



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

The gay Buddhist Fellowship supports Buddhist practice and the spiritual concerns of the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies in the San Francisco Bay Area, the United States and throughout the world. GBF's mission includes offering the wisdom and compassion of diverse Buddhist traditions, and cultivating a social environment that is inclusive and caring.

## Bringing Compassion to the Conflict in Our Hearts

By René Rivera

*René Rivera is a meditation teacher, restorative justice facilitator and leader working and learning in all the spaces in-between race, gender, and other perceived binaries, as a queer, mixed-race, trans man. René teaches heart-centered, trauma-informed meditation at the East Bay Meditation Center and other meditation centers. He has co-lead the first residential meditation retreats for transgender, nonbinary, and gender expansive people. René is a restorative justice facilitator for the Ahimsa Collective, working to heal sexual and gender-based violence.*

Thank you for the introduction. Thank you for having me here. This is my first time teaching in person since February, 2020, so it's very exciting! And I was just feeling the difference of sitting with my body actually here with those bodies who are here, as well as those who are on Zoom. There's something different in my nervous system, settling in this experience of being able to be together again. I'm so grateful for this opportunity.

My topic today is bringing compassion to the conflict in our hearts, and I wanted to start us off with a short poem by Deena Metzger, with whom some of you may be familiar. It's a poem that's been meaningful to me for a long time. I'm not sure when it was written. She says, "There are those who are trying to set fire to the world, we are in danger, there is time only to work slowly, there is no time not to love."

This poem had come to my heart, and I went on her website a few weeks ago and noticed that she had put it at the top with a note that said, "We are once again in a configuration, once again at war. Once again, we must find the heart of peace, even now put out the fires, even those in our own hearts." So that was her note from February 24th, just a short time ago.

I've really been thinking of this poem as war has been very much in my consciousness. Not that we haven't been at war, because I think our world has been at war at every moment, I think at least within my own lifetime and maybe for many lifetimes. And recognizing that the war in Ukraine affects us maybe in a different way than some of the other ongoing wars that are happening in Syria and other places.

So, I wanted to really bring some inquiry to this question of how do we bring our mindfulness to the experience of conflict inside ourselves and outside ourselves? How do we bring compassion to conflict, again, inside and outside of ourselves?

I was listening to a teacher who's been really important to me over the last couple of years, Lama Rod Owens. I think probably every time I'm here I bring Lama Rod in because his

*dharma* is really alive for me. He teaches through a *sangha* called *Bhumisparsha* and has a Monday talk called Medicine Buddha. Just this past Monday he was talking, and he also made reference to slowing down, as Deena Metzger did in her poem. He said, “The only way forward is to slow down.” So, that got my attention: With the urgency of conflict, we need to slow down.

## "Just can we notice that anytime there's external conflict, there's also internal conflict."

And also, just even noticing in this moment how is it to bring our attention to conflict. Just feeling it in our bodies and can we feel the piece that might be inside ourselves? As I feel into it for myself, I notice the thought that maybe you all came for some moment of escape from violence and conflict and I'm bringing it right into the room. There's a little internal conflict inside of me: “Was this the right topic? Maybe they just want to hear about lovingkindness.”

So, the invitation is to notice if there is some conflict inside of you. Even in this moment, maybe part of you is wanting to be here and part of you is not wanting to be here, something like that.

Another teacher who's been important for me recently is a trans woman from Toronto. Her name is Kai Cheng Thom, and she talks a lot about conflict. She's a conflict mediator, also a somatic sex educator, and also a meditator. And I've just been learning a lot from her about a lot of different things. I was participating in an embodied justice summit a couple of weeks ago where she pointed out something that seemed so self-evident, but I hadn't thought of it before. She said, “Just can we notice that anytime there's external conflict, there's also internal conflict.”

And she was talking particularly about when we're working within interpersonal conflict or conflict within our groups or organizations, just noticing that the conflict is not just in the group, it's also inside of us.

