



Dear friends,

Every morning when I do my dharma practice, I start by making the wish that I may be of benefit to beings on this day (and always) and I contemplate the preciousness of this human life. I think about how fortunate I am to have been endowed with all of the free and favorable conditions necessary to practice a spiritual path, more specifically, the Buddhist path that I have chosen. Not only do I live in a country where religious freedom is a right, but I live in a city with a Dharma center where I can come together with friends to explore and transform my mind. Do you know how rare it is to have a spiritual center that is open to both buddhist and non-buddhist practitioners, not judging...just encouraging growth; a center that is non-sectarian and brings spiritual teachers from the different lineages to provide us with guidance? How incredibly fortunate we are!!!!

My heart swells with gratitude and love as I reminisce about our Center’s journey since its inception in 1989. I can’t help but be grateful to the wonderful beings that gave birth to CTBCC; Joseph DeFlorio, the late David Hall, and our precious spiritual director, Venerable Losang Samten. I am also incredibly grateful for all of the loving, open-hearted individuals that have supported the Center in so many different ways and have made it possible for CTBCC to keep its doors open for all these years. Our journey has been one of growth and great opportunities; when one door closed, another one opened with even more potential! With the little bit of understanding I have about karma, I am clear that together we have created all of the conditions for this to unfold.

And here we are, 28 years later, with a clearer vision of our potential, with a stronger wish and motivation to serve sentient beings...and ready to begin another chapter in our history!! I open up my heart to you today, to ask you to join us as we move forward on our journey.

REVIEW OF PAST 5 YEARS

Goals:

In 2012, when we prepared for the Border Peace event at UTEP, I shared with you our dreams, goals, and plans for the future. Here is an update on our progress.

SHORT TERM GOALS:	PROGRESS	STATUS	PLAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lease a residence in order to continue to provide classes and teachings to benefit beings. 	We have been renting for the past 7 years and have been providing 4-5 classes per week.	COMPLETED	Will continue to rent until we are able to purchase property.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-lease space within the residence to help meet our rental agreement 	We have been sub-leasing space to Richie Barajas, acupuncturist, for 6 years	COMPLETED.	Will continue to sub-lease space at our current location, as well as, at a new property



MEDIUM TERM GOALS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Build up our membership to continue to cover rent. · Save enough money to purchase our own space. 	<p>Although we have a mailing list with over 250 individuals, our actual membership is very low. We have, however, been able to pay our rent without any difficulties. We currently have \$31,000 in savings</p>	PENDING/ INCOMPLETE	<p>Initiated a membership drive/ continue to encourage membership.</p> <p>Capital fundraising campaign for purchase of property for Center.</p>
LONG TERM GOAL:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Purchase/own a property 	<p>We have viewed several real estate properties/ found one with great potential.</p>	PENDING/ INCOMPLETE	<p>Move forward, with the help of our friends, to raise funds necessary to purchase property.</p>

Events/Activities:

In the past 5 years, CTBCC has been serving our members and community in the following ways:

1. Providing 4 weekly classes in English and adding a dharma class in Spanish
2. Hosting Dharma movie nights
3. Providing presentations/lectures for community groups/organizations
4. Providing weekly Buddhist services to inmates at Otero County Prison for the past 2 ½ years, and in process of beginning services at La Tuna Prison.
5. Supporting city-wide drives for blankets/coats for the elderly, toy drives for children in Ciudad Juarez, and others.
6. Hosting an average of 8-12 teachers per year (including teachings in Spanish) to provide dharma teachings/practice.
7. Hosting a fund-raising event for Nepal following the earthquake that caused so much destruction in that country. We raised \$10,500.
8. Holding classes on topics that support a spiritual practice (i.e., nutrition, death and dying, self-compassion)
9. Supporting Tibetan vendors in the US by purchasing dharma items at local shows/events.

NEW CHAPTER FOR CTBCC

Approximately 2 months ago, while having lunch at Luby’s on Chelsea, we came upon a property For Sale across the street that appeared to have many of the qualities we seek. Both the Board of Directors and Losang viewed the property. It was, indeed, clear that the property has a lot of potential, including a large gated parking lot. Since then, we have met multiple times to discuss the possibility of making an offer on this piece of real estate. The asking price is \$290,000 but we are told it is negotiable. We have since learned that there is an offer on the property.



Whether this property is available for us or not, this experience has led to our evaluating our financial situation very seriously and we have consulted with several experts for advice. In light of our present situation, we feel the following are viable options:

Option #1:

We raise the funds to be able to make a cash offer for the purchase of a property. A bank loan is not likely to be approved due to minimal income/ cash flow. We need to be able to establish a strong financial history and would need collateral or a guarantor (we have neither).

Option #2:

We borrow the money from a friend/sangha member and pay it back with an affordable monthly payment plan and at a low interest rate.

Option #3

A friend/sponsor/donor gives a tax-deductible donation of money, a property or piece of land to CTBCC (since we are a 501c3 tax exempt organization) which can be used towards the purchase of a property.

PLAN

It is clear to us that owning property would be of great benefit and essential for meeting our mission to increase our ability to provide broader services to the community. If we are serious about purchasing a property, we need to explore ways to raise the funds needed to meet our goal. It is obvious that we cannot do this without your help. If you are wondering how you can help, here is a list of suggestions. Please contact us if you, or someone you know...

1. ...is an expert in commercial real estate and is able to provide us with assistance/guidance.
2. ...has the financial resources to assist us with this purchase.
3. ...would like to make a large tax deductible donation for the purchase of a property.
4. ...has experience in fundraising and would like to assist us.
5. ...would like to volunteer to help in any way. We realize there are probably many of you with skills that would be of great assistance to us. We need a real estate lawyer, a CPA, and a commercial real estate agent.

Here is our more immediate plan to launch a fundraising campaign:

1. Start a fund-raising site. Losang has asked us to name it: **Shen Phen Dharma Fund** (shen phen means "to bring benefit to others")
2. Encourage CTBCC membership. We offer basic annual memberships and sustaining monthly memberships.
3. Ask for donations from our friends/members. Donations can be made in any amount at ctbcc.com.
4. Initiate a GoFundMe campaign.
5. Appraise and sell antiques/ dharma items that have been donated to CTBCC.
6. Start charging for dharma classes (\$5 per session/ 1st session free) beginning May 1st.

We are open to any other ideas. Be ready to get involved, possibly lead any efforts.



As you contemplate how you can contribute, please ask yourself if, and how, you have benefited from CTBCC classes, teachings, support. If you feel we have impacted your life in some way, or simply feel that the work we do is beneficial, won't you consider donating or helping us meet our goal?

Trust me, it is not easy for me to ask for money, but one of many things I have understood from the teachings of the Buddha, is to let go of any pride (one of the five poisons, a source of suffering), and analyze my motivation. I can tell you with all honesty that my intentions and that of the board members are very clear. We truly feel that having a place of our own would benefit many. It not only would be more comfortable for everyone, but more importantly, it would allow us expand our programs and activities to reach more people in El Paso and surrounding areas.

Finally, I would also like to add another teaching of the Buddha I have taken to heart ... to let go of the clinging to my views and desires. And so, in writing this letter to you, I have put forth my wishes and those of our spiritual director and board members...but I let go of the outcome and allow the ripening of our collective karma to be "as it is". The board members and I joyfully commit to doing all we can to benefit as many beings as possible, in whatever manner that may manifest. Whether we buy a property or not, now or later, we will continue to serve all of you and generate bodhicitta...from wherever we are.

May the Buddhas' blessings always pour upon you!

Your friend in the Dharma,

Helga Carrion
CTBCC President