

2nd International Queer Buddhist Conference - IQBC,  
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## Contents

Preface.....	5
Pema Dūddul (PhD): Visibility Is More than Being Seen: Creating a Dharma Community That Makes Space for Diverse Voices.....	7
Ven. Tashi Choedup: Socio-Political Work with the Queer Community in India.....	9
Kody Muncaster (PhD Candidate): Queer Trauma and the Trans-Sattva: Non-Binary Gender Euphoria and the Buddhist Teachings on Non-Duality.....	11
Kyle Neo: What’s love got to do with my queerness?.....	14
Ven. Vimala: Turn trauma into a pathway of spiritual growth! .....	17
Brother Troi Bao Tang: Healing the Past in the Present (teaching).....	19
Proposals, Abstracts, Blog Texts.....	21
Danielle Every (PhD): Trauma-Informed Meditation for LGBTQIA+ .....	21
Jampa Wurst: Dharma Rap, Visibility and Representation.....	32
Jemarc Axinto: The Iron Maiden Identity: Accessing Our Queerness as a Source of Liberation.....	34
Zoe Flowers: Breathing Space: Supporting Health.....	36
Stevie Inghram (M.S., C-IAYT): Integrating Yogic & Buddhist Practice.....	38
Noon Baldwin: Healing traumas through the natural elements in our bodies.....	40
Kesley Cage: Queer Compassion: Beyond Injustice – Happiness in Hard Places and Offering True Refuge.....	42
James Young: Queer Dharma Spaces as Refuge: SOGI, Stress & Liberation.....	46
Blair Perryman and James Young: The Power of Pronouns: How sharing and respecting pronouns can be a practice in being present and mindful.....	49
Elias VanDette: Self-Care Redefined, (Self-Care, Soul-Care).....	51
Geoff Peckman, he, him: Color Meditation.....	53
Susanne Thieringer: A Short Introduction to Sound .....	55
Contributors .....	57
Contributors (Talks).....	57
Contributors (Workshops).....	58
Contributors (Artists).....	61
Outlook.....	65
Acknowledgements.....	67
Supplement.....	69



## Preface

After the 1<sup>st</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference, IQBC, which I founded to share a safe space for me and my siblings, and that finally took place in 2021, the feedback was so positive, and people were longing, to soon having the next IQBC to come together again, discussing queer and Buddhist topics, listening to talks, chatting, having workshops, and meditations, I was lucky to find people all around the globe volunteering to help organizing with me the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC in 2022: Virtually we came together from the West Coast of the US to the East Coast, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The conference proceedings only build an excerpt about the variation of talks, and workshops given depending on the consent of the contributors.

But luckily the consent was given for the talks to be recorded as videos, which you can watch on <https://iqbc.org/iqbc-2022-recordings/> or on YouTube, where you can give a like, if you want to. We had beautiful scholars and respected venerables from different countries all over the world, like Prof. Pema Düddul, our keynote speaker, and Kody Muncaster, who is working on their dissertational thesis, Ayya Vimala, Venerable Tashi Choedup, Brother Troi Bao Tang and Kyle Neo, free lance designer and writer. Enjoy listening to these amazing talks on the websites mentioned above.

Workshops were not recorded, because of the safety of the participants. I am grateful, Prof. Danielle Every, and Kesley Cage, inspite of technical issues, which made it impossible for them to attend, offered their workshop contributions or blog text for the Conference Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC, s. below.

The variety or diversity of the workshops was exciting. And it's great that on this 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC we were supported also by allies like Zoe Flowers, especially for the trauma topic. For the difficult topic „Trauma/Abuse – Buddhism – Therapy“ the contributors accomplished something amazing, because the topic can be triggering. And we had provided helplines and helpsites all around the world, just in case they would be needed, s. <https://iqbc.org/helplines/>.

But the workshop contributors, e.g. Elias VanDette, and all the others were mindful, caring, and full of loving kindness, so that this important topic was a great success.

The new idea on the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference was to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC on two virtual platforms, so not only on zoom, but also on gather.town: There, Miriam, a long-term friend of mine and an ally, created a space for exhibitions, films, poems, book, and a stage for having a performance or open mic on the two days of the conference. Everyone was invited to go on stage, whether for singing, playing an instrument or sharing self written short stories or poems. For example we were lucky, to have Iden.t.t. on the virtual stage there, who performed their song „Sick to Work“ for the first time or to listen to Susanne with her ukulele.

Also the gather.town site was made to have the possibility to chat privately: People could jump from one platform to the other during the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC, when they wanted to have a private chat or check the helplines, enjoy the exhibitions or just to rest or meditate in a beautiful virtual surrounding.

The present proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference share this new idea of having a gathering with talks and workshops on one hand and on the other hand with so many different facets of artsy expressions, exhibitions, and open mic, which made this conference so special and successful!



**Pema Düddul: Visibility Is More than Being Seen: Creating a Dharma Community That Makes Space for Diverse Voices**

For the beautiful keynote from Pema Düddul, please watch the video on <https://iqbc.org/iqbc-2022-recordings/> or on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2b72h0kwLE>





**Ven. Tashi Choedup: Socio-Political Work with the Queer Community in India**

For the beautiful talk from Venerable Tashi Choedup, please watch the video on

<https://iqbc.org/iqbc-2022-recordings/> or on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4c-iCMK4eg>



## **Kody Muncaster: Queer Trauma and the Trans-Sattva:**

### **Non-Binary Gender Euphoria and the Buddhist Teachings on Non-Duality**

This talk combines trauma theory as it is used in gender and sexuality studies with non-binary phenomenology and Buddhist teachings on non-duality to explore the role of non-binary people in Buddhism. I have included below an excerpt of both the theoretical material and some of my personal narrative that will be covered in this talk. These concepts will be applied to Buddhist queer hermeneutics using stories of bodhisattvas in the sutras along with cross-dressing yidam practices in Vajrayana Buddhism. There is very little work done on non-binary identities at all, let alone in Buddhist studies, thus I offer more of my own narrative than I typically would, in hopes of augmenting the dearth in this field. In 2016 after years of distress and confusion over my simultaneous uncomfotability with being assigned male at birth but lack of desire to undertake a full-time binary transition to female, I was diagnosed with gender dysphoria by a physician who was trans himself. His exact words, which are burned in my memory, were “I think you need to explore your ability to be gender expansive” He affirmed that non-binary identities are a real, valid form of living in the world.

I have since been engaging a dance between drag (as well as other expressions of androgyny, masculinity, and femininity) and a hypervigilant fear of exposing myself to violence by visibilizing my (gender)queerness to those who may not yet know about or suspect it. I am terrified of being read as queer by strangers in public because throughout my childhood I was exposed to extreme violence both at school and from my now estranged parents. This traumatic fear even extends itself into situations where people know I am queer and are quite affirming, such as at a Buddhist organization I am involved with, where I find myself taking off my earrings before entering meetings for fear that I will not be taken seriously and it shows up in dates with cisgender gay men where I wear snap back hats to appease the valorization of masculinity due to its approximation to heteronormativity in gay male culture. I fear taking up space in trans organizations and I am anxious about not being perceived as trans enough to be doing such work. My queer trauma alongside my trans trauma of intense childhood harassment, abuse, and family rejection, causes me to expect discrimination or rejection anywhere I go, especially in religious communities. I do tonglen for all the other non-binary people who feel this way and for all the people who, acting out of delusion, hurt us.

Shantideva’s (1985) use of non-dualistic philosophy to argue that we need not see a separation between self and other can be used in conjunction with queer theory to extend its implications to trans identity by transcending gender and sexual binaries. Judith Butler (1988: 520) uses phenomenology in their argument that gender is performative, which is often misunderstood to mean that all gender is drag. What is meant by the use of the term “performative” is that gender is reified through its own repetition and constructed through discourse in a specific time period. This is somewhat similar to Michel Foucault’s (1990: 43) discussion of how “the homosexual” was linguistically produced as a category of being which actually came before the term “heterosexual”. In unearthing the discursive construction of homosexuality Foucault, a queer person himself, is not denying the validity of homosexuality just as Butler, a non-binary person, is not attempting to invalidate trans identity. Rather, the two authors are exploring how the concepts as we have come to know them today have been developed in language in a particular time period and have social, political, and medicalized connotations.

Renowned non-binary trans elder author Kate Bornstein (2013: 20) writes that everyone, including cis people, is in constant gender transition. This could be a transition from, for example, girlhood to motherhood or from dressing as a goth to a prep. I saw Bornstein give a talk in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2016 titled *Trans, just for the fun of it*. They explained that they had recently become heavily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism’s wisdom, compassion, and especially its distinction between conventional and ultimate truth in the context of gender. They encouraged us to detach from our convictions and to consider our truths about gender to be arguable and relative

just as the dominant views on gender are likewise arguable and relative. I asked them: “the concept of gender has harmed a lot of people. At the same time, it has a real meaning for binary trans people who work hard to be recognized as their gender. Do you think we should get rid of gender?” They explained that in the first edition of their earlier work *Gender Outlaws* (Bornstein, 1994) they would have said we should transcend gender as a concept but now they think that we should play with it and have fun with it since it is not going anywhere anytime soon. It has taken me a long time to embrace using they/them pronouns to refer to myself because hearing those pronouns reminded me of the fact that I am non-binary, which until recently, I preferred not to think about. Years after Bornstein’s talk, I am moving toward trying to have fun with and enjoy that part of me. Using they/them is beginning to feel less frightening and more affirming because it helps have who I really am be fully honoured in conversation.

Ann Cvetkovich’s (2008) work on queer trauma as ubiquitous is germane in this discussion of queer suffering. Cvetkovich (2003: 33) develops her notion of queer trauma counter to the medicalized discourse of post-traumatic stress disorder through her exploration of lesbian AIDS activism and her discussion of the often daily painful experiences that queers have to live through. Cvetkovich (2003: 10) ultimately argues that queer suffering has led to the formation of queer trauma cultures, communities informed by trauma that are imbued with elements of caring, mourning, activism, and compassion—concepts crucial to a queer engaged Buddhism.

