Gay Buddhist Fellowship

Newsletter

A Monthly Publication of the Gay Buddhist Fellowship, San Francisco June, 1995

GBF Calendar

2 June, Friday, GBF Potluck Dinner, 7:30 p.m. Information: call Ruhl,

6 June, Tuesday, GBF Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Call Clint Seiter

11 June, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Special Guest Speaker: Eric Kolvig, Vipassana teacher since '85, student of Joseph Goldstein, has led meditation retreats for lesbians and gay men and is a long time friend of GBF.

12 June,, Monday, GBF Newsletter Committee, 7:30 p.m. Information: Mark Picciano,

25 June, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Open discussion on Sexuality and the Dharma.

8 July, GBF Potluck Dinner, 7:30 p.m. Information: call John Krowka,

14-16 July, 4th Annual GBF Retreat. Vajrapani Institute in Boulder Creek. Details in this issue of GBF Newsletter or call GBF voicemail number for details.

GBF voicemail line: 415/974-9878

...Still looking or a location for a weekly meditation/discussion group. Got any ideas? Call David Holmes,

GBF Sponsors Foundations of Buddhism Study Group

David Holmes

GBF's Foundations of Buddhism Study Group met last Thursday, May 18th, for the first of seven weekly meetings. The series was organized by David Sunseri and Alan Oliver, who are also serving as facilitators. The group is composed of fifteen men, some of whom are new to Buddhism, others new to GBF—as well as a few seasoned practitioners. The meeting was held in Alan Oliver's home.

The topic of the first meeting was the Buddha's life and background. We began the evening by introducing ourselves and talking a little bit about our practice and interest in attending the study group. David and Alan then gave a brief introduction to the life of the historical Buddha, pointing out that much of what is recorded of his life may have been embellished and expanded during the first centuries after his death, when the canon was transmitted orally, and that although these records may or may not represent literal truth, they nonetheless have great value to us as a story of the awakening of a human being and the realization of his true nature.

Some stories were cited which underscored the human qualities which the Buddha possessed. In the discussion that followed, it seemed to be the opinion of most present that it was this very "humanness" that makes the story of the life of the Buddha at the same time so accessible and so inspiring to us in our own struggle for liberation and realization.

The group seemed to gel right away, and a lively and thoughtful evening of conversation and sharing ensued. I am looking forward to the next six weeks. Look for updates written by other participants in the next editions of the GBF newsletter.

GBF Summer Retreat July 14-16, 1995

The fourth annual Gay Buddhist Fellowship Summer Retreat will take place the weekend of July 14-16, 1995 at Vajrapani Institute near Boulder Creek in the beautiful redwoods of the Santa Cruz mountains.

This silent time of meditation and mindfulness will be an opportunity for us to practice together, deepen our relationships and support our Sangha. The moderate schedule, combining elements of Theravadan, Zen and Tibetan traditions, will include sitting and walking meditation, Dharma talks and readings. We will open the retreat on Friday night, July 14, with a general orientation followed by a period of meditation. We'll practice together all day Saturday, gathering around the stupa in the evening for a memorial service for our partners, family and friends who have died. We will continue our practice or

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The Local Dharma

Dharma Centers

- **BSC** Berkeley Shambhala Center: 2288 Fulton Street, Berkeley. 510/841-6475 or 510/549-1481.
- **GGF** Green Gulch Farm (SF Zen Center): 1601 Shoreline Highway, Sausalito. 415/383-3134.
- **HSZC** Hartford Street Zen Center: 57 Hartford St., SF. 415/863-2507.
- **HBC** Healing Buddha Center/ Medicine Buddha Healing Clinic: [Two locations: (1) Unitarian Universalist Church, corner of Cedar & Bonita in North Berkeley, 2nd floor, Fireside Room. Entrance through garden on Bonita; (2) 702 Solano Ave., Albany.]
- **KDK** Kagyu Droden Kunchab: PO Box 170370, SF 94117. 415/752-5454.
- **LMB** Land of Medicine Buddha: 5800 Prescott Road, Soquel. 408/462-8383.
- **NI** Nyingma Institute: 1815 Highland Place, Berkeley 94709. 510/843-6812.
- **ODD** Orgyen Dorje Den/Bay Area Yeshe Nyingpo: 410 Townsend #406, SF. 415/826-7181.
- **POL** PÖL Pema Ösel Ling: 2013 Eureka Canyon Road, Corralitos. 408/761-6266.
- **RF** Rigpa Fellowship: 816 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510/644-1858.
- **SFBC** San Francisco Buddhist Center: 37 Bartlett St., SF 94110. 415/282-2018.
- **SFSC** San Francisco Shambhala Center: 1630 Taraval St., SF. 415/731-4426.
- **SFZC** SF Zen Center: 300 Page Street, SF. 415/863-3136.
- **SR** Spirit Rock Meditation Center: 5000 Sir Frances Drake Blvd., Woodacre. 415/488-0170; 488-0164.
- **TCL** Tse Chen Ling Center: 4469-23rd St., SF. 415/641-0671.

