die each moment. Always, both at once.” — Issan Dorsey
Buddhist AIDS Project to Offer Classes, Workshop in 1997

The Buddhist AIDS Project (BAP) has scheduled a 12-week study session on The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying from January 12 through April 6, 1997. The course will be held on Sunday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Shambhala Center, 1630 Taraval Street. Course facilitators are Jim Purfield and Steve Peskind.

BAP is planning a four-week course called “The Listening Heart” on Monday evenings, March 3, 10, 17, and 24, at the Shambhala Center. The course will focus on actively listening to oneself and others, hearing Buddhist teachings, and developing contemplative skills. It will be led by Steve Peskind, participants, and guest teachers.

On Sunday, January 26, BAP is sponsoring a one-day workshop, “Practicing With Protease and Other Stuff,” from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Shambhala Center. The workshop will include a group exploration and sharing of experiences living with changes in AIDS treatments, and will include introductory meditation teaching and practice. It will be led by Jim Purfield and Steve Peskind.

All donations requested for each event will be based on expenses. To reserve a space in any of the above offerings, call BAP at 415/522-7473.

Special Sittings at Hartford Street

Special meditation sittings specifically for people with HIV, their caregivers, and lovers are to begin soon at the Hartford Street Zen Center. These mid-morning offerings are intended to be convenient and manageable even for those who are not feeling especially well.

Tentatively, the sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings from 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. They will include a five-minute period for questions and answers, two 10-minute periods with a short break in between, and then another few minutes of discussion. The discussion may, on occasion, continue past 11:00 a.m. for those who wish to stay.

People coming for the first time are requested to arrive 15 minutes early in order to receive basic meditation instruction. There is no charge for the sittings, but donations of any amount are always accepted with appreciation. Those interested should mail the Hartford Street Zen Center at HZSC@AOL.com, or call 415/863 2507. A starting date will be announced shortly.

We hope that these offers will be of value to many people with HIV and their parents.

Engaged Buddhist Projects

(This is only a partial listing of Bay Area projects. For details about individual projects, please contact the organization directly.)

- BAP: Buddhist AIDS Project, 555 John Muir Drive, #803, SF 94132. 415/522-7473.
- BPF: Buddhist Peace Fellowship, P.O. Box 4650, Berkeley 94704. 510/525-8596.
- HFPC: Hamilton Family Center Project, c/o GFB, 2261 Market Street, #422, SF 94114. Clint Seiter, 415/386-3088.
- MH: Maitri Hospice, 61 Hartford Street, SF 94114. 415/863-8508.

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship supports Buddhist practice in the gay men’s community. It is a forum that brings together the diverse Buddhist traditions to address the spiritual concerns of gay men in the Bay Area, the United States, and around the world. GBF’s mission includes cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship Newsletter is published monthly by the Gay Buddhist Fellowship. All signed articles express the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the GBF. © 1997 Gay Buddhist Fellowship. All rights reserved.

GBF Calendar

(continued from page 1)

19 Jan., Sunday Sitting (East Bay), 10:30 am. See 1/5.

23 Jan., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at the home of Edward Sams,

25 Jan., Dharma Dinner Party, 7 pm at the home of Jeff Miller,


30 Jan., Thursday Sitting, 7:45 pm, at Edward Sams’ home.

Contributors

Thanks to the following people who helped with this issue of the GBF Newsletter: Bob Hass, Brian Shelley, Clint Seiter, David Holmes, David Sunseri, Edward Sams, George Gayuski, Jeff Miller, Jon Weaver, Ken Harper, Mark Marion, Robin Levitt, Steve Peskind, and Tom Moon.

Writings from Prison

(continued from page 1)

How has your practice helped you deal with prison life? What are some of the challenges you have faced? How have you been able to deal with them? Do you have access to Buddhist writings and, if so, which have you found most helpful? How might others within the GFB sangha support your practice?

We welcome writings from all those who are willing to have them printed in the GBF Newsletter. These may be in the form of letters, articles, stories, poetry, or cartoons. Although we may edit your writing for clarity or length, we will strive to retain its message intact. We look forward to hearing from you.

GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER JANUARY 1997 3
A Respectful Request to His Holiness The Dalai Lama

by Steve Peskind

[The Gay Buddhist Fellowship Newsletter welcomes written responses from readers to this article.]

His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, is the temporal spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people and, with a 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, a rightly esteemed spiritual leader of people around the world.