And I thought that was an interesting reflection of the piece from the *Satipatthana Sutta* where the Buddha brings in this refrain about pointing to the way that we bring our mindfulness internally, externally, and both internally and externally. So, the *sutta* says something like, “They abide contemplating the body internally, they abide contemplating the body externally, and they abide contemplating the body both internally and externally.” And then that repeats for every piece of the four foundations of mindfulness, whether it's the body, feeling tone, thoughts and mind objects, or *dhammas*.

So, it just really resonated for me, this piece that it is both inside me and outside of me. From the talk just this past Monday from Lama Rod, he says, “We see war in the world where there is war inside of me. There is tension inside of me. There is a desire to harm inside of me. So, as you are working to disrupt

war in the world, we also have to disrupt war in our interpersonal experience, in our internal experience. If the internal experience isn't worked on, then you just recreate the systems in the external world. If I really want to disrupt the violence that I see in the world, then I need to get serious about disrupting violence in my own system, by cultivating compassion and wisdom, care and clarity.”

And he points out that this is the heart of the *Bodhisattva* path: disrupting the violence inside of ourselves so that we can meaningfully disrupt the violence that we see in the world.

And that was resonating for me also in just my own experience. I was thinking back to childhood. I had the experience—and maybe others have also—of actually having engaged in bullying behavior with other kids when I was a kid. It was around the ages of ten or eleven. I was a big kid. I was the biggest kid in my class. I also came from a family background of a lot of neglect on a lot of different levels. This was the seventies; many of us were kind of left on our own a lot. I certainly had that experience. I was just not getting much care, contact or direction from my parents.

And so, I was left to just figure things out on my own. And I can remember at that age, I really wanted to figure out how to relate to people. I wanted to understand whether I even had an impact on others. That was one of the things that I struggled with in my own family: Am I even important here?

So, I kind of did that with other kids through bullying in a way, just to try and understand how I am impacting another person. Can I really contact them? I was doing that through violence,

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both physically and emotionally.

And I can remember once just hauling off and socking my friend Keith for no reason. Then I really got the experience: “Oh, wow, that hurt him.” He was hurt. He didn't fight back. He was just hurt.

And another time I can remember realizing I just hurt people with words. I was saying really cruel things to one of my classmates until he started crying, and then I got that he was really hurt; that I hurt him.

I came to a place where I said to myself, “You know what? I've been sort of investigating this experience. And I actually don't want to hurt people.” That was something I came to on my own around eleven or so. And it was interesting. I made a vow to myself: “I'm not going to hurt people. I don't want to hurt people.” And I really lived by that. I didn't even know about the *Bodhisattva* path, but it was interesting that I came to that sort of vow within myself, just from my own direct experience of what it was like to hurt somebody else.

So, I think I was really resonating with this piece from Lama Rod: The heart of our commitment to non-harming is really examining it within ourselves and stopping the violence within ourselves, which is often violence towards ourselves as well as violence towards others. Those things are really connected very deeply.

I really notice this in my own work holding restorative justice processes both with the person who's been harmed, as well as the person who's done harm. I can really see this connection between the ways that we are hurting ourselves and the ways that we can then hurt other people.

So, I just want to turn to this question: How do we dismantle and disrupt this violence, both within ourselves and towards others? Just noticing that we're always practicing something is a good start. When we're on the cushion, we're practicing meditation, but we're always practicing *something*. We're practicing negative messages towards ourselves, like beating ourselves up for not doing something that we said we were going to do or being self-critical. All of that is practicing something. How can we begin to actively practice nonviolence? How can we practice compassion as an antidote?

In his talk, Lama Rod was also saying, "Karma is rehearsal. Whatever we have been rehearsing, we will do really well. If we have been doing violence, then we will do violence really well. If we have been rehearsing compassion, then we will do compassion really well." So just noticing that what we practice, what we cultivate is really what will grow. And I think Thich Nhat Hanh speaks to this as well. Many teachers have pointed to this.