There is a temporality to queer trauma that impacts the cognitive, affective experience of one’s world. Clementine Morrigan (2017) discusses their own lived reality as a queer person living with complex trauma in their conceptualization of queer trauma time. They discuss how the queerly traumatized engage in a form of cognitive and affective mental time travel through flashbacks, nightmares, and hypervigilance (Morrigan, 2017: 50) but they argue for an embracing of this in line with the values of crip and mad disability justice activism rather than carrying a notion that this way of being is wrong. As someone living with complex post-traumatic stress disorder, I am among the queerly traumatized who resist linear time by refusing (often against my own will) to exist solely in the present moment, haunted by flashbacks from the past and anxieties about the future. When I was introduced to the secular, Buddhist modernist mindfulness meditation movement, I saw meditation as a sort of temporary cure, a way to build my skills to eventually stay in the present moment. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2011: 19) problematizes the understanding of mindfulness as presented in Jon Kabat-Zinn’s mindfulness-based stress reduction as reductionist but still of benefit to some beings. As a result of a combination of Morrigan’s (2017) work and my own deeper understanding of Buddhism as well as acceptance and commitment therapy, I am now moving towards focusing on developing a non-attached metacognitive awareness of the time travel, an awareness of cognition, affect and bodily sensation when past or future thoughts occur, rather than trying to avoid such thoughts or fusing with them.



## **Kyle Neo: What's love got to do with my queerness?**

### **Introduction**

- ❖ A freelance designer
- ❖ Writer and Dharma practitioner
- ❖ Holds a diploma in Buddhist studies and Buddhist psychology
- ❖ He aims to find deeper in life through his advisory
- ❖ The editor-in-chief for an online Buddhist publication kusala
- ❖ He is now involved with the Buddhist mentoring program and he
- ❖ Hopes to share his insights with Buddhist youth

- Being Queer is like we're always different from the rest. There's always a branding of us like we are creative, we are fun people.
- It seems to be labeling queerness as the aspect of being happy and joyful but in actual fact, it's not that happy and joyful.
- We face different parts of discrimination, and bullying, from unequal rights.
- What has love got to do with my Queerness?
  - ❖ It's actually beyond love and compassion, it is because you think that love and compassion are something that you need to give others without anything in return
  - ❖ In actual fact, if you are truly a Buddhist practitioner practicing the four immeasurable. You'll notice how gratifying loving, kindness, and compassion work for you in terms of your Buddhist cultivation and in terms of your mentality, and in terms of how you become a person that you feel is much more purposeful and meaningful.
- Your love and kindness come from your own suffering and in return of that you understand what's empathy. What it feels like walking on other people's shoe.
- Love and Compassion are necessities not theories. Without them, humanity cannot survive.
- The Dharma will always tell you love and kindness but how many times have we tried and really put it into action into every action in our environment and then wait and see where the reaction leads to?
- Where we cling to joy, we actually somehow do not see the true reality of Joy.
- Where we truly experience joy and happiness it should be in the present moment and should be peaceful.
- Finding opportunity to learn in your suffering.
- Doing what the best out of what you find in yourself and if it helps other people, they're not suffering in vain.
- All of us suffer and are not immune from suffering.
- If all of us are suffering, the best thing we can do is share our love and kindness and compassion with each other.

- When we allow ourselves to care for ourselves and others it is a profound act of kindness that refuse the heart to energize the body and nourishes the connection with our minds and other people.

A Cancer Survivor, A Volunteer, An Aspiring Buddhist, A Gay Person. It's nothing related but yet the same time interconnected. Kyle Neo, a self-declared queer Buddhist discovered that all we need is love but does love accept my queerness? Why is the love he pursues feel so rare and extremely difficult to achieve especially as a gay person?

In his talk, he shares with you how he overcame cancer, volunteer in Chiang Mai for 3 years, wrote a book and practice Buddhism at the same time. The passion he unravel after living almost 25 years as an adult comes in com'passion'. Love and compassion can be intermixed, and loving kindness is the greatest love of all. The ending is the same for everyone but the journey you made is your choice. With the realization of Dharma, our path could be less intimidating and more rewarding. The love is greater and beyond what we comprehend from the Buddhist perspective. Ultimately, isn't getting out of samsara is the goal of all Buddhist?

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

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

[www.monkeylife.me](http://www.monkeylife.me)





## **Ven. Vimala: Turn trauma into a pathway of spiritual growth!**

LGBTIQA+ individuals generally deal with higher levels of interpersonal victimization than other people. These can lead to trauma and PTSD and other related problems in life. This talk and guided meditation will focus on the shame, self-blame and suffering resulting from trauma and how the Buddha's teachings can offer a path to full spiritual healing.

Trauma can be turned into a very powerful resource for spiritual growth, love and happiness that has the power to help others. Trauma is often related to relationships and need positive, safe and nurturing relationships to heal. The key is kindness, for yourself and others.

In this talk, Ven. Vimala (they/them) will focus on the mechanisms of trauma as well as share aspects of their own journey through PTSD and discuss practices to help access a sense of love, safety and ultimately forgiveness. They will offer a guided meditation that you can practice daily to help reintegrate those parts of you that experience feelings of fear, hurt, shame, or "being not good enough". (This talk is only a brief introduction and not a substitute for therapy for those with PTSD)



**Brother Troi Bao Tang: Healing the Past in the Present (teaching)**

s. <https://iqbc.org/iqbc-2022-recordings/> or  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvb0OXQ3u4c&t=4s>



## **Proposals, Abstracts, Blog Texts**

### **Danielle Every: Workshop: Trauma-Informed Meditation for LGBTQIA+**

This 90-minute workshop introduces, through short talks, exercises and meditations, a trauma-informed approach to meditation.

#### Proposed schedule

Grounding meditation connecting the breath with hand movements to open the session

Talk: Trauma and the Window of Tolerance. Explores how we can get to know when we are in and outside of our window and how best to respond in these different circumstances through meditation.

Examples of grounding and resourcing exercises for times when we are outside our window.

Exercise: Circle of Care exercise for drawing on sources of strength and resilience for resourcing ourselves in meditation.

Talk: Trauma and coming into body sensations. Explores how we might come into our body sensations in safe ways.

Meditation: Guided trauma-sensitive body scan.

Q&A

Grounding meditation to close.

#### Resources provided

To support ongoing practice and learning participants will receive:

1. a resource booklet on trauma, meditation and resourcing;
2. the Circle of Care worksheet; and
3. recordings for the trauma-sensitive body scan and grounding meditations.

### **An Introduction to Traum-Informed Meditation LGBTQIA+**

#### Resource guide

Wherever we walk in Australia we walk on Aboriginal land.

I acknowledge the Kurna people as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which this resource guide

was written. I recognise their continuing connection to the land and waters and thank them for protecting this

bushland and its ecosystems since time immemorial. Sovereignty of these lands was never ceded. I pay my

respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people present today.

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#### **Spirit Remains – Lorna Munro**

I am as old as time

I am fluid like spoken rhyme

I am still here, even if you refuse to listen to my lesson

I am wise beyond my years, though I wear the clothes of an adolescent  
I am confined amongst your 'good will' please spare me your blessing  
I am hungry for change although I am weary of the sinister inner essence  
I am still here amid your secret transgressions  
I am present  
I am unknown  
I am that eerie shiver you feel when you're alone  
I refuse to leave, this is my home!  
I am the gulf, the bay and the cove  
I bin 'ere' long-time, I have watched this place grow  
I continue to transcend beyond the skies, over the seas and deep below  
I am a stubborn child, refusing to walk in your shadow  
I am the thing in between, hereafter, the very thing you are too afraid to know  
I forever sing nature's song, my ode to ole father crow  
I inspired the city beats with the sound of my mismatched feet, each step thundering an enormous blow  
I will remain here even if you choose to go ...  
I control young minds, load warriors up with the knowledge of guerrilla ammo  
I counteract your propaganda with my lyrical skills and my righteous flow.  
I am responsible for your paranoia, I am the force that turns the most conservative to 'gung-ho'  
The very acknowledgement of my existence will force closure of your place of business and from your property you will have to forgo  
I am chaotic  
I am still the same  
I make sandstone structures shake and quiver at the mention of my name  
I am enigmatic  
Heartfelt, vengeful and a little dramatic  
I am forever studied, questions can't be answered from where or whence I came  
I smile at young women, they praise my face and sing to me but never in vain  
Wise men talk about me, boys line up to play my game  
They are told to beware my disguises and are warned of the bringer of pain  
I represent the long line of light, an eternal unbroken chain  
I had a beloved I adored, you destroyed their spirit in your attempt to tame  
I am condemned to watch on helpless as you assimilate, torture and continue to maim  
I shall remain in spite of the permanent tear flooded stain  
With oppressed thoughts of immense disdain  
Recognise my right, you have nothing left to gain  
What am I you ask, who is the cause for such discontent, what is to blame?  
Know that it is I, the law of this land, the creator, the maker of rain  
I am the core, the spirit, the giver of life, and I can take it back again

**Whenever we practice meditation, we benefit from the wisdom and generosity of Asian practitioners across time.**

I don't I don't care how much you meditate. I care about your level of consciousness of me as a person, as an Asian American. I care only about how you treat me as a living being.

Mushim Ikeda, Zen teacher

## The Invitation of Meditation

Our invitation in meditation is to lean-in. Our invitation in trauma-informed meditation is to lean-in safely.

No matter what is happening for us, meditation invites us to get curious about our experience. In our bodies

we may experience blankness and vivid sensations, resistance and openness, change and stillness.

