Gay Buddhist Fellowship

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

Ruminating on the GBF Weekend Retreat, September 1-13, 1998

The Seventh Annual GBF Retreat was not only the most highly attended (36 participants), but arguably the most innovative. Through the hard work of Bill Kirkpatrick, participant sign-up, mailings, fund collecting, and carpooling were seamless. The practices themselves were designed with great diligence by David Holmes. David also scheduled the Dharma talks by Jim Wilson and the Dharma exercise by Alan Oliver, and planned the forms of practice: mindful silence till noon, sitting and walking meditations, individual Dharma instruction, and ceremonies.

Below are articles written from three participants' perspectives: the Initiate, Dexter Young; the Veteran, Lee Robbins; and, the Teacher, Jim Wilson.

The Road to Vajrapani—The Initiate
by a Upasaka,* Dexter Young

I was in the bookstore yesterday when I came across the book, If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Kill Him by Sheldon Kopp. I had heard of it before, but had not really reflected on the meaning of the title until this week. As I started perusing it, I realized that it had been four days since my first three-day retreat at the Vajrapani Institute.

While standing in front of the Religion and Philosophy bookshelves, I pondered on the events of my first GBF retreat. The book reminded me of the first Dharma lecture given by Jim Wilson on compassion. Jim suggested that in order to nurture the compassionate side of ourselves, we could begin by reflecting and by silently saying to ourselves, “may I treat every person I meet as my mother.” Quick-wittedly, one of the members of our Sangha facetiously remarked “so you would shoot ‘em.” This sparked a dialogue, which resulted in the statement being rephrased as, “may I treat every person I meet as one who has nurtured and cared for me.” The remark about shooting one’s mother, which was made in jest, led me to some insights in relation to four activities that were, for me, the highlights of the retreat.

*Upasaka: A male lay disciple. The Sanskrit term was used by various sects in India, and was borrowed by Buddhism. A transliteration of the Sanskrit.
GBF Committees

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

Steering Committee
Paul Dalwigk, Contact Alan Oliver
Larry White, Nick Kolivas
Clint Seiter, Robin Levitt
Ding Hao Ma, Doug Hall
Clarence Wong, Chris Shelton
Bill Kirkpatrick

Social Committee
Clint Seiter, Contact Clarence Wong

Newsletter
Nick Kolivas, Editor Larry Hermens, Art Director
Alan Oliver, Assistant Editor, Larry Saxxon,
Mailbox Doug Hall,
Greg Eichler, Larry Alegre,
Managing Director Ernst Rischmuller,
Don Cristosomo, Robin Levitt,
Assistant Managing Mailing List
Director

Practice Committee
Alan Oliver, Contact David Sunseri
Nick Kolivas David Holmes
Doug Hall Howard King

Thursday Night Sittings
Bill Kirkpatrick Martin Kung
Lee Robbins Larry White

Newsletter Mailing Party
Snake Woolington, Bill Kirkpatrick
Contact Harv Whitten

Sunday Sitting Facilitators
Larry White, Contact Ding Hao Ma,
Ding Hao Ma, Harv Whitten,
Don Wiepert David Holmes,
Mark Marion Larry Hermens,
Joaquim Pose Substitutes
Doug Hall

Hamilton House
Clint Seiter, Contact

If you meet your mother on the road, kill her...with compassion

The Dharma lecture on compassion and the interchange that followed brought up memories of my own mother. I grew up with a mother who could have been the perfect understudy for both Mommy Dearest and Serial Mom. She was a strict disciplinarian during my early childhood who changed into an on-the-loose, compulsive gambler in my young adult life. When I think of my mother now, I feel a lot of compassion and love for her. It didn't always feel like this, but the more I practice the more I realize how grateful I am to my mother for helping me become the person I am today. I thank my mom for giving me an introductory course to “Samsara 101”, and as a token of my gratitude, I try to practice lessons each day in “Karuna* 101” for her and for others.

Loving people who have caused us suffering and have hurt us in the past is difficult. Having been raised in a Christian environment, I was always taught that if I met somebody who didn't treat me well, instead of taking revenge, I must learn to kill him or her with kindness. When I was a child, I pondered “how could this be?” Later on, I realized that this wasn't meant to be taken literally. I learned that instead of having vindictive thoughts toward my enemies, I can instead choose to fill my mind with compassionate and kind intentions for them.