One place that I've explored for myself is just noticing what my own conditioning is around conflict. I'm someone who sometimes can be very comfortable with conflict in groups and different spaces, and someone that's very uncomfortable with it. And so, I was really noticing and going back and unpacking my own experience of these two very different role models in

## ***How can we begin to actively practice nonviolence? How can we practice compassion as an antidote?***

my parents.

I had a father who was a civil rights activist. He was someone who brought a lot of energy and was fueled by anger in his work. But I also saw it really focused outwards, focused towards the anger being a generating force for change; anger being a way to take action in the world and it was focused towards others. It wasn't focused towards me or the family, so it seemed like a positive force, even though it was also often

quite a scary and chaotic force. I had mixed feelings about that, but I definitely saw that it was positive.

And at the same time, my mother was very conflict avoidant, and I just never saw her get angry ever. And there was a time when I was really trying to get her to be angry with me because I thought if she was angry with me, I would really know that she cared. I would just provoke her by not doing anything that I was supposed to do, and that kind of thing.

One day she finally sort of snapped, and I remember she was holding a wooden spoon and she brought it down on the counter forcefully, and a little edge of the spoon broke off. I just would always remember because we had that spoon for the rest of the time until I left home and I would always think of that moment. She said, "If you don't want to be here, you can just leave." I was ten years old!

I was really shocked. In that moment I got that there were a bunch of messages contained in what she expressed. One, of course, was that maybe she didn't love me and didn't want me, but also that she was so unwilling to engage in conflict that she would rather I left than have conflict. That's a pretty intense fear of conflict!

It's interesting to then come forward to my life now and realize that the work that I do is all about conflict. Aside from meditation work, the facilitation work is always around conflict and I'm very comfortable with that. I've also been very comfortable as an organizer, an activist, and managing organizational conflict. That's always been a place I feel quite comfortable.

Yet at the same time, when I look at my intimate relationships, partners and dating, I'm super conflict avoidant in that realm. I will really go to great lengths to make sure that people aren't angry at me or upset with me. So, it's just interesting to see that even just in these two realms, I hold conflict completely differently.

At some point I realized, "Oh, I've got transferable skills here." And I started to bring some of my love of and comfort with conflict more into the intimate realm, and that's been helpful.

Even just going through that inquiry was helpful for me because I realized how deeply I have been shaped by these experiences, and just to see how it plays out in my life now, that then helped me to realize that conflict could also be a more positive, regenerative force in intimate relationships. That kind of inquiry can be very helpful as we unpack these conditions.

One of the things I want to also point out around the ways that we can avoid conflict is that sometimes even within our Buddhist communities and cultures, there can be this aspect of conflict avoidance. I've certainly encountered it acting in different governance roles within different Buddhist communities and centers. Just watching out for the ways that sometimes we can have a kind of bypass around conflict, and even sometimes

conflict or anger gets labeled as unskillful or spiritually immature.

Can we notice when this comes up and can we also notice the times when we do that to ourselves? It might be noticing we don't want this internal conflict or we don't want to be in conflict with this particular person, and so we push our own feelings away. I've noticed this on every single board of directors I've ever sat on: There's always that one person who's difficult, and there's the sense that if we just got that one person off the board, everything would be harmonious.

What I've noticed is that every time you get that one person off the board, some new person becomes the difficult person. It's almost like it's a role that someone gets to occupy. So even when we try to push it away, there's some kind of group conflict that is present and somebody needs to be bringing it to the surface. When you get rid of that person or don't talk about it, the conflict doesn't go away. So just really noticing that piece.