We are

learning to open to all these experiences in a safe and caring way.

This quote from Eduardo Galeano captures our mindful orientation to ourselves beautifully:

The Church says: the body is a sin.

Science says: the body is a machine.

Advertising says: The body is a business.

The Body says: I am a fiesta.

Meditation says the body is the place that is always present, and it brings us back to each moment.

As do the breath, sounds, thoughts, feelings...they're all part of the curriculum in meditation.

In this course, we take a trauma-informed approach. The meditations, the talks and the exercises help us understand the Window of Tolerance and its role in meditation, find ways to explore our bodies when they may feel difficult to come home to, and to see and experience thoughts as thoughts, and feelings as feelings.

And all of this is held in a gentle container of care which we learn to develop. And let's not forget joy and seeing the good in ourselves! We explore this too.

We don't work directly with trauma – that is work best done with a therapist to support us. As Anne Lamott wisely reminds us:

My mind is like a bad neighbourhood. I try not to go there alone.

What we will do is work together in our group to build our mindfulness muscle to help us see clearly what is here in each moment, developing a new relationship with our everyday experiences.

The new relationship we're developing with our experience through mindfulness is one of acceptance of who

we are. One of the phrases in the Metta Pride meditation from Rainbodhi that I love the most is "Stand tall in

who you are". (Metta roughly translated is 'loving kindness')

Kodo Nishimura (This Monk Wears Heels) a Buddhist monk, make-up artist and LGBT activist, reminds us that meditation helps us to:

Protect the light of your value even if a gust of wind is harassing you — don't let people take your fire away

FOR A NEW BEGINNING

John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,  
Where your thoughts never think to wander,  
This beginning has been quietly forming,  
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,  
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,  
Noticing how you willed yourself on,  
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.  
It watched you play with the seduction of safety  
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,  
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,  
Wondered would you always live like this.  
Then the delight, when your courage kindled,  
And out you stepped onto new ground,  
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,  
A path of plenitude opening before you.  
Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is at one with your life's desire.  
Awaken your spirit to adventure;  
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,  
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

### **Further Resources**

Interview with Kodo Nishimura  
Debra Flics: What meditation can't cure.

### **Trauma and Resourcing**

#### **Resourcing**

there are resources we can rely on to meet the challenges of life  
Lama Rod Owens

#### **What is Resourcing**

Perhaps the most common, and most well-known, meditation instruction is 'to be with what's here'. But it's not always possible or wise to make this our starting point. Rather than going inside our minds and bodies like a warrior, using grit and determination, we want to enter like a caring friend, using love and caring. And one of the ways we build our capacity to do this is through resourcing ourselves – both longer term as an ongoing part of our practice and in the moment when things arise.

[Resourcing is] bringing in enough safety and love to be able to work with what's here.  
Tara Brach

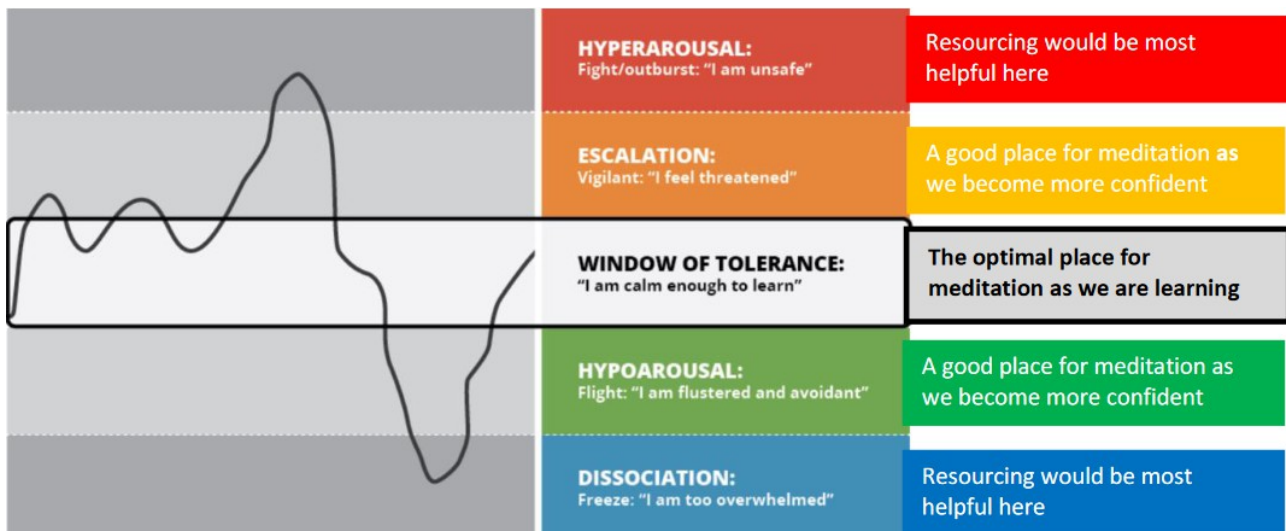


## Taking Refuge, Resourcing and Trauma

Creating a container for holding ourselves is important for all of us, and it can be particularly helpful when we've experienced trauma. Meditation requires curiosity and openness to be able relate kindly to our experience. These are functions of the executive part of our brain – the pre-frontal cortex and cortex. When we're having a tough time our autonomic nervous system (the fight, flight, freeze, fawn system) takes over and we find it more difficult to access these parts of our brain. For those of us who've experienced trauma, this may take over more often. In those times, asking ourselves to 'be mindful' 'be with what's happening' even to 'be kind' is simply not going to be available to us – and it's not meant to be, this is one of our brain's safety mechanisms to switch off these 'attend and befriend' functions because it needs us to respond quickly to a threat.

Asking it to be something different at these times is counterproductive. Instead, when we notice we are in fight, flight, freeze or fawn, a far more caring and useful response is to reconnect, to soothe and hold ourselves using skills like taking refuge and resourcing. This helps us regain our capacity to explore with curiosity and care, opening to what is here in a safe way. We can come into our Window of Tolerance – and, over time, we can also widen our window of what we can safely be with and reduce the experience of being hypo or hyper-aroused in response to threat. In the image below I've mapped out the places in our responses where resourcing would be our most helpful response.

### The Window of Tolerance Model and Meditation



Created by Govind Krishnamoorthy and Kay Ayre licensed under [CCBY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

How do we know when we are in a place where resourcing would be helpful?

We can get to know the body's sensations when we're in our Window of Tolerance, and when we're moving outside of this, and when we're in a fight, flight, freeze or fawn response.

Below is a map of body sensations at each of the stages of the Window of Tolerance that can be useful for getting to know our own responses, and thus to discern what would be most helpful in taking care of ourselves.



life.

- Movement – light stretching or walking, bringing your awareness to the sensations as you move. This can include simple movements that also ground us such as pressing your toes into the ground.

Bringing conscious awareness to our breathing and slowing and deepening our breaths. The breath can be paired with movement as well. This pairing triggers the Parasympathetic Nervous System which is our rest and digest system. (...)

Resourcing builds our capacity to hold our experience. Rather than trying to replace the current experience with a better one – calmer, quieter – we are building our gentle strength to hold all our experiences.

### **Further Reading**

If you'd like to explore resourcing, meditation and trauma further, here are some resources you might find helpful:

Tara Brach's talk: Healing Trauma: The light shines through the broken places

Meg-John Barker's wonderful free e-book on trauma

David Treleaven and Dan Siegel talk in this podcast about the Window of Tolerance and Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness

Laura Kerr's short guide Live within your window of tolerance: A quick guide to regulating emotions, calming your body and reducing anxiety

### **Coming Home: A Circle of Care Exercise**

#### **Adapted from The Seven Homecomings, Lama Rod Owens**

What could taking refuge and resourcing ourselves look like for us LGBTQIA+ folk here in the West? Lama Rod

Owens, a queer BIPOC teacher, explores this very question.

“I wanted to bring my whole life into this practice [taking refuge] in a way that embraced by cultural, racial, sexual and radical identities.”