If you meet others on the road, kill them... with gratitude

The gratitude ceremony which was performed around the Stupa forced me to think about people, things, and events that I was supposed to be thankful for. A panic attack set in. What if there wasn't anybody or anything that I was thankful for? To make it worse, we were asked to walk in front of the altar, light a candle and maybe say something to the Sangha. I thought surely that my experience in stage-acting in college would come in handy this time. My turn eventually came up, and I mindfully walked towards the altar, lit the candle, turned around, and spontaneously blurted out something from my heart. I was surprised to hear myself thanking the Sangha and the wonderful friends I had made in GBF. It was a heartfelt experience of opening myself up and a feeling of being in a safe environment.

Every person we have met on our personal, spiritual journey is a potential Buddha. Our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors, co-workers, lovers, boyfriends, enemies, and anyone we have met on the street has an innate Buddha nature. This means that all of us have the possibility of awakening our minds by developing Bodhicitta. When I contemplate on this theme, I realize that every person I have met has taught me something about the Dharma. I learned compassion from the homeless person I come in contact with on the streets, impermanence

*Karuna: Compassion in Pali
†Bodhicitta: Bodhi is awakened. Citta is mind. This is mind in the sense of complete-ness or fullness of our body/mind. Bodhicitta is the impetus for attaining enlightenment for the sole purpose of helping all other beings to attain enlightenment. It is the primary practice of the Bodhisattva (an enlightened being who determines to stay on earth only to help others).
from the ex-boyfriend who dumped me unexpectedly, and attachment from the cute guy I have a crush on. These situations serve as practice tests for me. I try to be aware of the feelings that arise when I come into contact with these beings. I am grateful to have difficult people in my life because they are the ones who provide me with a measurement of how I am progressing towards the Truth. I reflect on the thoughts that I have. Do I curse them? Do I secretly wish harm for them? Do I let go and send thoughts of compassion and loving kindness to them?

If you meet yourself on the road, kill yourself...with loving-kindness

The altar, which was created on Saturday morning, provided me with another challenge before going on the retreat. We were asked to bring a personal item that had some meaning to us. The first item I immediately thought about bringing was a small happy buddha carved out of jade that was given to me by my teacher after my refuge ceremony. The item was significant for me because it marked the beginning of my life with the Dharma. I felt that the altar sent a powerful energy and generated a symbolic and collective expression of our Gay Sangha. Each of the items that were offered on the altar showed the interconnection of our lives with one another.

As Gay men, most of us probably went through the pain of not being accepted by our peers and family early in our lives. This could have generated in us feelings of internalized homophobia, self-hatred, low self-esteem, and depression. During our meditation these torturous feelings might arise and bring us back to these disturbing situations. So, when we sit and meet-up with these feelings, we can acknowledge that we are having these feelings, and to send thoughts of loving-kindness to ourselves.

If you meet the Buddha on the road to Vajrapani, kill him...with kisses

There was a code of silence that was maintained throughout the morning on the first two days. Although I am comfortable with experiencing quiet periods alone, and have been in one-day silent retreats, I recognize that this would be a wonderful way for me to experience the presence of our Sangha. Silence leads to an insightful trip to one’s feelings, thoughts, and actions. It makes me more aware of where I am, where my thoughts are, and what my intentions are at that moment.

Since the Buddha is in all of us, it helps to become more aware of our actions towards others, especially when most of us hope to connect with a partner some day. By being present in our daily lives, we can learn to become more spontaneous in our actions. By being alive in the moment, we can learn to enjoy our interactions with people more. By becoming more relaxed with people, we open ourselves up to new experiences. This generates good, positive energy to everyone around us. One doesn’t know where he might meet his future lover, but if he already met him on the road to Vajrapani, just kiss and enjoy him!

I still try to contemplate on these reflections of compassion, gratitude, and loving-kindness and hope to continue generating mindfulness and awareness in my daily life! Be happy everyone!

GBF’s New Web Site:
www.gaybuddhist.org
November 15 Launch

For the past few months, a group of GBF nateheads have been diligently working on GBF's new website, www.gaybuddhist.org. The website contains information for newcomers to GBF (mission statement, history of GBF, etc.) as well as information for GBF members (sitting, social events, newsletter articles, etc.). Please join us on Sunday, November 15 for a multimedia presentation of the new web site (the presentation will take place after the 10:30am sitting in lieu of a talk). A feature of the new web site is the GBF “E-mail Sangha.” Using Internet e-mail listserv technology, GBF members as well as other Gay Buddhist practitioners can have an on-going group dialog via e-mail on topics of interest to Gay Buddhist practitioners. We will tell you more about the GBF E-mail Sangha at the presentation on November 15.