Martin Luther King, Jr. really pointed to this in a speech that he gave called *When Peace Becomes Obnoxious*. He wrote this speech right after they were working to integrate the University of Alabama. There was a young woman named Autherine Lucy who was the black student who was brought in to integrate that university and she was met with just incredible violence, as you can imagine—just hordes of people yelling and spitting on her, and it was just awful. Then the University was like, “Okay, we can't do this. You can't come and study here.” That's when Martin Luther King wrote the speech because the headline in the newspaper the next day, after they expelled Autherine read, “Peace Reigns on the University of Alabama Campus,” or something like “Peace is Restored.”

King said that this calm is the type of peace that “...stinks in the nostrils of the almighty God.” And he recounts another conversation that he had with someone who was suggesting that the bus boycott that was also happening at the same time was destroying race relations and peace in the community. King responds, “Yes, it is true that if the Negro accepts his place, accepts exploitation and injustice, there will be peace, but it would be an obnoxious peace.” And he also talks about this as “...the peace of oppression.”

Can we look at the ways that we sometimes try to create that kind of peace where we're not actually resolving the conflict? We're just trying to remove either someone in our sphere or some part of our own selves that we see as the troublemaker; we squash that troublemaking part so that we can have peace. That's the kind of peace King would call the “peace of oppression” and could even be seen as a kind of self-oppression.

Even in my now two decades plus of meditation practice, I still have to be mindful of this kind of peace that comes at a cost. Am I sometimes pushing down parts of myself to achieve some semblance of peace? My practice has shifted towards this in-

quiry: How can I use my practice in an enlivening way that's bringing to the surface feelings—even really uncomfortable ones—rather than pushing those away so I can have this sense of internal quiet or peace?

I've been really supportive of the practices of Lama Rod Owens, particularly what he calls the seven homecomings practices, a benefactor practice designed to bring in a sense of being cared for by all of our benefactors, including *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Sangha*, the earth, our ancestors and lineage holders, ourselves and silence.

We're building this container of care and within it we have a lot more capacity to let the difficult feelings just be there and move through us. By building this kind of support, we start to develop a capacity to hold the conflict both inside of ourselves and around us without pushing it away.

We can also notice that it is often when some important need of ours is not getting met that we might be in internal or external conflict. So, another piece of reducing violence towards ourselves and others is really making sure that we are getting our needs met, that we're caring for ourselves, that we're asking for what we need, and that we're setting the boundaries that we need to set.

From his talk on Monday, Lama Rod said, “If I want to be the least violent version of myself, I have to make sure I'm getting my needs met, getting my needs met in a way that is ethical, that is sustainable, that is consensual.” This work of just getting our needs met and holding our boundaries is an important part of reducing violence.

It's a little counterintuitive, because when we're saying no or asking for something that we're not getting from someone else, like a partner, it can feel like it's creating conflict, but it is bringing to the surface something that's already present. There might be this sense of, “Oh, I don't want to rock the boat here,” but that conflict is already there. It's either, “Am I going to just hold it within myself or am I actually going to bring it into the space so that it could be resolved?” The other person then might say, “Oh, okay, now I know not to do that,” or, “Oh, I didn't know that you needed that. I could do that.” Or they could say, “No, I can't do that for you,” and then you know where you stand and there's somewhere else to go. So, there's a way that by avoiding conflict, we often keep ourselves in our own internal conflict.

Coming back to compassion, in the work I do around conflict I'm always first bringing a lot of compassion for myself in the hard work of upholding conflict for myself and others; I'm also really bringing compassion to everyone in the conflict, including those who I'm in conflict with.

So even just really bringing our compassion practice right into that experience of conflict and bringing in phrases that could be directed towards ourselves or others, “I care about your suffering. I'm here with you and this pain. Your suffering matters to me. I wish things were different”—just really bringing

**We're building this container of care and within it we have a lot more capacity to let the difficult feelings just be there and move through us.**

our practice right to that experience, even when we're in conflict with someone.