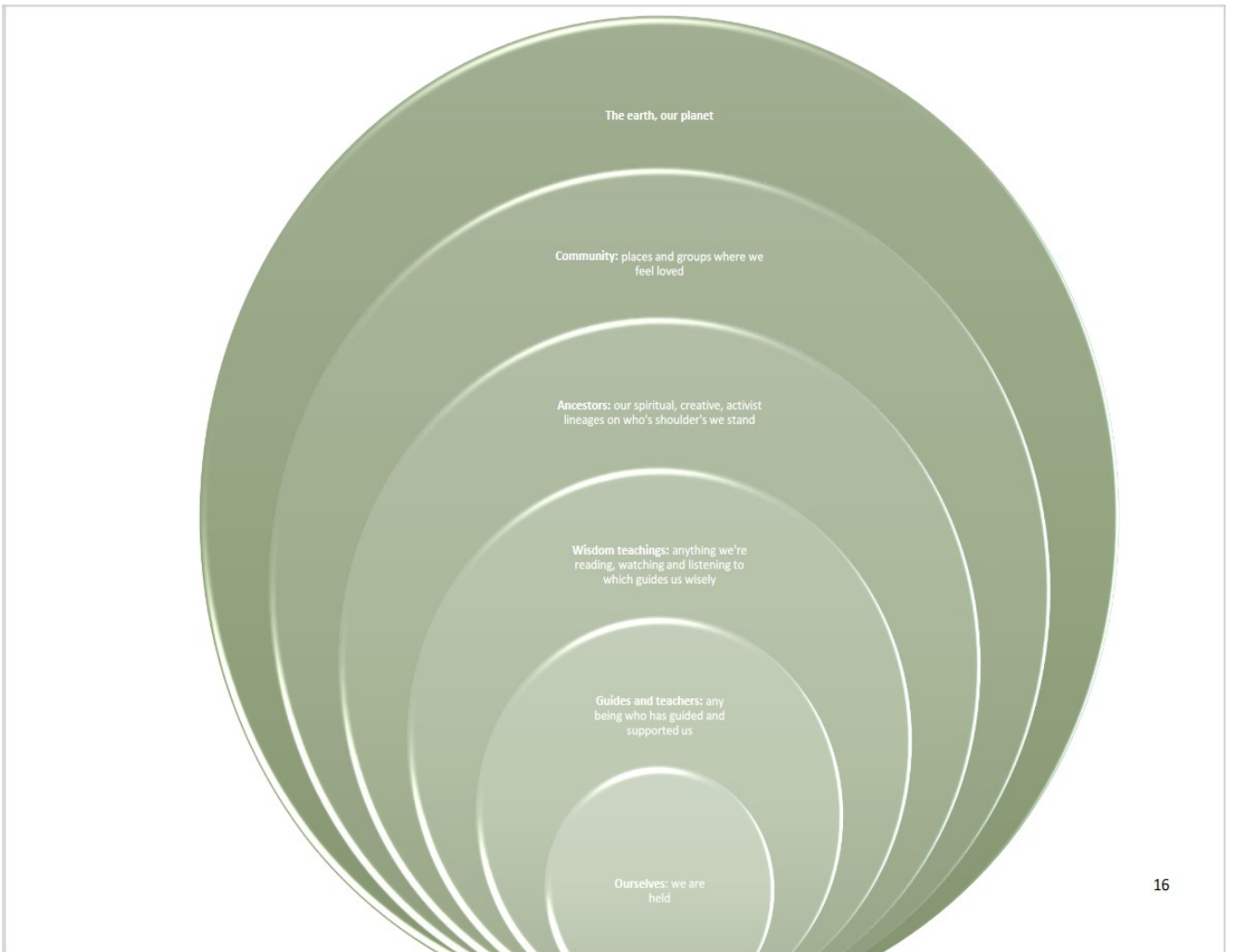
Lama Rod Owens

Reflecting on this, Lama Rod developed the Seven Homecomings as a practice of refuge in which we evoke sources of refuge and gather these around us.

“I see the Seven Homecomings as an expression of love that forms a container to hold the intensity of my anger and rage. It holds my despair under the anger and rage as well.”

Lama Rod Owens

I've adapted Lama Rod's beautiful contemplative practice into the Circle of Care – an exercise which we will be exploring together in our the first week of our course. We can conceptualise this Circle like this



## My Circle of Care

### GUIDES

Any being who teaches us how to be wiser and kinder.

We reflect on our teachers and guides, bringing them into our circle, remembering what they have brought to our life and imagining them holding us with kindness.

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As LGBTQIA+ folk we might include in this refuge our 'queer-oes' (queer heroes!) – the people who helped us stand tall in who we are. I have so many of these its hard to choose one (and the beauty of this meditation is that we don't have to – we can add them all!). At the moment, its Jeanette Winterson.

For me, other guides and teachers who I regularly call to mind as part of my circle of refuge include Tara Brach, my therapist, and Meg-John Barker.

### WISDOM TEACHINGS

Anything (scriptures, movies, art, memes, books) that I am watching, reading or listening to that helps us feel clearer and kinder.

We reflect on these texts and evoke their energy to inspire us and remind us of the wisdom we can come home to any time and remind us of the wisdom we can come home to any time we need.

We reflect on these texts and evoke their energy to inspire us of the wisdom we can come home to any time we need.

For me, wisdom teachings that I regularly call on include are my favourite authors (Alison Bechdel, Jeanette Winterson, Alain de Botton), spiritual books like Lama Rod Owens Love & Rage, talks and podcasts from Tara Brach and Cameron Esposito, comedians like Hannah Gadsby and Mae Martin. Ben Quilty's paintings. Schitt's Creek.

The sky's the limit here!

## COMMUNITY

The places, groups and communities where we feel loved.

Inviting around me those members of the communities I am part of where I experience love.

For me, the place and people I draw on here include Argo's Café, my yoga studio, the library, the art gallery, my queer meditation groups, and my Buddhist study group.

## ANCESTORS

Those in our lineage (family, activist, spiritual, creative) on who's shoulders I stand.

We reflect on our ancestors and lineages, reminding us that we are not alone, and asking for support and guidance.

My family of origin is not who I call on here – and that may be true for many of us in the alphabet community. The lineages I do call upon are the feminists and lesbians who made it possible for me to live the life I currently live, and who's courage opened the way for me to be myself.

## THE EARTH

“The planet which is always loving us.”

Evoking the energy of the earth, inviting it into our bodies, and allowing ourselves to be held by the earth.

As I write these words I am looking out my window at the gum tree, the jasmine flowers, the sunlight falling on the leaves in the garden, and breathing the air, feeling the glass of water I drank in my tummy and heating my eggplant and tomato bake for lunch in the oven. In each of these acts, I am nourished and held by the earth.

### Further reading

If you'd like to explore taking refuge, using The Seven Homecomings or other more traditional and queered Buddhist practices, here are some further resources for exploration:

Lama Rod Owens

Tara Brach, Finding True Refuge: Pathways to Belonging



## **Jampa Wurst: Dharma Rap, Visibility and Representation**

This is an interactive workshop, where people are asked to try to make their own rhymes, especially for the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC, after an introduction of DJ Jampa Sausage, inventor or founder of Dharma Rap about the „her/his/theirstory“ of visibility and representation.

The idea is, to get people involved, and if possible at the end also try to do a queer Buddhist Dharma Rap together on the virtual stage or open mic, in which everyone can do their own two or four lines or more with a chorus that links everyone during the social event at the open mic.





## **Jemarc Axinto: The Iron Maiden Identity: Accessing Our Queerness as a Source of Liberation.**

When is the last time you felt pure, consistent, celebration for everything that you are? When did you feel completely liberated and accepted for all of those different qualities and aspects of your being that elevate you regardless of what anyone else says

You don't have to prove anything to be worthy of self-love and happiness, honey.

We have been culturally conditioned to believe that we have to earn the right to our labels. And I'm here to tell you that we are so much more than our queerness. And, even so, our queerness can be the very engine with which we can attain personal liberation.

Let's celebrate The International Queer Buddhist Conference together and remember that we're all perfect as we are.

Jemarc will guide you through some incredibly delicious wisdom including...

First half:

- The Three Poisons that Keep Us Hooked
- Transmuting Pain into Power (Poison is Medicine)
- Understanding the Creative Power of Change
- Transcending Attachment to Labels
- Celebrating the Rainbow

Second half: Practice

Jemarc will guide you through a powerful Somatic practice from their modality: The Spiritual Playground to help you connect to your inner gods and goddesses and fully embrace the full spectrum of who you are.



## **Zoe Flowers: Breathing Space: Supporting Health**

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” ~Audrey Lorde

After 20 years in the domestic violence movement, Zoë Flowers knows first-hand about the toll our work can have on our bodies, minds, and spirits (Especially those of us with histories of trauma). And the current climate is exacerbating the stress many of us have overlooked for years. Advocates, and program directors alike are struggling to stay connected while also keeping programs, staff, and their families healthy. This workshop will utilize intentional breathing, visualization, and other modalities to assist participants with techniques to reduce stress and promote a renewed sense of creativity and resilience.

### **Goal**

To provide participants with information to address the impact of vicarious trauma and stress.

### **Major content areas:**

Intentional breathing, visualization, and journaling are some of the modalities used to increase awareness, reduce stress, promote relaxation and creativity in this session.

### **Intended Audience:**

- Advocates for Children and Youth
- Healthcare Providers/First Responders
- Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault Survivors and Advocates
- Community Educators/Organizers



**Stevie Jiyo Inghram, M.S., C-IAYT, NMS-3**

Integrating Yogic & Buddhist Practice

This workshop will be both philosophical and experiential in nature starting with an introductory presentation on finding common ground and integration among Yogic & Buddhist practices. With this foundational knowledge and context, the remaining portion of the workshop will include embodiment practices of mindful movement, breathing, meditation, and self-reflection all meant to integrate these principles deep within our being- mind, body, and spirit.



## **Noon Baldwin: Healing traumas through the natural elements in our bodies.**

### " Soothing Our Dwelling"

The first part will be a guided meditation of 45 minutes, inviting people to come into embodiment through deep connection with sensations of skin, bones, fluids, breathing, heat, energie.....Based in classical Buddhist elements meditations, from the first foundation of mindfulness, the four elements of air, water, earth & fire, I invite meditators into this beyond ...This beyond is not a bypassing of our troubles. Finding ease within our dwelling, can be a challenge for LGBTQIA peoples who have often suffered from the shyness of feeling like the " outsider", through to extreme self consciousness, or body dysphoria...We can by moments find a pathway, often a small jungle path, into this ease in our own bodies...sometimes it's just a whisper of this opening we hear in meditation leading to a trust in ourselves that we can explore these unknown paths. This offering a taste of embodied moments can lubricate a confidence in ourselves of the awakened aliveness residing in our bones. Giving ourselves experience of the impermanence & impersonal nature of our shared commonalities, ( water in the body, air in the lungs, capillaries etc), soothes our dwelling,into coming out of anxiety as a habit, into befriending the offerings of our inner eco system.

As we go upstream against mainstream narratives of lack & anxiety in a capitalist world view, there is an island, a resting place of sanctuary. A place of ease we can slowly become familiar with, allowing this ease to grow as our trust in ourselves grows to rely on resting into the elements of our body.

In our sensual bodies lives not only kindness for ourselves & much needed love, but also fluidity & groundedness are essential oils for these uncertain times. Fluidity to duck when we need to, suppleness to sway when the winds of the world are too strong & groundedness to establish wholesome boundaries & a stable sense of presence .