Regarding homosexuality, we know firsthand that the Dalai Lama has been personally supportive of sexual relations that include love and mutual consent between homosexual men and homosexual women. He has stressed kindness, non-harm, and discernment in all sexual relations. He has directly supported author Andrew Harvey and Tibetan Buddhist scholar Jeffrey Hopkins, both openly gay men who have experienced harmful responses to their sexual orientation in their respective spiritual communities. As he said to Andrew Harvey, “Love is love.”

However, in two recent books under his name, The Way to Freedom (Harper Collins for the Library of Tibet, 1994) and the just released Beyond Dogma (North Atlantic Books, 1996), he states that sexual relations between two men or two women is considered sexual misconduct according to Buddhist teachings, and is a violation of the third Tibetan Buddhist moral precept to engage in non-harmful sexual activity.

_Beyond Dogma_ is a transcript of interviews with His Holiness that were conducted in France between October 24 and November 16, 1993. The following is recorded on page 46 of this excellent book:

"Question: What are improper sexual attitudes, and what do you think of homosexuality, for example?

"Response: Something may be considered improper in terms of organs, time, and place—when sexual relations involve inappropriate parts of the body, or when they occur at an unsuitable time or place. These are the terms Buddhists use to describe sexual misconduct. The inappropriate parts of the body are the mouth and the anus, and sexual intercourse involving those parts of the body, whether with a man or a woman is considered sexual misconduct. Masturbation as well.

"As for when sexual intercourse takes place, if it is during the day, it is also held to be a form of misconduct, as is having intercourse with a partner who professes to certain principles such as sexual abstinence or celibacy, even if those vows are only temporary. To force someone to have intercourse also comes under the category of improper time.

"Inappropriate locations include temples, places of devotion, or positions where one of the partners is uncomfortable. A sexual act is deemed proper when the couples use the organs created for sexual intercourse and nothing else. To have sexual relations with a prostitute paid by you and not by a third person does not, on the other hand, constitute improper behavior. All these examples define what is and what is not proper sexual behavior according to Buddhist morality.

"Homosexuality, whether it is between men or between women, is not improper in itself. What is improper is the use of organs already defined as inappropriate for sexual contact. Is this clear?"

But consider the following statements by the Dalai Lama to American interviewer Scott Hunt, two months prior to the above interview on August 16, 1993, and printed in _Out Magazine_ (March 1994) and the _GBF Newsletter_ (July-August 1995):

"SH: The Dalai Lama is also more liberal on issues of sexuality.

"HHDL: Using one’s hand is not harming on others, and if you have no vow, then it is simply for temporary satisfaction.

"[Scott goes on to write:] 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:

"HHDL: 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.

"Scott adds: 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.'"

Again, the above was a personal interview between Scott Hunt, an openly gay Buddhist, and His Holiness in Dharamsala, India, in August of 1993.

In 1997, The Dalai Lama is coming to visit and teach in the San Francisco area. Members of GBF and the Buddhist AIDS Project respectfully request that His Holiness The Dalai Lama, in whatever manner and venue he chooses, speak to the Buddhist Dharma, the truth of homosexuality and homosexual behavior.

Many who regard this "simple Buddhist monk" (as he refers to himself) very highly, are confused and distressed by the inconsistency of his statements and their worldwide ramifications. The Buddha, according to Buddhist teaching, and the Dalai Lama himself have said that the truth of what is—not Buddhist doctrine per se—is the Buddhist Dharma.

With open hearts and inquiring minds we may each ask ourselves and each other: What is the truth of love and harm expressed in homosexuality and homosexual relations "beyond dogma?"

Steve Peskind is a gay man practicing in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He has been an AIDS counselor and caregiver since 1981 and presently is a coordinator of the Buddhist AIDS Project. He is also editor of the forthcoming anthology, Heart Lessons From an Epidemic: Buddhist Practice and Living With HIV.