I've named the conflict as internal and external, but I also think of the realms of conflict as these concentric circles with ourselves at the center with our internal conflict. We might also have interpersonal or intimate conflict; there are the groups that we're a part of, and then there's institutions and systems where conflict is present. Of course, there's also this geopolitical sphere of conflict between nations that we started with. Expanding to an even bigger level, there's almost the existential conflict of our life on this earth and the ways that some aspects of how we live are in conflict with the earth itself. So, there are so many spheres, and it's useful to send compassion to all of these levels knowing also that they're all interconnected and we're feeling all of that inside of our bodies.

Going back to another quote from Kai Cheng Thom, she says, "When we put compassion and curiosity together, we often get

conflict de-escalation." So this is just really great noticing, that when we bring these two qualities together, our compassion and our curiosity, often conflict can de-escalate. Can we practice that with ourselves, with our own internal conflict, really bringing not just compassion, but our curiosity to that experience? Then just notice what happens.

I have many more thoughts around how we actually practice being less violent with ourselves; being more kind and how that ripples out. That could be a whole other talk!

I want to end with the practice of gratitude because I feel like gratitude is another practice that is, for me, very much a daily, as-many-times-as-I-can-touch-into-it practice. It also feels like gratitude practice directly addresses how to be kinder to myself and others.

In turning my attention to gratitude as often as possible, what I notice is it brings me into relationship. For example, if I'm just walking down the street in my neighborhood, I notice that the wisteria is starting to bloom and it's so beautiful and it smells so good, and I walk by it and I feel this great gratitude for all of that beauty. And it's just right there. It's so accessible to me.

Or having a meal and thinking, "This food has come to me from the earth, it's come to me through the hands of other people." Offering my gratitude is bringing myself into a relationship with the earth and with others.

So, gratitude is not only a practice of gladdening the heart and resourcing ourselves, but also of bringing ourselves into kinship and reciprocity and connection with all of life. It's interesting that when we use the word feedback, we often really think of that as people telling us things we don't want to hear, but it can also be a way that we can appreciate people. When

we bring more appreciation into our relationships, that can be really resourcing for the moments with those same folks when we need to hold conflict.

I want to leave us with gratitude and do just a brief practice of gratitude. It can be done sitting, standing, or in any position, but I'm going to stay seated since I know everyone will be able to see me. This comes from a somatics lineage called generative somatics.

I invite you first to bring your hands together—rub them together, allowing the friction to generate some warmth. Just feel that contact and warmth and start to generate some aliveness. Now, take your hands and extend them towards the earth. Continue to feel the aliveness and energy in your palms and send that energy towards the earth with your gratitude. You might think to yourself of a few things that you're grateful to the earth for.

And then, just think of being grateful to the earth for feeding you, for all the beautiful flowers that are coming out right now, and for providing a

home. Just take a moment and see whether any other things come to mind for which you are grateful to the earth.

Now, extending upward—we can do this physically or just energetically if you want to just stay still—send your gratitude towards the sky. Allow anything that comes to mind that you're grateful for in relation to the sky. I'm thinking of the rain, the raindrops I felt this morning when I was walking my dog. I'm thinking of the moon, feeling connected to the cosmos through seeing the moon, and also a sense of spaciousness. And then, just anything else that comes to you as you think of your gratitude towards the sky.

Now, extend your arms out to your sides and extend gratitude towards community. We can extend our gratitude towards each other in this room and on Zoom, including members of the community who are not here, and extending towards other people in our lives that we're grateful for. Just inviting in anyone who you want to extend some gratitude towards.

Finally, bring your hands to rest on your own body, any place that feels good, and extend your gratitude towards yourself, perhaps appreciating that you showed up here today, appreciating yourself for having done the dishes, appreciating yourself for ways that you have cared for yourself, and anything else that you want to extend gratitude to yourself for.

Thank you for joining me in this practice.

## **This work of just getting our needs met and holding our boundaries is an important part of reducing violence.**



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GBF has resumed in-person meetings at 37 Bartlett Street. Our Sunday meetings will be both in-person and on Zoom. Visit our website at [www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org) for the Zoom link and password.