Coming into friendship with our innate gentle & supple strengths, we can meet our edges, our feelings of non belonging, our residues of not being understood.....& find our roots, our feet firmly planted in releasing what is no longer necessary, allowing ourselves to be fully our own being. After this meditation, & a 3mns break to stretch, drink etc, I will hold the space for people to ask questions, receive feedback if they wish, share their insights, share their troubles...& feel into the effects of this type of meditation.

This open dialogue space will be explained in the beginning: as leaving each person to speak without interruption, that each participant can speak only in the first person to not tell others what they should do, and without a free for all comments happening so all can feel free to speak without being judged. Leaving moments for silence, & no pressure to say anything is also an essential ingredient. All are welcomed as they are.





## **Kesley Cage: Queer Compassion: Beyond Injustice – Happiness in Hard Places**

### **and Offering True Refuge**

During the American War in Vietnam, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) took his Buddhist practice out of the monastery and into society. He formed the School of Youth for Social Services to help people to rebuild peaceful societies, and the Order of Interbeing to support activists and social workers to stay resilient through practising mindfulness. Thay faced many challenges and almost lost his life, and witnessed friends and loved ones die due to violence. His mastery of the Buddhist practice of mindfulness throughout that period has formed a precious gift to the world. His mindfulness practice was so deep that he was able to practise transforming some of the greatest suffering known to our planet; the suffering of war. Thay taught peace in Vietnam and in America, and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, by Martin Luther King Junior. Thay was then exiled from his home in Vietnam for most of his life, and only returned to his root temple in old age and at the end of his life. Thay's practice centre eventually settled in France where Plum Village was founded, and he taught there for many years. It was towards the end of Thay's life, that I first attended a Plum Village mindfulness retreat.

During the 3-months of my initial stay at Son Ha (Plum Village), in 2018, I found refuge and stability in mindfulness practice. I was there as a man from the UK, aware of widespread violence around the world, and I was there for inner peace, and world peace. A key aspect of my learning would be about true love. I am now going to tell you some of my story, and how Thay's mindfulness teachings and the ongoing support of the Plum Village community have influenced my practice in healing not only myself, but other men who love men too.

I was given the words "gay" and "queer" to describe myself when I was a teenager, although mostly these words were used in an aggressive way, intended to insult me. I struggled to understand and value my difference when I was discriminated against day upon day. I was rejected, verbally insulted, spat on, physical violence was targeted against me, and I also received threats of torture and death. These were very lonely years as a young person, and I also had hurts from earlier childhood that I had not yet healed. I was vulnerable and groomed by older men, who had suffered in their generation so much that they were unable to respect themselves or others and they exploited me for sense pleasures. As a young adolescent, I developed the misperception that my worth was tied to my sexuality, which some hated, and others exploited me for. Who I truly was in my heart, was not yet able to flourish in society.

I accepted sexual desire in place of love for so long that I didn't know how to form loving relationships. I tried to heal my sexuality during my twenties, and found my way into a world of western tantra, where erotic sensuality and sex was sold as a spiritual path. In attempts to heal and be happy, people in those circles would aim to politely negotiate group nudity, sensual touch and sexual consent. It did not contribute to building a stable and happy love life for me, in fact it made it difficult. The culture was more invested in consuming and selling sense pleasures than in sustaining deep and committed relationships. I found it impossible to build a healthy relationship then, because there was such a pattern of behaviour that one of us would casually reject and abandon the other for the next sensual high with somebody new. We tried to avoid our suffering, covering it up with empty and unfulfilling pleasures. Without a deep commitment, we used sensuality and sexual intimacy to use each other for temporary pleasures, and then we disposed of each other; this harmed the vulnerable aspects of us that just wanted to be loved and to belong. It made us callous, unsatisfied, filled with craving and loneliness, and manipulative of others.

I knew I had more to learn about true love, and my place in the world, and it was during my professional training as a therapist that I found the Buddhist teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. I began to understand more deeply the mistakes that I had made in pursuing my cravings. I also realised how I had previously confused sensual pleasure with my worthiness of true love. I discovered spiritual intimacy among celibate practitioners, and this helped to me to feel worthy to be among men who did not just want to use me for sense pleasures. During time out from my university

education, I decided to dedicate myself to healing my personal suffering in the Plum Village tradition, so that's how in 2018, I formally received the Five Mindfulness Trainings. I also contemplated becoming a monastic, however my aspirations to complete my education and also to have the opportunity to develop true love in a relationship with another man, was stronger. During the government restrictions at the beginning of Covid, I trained in online counselling. It was then, through the Pink Therapy network, that I first made remote contact with LGBTQIA+ refugees in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. [LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans/non-binary, queer, intersex and asexual, plus other diverse identities and orientations; LGBTQIA+ is a movement for better human rights for all, regardless of our gender or who we love.] I began a volunteer placement with the Kakuma Counselling Service, supporting some of the gay men at the camp and I empathised with their stories. As a counsellor, I worked to keep them safe from the effects of trauma, and shared some of Thay's mindfulness practices, including love meditation and deep relaxation. Supported by my trainers and supervisors, the way that I worked was underpinned by the Buddha's Four Noble Truths, assisting them to accept and honour their suffering and turn toward the positive, and wellbeing.

In East Africa, there is a terrible situation where religious colonisation has indoctrinated families to hate their own LGBTQIA+ children. Many villages perform public torture and executions of LGBTQIA+ people. The gay men who I worked with had escaped these kinds of circumstances in Uganda, fleeing for their lives to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - the UN Refugee Agency) at Kakuma in Kenya. All of them lost partners to homophobic violence, and most were exploited for sex by people in positions of power. Arriving at Kakuma Camp, they experienced further violence from unwelcoming refugees. Ugandan people are recognisable by their facial features, complexion and accents. News spread fast around the area, of mainly Sudanese refugees, and Kenyan natives, that Ugandans are LGBTQIA+ people, so they are targeted by violent persecution, on a daily basis. LGBTQIA+ refugees are denied access to services, accused of being evil demons and devils, brutally attacked with machetes, hated, set on fire, treated as less than human, and their lives have been lost there, at the hands of people who yet remain unprosecuted. I understood because the same kind of oppression, though less extreme, had run through my life. I knew what it felt like to be excluded, hated and attacked in response to my identity and sexual orientation. Kenyan officials have denied LGBTQIA+ refugees exit permits, so they cannot escape the violence. I learnt from these gentle and kind people how they stayed strong and hopeful in the face of dire circumstances and I tended to their traumas after terrible acts of violence. I also honoured their bereavements, past and present, and spoke at the online funeral of Trinidad, now a martyr, who died during an arson attack. Throughout my service as a counsellor, I communicated with UNHCR and government officials to beg them to do more for the safety and security of LGBTQIA+ refugees and to help them to leave the camp. It has not been possible to resetttle the refugees away from the violence, as the Kenyan government are blocking LGBTQIA+ exit permits and furthermore many countries are not interested in black, African, LGBTQIA+ refugees. LGBTQIA+ people fleeing for their lives and arriving at Kakuma Refugee Camp, are trapped there now in the extreme desert climate, sleeping on the ground in poor weather conditions, and surviving on a meal a day amidst ongoing violence.

Mindful breathing helped me to support the refugees to calm their nerves and stabilise, during intense moments of fear and anger. I validated their strengths and emotions, and offered refuge in ways to give compassion to themselves, such as by inviting them to place a hand on their heart to care for their feelings, and with positive visualisations of a safe place in their minds. I also supported them recognise the conditions for happiness - that they were alive, that they were worthy, that they had friends at the camp, and that they belonged to a worldwide community of activists campaigning for their freedom. It was extremely difficult work, because just as therapeutic progress was being made, something dreadful would happen at the camp, such as another act of violence, a terrible rainstorm (they slept standing up in leaking shelters), or they would run out of food. I worked with a dwindling network of activists to try to respond to their needs whilst trying hard to prevent vicarious trauma and burnout.

The possibility of ending the therapy work, when the refugees were in a safer position became less likely as the Kenyan government continued to refuse exit permits. The feelings of helplessness and powerlessness I experienced were terrible, and reminded me of traumas in my past. I suffered chest pains and I realised that the work was breaking my heart. Many therapist left the service. With the help of a remaining colleague we transformed the therapy service being offered to a community-oriented approach, supporting the building of support groups in order to build morale on the ground, and to decrease dependency on the therapists. Most of these support groups folded, due to the distress of continued attacks against the LGBTQIA+ refugees. The refugees who access to mobile devices, spend most of their days raising awareness of the difficulties experienced by the community sharing evidence on social media. However they have further challenges because there are inevitable conflicts over crowdfunding donations, interferences from spies and regular threats to their lives.

There aren't enough resources. The food is constantly low. Health problems are also a huge challenge. Services provided by the UNHCR are insufficient and private funding is inconsistent. I began investigating sponsorship options and found that some universities offer free scholarships to refugees. However, I think that education after experiencing so much trauma would be an immense challenge, for the refugees. Furthermore maintenance payments would be needed for food, clothing, travel and accommodation. Also, before all this, the refugees would still need their exit permits, which the Kenyan government are withholding. It is a very difficult situation for the refugees. Help is needed.

Meanwhile, in my life as a man, now in a loving, committed relationship with a man here in the UK, I enjoy the privileges of a much safer society for LGBTQIA+ folks, yet am aware of socioeconomic and racial inequalities worldwide. There's so little, I can do to help except be aware, care, and wish peace and freedom to all. So, love meditation has become a core practice for me. I practise for myself and for others, wishing wellness, happiness and freedom from suffering. My partner and I are sharing a deep love together and wish to share it with others, and so we are interested in fostering children and young people. If I could help to home LGBTQIA+ refugees then I would.