Do you want a Dharma center's events listed here? Send a note with information on special events, or better yet, arrange for their mailings to be sent regularly to: Ron Ginsberg, 2215-R Market Street, Box 230, San Francisco, CA 94114. K

LOCAL DHARMA
June, 1995

(Note: Sometimes schedu;es change because of special events; we recommend that you call first to confirm events.)

Ongoing Events

Sundays **Introductory Open House** The purpose of the Dharmadhatu is to promote an uplifted environment for students to practice meditation and to study Dharma according to the Tibetan Buddhist Kagyu and Nyingma traditions as taught by the Vidyadhara, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. 9-noon. Free of charge, meditation instruction available. BSC

Sundays **Community Practice Day** This includes open house, sitting practice session, and Shambhala Practice Session. Meditation instruction is available during any of these practice sessions. Talks are given at Open House and on Shambhala Practice Days. SFSC

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

Sundays **Sitting** 9am-12 noon, meditation instruction available at 10am. BSC

Mondays **Zazen Instruction** 5:00 pm call first. HSZC

Mondays-Saturdays **Zazen/Evening Service** 6:00 pm. HSZC

Mondays-Saturdays **Meditation and Services** 5:00 am- 7:00 am. HSZC

Tuesdays **Lam Rim Meditation** 7pm TCL

Tuesdays **Sitting**, 7-8pm. BSC

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

Wednesdays **Shambhala Sitting Practice** 7pm-8pm. BSC

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

Thursdays **Sitting** 7pm-8pm. BSC

Saturdays **Zazen & Dharma Talk** 9:00 am. HSZC

Special Events

3,4 Jun (Sa-Su) **Vipassana Day Longs with Ajahn Juminien (Thailand)** $30/day incl lunch, contact codes AJ3/AJ4 , SR

5 Jun (Mon) **Ven Geshe Lobsang Tsephel "Spontaneous Kindness: How to Develop It."** 7pm, $10 donation, TCL

10 Jun (Sat) **Introductory Sitting with Green Gulch Senior Zen Priests** 9am - 5pm, $20, $15 members, incl lunch, GGF

12 Jun **Sulak Sivarska at Berkeley Zen Center -** Author of Seeds of Peace and founder of International Network of Engaged Buddhists. 1933 Russell St, 7.30 pm, donation, sponsored by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

13 Jun (Tu) **Sakadawa** Buddha's Birth, Death and Parinirvana. Sun-

Special Events *(continuedon page3)*

Special Events...

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rise: 8 Mahayana Precepts. 7pm Guru Buddha Shakyamuni Puja. Bring favorite foods to share. TCL

17 Jun (Sat) **Vipassana Daylong with James Baraz** $30 incl lunch, contact code JB8. SR

23 Jun - 25 Jun (Fr-Su) **Shambhala Training Level I - Ordinary Magic** $125 BSC

24 Jun (Sat) **Zen Action with Senior Dharma Teacher Tenzin Reb Anderson** 9am - 5pm $20, $15 members, incl lunch. GGF

25 Jun(Sun) 29 Jul (Sa) **Spirituality and Work: Living More Fully** (cost depends on length of retreat 1 to 5 weeks). NI

26 Jun (Mon) **Ven Geshe Lhundrup Sopa - Hell Realms and Other Dimensions from a Tibetan Buddhist Perspective** 7pm, $15 donation TCL