## Sunday Sittings

10:30 am to 12:00 pm

Every Sunday at 10:30 am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12:00 pm. Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize until 12:30 pm.

## Wednesday Night Live

7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Similar to the Sunday format, without a formal dharma talk, we host a wide range of discussions which can include creative spiritual inspirations, pitfalls on the path, and applications of practice in everyday life. You are welcome to attend the Meditation (7:30 pm to 8:00 pm) only, and/or the Discussion (8:00 pm to 9:00 pm).

## Your Thrift Store Donations Earn Money for GBF

GBF members can donate their quality cast-offs to the Community Thrift Store (CTS) and GBF will receive a quarterly check based on the volume of items sold. This is a great way to support our Sangha, and the community. So far this year we have received over \$800 through members' generosity. Bring your extra clothing and other items to CTS at 623 Valencia St 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 Tell the worker you are donating to GBF. Our ID number is 40.

Information: (415) 861-4910

## How to Reach Us

[www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org)

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To contact Gay Buddhist Fellowship with general questions, suggestions for speakers, address changes, or to subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter: [gaybuddhistfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:gaybuddhistfellowship@gmail.com)

If you would like to join the GBF Google Group email list, please go to <http://gaybuddhist.org/v3-wp/email-list/> for instructions.

Find us on Facebook @[gaybuddhistfellowship](https://www.facebook.com/gaybuddhistfellowship)

The Gay Buddhist Fellowship is a charitable organization pursuant to Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) and California Revenue and Taxation Code #23701d.

# Sunday Speakers

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## June 5 - Joseph Rodriguez

“Taking Refuge By Evacuating Gay Afghan Refugees”

Joe Rodriguez is a Soto Zen Buddhist practitioner at San Francisco Zen Center, where he sits on the board committee for diversity, inclusion, and belonging. He is a father, a social impact strategist, and a LGBT+ activist.

<https://www.gardnerrodriguez.com/about>

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## June 12 - JD Doyle

JD Doyle serves as a core teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) and has served as a board member and was the cofounder of the LGBTQI meditation group. JD is in the Spirit Rock Meditation Center teacher-training program and was in the Dedicated Practitioner Program (DPP2) and the Community Dharma Leader Program (CDL4). JD has practiced Buddhism since 1995 in the U.S., Thailand, and Burma. For over twenty-five years, they worked as a public school teacher focusing on issues of equity and access. JD holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Cornell University and a master's degree in Language and Literacy and Sociocultural Studies from the University of New Mexico. JD identifies as gender non-conforming. They are committed to celebrating the diversity of our human sangha, addressing the impact of racism on our communities, expanding concepts of gender, and living in ways that honor the sacredness of the Earth.

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## June 19 - Steve Tierney

Steven Tierney is Professor Emeritus of Counseling Psychology at CIIS. Steven began his Buddhist practice in 1993 and is now an ordained priest in the Soto Zen lineage of Suzuki Roshi. He is a licensed psychotherapist in private practice in San Francisco, specializing in addiction and recovery, life transitions and resilience. His therapeutic approaches are grounded in mindfulness-based, trauma-informed therapies. He is the co-founder and CEO of the San Francisco Mindfulness Foundation. Dr. Tierney is a certified suicide prevention and intervention trainer and offers community based workshops to promote safer, healthier communities.

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## June 26 - Open Discussion

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## July 3 - Open Discussion (July 4 Weekend)

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## July 10 - Ari Lathuras

Ari Lathuras has been practicing meditation for approximately 35 years. She has received teaching from many renowned Buddhist teachers over the years. Pema Chodron has been one of her main sources of dharma teachings. She studied and practiced with Ani Pema since the mid-90's. About 13 years ago she met Ani Pema's teacher, Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche and became a student of his. She has also attended several teachings with Mindrolling Kondro Rinpoche. As a professional sign language interpreter, Ari has interpreted for many dharma teachers over the years.