The struggle for LGBTQIA+ liberation worldwide is real, and I am a part of it. Mindfulness helps me to overcome my suffering and find inner peace, compassion and happiness. I continue to share the practice with others. True love keeps my self worth and relationship strong. I am building local, national and international community, and particularly interested in how LGBTQIA+ people can share deep empathy with one another, based on their lived experiences. I hope that one day everyone will be free to be who they are and experience true love in happy, committed relationships that uplift the world. I am grateful to Thay for the inclusive, loving and understanding community that has formed based on his mindfulness practice now shared around the planet. One need not be a Buddhist to practise mindfulness - in fact Thay's teachings have reached people of many different kinds of faiths, and ways of life, because the simple truths of the Buddha's teachings are helpful to all.

Kindly from: <https://kesleysnotes.blogspot.com/2022/12/queer-compassion-beyond-injustice.html>  
s. too: <http://www.kesleycage.com>  
<https://www.lifebeyondanxiety.co.uk/>



## **James Young: Queer Dharma Spaces as Refuge: SOGI, Stress, and Liberation**

SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) stress, considered to be part of minority stress, increases a variety of risk factors from anxiety to cardiovascular disease. This type of stress occurs because of two factors: intrapersonal (within the self) and interpersonally (between self and others). Being considered outside of the normative is cause to potentially experience discrimination, harassment, and marginalization both within family units and society at large.

As a result of marginalization, Queer folx consistently experience underrepresentation in media, education, and politics. They may be politically, emotionally, and/or physically attacked. Feelings of not belonging or alienation from family, community, and society may also occur. The pressures of marginalization can also increase risk-taking behaviors, feelings of low self-esteem, risk-taking behaviors, and neglect of body, mind, and soul.

Negative stress and maladaptive behaviors impact all people, but individuals from marginalized communities encounter the stressors that befall everyone (i.e. sickness, old age, and death) plus the stressors that are unique to marginalization. As a result of this double-stress burden, marginalized communities are even more in need of safe spaces and refuge.

Dharma - the teachings of the Buddha, Sangha - the community of Buddhists, and the Buddha - the enlightenment that the path of practice brings (the Three Jewels of Practice) are even more essential for the SOGI communities.

Queer Dharma Spaces ensure:

### **I. The Easing of Stress and the Comfort of Community**

Internalization of marginalization ("I do not belong") can be assuaged in spaces specifically designed for marginalized communities. All gender and sexual identities are fully welcomed and embraced in Queer Dharma Spaces.

### **II. Potential for Play/Free Exploration:**

Queer Dharma Spaces provide individuals opportunities to explore their habits of mind, assumptions, and internalization of maladaptive stereotypes and stressors. Through the exploration of consciousness, liberation occurs. Individuals share personal journeys without fear or shame. By sharing lived experiences and exploration of consciousness we create expansive spaces where all are welcome to explore gender and sexual identities.

### **III. Ensure the Wellness in Well-Being:**

Queer Dharma Spaces provide individuals chances to explore not just the negative stressors of intolerant societies such as being marginalized and minoritized, but also the joys and benefits of queerness including gender euphoria, family of choice, and deeper intimacy.

Like Prince Siddhartha who saw the limitations of a society that did not consider the cause and cessation of suffering as the noblest pursuit and abandoned the known society for a deeper truth, Queer Dharma Spaces ensure that individuals discover the fullness of their beings and the inherent worth and dignity of their lives.

Queer Dharma Spaces offer refuge, expansiveness of thought, and liberation. Awareness of thought patterns is the gateless gate to freedom and is essential for Queer communities. To liberate the mind, the mind must see the assumptions and thought patterns it has been trained to emulate. Only through seeing can freedom begin.

This workshop will discuss how CALM/Queer Zen Meditation creates Queer Dharma Spaces, the elements that hold that space, and its connection to Buddhist principles. The workshop will also include a model of the program where participants will experience the session, meet/greet each other, and practice breathing, focused meditation and a song meditation by [I.Den.t.T.](#)





**Blair Perryman and James Young: The Power of Pronouns: How sharing and respecting pronouns can be a practice in being present and mindful.**

The workshop „The Power of Pronouns: How sharing and respecting pronouns can be a practice in being present and mindful“ will be in form of an open conversation with the attendees, explaining, why it's important to share pronouns, how to use them, and the importance of respecting pronouns.

We know, that it's difficult to address others with the correct pronouns, because pronouns are not fixed and can change during life. Additionally meanwhile many neopronouns exists. So this will be also an overview about all the possibilities and how to use them. Mistakes can happen by addressing another person, but respect or mindfulness is needed and the will to learn.



## **Elias VanDette: Self-Care Redefined, (Self-Care, Soul-Care)**

Description: Most of us already know that self-care is an important part of overall wellness, but what is self-care anyway? You might be thinking, “I don't have time for self-care”. How do we practice self-care when we are so drained by our day to day life? How do we make time in our busy schedule to take care of ourselves so that we don't burn ourselves out as much? This workshop uses a trauma-informed approach to challenge common misconceptions about self-care and provide practical skills for integrating self-care into our lives.

### Workshop Outline:

- What is self-care?
  - Definition / Introduction
- Why is self-care important?
  - Debunking common misconceptions about self-care
- What are the 8 types of self-care?
  - Physical self-care
  - Emotional self-care
  - Social self-care
  - Spiritual self-care
  - Personal self-care
  - Environmental self-care
  - Financial self-care
  - Work self-care
- Activity & discussion
  - Making time for self-care: Creating your personal self-care menu!



## **Geoff Peckman Color Meditation**

Color meditation is one meditation Geoff practices often, being an artist, and he looks forward to sharing it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC.

This meditation involves each sense and can be called a fest of senses.



## **Susanne Thieringer: A Short Introduction into Sound**

What is sound? What was in the beginning? Was there sound? Sound is all around us - nature produces sound, i.e. wind, rain, trees, rivers, ocean. Sound and rhythm is also in us, i.e. heartbeat, breath. Mantra is sound. The all-embracing mantra is OM.

Mantra singing with ukulele as examples. (Open mic).





## Contributors

### Talks

#### **Pema Düddul** (they, them)

Pema Düddul is a queer and non-binary person and is the Buddhist Chaplain in the University of Southern Queensland's Multi-Faith Service and the Director of Jalü Buddhist Meditation Centre. Pema was authorised to teach Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition in 2006. Pema is one half of a same-sex teaching couple, a uniquely Tibetan approach to sharing the Dharma common in the Nyingma school. Pema has a doctorate (PhD) in creative writing and is an academic in writing, editing and publishing at the same Australian university where they are chaplain. Pema is ordained as a Ngakpa, the Tibetan equivalent of a non-monastic minister of religion. Here we Settle is a recent collection of Pema's contemplative poetry and Resting in Stillness is a collection of pithy advice about meditation, compassion and the true nature of mind co-authored with their partner of 17 years Jamyang Tenphel.

#### **Ven. Tashi Choedup** (they, she)

is a trans feminine Buddhist monastic living in India. They is an activist in socio-political work in the queer community.

#### **Kody Muncaster** (they, them)

is a PhD Candidate and part-time instructor of a Queer Trauma course in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Western University, Canada. Their research interests include: Buddhist hermeneutics, non-binary Buddhism, Buddhist spiritual care, trans health, HIV/Aids, and queer health, HIV/AIDS, and queer suicide prevention. Their most recent work, Towards a Queer Buddhist Hermeneutics: Reparative Readings of Queer and Trans Buddhist Histories is forthcoming in 2022 in James Admans and David Valentin's anthology Beyond Worship.

#### **Kyle Neo** (he, him)

A Cancer Survivor, A Volunteer, An Aspiring Buddhist, A Gay Person. It's nothing related but yet the same time interconnected. Kyle Neo, a self-declared queer Buddhist discovered that all we need is love but does love accept my queerness? Why is the love he pursues feel so rare and extremely difficult to achieve especially as a gay person?

In his talk, let him share with you how he overcome cancer, volunteer in Chiang Mai for 3 years, wrote a book and practice Buddhism at the same time. The passion he unravel after living almost 25 years as an adult comes in com'passion'. Love and compassion can be intermixed, and loving kindness is the greatest love of all. The ending is the same for everyone but the journey you made is your choice. With the realization of Dharma, our path could be less intimidating and more rewarding. The love is greater and beyond what we comprehend from the Buddhist perspective. Ultimately, isn't getting out of samsara is the goal of all Buddhist?

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

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

[www.monkeylife.me](http://www.monkeylife.me)

#### **Ayya Vimala** (they, them)

is a non-binary monastic who was born in the Netherlands in 1967. They studied Geophysics and MBA before changing course to become a Buddhist monastic.

From an early age they were interested in meditation, but did not come in contact with the Buddhist teachings until 2001. After spending some time practising in the Goenka tradition, the wish to ordain arose. They took temporary ordination in The Pyu Tawye Monastery in Burma in 2008,

where they became aware of the gender-inequality within the traditional Buddhist countries. After also meeting with several fully ordained nuns and Ajahn Brahm, they became interested in full ordination in order to help support the Bhikkhunī lineage and pave the way for women to take up full ordination, just like the men had always been able to.

After spending time in monasteries in Germany and Australia, they finally took higher ordination as a Bhikkhunī in Los Angeles in 2016 with Ayya Gunasārī from Mahapajapati Monastery as their preceptor.

In Australia, they also met Bhante Sujato, one of the main driving forces behind full ordination for women. Ven. Vimala joined the SuttaCentral.net team in 2013 and over the years added many Sutta translations and parallels to the site.

Inspired by Bhante Sujato's work, they wrote several articles on the challenges and discrimination faced by women and LGBTIQ+ in Buddhist establishments.

They are one of the founding members of Samita ASBL, a foundation with the goal to start a monastery in Europe, and of Tilorien Monastery, a monastic community based on Early Buddhist teachings. Tilorien Monastery was set up with the goal to provide a place of practice for Bhikkhunīs and other female monastics, whilst also supporting LGBTIQ+ people and other underrepresented groups to develop in the Dhamma.