From the Steering Committee

Below are a list of some actions and highlights from the last GBF Steering Committee Meeting:

- A second co-editor is urgently needed for the newsletter, as are people to tape the Sunday speakers (set up and operate the recording equipment), and people to transcribe the talks. If you can help or if you'd like more information, please call the GBF line, at 415/974-9878, and press 5 to leave your message.
- Work is progressing on a brochure about GBF.
- Work is progressing on a release form so talks and articles can be placed on our Web site, tapes of Sunday talks duplicated and sold, and reprints of articles made available to GBF members.
- The GBF Web site is being updated and expanded. When it's ready, we'll let you know.
- GBF is now taping the Sunday talks and question-and-answer sessions. Before the Q & A sessions begin, someone will remind everyone of this, so if someone does not want their remarks taped, they will have the option of not participating.
- Potlucks are resuming. They will be held the last Saturday of each month at the home of Jeff Miller.
- Steering Committee members are now meditating together at the beginning and end of each meeting.

GBF Steering Committee

Below are the names and telephone numbers of the current GBF Steering Committee members. We encourage you to contact any of us whenever you have any idea or concern you want to discuss. Feel free to speak with us at GBF events or to call us at home.

Alan Oliver ........................................
Avery Freed ........................................
Bob Hass ...........................................
Clint Seiter ........................................
David Holmes ......................................
Ding-Hao Ma .......................................Edward Sams .......................................Jeff Miller ...........................................
Larry White ........................................Paul Dalwigk .......................................Robin Levitt ........................................Tom Moon ...........................................

GAY BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER JANUARY 1997 5
The Intimate and The Archetypal: Can the Buddhist Dharma be Applied to Casual Sex?

by Clint Seiter

Sex between partners may be a personal act of self-to-self acknowledgment, a means of expressing close feelings between two people who already have achieved at least some degree of intimacy. In this case, the sex act is used as a means of expressing and enhancing this emotional bond. This type of sex could be referred to as “intimate sex.” It can develop into an intensely personal physical connection that only grows stronger as two individuals reveal their selves to each other.

There is a second type of sexual motivation, however, that operates on quite a different plane. This sex draws strength primarily from fantasy, where the partner is actually a vessel for something bigger, the ideal of The Male (in gay sex). In this situation, the partner is fulfilling the role of an archetype, whether it is The Beautiful Youth, The Dandy, The Rough Trade, The Androgynous, The Masculine Man, or any number of other generic types.

The pleasure derived from this type of sex is directly proportional to the degree of success that the partner has in assuming the archetype. Archetypes by definition are limited and cannot assume the complexities, contradictions, and frailties of the typical human personality. The more an individual reveals his own distinct personality, the more difficult it is for the partner to maintain whatever fantasy is being invoked. Personal disclosure is lethal to archetypal sex.

The Western Judeo-Christian culture has for centuries extolled the virtues of intimate sex while roundly condemning archetypal sex. In this cultural perspective, only intimate sex can lay any claims to “the spirit.” Archetypal sex is dismissed as an urge of our animal bodies (or in fundamentalist churches, the temptation of Satan) that must be transcended for the sake of our spiritual development. This results in expressions of archetypal sex invariably linked to feelings of shame, remorse, and a need for penance.

Most schools of Western psychology have picked up on this theme and enhanced it. Intimate sex is the manifestation of a well-adjusted, actualized personality; archetypal sex is the sign of arrested development, an immature personality stuck in adolescent fantasies. Within this context, it has proven extremely difficult to examine archetypal sex in a nonjudgmental manner. Attempts to understand its nature are colored by pejorative assumptions and terminologies (witness all of the baggage the word “promiscuous” carries with it).

In the culture we live in today, the options regarding archetypal sex include repressing the urge, sublimating it, or acting it out in secretive, furtive ways that carry a stiff penalty if the perpetrator is caught. (Just call to mind the image of Jimmy Swaggart confessing his trysts with prostitutes before the camera, tears of remorse streaming down his face.)

And yet there are characteristics of archetypal sex that can take on the aspect of a religious experience. Archetypal sex seeks to transcend, to connect and identify with a concept greater than our personal selves. The partner loses his own personality and identity and becomes an ideal of The Male. In successful archetypal sex, the egos of both partners can dissolve into the act of sex itself. Archetypal sex is a form of worship to a principle of beauty momentarily incorporated within the body of the partner.

Despised as it is, archetypal sex does happen. And in the already marginalized gay subculture, it happens a lot. But because this subculture in many ways has incorporated and institutionalized the values of the main culture that despises it, the arenas where archetypal sex is most frequently played out are fraught with contradictions. More often than not, archetypal sex is split off from the day-to-day experiences and identities of gay men and relegated to a separate role. It’s not incorporated into the rest of our personality. What results is a type of schizophrenia.

