



GAY BUDDHIST Fellowship

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

The Four Brahmaviharas

BY LARRY ROBINSON

Larry Robinson has been a practicing Buddhist for 47 years, mostly in the Zen and Vipassana traditions. He is a member of the Occidental Laguna Sangha in Sebastopol, studying with Bruce Fortin in the lineage of Suzuki Roshi. A longtime environmental and social justice activist, he is a retired ecopsychologist and former mayor of Sebastopol. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Center for Climate Protection and the Board of Trustees of Meridian University. His "large and foolish project" (in the words of Rumi) is to restore the soul of the world through reawakening the oral tradition of poetry. He is also the founder and producer of Rumi's Caravan.

It's a great pleasure to be back here with you. I'm going to start with a poem—*The Second Coming*—written about 80 years ago by William Butler Yeats on the eve of the Second World War. This was a time that kind of resonates with the time through which we're living now. He says:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*

*Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

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When we fully get how absolutely ephemeral everything is, we have no choice but to let go.

I think many of us know in our hearts that we are living through a time of anarchy and chaos and increasing violence. The question that's constantly on my mind, and I think this is true for many others as well, is how do we live consciously and full-heartedly in such times? That's what I want to talk about this morning: how Buddhism offers a path toward full-hearted, engaged living in a time of chaos and uncertainty.

First, I want to just acknowledge that the word chaos does not necessarily mean randomness. Chaos is the Greek word for womb, the source of everything that we know. We can imagine that the chaos that we are experiencing is where something new is being born. There's a new science of chaos theory or complexity theory that studies non-linear systems, and one of the observations of this study is that as non-linear systems become more complex, they move farther and farther from equilibrium. At a certain point of disequilibrium, new orders of structure appear that were not visible before or were not even possible before. It turns out that reality in this universe is a sandwich of order and chaos and order and chaos, but with increasing levels of complexity. I just want to invite you to hold that thought as we talk about a Buddhist approach.

Now, Buddhism teaches that there are three characteristics of existence: *dukkha*, meaning suffering, *anicca*, meaning impermanence, and *anatta*, meaning no-self. Now, *dukkha* is usually translated as suffering, but in Pali, the language in which Shakyamuni taught, it has a more nuanced meaning. It actually means something more like the unsatisfactoriness of life.

In other words, the things that we think will give us satisfaction, that we pursue, never really do. In that is the root of our suffering, and hatred, greed, and delusion are the three causes of the suffering within this world of *dukkha*. When we try to hold on to something that is changing or moving away, we create suffering. When we try to push away what is coming toward us, we create suffering. In our delusion of our own separateness from everything and everyone else, we create suffering for ourselves and others.

The four great virtues, the *brahmaviharas*, we might also think of as four practices. That's really the essence of what I want to communicate to you today. The four *brahmaviharas* are *metta*, which is loving-kindness, *karuṇa*, which is compassion, *mudita*, which is sympathetic joy, and *upekkha*, which is equanimity or mindfulness.

So *metta* begins with recognizing our own suffering, and it is the practice of wishing well for everyone. I don't know whether you practice *metta* here on a regular basis, but for those who don't know, there are many forms of it and many different ways to language it. The simplest form that I use is a meditation that begins with focusing on myself to cultivate self-compassion. May I be happy, may I be filled with kindness, may I be safe, may I be free from suffering, and may I live at ease.

Then, we extend that to someone in our lives that we love. May this person be happy, may they be safe and free from fear, may they be filled with kindness, may they be free from suffering and may they live at ease. Then we extend it to all of our friends and loved ones. May they be happy, may they be safe and free from fear, may they be filled with kindness, may they be free from suffering and may they live at ease. Then we

stretch a little bit and choose someone in our lives with whom we're having some difficulty. May this person be happy, may they be safe and free from fear, may they be filled with kindness, may they be free from suffering and may they live at ease.

I keep a picture of Donald Trump on my altar and do this practice. May he be happy, may he be safe and free from fear, may he be filled with kindness, may he be free from suffering and may he live at ease. This is where it gets difficult, because part of me wants to wish him out of this world. But, I know that we are all in it together, and the Mahayana path says that none of us gets out of it until we all get out of it.

If someone like Donald Trump is truly free from suffering, if his heart is truly open, and he's truly free from fear, he's not going to be doing damage in the world. Rather than wishing him dead, I'm wishing his liberation and enlightenment. That's where the heart has to struggle to open. That's where the rubber of practice meets the road. May all of my enemies be happy, may they all be safe and free from fear, may they all be filled with kindness, may they be free from suffering and may they live at ease.