Thrift Store Donations

Thrift Store Donations benefit GBF and our Community.
Bring your extra clothing and other items to Community Thrift Store at 623 Valencia Street 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. Please inform the staff you are donating on behalf of GBF. Our ID number is 40.
If you want to understand Zen, don't be fooled by others. Inwardly and outwardly destroy all obstacles immediately.

If you meet the Buddha, kill him. If you meet the Patriarch, kill him. Don't hesitate. Kill them all. It's the only way.

Don't get caught up in anything. Rise above. Move on. Be free!

—Lin Chi

Innovative Forms—The Veteran by Lee Robbins

Last month, in the mountains a couple of hours south of San Francisco, I participated in our annual GBF retreat. Our two day retreat joined sitting and walking meditation with several Dharma talks by the man who has become one of our teachers (a Gay man with many years of Buddhist training as a monk and service as Abbot of a Korean Buddhist center in New York City). I first met Jim Wilson as Tundra Wind and often wonder why he changed his name back to Jim Wilson. To this rather traditional structure, we added several ritual and workshop exercises planned by the retreat designer, David Holmes, ably supported by Alan Oliver and Howard King.

Our first innovative Sangha exercise occurred after dark, Friday, around the ritual Stupa of the retreat center, which houses the ashes of the great founder of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), Lama Thubten Yeshe, of which Vajrapani is a retreat center. The Stupa is an ornate, outdoor structure with colorful lights, chimes, and a small man-made stream. It resembles a large wedding cake: mostly white, with ritual symbols and elephants painted on its trim. One by one all, who chose to do so released some problem or pattern in their spiritual lives by first writing the issue on a piece of paper and then burning it in a small urn. With an intent to reduce suffering, I thought of my sleeping disorder of several decades duration. Burning a slip with the words "Anxiety and thinking at night—and the intention to fulfill desire and aversion which drives these", I hesitantly awaited the results. The next two nights I slept well indeed. Despite two missed early morning meditations, I thought it well worth it.

Saturday morning's ritual created an altar of personal sacred objects. Mine was a little toy bear filled with sweet candy given to me by my partner, Steve, representing his love last Valentine's Day. Saturday evening, in a beautiful ceremony, again around the Stupa, we lit candles and expressed our individual gratitude. The ritual started with six people who, selected in advance by David to initiate the process, had more time to think about what they wanted to say. They "primed the pump" for the rest of us. Then each participant, after making his statement while lighting a candle on the Stupa altar, hugged all the prior participants as each hugging pair whispered their names to each other.

In the final Sunday exercise, people told a story about some aspect of their lives in groups of two or three, and were encouraged to tell it either in the third person (in his early years Lee ... ) or to tell it as if the other person were you, had amnesia, and was being helped to fill in lost memories. The intention of this sharing was to put some distance between our "stories and dramas", to recognize the emptiness as well as the fullness of our lives. This activity occasioned some resistance among the participants, who raised many questions before finally committing to the exercise. I speculated to myself that this might mean anxiety about actually recognizing, recounting to another, and perhaps letting go of some of our personal drama.

Several profound Dharma talks by Jim Wilson, a marvelous rolling Korean chant, and the beautiful retreat center itself, tucked among the towering trees, made the weekend a great experience for me. My concluding thought is that we at GBF are developing not so much "Gay Buddhism" as "Northern California Buddhism" —merging a variety of theologically based Buddhist traditions with the psychological and interactive community methods that have found a special home in this region since the late 60s. This, in my view, is a valid and valuable Sangha development, helpful in keeping spirituality awake, and fulfilling the central Buddhist task of relieving suffering. I believe our cohesion based upon being a Gay Sangha allows the unfolding of this new development, and I anticipate this new form developing further and spreading to other communities.

Many Rivers—The Teacher by Jim Wilson

The latest retreat held by GBF at Vajrapani unfolded so smoothly, with such slight contention, that I found myself refreshed and with a deeper appreciation for GBF. I have involved myself with our group pretty much from its beginnings. It has gone through some growing pains (periods where people had strong disagreements with each other), but it feels to me as if we have grown to become a unique Dharma Treasure.