### **Brother Bao Tang** (he, him)

also known as Brother Treasure, is from Indonesia. He was ordained by Thay in 2011, and has hikshu since 2016 and a Dharma Teacher since 2020. His openness and bright smile make him easy to approach, and he is a good friend to many monastics and lay practitioners alike. He energetically supports people in building local community, including the gender and sexual orientation diversity practice community, and wholeheartedly answers anyone's questions about the Dharma, sharing how he applies it in his daily life. He is inspired to help make Thay's teachings accessible and applicable for everyone, and to deepen them year after year so they may continue as a treasure for generations to come.

### **Workshops**

#### **Danielle Every** (she, they)

PhD in Psychology

Grad Dip in Psychotherapy and Counselling

Certified Level 1 Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Teacher

Currently completing the Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Certification Program with Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield

Trauma-Informed Group Facilitator, Australia and New Zealand Process-Oriented Psychology

I began meditating in my twenties, drawn to the possibilities that meditation offers for responding to anxiety, depression and a general feeling of being lost and unanchored. Since that small beginning I have practiced at home, in the world (as part of a lovely group 'Mobile Meditators') and on retreat. I practice with several Buddhist sanghas, including Rainbodhi, a queer Buddhist group in New South Wales, Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams, a queer BIPOC teacher in the US, the Alphabet Sangha at East Bay Meditation Centre and insight teachers in the US and Australia.

#### **Jampa Wurst** (they, them)

Dr. Jampa Wurst studied comparative religion at Freie Universität Berlin, where they earned her

PhD in 1999. In their studies, they conducted field work among Tibetan Buddhist nunneries in exile India. They was ordained twice with white robes in Theravada Buddhism. From 1991 – 1999 they studied at the Tibetan Centre in Hamburg the “7 Years Systematic Studies of Buddhism”. They finished with a certificate and earned a small yellow hat of the Gelug tradition, so similar to a teacher/acharya.

Furthermore, they is a lifelong member of Sakyadhita, has held regular workshops about LGBTQIA+ at Buddhist Conferences.

As DJ Jampa Sausage, they invented Dharma Rap, a playful medium to stir interest in education, research, Buddhist, ethics, feminism, diversity, and politics.

(<https://medium.com/@jampawurst/dharma-rap-ac5d94a231e9>)

On the artistic side, Jampa is not only a rapper but also a painter, s. (<https://atelier.drwurst.de/en/>).

Furthermore they is a (learning) coach and counsellor with own practice, s. [www.drwurst.de](http://www.drwurst.de).

### **Jemarc Axinto** (he, she, they)

is a radical Spiritual guide, Meditation teacher, Ayurvedic Health teacher, Somatic Healer, and transformational speaker trained by some of the greatest modern spiritual teachers of our era like Sah D'Simone, Deepak Chopra and the faculty of the Chopra Foundation, and Benjamin Decker. Jemarc's profound dedication to radical authenticity genuinely benefits others on their path to liberation. They have developed an Alchemical process of healing trauma, and empowering the soul through the merging of Buddhism, Limbic System retraining, Neurolinguistic Programming, Meditation, Mantra, and Breathwork. All delivered by their passionate, loving, and geeky self.

### **Zoe Flowers** (she, her)

is an author, filmmaker, and social justice healer whose poetry and essays can be found in several anthologies, and journals. In 2004, Zoë interviewed survivors of domestic and sexual violence. From Ashes to Angel's Dust: A Journey Through Womanhood is the book that emerged from those interviews.

In 2012, Zoë launched Soul Requirements, Inc. a healing centered consulting company that combines her artistic endeavors, 20 years of domestic/sexual violence expertise, and holistic healing practices.

As a Researcher, Zoë's conducted listening sessions with survivors of violence across Florida about shelter services, Tribal Elders in Canada about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Black students at The University of Florida and Florida A&M University about the Universities' response to them during COVID-19 crisis & Black Lives Movement, community members and advocates in the US, London, and Canada about sexual assault and Uber rideshare service.

As a Speaker, she's appeared on National Public Radio, WGBH Boston, numerous articles and online publications, and spoken at over 300 conferences on issues related to racial equity, reaching, and resourcing underserved communities, art as a healing methodology, gender-based violence, and more.

As a Healer, she facilitates individual and group healing sessions, retreats, and workshops from New York to Ecuador.

### **Stevie Inghram**, M.S., C-IAYT (they, she)

Future Naturopathic Medical Doctor, Certified Yoga Therapist, Buddhist Teacher

*Teaching queer & trans folks the tools for vibrant health & well-being!*

Social Media:

@futuresmndyogi & @queertransthiving

Jiyo Integrative Health & Wellness, LLC

Stevie is a Queer & Trans Femme who has over a decade of experience in the yoga and holistic health world. She is a Certified Yoga Therapist, Buddhist Teacher, and Future Naturopathic

Physician (NMD) whose primary work is focused on helping to heal the pain and trauma that is pervasive within the queer and transgender communities by teaching practical and sustainable tools or vibrant health & well-being. Additionally, Stevie is a passionate advocate for the intersection of science & spirituality as they believe that a middle-way can be truly found, one that simultaneously respects the scientific method and caring for the whole-person. Currently, Stevie writes about gender & sexuality for Yoga Therapy Today, a magazine of the International Association of Yoga Therapists and lectures internationally on LGBTQIA+ health for Integrative Medicine professionals. She also serves as the Co-Sangha Director of Daybreak Oneness Ministries an online Sangha associated with The Way of Oneness as taught by Revs Gyomay & Koyo Kubose. Stevie can be found on all social media at both @futurenmdyogi and @queertransthiving.

**Noon Baldwin** (he, him)

Noon's ongoing fields of exploration are connecting with curiosity, energy, & a sense of embodying spiritual practice through grounding meditations...into the natural kindness in our sensual human bodies... beyond concepts. He enjoys how the traditional & open spirituality practices meet as one in his heart. Noon has been practicing with Jaya Ashmore from Open Dharma & The Ajahn Chah Tradition from Thailand since 2008. He became involved in offering service in Dharma centers in 2003 in the Tibetan Tradition.

He's a transsexual man, intrigued by freedom from suffering through form & formless resonances, enjoying explorations into embodied practices.

Retired from circus & street artist life in 2004, dedicating his life to spiritual practice and Dharma centers.

Noon lives at Ekuthuleni, an ecological retreat place near the French Pyrenees, ([www.ekumeditation.com](http://www.ekumeditation.com))

**Kesley Cage** (he, him)

is a consultant/therapist, researcher/educator & facilitator. He is a practitioner member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and the Person Centred Association.

**James Young** (they/he)

Young has been facilitating a free weekly non-traditional virtual meditation session that is co-sponsored by [https://www.loftgaycenter.org/calm\\_loft\\_meditation](https://www.loftgaycenter.org/calm_loft_meditation) and <https://www.queery.us> since the start of the pandemic in 2020. These sessions are under two names: CALM, s. above & Queer Zen Meditation, s. <https://queery.us/queerzenmeditation>. Young is the recipient of the 2007 GLSEN Hudson Valley Leadership Award, and the 2019 Pace University Lavender Award for holding safe/brave spaces for folx over several decades as an LGBTQ+ advocate and educator. He also serves on the <https://lgbt.westchestergov.com/lgbt-advisory-board> and teaches as a social sciences professor at <https://www.monroecollege.edu>.

Connect with Young on [www.instagram.com/jamescbyoung](http://www.instagram.com/jamescbyoung) or <https://www.facebook.com/YoungJamesYoung/>.

**Blair Perryman** (he, they)

is Program Manager at <https://www.queery.us/blair-perryman>. „Blair is no stranger to the fight for social justice and social change. Hailing from Kansas City, Missouri, he began his journey for social change at the early age of 18.

Since then, Blair has participated and facilitated a variety of programs and groups with organizations such as Camp PeaceWorks, <https://www.candlerockland.org/>, and <https://www.loftgaycenter.org/>.

Currently, Blair co-facilitates <https://www.queery.us/qcbc-queer-community-book-club/>, a partnered program between Queery and The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center, which allows those within the queer and allied communities to connect with each other while deepening their understanding of themselves through readings by queer authors.

Blair is also the Project Coordinator for the <https://www.queery.us/queerypronounchallenge/>, a social media challenge asking people and organizations to list their pronouns in their digital world (social media accounts, emails, virtual meetings) to normalize the use of and show respect for people's pronouns. He has made amazing strides in educating people as to the importance of this program.“

**Geoff Peckman** (he, him)

Geoff is an artist, poet, writer, yogi, LGBTQ+ volunteer and a founding member of Queery. He loves animals, chocolate, pizza, and being in nature. He has practiced breathing all his life and can now do it without a thought. He has a sarcastic sense of humor and enjoys the art of punning.

**Artists**

**Susanne Thieringer** (no pronouns)

Born in 1963, Magistra Artium in Musicology, later studied social pedagogy and now works as a socialpedagogue and yoga teacher.

I have been politically active for a long time, including in the queer, formally known as lesbian and gay movement as well as in the trade union.

I have been dealing with Buddhism and mindfulness for many years and I have completed a four-year yoga teacher training course.

Love playing music, especially the ukulele, riding my bicycle and longboarding.

Location: Hamburg, Germany

**Jampa Wurst** (they, them)

Bio, s. above, esp. <https://atelier.drwurst.de/en/>.

**Ceikaiyia Cheeks** (she, her)

is a 25 year old aspiring Film Director from Syracuse, NY, graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor's Degree in Film in May 2021. Knowing loneliness and isolation, Ceikaiyia all she ever wanted was to have a connection. This connection came by a camera, which gave her a chance to express her true self from now that time onwards.