And then we extend it as far as we can. May all beings, all humans, all animals, all men, all women, all children, all Americans, all Syrians, all Ukrainians, all gods and devas, all beings born and unborn, may we all be happy. May we all be safe and free from fear, may we all be filled with kindness, may we be free from suffering and may we all live at ease. That is the first of the *brahmavihara* practices.

The second is *karuṇa*, which is compassion, and compassion is only found through sorrow and loss. I'm going to offer a little poem from Naomi Shihab Nye (*Kindness*), who says:

*Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.*

*Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.*

*Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.*

*Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.*

When you truly drop into your own grief, into your own sorrow, as the poem says, you see the full size of the cloth. You see that we are all separate; we are all struggling. Even those people who don't know or acknowledge their suffering and act it out on the rest of us, we are all suffering. We are all burning, and we are all here for such a short time, which turns out to be both the good news and the bad news.

Coming back to *anicca*—impermanence—which is one of the three characteristics of existence. When we fully get how absolutely ephemeral everything is, we have no choice but to let go. How perfect that this altar is here, because on the Day of the Dead, when the veil between the two worlds is so thin, we're reminded of how many of the people we have loved are no longer with us, and yet, they are with us in our hearts.

Here is another poem that comes to mind from Wendell Berry (*No Going Back*), who says:

No, no, there is no going back.
Less and less you are
that possibility you were.
More and more you have become
those lives and deaths
that have belonged to you.
You have become a sort of grave
containing much that was
and is no more in time, beloved
then, now, and always.
And so you have become a sort of tree
standing over the grave.
Now more than ever you can be
generous toward each day
that comes, young, to disappear
forever, and yet remain
unaging in the mind.
Every day you have less reason
not to give yourself away.

Which brings us to another aspect of impermanence, which is actually one of the three characteristics, *anatta*, no-self. This is a challenging one to understand. Buddhism teaches us that the definition of ego is the illusion of separateness. No-self doesn't mean that we don't exist. What it does mean is that we don't exist separately from anything else or anyone else or everyone else. That our existence depends utterly on everyone and everything else, as does our happiness and our suffering.

In Mark Nepo's poem *The Rhythm of Kindness*, he says:

*I think each comfort we manage-
each holding in the night, each opening
of a wound, each closing of a wound, each
pulling of a splinter or razored word, each
fever sponged, each dear thing given
to someone in greater need-each
passes on the kindness we've known.*

*For the human sea is made of waves
that mount and merge till the way a
nurse rocks a child is the way that child
all grown rocks the wounded, and how
the wounded, allowed to go on, rock
strangers who in their pain
don't seem so strange.*

*Eventually, the rhythm of kindness
is how we pray and suffer by turns,
and if someone were to watch us
from inside the lake of time, they
wouldn't be able to tell if we are
dying or being born.*

Unwrapping this illusion of separateness is really the essence of our sitting practice, isn't it? As we sit, whatever our practice is, we gradually begin to notice the difference between the thoughts, the feelings, and awareness itself. It's like watching a movie on the screen. Sometimes we can remember that it's a movie, and the more we sit and meditate—and this is a gradual process—there's a loosening that happens, and we're not taking ourselves so seriously. And we're not taking our suffering so seriously. And we're not taking our opinions so seriously.

One of my favorite sayings is from Huineng, the sixth Zen patriarch. He says, "The great way is exceedingly simple for those who cease to cherish opinions." Now, he's not saying, "Don't have opinions," because opinions come with the territory of being human, of having a mind. We can't help but have opinions. But, we don't have to cherish them, and we don't have to believe that our opinions are the truth, because at the very best, our opinions are only an approximation of the truth, and usually, they are far off the mark. "The great way is exceedingly simple for those who cease to cherish opinions."

The third *brahmavihara*, the third great, noble quality of mind or practice is *mudita*, or sympathetic joy. That means looking for the happiness that you see around you and letting that fill you with joy. The great Indian sage Shantideva said that "The source of all suffering in the world is seeking happiness for oneself." The source of all happiness is seeking happiness for others, which is why the path of service is probably the most direct path, because it puts you right into the presence of suffering and joy, and when you lean into the suffering that you encounter rather than pulling away from it, the practice is to open your heart even more to the suffering, and then the happiness comes.

Happiness is the kind of thing where the more you seek it, the more it eludes you. But the practice of leaning into the suffering brings joy, and when you see the joy in others, you take that joy in, which in turn helps you to see the beauty in the world. It may be that a diagnosis for our time is not so much a political dysfunction as a spiritual dysfunction resulting from a loss of beauty. Perhaps, it is our spiritual obligation to bring beauty into the world and acknowledge it when we see it—not at the expense of acknowledging the suffering, but to hold it; to hold them both. Carl Jung says, "Emotional maturity is not about resolving the paradoxes and the conflicts, but growing large enough to contain it all."