When GBF kindly asked me to give regular monthly talks for the Sunday sittings, I realized that I would have to put aside my own background, my own strong commitment to the Zen tradition in
which I have studied for some decades now. Because the GBF has practitioners from many different Buddhist traditions, I have made a conscious effort to speak to those broad truths that emanate the Buddhist tradition as a whole. This has represented a great challenge for me because, after many years, I have grown accustomed to reaching into my bag of Zen stories, perspectives, and metaphors when speaking about the Dharma. This process of re-presenting the Dharma has taught me much, almost like learning it all over again for the second time.

In order to do this I have to come from a place which does not view one school of Buddhism as superior to another, or as more complete. The name for this process is tolerance. Not tolerance as in "putting up with", but tolerance which stems from realizing that others always have something to offer me, something to teach me, something which will deepen my understanding of the Dharma.

I have come to see that tolerance as the basis of the GBF. As Gay men, we live in a society which barely tolerates our existence. For this reason, we know the great value of tolerance, both for ourselves and for others. Out of that experience the GBF has formed a community, a Sangha, that portrays multiple perspectives on the Dharma. This presents a great opportunity for Dharma practitioners as we deepen our understandings of the Dharma by refracting them off of each other.

I think the retreat went so well because of that tolerant openness which seemed so present. People manifested a willingness to experiment, to try various practices, various approaches. Not everything (continued on page 9)

"By the merits of this practice, may I attain the state of peerless, full enlightenment right now, in order to fulfill the wish to free all the numberless kind mother sentient beings from Samsaric suffering." Here again, we recognize the unbearable suffering of other beings, and look to self-enlightenment only as a means of helping others.

It is as if we are giving away our own merits to someone else, even though we worked so hard to earn them. Might this slow down our path to enlightenment (giving away all of our merits)? Why would we do this? It was during a teaching on the 37 practices of the Bodhisattva, taught by Geshe Donyo at Tse Chen Ling, that a student asked, "But, if we give away all of our merit, how are we ever going to attain liberation?" Geshe Donyo replied, "The merit you will gain from giving away your own merit is phenomenally more meritorious than the original merit you started with." So, we can see by this example how important it is for us not only to earn merit through skillful means, but also to dedicate it to others, for their sakes. In this way, we have been generous and compassionate to other beings.

This is very easy to do when one's practice has been either to sit in a meditation hall or listen to a Dharma talk. But, what about the Karmic effects of actually serving the Dharma, one's community, or other beings? How much more potent can this be, if simply stabilizing the mind through meditation or single-pointedly focusing the mind on an object generates merit? And, dedicating it (or giving it away) to benefit all other beings gains even more merit? The answer may be that by doing service, one can actually multiply his/her merits earned, geometrically.
This philosophy is well-known in Buddhism world-wide, and is particularly encouraged in Mahayana and Vajrayana practices. Tricycle featured an article on how, in Japan, Zen practitioners line up to clean public toilets. Why? Because this is a primary practice that helps other beings, teaches one humility, and purifies one's mind. My Refuge Guru, Venerable Robina Courtin, says that to a Buddhist practitioner, the prisons are a merit field—a veritable oasis of merit to those who can help the prisoners. Why? Because service in the prisons helps those deeply suffering in isolation, depression, and loneliness—those who have presumably performed inauspicious acts of violence in their pasts, to themselves, to others, or to others' property. And, to help these beings stop their negative Karma from growing, and to encourage the reaping of genuinely good Karma, is unbelievably meritorious.

Okay, you do not want to clean toilets in Golden Gate Park, and you do not want to, or are not qualified to, teach the Dharma to prisoners. You do see the merits of service, but do not know where to begin. Or, are so busy just staying alive, that service does not seem practical. Serving the Dharma, one's community, or other beings does not have to be painful, demeaning, or all that time-consuming. Of course, we do have many examples, in our Sangha alone, of people putting the majority of their efforts into serving the community: Daishin David Sunseri, with his work for the sick and dying; Howard King, with his hospice work; and Bill Kirkpatrick, with his work for the elderly—to name just a few. However, the majority of us either cannot afford to put this much time into full-time service, or have other more pressing problems, needs, wants, or desires of our own to work on or work out. So what can we do?