„A Diverse Film Director is going to emerge from Syracuse and hopes to become a big inspiration to all!“ “A Warm Touch Is All I Need” is about a young observer, who goes around his city, seeing how everyone around him has someone they can connect with. The only question is: Is he worthy enough to have that special connection, too?

„The reason why I created “A Warm Touch Is All I Need” is exactly what it says in the title. A Warm Touch Is All I Need. „For the longest, I have been given the cold shoulder by people, so I became quite custom to be an observer in life, just watching other people connecting and clicking with their own people(...). I strongly hope that this film and future film of mine could be a spark on inspiration to help others find themselves and their own stories to share!“

**Colin James** (he, him) has a couple of chapbooks of poetry published:

Dreams Of The Really Annoying from Writing Knights Press and A Thoroughness Not Deprived of Absurdity from Piski's Porch Press and a book of poems, Resisting Probability, from Sagging Meniscus Press.

**Brandi „Noire“ La Zard** (she, her)

Brandi "Noire" La Zard was raised in Houston, Texas. La Zard received her BFA (Individualized Film/Video/Performance and Drawing) from California College of the Arts in San Francisco/Oakland.

Her work has been selected and featured in the Creative Quarterly, as one of the national finalists in the Fine Art Professional category for the No. 27 circulation. She's also featured in WMN Zine publication dedicated to artists living with disabilities. Ms. La Zard exhibited work in the group

exhibition Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series – Regional – Houston Museum of African American Culture, Houston, Texas. La Zard currently lives and works in Houston, Texas.

**ARTIST STATEMENT:**

My work explores my life-long curiosity and fascination with form. Specifically, typography and architecture have directly influenced my artistic approach, aesthetic.

The forms are created through free association; in addition, predetermined forms are used as the catalyst to develop the overall composition.

My studies in graphic design, typography, architecture, abstract constructivism, and pop art have shaped my aesthetic, thus far, in the majority of works to date.

Merging gestural mark-making with structured line-drawing dominates the overall composition. In this realm of competing styles of mark-making (gestural, precision mark-making), the works highlight the desire to create freedom, harmony, and balance between those worlds.

**Tomasz Nicevisz** (he, him)

*(passed September 20, 2022)*

(Excerpt): „My life has been very eventful, and there are many moments I do not want to remember. Within this song, within this submission is a story I want to tell. Technically, the story is already told by the singer, however, there is still much to tell.

What I can tell you about me is, I am a single father... What is important that I am here, I am here for all of us.

I started my Instagram account after my 17 year old son perished...

From that moment on I wanted to hold on to every single moment every single second, every **single** event.

I started posting on instagram, at first I started posting about myself, and I started posting about my son, my kids, and I started posting my stories. I am a writer, I am on Spotify as well...

I am a master Animator, I do computer graphics, animations, and videos for lgbtq members... I also do commercials, promo videos etc...“

**Kodo Nishimura** (he, him)

is a makeup artist, Buddhist monk, and LGBTQ activist.

He grew up in a Buddhist temple in Tokyo. At the age of 18, he moved to the US. and later graduated from Parsons The School of Design in New York. He started his makeup career in NY and his makeup work has appeared in national shows such as Miss Universe. In 2015, he completed his two-year Buddhist Monk training in Tokyo. As an LGBTQ activist, he has spoken at United Nations Population Fund, TEDx Talk, and Microsoft. He was featured in "Queer Eye" in 2019. His book in English "This Monk Wears Heels" had its debut in February of 2022 from Watkins Publishing. His mission is to empower all people with Buddhist teachings with a touch of makeup.

**Schwules Museum/Gay Museum Berlin**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schwules\\_Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schwules_Museum)

**Izolda Trakhtenberg** (she, her)

s.: <https://izoldat.com/mediakit/>

**Elias VanDette** (they, he)

is a mental health advocate and trauma-informed peer specialist with a focus on resilience, coping skills, self-care and self-compassion. They are also a visual artist with a love for surrealism, portraiture, and tattoo design. Elias also works with Queery as a creative manager & peer mental health advocate. In their spare time, Elias is a proud houseplant parent.

**Tillet Wright**

s.: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/IO\\_Tillett\\_Wright](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/IO_Tillett_Wright)

**I.Den.t.T** (they/them)

<https://www.identt.biz/> explores music, gender and tranquility and has release three songs in 2022 to inspire more queer joy, inner peace, and the cultivation of love. They have performed at various Pride Events in New York and have been written up in <https://queerforty.com/no-boundaries-a-song-to-remember-for-memorial-day-weekend>. Their queer inspired songs are available on all major platforms. Connect with I.Den.t.T or find their music on their <https://links.vip/identt>.





## Outlook

After the 1st IQBC in 2021 the idea was born to organize monthly Conscious Connections of the IQBC via zoom between the International Queer Buddhist Conferences as a chance to stay in touch and exchange ideas of artsy expressions on a mindful basis. On <https://iqbc.org> you always will be updated.

The requests to soon come together again for a 3<sup>rd</sup> IQBC, and this already before the 2<sup>nd</sup> had been finished, means for me, that there is still a need to come together for exchanging ideas, scholarly talks, workshops, and especially artsy expressions: Artsy expressions make it possible for queer and Buddhist people to survive and to live inspite of difficulties by expressing themselves, their gender, their diversity, their facets among this global rainbow community. The International Queer Buddhist Conferences will be a safe space for this as long as their is this need.

So, the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference is already in our mind and is supposed to take in Fall 2023 with new volunteers in the organizing team.

As I mentioned last year:

„May it become a tradition of further International Queer Buddhist Conferences – IQBCs - as a safe and protected place, no matter, which sexuality, gender, color or culture you belong!

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be safe, and well.

May all beings be peaceful and at ease.“



## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for my global team, who encouraged me to organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference, IQBC.

Thanks to the two allies, supporting me behind the scenes, Melanie Poech and Lukas Galke.

Melanie has always been supportive, creating and being in charge of <https://iqbc.org> and taking care that everything worked on this website, uploaded photos, videos, linking with youtube, giving me kindly advice how to spread the news via facebook, twitter, and instagram, and finally cutting and uploading the videos of the talks, after the conference had finished. She always has been in touch with me, that everything worked perfectly. Thanks to Lukas Galke, who always was there, when questions arose and encouraging Miriam to create on gather.town a site for the IQBCs. Also I would like to thank Lukas for putting the Conference Proceedings on zenodo.org.

Miriam, whom I have been friends with since university times, studying, is, too, an ally, and offered her support, showing her facets creating this beautiful space there for us. Thank you!

I am grateful for the support of Br. Yonten and especially for Lisa O'Connor, who both shared their wisdom about helplines and helpsites all around the globe. We could offer this help already during the conference, in case of emergency, if people were triggered among the trauma session.

Thank you to Daigan, who shared their insight about queer Buddhist websites, and centres around the world, and also reached out themselves for contributors.

Also I am grateful for the volunteers, who engaged with videos to my rap „IQBC - What it means to me“: James Young, Inanna, Lisa O'Connor, Ven. Tashi Choedup, and Benny Prawira. Thanks to Inanna and Benny, too, for their extra videos for the website.

I am happy, that you all shared your ideas and supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Queer Buddhist Conference.

Last, but not least, I would like to mention the co-hosts – Luca, Marein, Fynn, Lisa, who supported me to make the conference a safe space. It was beautiful, that so many people agreed to keep an extra eye on everything during these awesome two days of the 2<sup>nd</sup> IQBC, 2022.



## Supplement

### Queerphoria

Poem by Elias VanDette

We must move through darkness to find the light  
Billions of stars burning bright

In this vast sky we are far from alone  
And in each other, we can find a home

This life is a process of finding your spark  
So if you haven't yet, hold on through the dark

You are unique, but there are others like you  
Finding family in one another is what gets us through

Some rain must fall for a rainbow to form  
So dance in the rain and make peace with the storm

We can be a voice for change and growth  
If we hold space for each other when it matters most

It starts with you, it starts with us  
It starts with love, it grows with trust

### Visibility and Representation

Jampa and the Dharma Rappers

James, Tamara, Susanne  
Breath is something I take with me where ever I go.  
Conscious or unconsciously the air always flows  
Like a river or a stream it can rush with strength  
Or a lake or an ocean it runs deeply in length

I connect with myself with each breath I take  
And connect with others every single day  
My breath reminds me, I take up space  
My birth rite, Pema said, like a Lion's face

We three will stay to play  
Our breath in rhythm follows us all day  
Thank you, Jampa, for allowing us to be GAY  
As well as all of the letters that our identities make

Marein

in ancient india, a person brought the dhamma  
they had an idea on how to deal with drama  
we shouldn't be blind to the nature of trauma  
this doctor of mind, their name? gautama

Yonten

Inclusivity is a human potential & possibility,  
That's difficult at times to nurture, creating a dichotomy  
But these many paths explored are what we need  
To create this Gaia of glorious, faceted spectrum of inclusivity,  
This may come from joy to tears so emotions may mellow.  
Every tear holds a potential rainbow

I am buddhist and nonbinary  
and also have a disability  
and buddhist sanghas I don't often feel free  
because I can't be the person I want to be  
even inclusive retreats I often can't attend  
so it's hard to find buddhist friends  
that's why I often feel broken and not on the mend  
I wish there would be a place where I could land

Elke

Colours

sitting on the floor  
meditate in blue  
clouds passing by  
why identify

changing into red  
melting with a lotos  
both of us will be as one  
finally, the thoughts are gone

green is the colour  
I am seeing today  
connected with a tree  
the forest grows in me

channel with the moonlight  
feeling what is white  
seeing myself reflected  
from the moon itself selected

coming to orange  
at the end of the session  
the sun is rising  
and with it my heart.

Jampa

I'll rap about visibility and  
representation.

I'll rap about equality  
And about education.

I'll rap about diversity -  
All genders on the globe.

May they be equal!

May they be free!

That's my urgent hope!

Yo :)