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## July 17 and 24 - Ann Gleig

Ann Gleig is an associate professor of Religion and Cultural Studies at the University of Central Florida. She is the author of *American Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Modernity* (Yale University Press, 2019). She is currently working on a collaborative book with Amy Langenberg on sexual misconduct and abuse in contemporary Buddhism, which is under advance contract with Yale University Press.

Reading: First Sunday

Bob Sharf: Losing Our Religion - Tricycle: The Buddhist Review

<https://tricycle.org/magazine/losing-our-religion-2/>

Robert Sharf's interest in Buddhism began in the early 1970s, when, as a seeker in sandals barely out of his teens, he hopped from one meditation retreat to the next, first in India and Burma, then back in North America.

[tricycle.org](http://tricycle.org)

Reading Second Sunday

<https://www.lionsroar.com/the-shifting-landscape-of-buddhism-in-america/>

The Shifting Landscape of Buddhism in America - Lion's Roar

In 2011, more than 200 Buddhist teachers, mostly American, gathered at the Garrison Institute in upstate New York to discuss the state of Buddhism in the West.

[www.lionsroar.com](http://www.lionsroar.com)

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## July 31 - Daigan Gaither

Rev. Daigan Gaither (he/him) began Buddhist practice in 1995 in the Vipassana (Insight) tradition, and then began to study Zen in 2003. He received Lay Ordination in 2006 where he was given the name Daigan or “Great Vow,” and received Priest Ordination in July 2011. Daigan speaks internationally on a variety of topics particularly around gender, sexuality, social justice, and their intersections with the Dharma. He also sits or has sat on a number of boards and committees that serve community needs and further social justice causes. Daigan has a BA in Philosophy and Religion from San Francisco State University, and an MA in Buddhist Studies (with a chaplaincy certificate and a certificate in Soto Zen Buddhism) from the Graduate Theological Union and the Institute of Buddhist Studies. You can find out more via his website [queerdharma.net](http://queerdharma.net). He lives in San Francisco, CA and identifies as a disabled, queer, white, cis male.

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## August 7 - Liên Shutt

Rev. Keiryū Liên Shutt is a lineage holder in the Shunryu Suzuki tradition. Born to a Buddhist family in Vietnam, she received her meditation training in the Insight and Zen traditions in the US, Thailand, Japan, and Vietnam. She was a founding member of the Buddhists of Color in 1998 and currently is the guiding teacher of Access to Zen, an anti-racist, inclusive sangha and non-profit in the SF Bay Area. She lives in San Francisco with her partner, exploring waterways and forests as often as they can.

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## August 14 - Donald Rothberg

Donald Rothberg, Ph.D., a member of the Teachers Council at Spirit Rock Center, and a teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center, teaches retreats and groups on concentration and insight meditation practice, lovingkindness practice, transforming the judgmental mind, mindful communication, working skillfully with conflict, and socially engaged Buddhism. He has practiced insight meditation since 1976, and has also received training in Tibetan Dzogchen, body-based psychotherapy, and trauma work. He has helped guide many six-month to two-year training programs in socially engaged spirituality, both Buddhist-based and interfaith, and is the author of *The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World*, and the co-editor of *Ken Wilber in Dialogue*.

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## August 21 - Open Discussion

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## August 28 - John Martin

John Martin teaches Vipassana (Insight), Metta (Loving Kindness) and LGBTQIA+ meditation retreats. He leads an on-going weekly Monday evening meditation group in San Francisco. He serves as Co-chair of the Guiding Teachers Council for Spirit Rock. John is also currently serving as Interim Executive Director for Spirit Rock. His practice has been supported by twelve years as a hospice volunteer: including five years at Shanti Project during the AIDS crisis, and seven years with the Zen Hospice projects.

**GBF NEWSLETTER**  
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**SAN FRANCISCO CA 94114**  
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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