When you think about it, the needs are unlimited. But, so are the resources. I don't want to use a very uncharacteristic cliché of a past president. But, there are a thousand points of light out there. We simply need to tap into them. The thousand points of light are like the rainbow body of enlightened beings shooting out loving-kindness to all beings through every pore of their bodies.

Service as a practice is a gift given according to one's own means. The Perfection of Generosity includes generosity of the Dharma, generosity of the self in helping beings in fear or trouble, and generosity of giving of one's possessions or money. The generosity of the Dharma is primarily demonstrated by teachers, leaders of Dharma discussions, and facilitators of Dharma activities. The person who cleans the meditation hall before or after a teaching is also displaying the generosity of the Dharma, as is the person taping a Dharma talk, pouring water for the teacher, and lighting incense and candles.

The generosity of helping others who are in fear or trouble is much like the practices (noted above) performed by Courtin, Sunseri, King, and Kirkpatrick. This also includes hugging or protecting an animal when thunder and lightning frighten it, or opening one's umbrella to shield an animal from the rain. What you are giving is comfort, warmth, and love.

The generosity of giving of one's possessions or money can serve to spread the Dharma by donating Dharma books or supporting a teacher, a monk, or a Dharma center. Monetary offerings could also be used to fund an auspicious project (like the Maitreya project) or to build a Stupa or renovate a meditation hall. In addition, donations can be used to fund projects to help the poor, aged, infirm or better the lives of other beings—including those whom are members of one's own Sangha. These things are a way for those with less time to volunteer, to contribute financially to benefit others, and, in so doing, gain much merit.

I try to benefit other beings within the boundaries of time and money, and my personal pursuit of liberation through the Dharma. I only have so much time available to pursue my education in the Dharma and benefit other beings. My funds are limited and are parcelled out to pay bills, meet obligations, and make offerings to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Pursuing liberation through the Dharma requires that I attend teachings, read, recite Mantras and prayers, and meditate. As one of my great teachers at Tse Chen Ling, Ngawang Chotok, says: “No Liberation Without Meditation.”

What have I done to serve? I joined the GBF Steering Committee (which meets one evening per month), partly to relieve the suffering of other members who had served for many months (and even years), and also to lend my voice.
to the structure and direction of our group. Secondly, I accepted
the kind offering of Howard King
to become the editor of our news-
letter (a job that I performed since
April of this year to this, my final
issue). Thirdly, I joined and have
participated in the Practice
Committee and the Development
Committee, and will be able to
host an occasional potluck at my
home. Finally, I give an annual
offering to GBF, contribute to the
Dana bowl for sittings, and try to
support GBF functions.

At Tse Chen Ling, I became a
patron member, offering monthly
donations to the center (to help
them pay the rent, make offerings
to our teachers, pay for the news-
letter, and sponsor events). I
humbly accepted an invitation to
join their Management Committee.
I serve as a program coordinator
for various teachings (both onsite
and offsite). And, I tape teachings
for the center, serve tea to the
teachers, water plants, empty the
garbage, offer food, and set up,
take down, and clean up at offsite
teachings. I also support our book-
store and help in car-pooling
to various events. The
service I attempt to give, however,
cannot compare to the unbeliev-
able benefit I receive from the
 teachings and the Sangha. I am
constantly humbled by my own
limited actions, and only wish I
could do more.

Start Slowly, Take Baby Steps
Here are just a few opportunities
for service as a practice in our
own Sangha:
• Help at the newsletter mailing
  party (third Sunday of every month)
  and get your copy a minimum of
  a week before everyone else!
• Be a volunteer host for a GBF
  sitting, and smile and meet other
  participants.
• Offer a ride to a fellow GBFer
  after a sitting, or to a potluck event.
• Volunteer at Hamilton House on
  a third Saturday.
• Write an article for the newslet-
  ter, or transcribe a talk to be used
  for the newsletter.
• Donate clothes to the Community
  Thrift Shop on behalf of GBF.

Bigger Steps
• Join and participate regularly in
  the Steering Committee, Practice
  Committee, or Development
  Committee.
• Work regularly for the Newsletter
  (as a reporter, or delivering the
  450 newsletters to the Hunter’s
  Point Post Office each month).
• Host a potluck or half-day sitting
  at your home.
• Become a patron of GBF (non-
  profit, tax-deductible), giving
  regular, monthly offerings of $15
to $250.
• Organize, coordinate, and promote
  a first time, GBF entry/contingent
  in the S.F Pride Parade.