Problems also arise when partners fail to recognize the dichotomy between the two different sex drives. A partner seeking intimate sex may view a partner seeking archetypal sex as shallow and objectifying. A partner seeking archetypal sex may view a partner seeking intimate sex as clinging and smothering.

Since archetypal sex is more often associated with male energy and intimate sex with female, this is a particular issue in the heterosexual world. But because both genders carry both archetypal and intimate sexual needs within, albeit in different proportions from individual to individual, this is an issue in the gay and lesbian subculture as well. The homosexual subculture does have one distinct and powerful advantage over the heterosexual main culture: a much greater opportunity to experiment with different types of sexual roles and relationships (our “outlaw status” at least has some compensations).

About the only relational model that the straight world offers up as acceptable is one-on-one monogamy. This model goes a long way in validating intimate sex, but it discredits and suppresses archetypal sex almost entirely (except in fantasy role playing between monogamous partners, and even that is usually a grudging concession).

An interesting challenge would be to look at archetypal sex in a non-judgmental manner and speculate how it could be integrated into our lives in a way that could conform with Buddhist dharma. If this were possible, then what form would archetypal sex take? What would relationships based on archetypal sex be like? What special problems would arise from trying to integrate archetypal sex with intimate sex, and what creative solutions could be
invoked to deal with them? Are archetypal sex and Buddhist dharma innate contradictory, or can common ground be found between them?

Criteria set by Buddhist dharma include a movement away from greater suffering and towards greater interconnectedness. If the archetypal sex drive is acknowledged and understood, if partners enter into an archetypal sexual experience openly and honestly, if care is taken to treat each other lovingly and with joy, could this form of sex, even if between strangers, be consistent with Buddhist dharma?

To explore this further, it might prove useful to examine criticisms levied against archetypal sex and try to respond to them.

Archetypal sex treats the partner like an object.

Actually, it treats the partner like an ideal. The partner isn't just a body, but an avatar of the male, in whatever particular image is being currently evoked.

Archetypal sex lacks intimacy.

This depends on how “intimacy” is defined. Archetypal sex does little to acknowledge the day-to-day identity with which a partner usually associates himself. But archetypal sexual experiences can bring two (or more) people together sometimes in some powerfully transcendental ways. If they walk away afterwards and never see each other again, this doesn’t mean that intimacy did not occur for the moment.

Archetypal sex can become addictive.

So can intimate sex. The challenge is to remain aware and conscious and strive to act in the moment.

Archetypal sex leaves a person feeling empty afterwards.

If a person is seeking intimate sex and engages in archetypal sex instead, this can be true. The challenge here is to attempt to be clear in one’s motives and desires. Engaging in archetypal sex needn’t preclude having intimacy needs met in other relationships, sexual or otherwise.

Archetypal sex discriminates in favor of the young and physically attractive. Those who are neither are treated as second-class citizens.

Archetypal sex “discriminates” in favor of whoever most successfully embodies the archetype in question. The American culture does tend to fixate on youth and sets up specific standards of beauty. But there are archetypes that define beauty in ways different than the norm (e.g., the “Daddy” archetype finds older men more desirable). However, whatever the given archetype is, it’s true that there will be people who fall outside of it. But condemning this will not make the dynamic stop, it will just push it underground.

There are ways for someone who falls outside the archetype to still honor it and participate with it in some capacity. If participants of archetypal sex also honor the dharma, then the challenge is how to deal with potential players with kindness and respect, even in the act of rejection. (This same challenge exists for those seeking intimate sex.) An even greater challenge, however, would be in finding creative ways of including would-be participants who might normally be excluded.

In closing, it should be stressed that archetypal sex cannot respond to and satisfy all basic human needs for intimacy and love. A steady diet of nothing but archetypal sex would result in disinterest and suffering. However, perhaps there is a potential in every human for the archetypal sexual experience, and for those who choose so, it may be possible to respond to this desire in a way that does not violate the basic Buddhist dharma.

Enlightened archetypal sex is a tremendous challenge in a culture that condemns and despises it. We occupy a unique position as gay Buddhists in this dialogue. Gay sensibilities can offer as valuable a perspective on Buddhist views on sexuality as Buddhist dharma can on gay views. It’s up to us to at least open up a dialogue where new types of relationships, embodying both the intimate and the archetypal, can be examined.

Clint Seiter is a member of GBE and heads the sangha’s Hamilton Family Center Feed-the-Homeless Project.