Here is a poem by Jack Gilbert called *A Brief for the Defense*. He says:

*Sorrow everywhere. Slaughter everywhere. If babies
are not starving someplace, they are starving
somewhere else. With flies in their nostrils.*

Maybe that is why we're here. Maybe that is the ultimate role of humanity: to witness the beauty and the horror of it all.

*But we enjoy our lives because that's what God wants.
Otherwise the mornings before summer dawn would
not
be made so fine. The Bengal tiger would not
be fashioned so miraculously well. The poor women
at the fountain are laughing together between
the suffering they have known and the awfulness
in their future, smiling and laughing while somebody
in the village is very sick. There is laughter
every day in the terrible streets of Calcutta,
and the women laugh in the cages of Bombay.
If we deny our happiness, resist our satisfaction,
we lessen the importance of their deprivation.
We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure,
but not delight. Not enjoyment. We must have
the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless
furnace of this world. To make injustice the only
measure of our attention is to praise the Devil.
If the locomotive of the Lord runs us down,
we should give thanks that the end had magnitude.
We must admit there will be music despite everything.
We stand at the prow again of a small ship
anchored late at night in the tiny port
looking over to the sleeping island: the waterfront
is three shuttered cafés and one naked light burning.
To hear the faint sound of oars in the silence as a row-
boat
comes slowly out and then goes back is truly worth
all the years of sorrow that are to come.*

So there are so many places to look for beauty and joy. Like the old philosophical question, if a tree falls in the forest and there's no one to hear it, does it make a sound? If beauty appears and there's no one to see it or acknowledge it, what happens to it? Maybe that is why we're here. Maybe that is the ultimate role of humanity: to witness the beauty and the horror of it all. When someone passes, when someone leaves our world, don't we owe it to them to bear witness to their passing? And we do that through our grieving.

I spent most of the month of October in Bhutan, which is a tiny Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas. My friend there, Khashap, who is a lay Buddhist monk, asked me, "When someone you love dies, do you grieve?" and I said, "Absolutely." He said, "Oh, we're taught not to. We're taught to celebrate when someone leaves, because it means they're moving on and that our tears hold them back." I said, "In our culture, our tears are how we let go. Grieving is how we send them on their way."

And my friend Francis Weller, who is here today, is a master teacher of the grieving process. He teaches us that in the West African tradition, when someone dies, the image is they're in a canoe in a dry riverbed, and it's our tears that create the river that helps them move on. So, these are two different aspects to Buddhism. The latter feels much more akin to me. I mean, I can still celebrate someone's life well lived, but it doesn't mean that I don't miss them; that I don't honor how they have touched my life and others' lives.

So the fourth *brahmavihara* is *upekkha*, equanimity, and that really is the essence of meditation practice. It's finding again and again and again the still point in the midst of a chaotic world. That's not just in sitting. In sitting, we practice it as a musician practices scales, but playing scales is not the same as performing a Beethoven symphony. It's when we're out in the world in traffic, at work, in confrontations with friends and enemies, in dealing with the world as it is that we rely on the habits of mind and heart that we are inculcating in our sitting practice. We practice coming back to center, because we're human and can't help but be reactive. It's what the mind does. But we commit to always coming back.

Just as in our sitting practice, within one or two breaths we're drifting off into wherever the mind goes: into the narrative, the stories, the "should haves." "Oh, I've got to do this," "I wish I had done..." you know those. But the practice is to just keep coming back. Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. In a world that is moving farther and farther from center, where it feels like the tectonic plates are shifting beneath us, we need to learn to dance with the dancing earth, and we do that one step at a time, by remembering where we are in this moment, but doing it with an open heart. I'm going to share another poem that I wrote. As some of you may know, my community in Sonoma County has recently been devastated by some fires, and so many of our friends are homeless. This is a poem I wrote while I was in Bhutan half a world away watching this happen, feeling helpless. This is called *Falling*.

*In these awe-filled days of fire and flood,
we watch and wait and wonder
when that fierce hand might reach at last for us.
Those of us not yet touched by calamity quake,
knowing in our bones that though we may be spared
this time,
time will level us all.
No magic amulets, no prayers, good deeds or good
looks
can promise protection from our terminal condition.
And those who have watched a child swept forever from
our arms,
or fled the flames that swallowed our hopes and our
memories,
or hid from the bombs or the predator's gaze,
know that nothing now will ever be the same.
As if anything ever were.
For all of us are falling like ashes, like rain,
like petals or leaves, but we all are falling together.
And if we knew, in truth, there was nowhere to land,
tell me, could we know the difference
between falling and flying?*

This touches again on impermanence. When we are caught in the illusion of permanence, then we try to hold on to what is already changing, what is already past. One of my favorite Zen koans is a very simple one: "This precious jade teacup is already broken." It's a reminder to continually let go, which is what we do with our breath. If we don't let go, we can't breathe in again. So we always have to let go.