Huge Steps
• If you are a Dharma teacher, or
  are becoming a Dharma teacher,
  give regular Dharma talks, or half-
day sittings.
• Monthly, host and facilitate the
  Thursday night discussion group.
• Sponsor, or lead the sponsorship
  of a major project: 1) Taking
  Refuge Ceremony; 2) GBF
  Website; 3) Semi-Annual GBF
  Retreat; or, 4) Acquiring our own
  practice center and residence.
• Organize, coordinate, and pro-
  mote a worldwide conference (to
  be held in San Francisco) of Gay
  Buddhist Practitioners, in 1999.
• Donate a practice center, and/or
  Gay Buddhist Residence to GBF.

As a final note, I would like to say
thank you from the bottom of my
heart for the wonderful practice
opportunity of editing our
newsletter. I have learned so much,
and have been so richly endowed
by the wisdom of our members.
Thank you for the esprit de corps,
and for all your good wishes.

Please allow me this opportunity
to publicly thank the following
Bodhisattvas: Larry Hermsen, for
spending so much time doing a
highly innovative and professional
job with the layout of the newsle-
ter, and for the beautiful art. Alan
Oliver, for his continued wisdom,
mentorship, and guidance. Greg
Eichler, for diligently collecting
and writing up local Dharma
events. Snake, for generously giv-
ing of his home, and for painstak-
ingly organizing the mailings.
Larry Allegre, for the bulk mailing
transport and coordination of the
mailing to the Hunter’s Point Post
Office. Robin Levitt, for assidu-
ously maintaining the mailing list.
David Richo, for his insightful
articles. Rob DeRe, for his beau-
tiful Dharma quotes and poems.
David Sunseri, for writing articles,
giving Dharma instruction, and
supporting the newsletter.
Clarence Wong, for organizing the
pot lucks and other events, and
transmitting the information to
the newsletter in a timely fashion.
Clint Seiter, for his speaker co-
ordination, “movie” nights, and
Hamilton House articles. And, my
mom, Dolly Lott, for actually
reading all of the newsletters, and
for her love and support.

May all beings since beginningless
time, all beings in this present lifet-
time, and all beings in limitless
future lifetimes be well, be free
from suffering, and be happy.▼
Local Dharma


Monday, November 2, 7pm-9pm, Monday, November 16, 7pm-9pm: San Francisco Mindfulness Community—followers of Thich Nhat Hanh meet. Hartford Street Zen Center. Information 415.252.8476.

Friday, November 6, 5:30pm-7pm, Friday, November 20, 5:30-7pm: Teen Sitting Group, for teens 14-18 who want to explore Zen. San Francisco Zen Center. Information 415.563.5128.


If you would like to recommend a Dharma event for this column, please send the information via e-mail, to the attention of Greg Eichler: <anatman@sirus.com>.

Local Dharma Centers

Berkeley Shambhala Center
2288 Fulton St, Berkeley 510.841.6475

Berkeley Zen Center
1933 Russell St, Berkeley 510.845.2403

Buddhist Church of San Francisco
1881 Pine St, SF 415.776.3158

California Diamond Sangha
P.O. Box 2915, Petaluma

Community of Mindful Living
P.O. Box 7355, Albany 510.524.3751

Dudjom International
P.O. Box 40155, Berkeley 510.849.9928

Empty Gate Zen Center
2200 Parker St, Berkeley 510.845.8565

Enlightened Heart Meditation Center
415.255.0798

Green Gulch Farm
1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito 415.383.3134

Hartford St. Zen Center
57 Hartford St, SF 415.863.2507

Kamtsang Chöl Ling USA
110 Merced Avenue, SF 415.661.6467

Land of Medicine Buddha
5800 Prescott Rd, Soquel 408.462.3838

Living Peace Meditation Community
1650 Clay St, #2, SF 415.346.3923

Medical Buddha Healing Center
6809 Chiara Lane, San Jose

Nichiren Buddhist Temple
3570 Mona Way, San Jose 408.246.0111

Nyingma Institute
1815 Highland Place, Berkeley 510.843.6812

Orgyen Dorje Den
410 Townsend, #406, SF 415.826.7181

Pema Osel Ling
2013 Eureka Canyon Rd, Corralitos 408.761.6266

Rigpa Fellowship
816 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 510.644.1858