26 Jun (Mon) - 30 Jun (Fri) **Vipassana Non Residential Retreat** instruction, sitting, walking, dharma talks, interviews, some teaching with Jack Kornfield. $30/day incl lunch, contact code NR2, SR

28 Jun (Wed) - 29 Jun (Th) **Public Talks by Ven Tsoknyi Rinpoche** 7:30 pm—$15 donation and weekend **Dzogchen Retreat** (for students with pointing out instructions) $85. SFSC

29 Jun (Th) - 12 Jul (Wed) **Meditation in Action - Transforming Violence, an Institute for the Practice of Engaged Buddhism** at Land of Medicine Buddha ($175-$300 sl scale). Call 510-525-8596., sponsored by Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

Retreat...

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Sunday until 4 pm in the afternoon.

We held our summer retreat at this location two years ago, and it was a wonderful experience for all who attended. The director and residents at Vajrapani are very happy about our return this year, and have warmly welcomed us back.

Registration fees for this weekend retreat will be $80–$100, sliding scale, which includes housing and vegetarian meals. Housing will be in large dormitory cabins and camping areas, although a small number of semi-private cabins (two per cabin) are also available at additional cost

Registration forms for this retreat will be mailed out the first part of June. We hope many GBF members will be able to attend this annual summer event.

A GBF Day of Mindfulness and Meditation at Sangha House

David Holmes

Yesterday, Saturday the twentieth of May, fifteen men from GBF spent a day together in silent meditation at Sangha House in Berkeley. We arrived before nine o'clock to settle in and get acquainted. For some it was the first time ever at an all-day sitting; the old hands among us knew more or less what they were getting into.

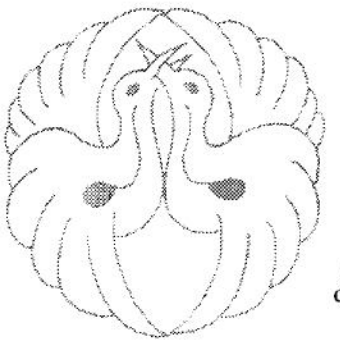
The day was organized by David Sunseri, who had been among those who originally contacted the owner of Sangha House for our February workshop on GBF and Gay Buddhism. Having been greeted by her with such warmth and enthusiasm, we all agreed with David that this location would be ideal for a small group day of meditation.

Sangha House was until last year the site of the Empty Gate Korean Zen center, and therefore is well equipped with zafus and zabutons. There is a beautiful meditation hall and altar—subdued, but with plenty of light and fresh air. It has the grounded feel of a practice center, a place where the many hours, days, years of meditation have left their traces.

After a brief orientation to the day's schedule (alternating 40 minutes of sitting meditation with 20 minutes of walking meditation, punctuated by short Dharma readings, and breaks for lunch and afternoon tea), we settled onto our cushions for our day of mindfulness—a day to share silently our effort and concentration. I am sure that for each of us the experience of the day was quite different. We each must have had our own cyclical rhythms of single-pointedness and scattering of thought. For some, the physical pain of sitting may have been the foremost reality; for others, the chattering of the monkey-mind might have been the chief obstacle. For all I know, some among us may have been floating in clouds of bliss. But we all sat and walked and sat and walked, and ate and sat and walked some more. In the end we each must have felt some subtle shifts in consciousness, some deepening of our practice.

At five o'clock we dedicated the merit of the day and hugged and smiled and said our goodbyes and packed up and left for our "real lives" on the outside. It was a long day, but it was way too short. During the last sitting I felt that I had finally found my stride, and as the final bell sounded I heard myself saying, "Please, just one more!"

I thank all of the men who came to Sangha House yesterday and helped me sustain and deepen my practice in this way. I also wish to thank David Sunseri for his dedication to GBF and his effort in organizing this event.



GBF, 2261 Market St. #422, San Francisco, CA 94114. For 24-hour information on GBF activities, call (415) 974-9878. Submissions for newsletter publication can be sent on a MacIntosh disk (if possible), to: GBF Newsletter, Mark Picciano, Editor,

signed articles express the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the GBF.