In Zen, when you take ordination or commitment to the path, the process is called taking refuge. You take refuge in the three treasures of Buddhism: refuge in the Buddha, refuge in the dharma, and refuge in the sangha. Another way of framing this, and how I hold it, is I take refuge in awakening mind, I take refuge in the nature of existence, and I take refuge in the community of all beings. When you let go of your own attachment to belief in your own separateness, you are free. That is liberation.

“To study the Buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be awakened into the 10,000 things.” This is a brief road map of the whole path. I’ll leave you with one final poem and then if you have any questions or comments, I think we have a few minutes. This is another of mine, called *Rise and Fall*:

*Let go of fear
and rest in that which is.
For peace, like love,
comes to those who allow it.*

*Let go of fear
and rest in stillness.
Watch the breath rise...
and fall.*

*Watch the tide rise...
and fall.
Watch towers rise...
and fall.*

*Watch walls rise...
and fall.
Watch statues rise...
and fall.*

*Watch empires rise...
and fall.
Watch the breath rise...
and fall.*

*Let go of fear
and rest in the arms
of the One
who has always held you,
the One who holds
atoms and empires
and oceans and stars.*

*Let go of fear
and watch what happens next.*

Thank you very much for your kind attention. Are there any questions?

Participant: I am aware that in this political climate I have a real attachment to evidence, logic, reason, rationale—the things that don’t seem to have a lot of currency in today’s world. I still don’t know how to hold that in myself. I’m not even asking a question, I’m just thinking out loud to myself...

Larry Robinson: It’s vitally important that people speak up for reason and evidence and reality. And, one of the things that I learned from 12 years in holding public office is

that reason rarely convinces anyone. People make the decision based on emotions and on the story that they believe. As you know from your own meditation, there’s a difference between our reality and our story about reality, but politics is all about storytelling, so I think we need more and more skilled, competent storytellers to tell the story that you’re describing. So I hope that helps somewhat. Just relax your expectations of being able to convince people with reason and you’ll have a lot more fun with it!

Participant: Thank you for a gorgeous presentation this morning. I am very moved. At our retreat last week, Steve Tierney quoted Maya Angelou, saying that people won’t remember what you say or what you do, but they’ll remember how you’ve made them feel, which I think is relevant to the point you just made.

Larry Robinson: Yes, yes. And if you treat them with respect and love and kindness and compassion, that will touch them.

Participant: I just want to give you a shout out for a lot of courage to put Donald Trump on your altar. I know, because I tried doing that with George W. Bush. It’s like we know that that’s where we really need to go, but there’s still this thing about, “Am I giving him my power by doing it?” But I know I’m not, but...Mara is right there.

Larry Robinson: Exactly, yes, and the real struggle is with Mara. In that last hour when Buddha was sitting under that tree, Mara challenges him, “What right do you have to deny me?” Buddha puts his hand on the earth. He’s saying, essentially, “The earth is my witness, the earth is my strength. This is my power.” Truly, we are all an expression of this. That is unstoppable. Grass will always defeat asphalt in the end. Rivers will always wear down dams.

Participant: Would you recite your poem *Roll Away the Stone*?

Larry Robinson:

*This fecund earth has lain covered long enough.
It wants to throw off its asphalt blankets,
to stretch and yawn and send forth ten thousand blades
of grass.
Behind their dams, rivers dream of the sea,
yearning to burst their bonds and run wild once more,
to feel the caress of the banks and beyond,
to sing their ancient songs of joy and abandon.
Something has been calling to you for longer than you
can remember;
calling you to step out into the light, into your life.
It doesn’t matter if you think you’re ready or not.
The time has come.
Roll away the stone! Roll away the stone!*



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Sunday Sittings

10:30 am to 12 noon

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

MUNI: 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 21st St, walk 1/2 block

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

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

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Sunday Speakers

March 4 Open Discussion

March 11 David Richo

Dave Richo, Ph.D, MFT, is a psychologist, teacher, and writer in Santa Barbara and San Francisco who emphasizes Jungian, transpersonal, and spiritual perspectives in his work. He is the author of *How to Be an Adult in Relationships*. For more information, visit www.davericho.com.

March 18 Dorothy Hunt

Dorothy Hunt serves as Spiritual Director of Moon Mountain Sangha, teaching at the request of Adyashanti, who invited her to share the Dharma in 2004. She is the founder of the San Francisco Center for Meditation and Psychotherapy and has practiced psychotherapy for more than 50 years. Dorothy is the author of *Only This!*, *Leaves from Moon Mountain*, and *Ending the Search: From Spiritual Ambition to the Heart of Awareness* (Sounds True, March 2018). She is a mother and a grandmother. Dorothy offers satsang, retreats, and private meetings in the Bay Area and elsewhere by invitation. For more information, please visit www.dorothy-hunt.org.

March 25 Baruch Golden

Baruch Golden is a longtime GBF Member who has been practicing Vipassana meditation since 1998. He completed Spirit Rock's Community Dharma Leaders program in 2012 and the Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program with the Sati Center in Redwood City in 2013. He teaches dharma to many sitting groups in the Bay Area. Baruch is a registered nurse and has been doing hospice work for the past 14 years.

April 1 Open Discussion

April 8 Eugene Cash

Eugene Cash is the founding teacher of the San Francisco Insight Meditation Community of San Francisco. He teaches at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and leads intensive meditation retreats internationally. His teaching is influenced by both Burmese and Thai streams of the Theravada tradition as well as Zen and Tibetan Buddhist practice. He is also a teacher of the Diamond Approach, a school of spiritual investigation and self-realization developed by A. H. Almaas..

April 14 (Saturday) GBF Spring Daylong Retreat: "Passion and Compassion"

Teacher: Dale Borglum, of www.livingdying.org.
10:00 AM to 5:00 PM (arrive by 9:45)
37 Bartlett St, San Francisco, CA 94110
Admission is free.
Preregister at <https://en.xing-events.com/LELJAKJ>

April 15 Benjamin Young

Benjamin Young began meditation as part of his spiritual practice when he was in his early twenties. Over the last forty-four years, he has studied many spiritual paths, pursued a number of meditation practices, led spiritual retreats, and given spiritual talks. Benjamin traveled to India for two months in 2001 where he and a close friend took monk's vows. He has been practicing a Buddhist form of meditation called Anapanasati (Mindfulness of the In and Out Breath) for the past 20 years and assisting others in developing their spiritual practices.

April 22 Dharma Duo: Hal Hershey and Jonathan

Hal Hershey first encountered the Dharma in a philosophy course in college, and has danced with the Buddha on many paths. He

learned Zazen at the San Francisco Zen Center in 1966, worked on books by Chogyam Trungpa at Shambhala Publications during the 1970's, and found the Gay Buddhist Fellowship in 1999, where the loving kindness and compassion of this Sangha as well as the deep teachings of many enlightened being have continued to inspire him.

Jonathan moved to the Bay Area in 1980 to attend UC Berkeley where he left the study of forestry for Social Work (he couldn't see the people for the trees). He worked largely in the LGBTQI community as a geropsychiatric social worker and in the field of adoption. Disability, widowhood, and cumulative bereavement led Jonathan to seek help in the form of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction classes through the SF Zen Center. After a return to health, a move to Marin, and having children, further disability led him to Buddhism, a deepening of his appreciation of the dharma, and to increasing states of gratitude. He has had a meditation practice for 24 years.

April 29 Pamela Weiss

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

May 6 Heather Sundberg

Heather Sundberg began teaching meditation in 1999. She has completed the four-year Spirit Rock Insight Meditation Society Teacher Training. Beginning her own meditation practice in her late teens, for twenty years+, Heather has studied with senior teachers in the Insight Meditation and Tibetan traditions, and has sat 1-3 months of retreat a year for the last fifteen+ years. She is a Teacher for Mountain Stream Meditation Center in the Sierra Foothills, and also teaches classes, day-longs, and retreats nationally, especially at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. For more info, visit www.heathersundberg.com.

May 13 Emilio Gonzalez

Emilio began his Tai Chi and Qigong practice in 1973 with Grand Master Kai Ying Tung and still studies with him today. For over forty years, he's taught classes in N. California and conducted workshops for Kaiser, the VA, persons with PTSD and HIV, and at recovery conferences. He taught Qigong at the first GLBT residential retreat at Spirit Rock in 1985. Since then, most meditation centers have added daily Qigong exercises at all residential retreats.

May 20 David Lewis

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

May 27 Open Discussion

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By the power and truth of this practice, may all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness, may all be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow, may all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is without sorrow, and may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment or too much aversion, believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF Dedication of Merit