San Jose Tibetan Temple
300 South Tenth St, San Jose 408.280.6827

SF Buddhist Center (Friends of the Western Buddhist Order)
37 Ballard St, SF 415.282.2018

San Francisco Zen Center
300 Page St, SF 415.863.3136

Santa Cruz Zen Center
113 School St, Santa Cruz 408.457.0206

Saraha Buddhist Center
3145 Geary Blvd, #515, SF 415.731.5973

Shambhala Center
1630 Taraval, SF 415.731.4426

Sonoma Mtn Zen Center
6367 Sonoma Mtn Rd, Santa Rosa 707.545.8105

Spirit Rock Meditation Center
5000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Woodacre 415.488.0164

Tse Chen Ling Center
4 Joost Ave, SF 415.333.3261

Vajrapani Institute
P.O. Box 2130, Boulder Creek 408.338.6654

Zen Hospice Project
415.863.2910
**GBF Calendar**

**San Francisco Events**

**Sunday Morning Sittings:**
SF Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett St, between 21st & 22nd, one block west of Mission St, beginning at 9:30am and 10:30am respectively.

**November 1** Guest speaker
Jim Wilson

**November 8** Discussion

**November 15** GBF Website Launch (see pg. 3)

**November 22** Discussion

**November 29** GBF Introductory Guidebook Discussion

**Thursday Evening Sittings,**
7:45pm: Sittings are held at participants’ homes and are open to all GBF participants. Please speak to hosts for directions to their homes.

**November 5** Bill Kirkpatrick

**November 12** Lee Robbins

**November 19** Martin Kung

**November 26** Larry White

**Saturday, November 14,**
8:45am-12:30pm: A Morning of Meditation led by Daishin David Sunseri, sponsored by GBF. Consisting of sitting and walking meditation, a short Dharma talk, and some group recitation, new and experienced practitioners are welcome. Held at the home of Clarence Wong, 94117. Bring a meditation cushion or bench. $10 donation, space is limited. To register, send your name, phone number and check (made out to GBF) to Clarence at the above address. For more information, call Clarence

**Sunday, November 22, 2:30pm:**
Mailing Party, Snake’s home,

**Thursday, November 26, 4pm:**
Thanksgiving Potluck Party at the home of Lee Robbins,

Lee will provide a turkey or ham; please bring vegetarian main dishes, side dishes (potatoes, yams, vegetables, cranberry sauce, etc.), salad, bread, dessert, beverage, or wine. If you have Thanksgiving dinner plans elsewhere, you are welcome to drop by for coffee and dessert and spend part of the holiday with your GBF Sangha.

**New Year’s Eve Potluck Party**

Thursday, December 31, 8pm at the home of Clarence Wong

If you are interested in helping to organize an activity for GBF members on Christmas Day, please contact Clarence Wong (see above).

**Meditation Groups in Sonoma County**

There are currently two Buddhist meditation groups affiliated with GBF in Sonoma County. One group, for gay men, meets in Santa Rosa (and sometimes in Graton). For more information, please contact Avery Freed,

A second group meets near the town of Sonoma every other Tuesday evening. Although at present group members are all gay men, the group is open to lesbians and non-gay practitioners. For more information, please contact Bob Hass,

**GBF Homeless Project**

If you are available to volunteer your time to the Hamilton Family Center on the third Saturday of any month, please contact Clint Seiter

A dinner is prepared by GBF volunteers, funded by GBF. Thank you.
This opportune physical form
Is worth more than a wish-granting gem.
You only gain its like the once.
So hard to get, so easily destroyed.
It's like a lightning bolt in the sky.
Contemplate this, and you will realize
All worldly actions are but winnowed chaff.
And night and day you must
Extract some essence from your life.
I, the yogi, practiced this way;
You, wanting liberation, do the same!

Je Lama Tsongkapa, Founder of the Gelugpa tradition,
from Libration in the Palm of Your Hand, by Pabongka Rinpoche.

How to Reach Us

GBF Sangha
Send correspondence and address changes to: GBF, 2261 Market Street, #422, San Francisco, CA 94114. For 24-hour information on GBF activities or to leave a message, call 415.974.9878.

GBF Newsletter
Send submissions to: Editor, GBF Newsletter, 2261 Market Street, #422, San Francisco, CA 94114. If possible, include a DOS or Windows disk in Word or as a text file, along with your hardcopy. You may also send your submissions via e-mail with your documents attached to: