



Commit 2 Dharma Program Description

a year long spiritual practice program at the East Bay Meditation Center

In February 2009, East Bay Meditation Center will start a new year-long program for individuals to deepen their spiritual practice within the Dharma. The intention of this program is about how to live your everyday householder life while having it continually inclined towards the Buddha's teachings. This year long program is designed for those who are interested in deepening their meditation practice, exploring serious Dharma study, and developing the capacity for their spiritual practice to become one of the primary focal points of their day-to-day lives. The *Commit 2 Dharma Program* (C2D) is not about changing your life; it is about allowing the teachings of the Dharma to transform your relationship to your Life. We will explore scriptures from the Theravadan lineage of Buddhist practice as well as different dharma topics and life experiences.

Once we enter into a Commitment 2 Dharma, we begin to become increasingly aware of how the Buddha's Teachings affect and influence our lives. We will explore how the Dharma shapes our life path towards less suffering and more happiness. In this way, the primary teachings of the Buddha will be explored through the lens of our different lived experiences—including our householder lives, our cultural identities, our personal histories, and our visions of whom we see ourselves to be. Over the course of the year, these teachings will include the Four Noble Truths (including the Eightfold Path), the Three Characteristics (dukkha, anicca, anatta), the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (satipatthana), the Divine Abodes of the Heart (brahma viharas), the Factors of Awakening (bojjhangas), and the Perfections of Virtue and Goodness (paramis).

The C2D Program will involve 8 face-to-face meetings approximately every six weeks. Each meeting will be 3-4 hours long depending upon the amount of material to be covered. Everyone will be asked to commit to at least one 45-minute meditation period every day. Participants will keep in contact with an assigned "dharma buddy" to support their mutual commitment and intention towards practice, at least once every two weeks, if not weekly. In addition, participants will have regularly scheduled interviews, either in-person or on the phone (for 30 min every 6 weeks), with the guiding teacher of the program, to explore and support each person's individual life situation and spiritual practice.

For the closing of the year-long program, all the participants—working together— will be expected to self-organize a 5-day residential retreat in which all participants will attend with the guiding teacher. All aspects of the residential retreat will be organized, managed and supported by the C2D participants including: finding a facility, costs and fees, management and organization of food and cooking, transportation, and any other logistics.

If you are accepted into the program, you will be asked to commit in writing to all of the C2D Program components.

This is not intended to be a beginner's program. The pre-requisite of the C2D Program is that you have experienced at least **15 days** of silent Vipassana and/or Metta retreats previous to the beginning date of the program. Additional days of retreat practice are desirable. These retreat days can be in any configuration, including residential retreats and/or daylongs. Admission to the Program will be based upon a completed application and subsequent face-to-face interview. Number admitted into the program will be strictly limited to 16 practitioners.

The financial support of the C2D Program will be all-Dana (the practice of Generosity) based. In the program application you will be asked to describe your understanding of Dana, how you intend to commit to practice Dana during the program, and how Dana will sustain the program, the teachings, and the Center. Below are listed some opportunities to practice Dana for the Program.

To complete the application process, please:

1. Read this detailed description
2. Download the application forms from www.eastbaymeditation.org and
3. Submit the completed application in both email and hard copy form. Please email application to: larryy@eastbaymeditation.org. Also, please snail mail a hard copy of the application to Larry Yang, c/o EBMC, C2D Program, 2147 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612.

Application deadline: Oct 15, 2008.

Timeline:

- Between November to December 2008, applications will be reviewed.
- During November and December, 2008 final candidates will need to do either an in-person interview or phone interview as part of the application process. (*Please note that not all applicants may be given an interview.*)
- Initial acceptances will be sent in January 2009. There will be a wait list created for openings that might arise between January 2009 and the start of the program in mid-February 2009.

Program Duration: from mid-February 2009 until mid-February 2010.

Description of the Residential Retreat ending the C2D Program

There are several intentions for the 4-night, 5-day residential retreat that will close the Program. First, it will be a method of integrating extended retreat practice with householder practice in daily life. It will also provide an opportunity to bring all the teachings of the C2D Program together. There will be dedicated times of Noble Silence as well as group experiential learning. Participants will learn by direct experience how to organize, create, and manage a residential retreat. This is what they will be doing for themselves. They will be creating their own practice opportunity—their own path towards freedom. Participants will have the support of the guiding teacher and EBMC as they self-organize and manage their own retreat.

C2D Program Components

1. Face to face meetings approximately every 6 weeks, lasting 3-4 hours each
2. Committing to develop a relationship with a dharma buddy
3. Meetings with your dharma buddy at least once every 2 weeks, if not weekly
4. Daily sitting meditation of 45 minutes
5. Keep a Journal of Dharma thoughts, reflections, questions, issues—at least weekly.
6. Interviews with the guiding teacher approximately once every 6 weeks for at least 30 minutes
7. Completing all readings, exercises and research
8. Willingness to do and experience all practices which are offered
9. Organizing and participating in 5 day residential meditation retreat with the group
10. Practice Dana/Generosity to support the program

C2D Program Schedule

- Aug 1, 2008: Application submission process opens
Oct 15, 2008: Application deadline
Nov 08 – Dec 08: Review and Interview process
Jan 2009: Initial acceptances go out
Feb 8, 2009: C2D Program begins

Tentative schedule of meetings and topics: *Please make sure you can attend all the dates.*

(weekend meetings are 12n to 3pm, weeknight meetings are 6:30pm to 9:00pm)

- Feb 22 '09 aft Program Introduction, a Cultural History of the Dharma,
The First Teaching: The Four Noble Truths
- Apr 5 '09 aft Freedom in Our Everyday Lives: The Eightfold Path
- May 19 '09 eve Anytime is a Good Time for Practice: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness
- Jun 30 '09 eve Opening to Your Life: The Divine Abodes of the Heart—Lovingkindness,
Compassion, Joy, Equanimity
- Aug 16 '09 aft Allowing Awareness to Flow: The 7 Factors of Awakening—Mindfulness,
Investigation, Energy, Rapture, Tranquility, Concentration, Equanimity
- Sept 27 '09 aft Ripening the Fruit: The 10 Perfections of Virtue and Goodness—
Generosity, Ethical Behavior, Renunciation, Wisdom, Energy, Patience,
Truthfulness, Determination, Lovingkindness, Equanimity
- Nov 17 '09 eve The Most Difficult Teachings: The Three Characteristics of Existence—
Dukkha, Anicca, Anatta (Suffering, Impermanence, Non-Self)
- Early Jan '10 The Constant Inspiration: The Life of the Buddha
- Mid-Feb '10 Diving into the Dharma: Bringing it all together in a 4-night, 5-day residential
retreat to close the C2D Program

Opportunities for the Practice of Dana

(more details can be found in the description of Dana in the application form)

1. Upon acceptance into the Program to cover administrative and coordination costs of application and selection process
2. General administration and management costs for the year long program (estimated at \$225 per person for the year long program)
3. Upon completion of each 3-4 hour, face-to-face meeting for the Teachings and EBMC
4. On receipt of articles, copies, books, or other study materials which will be given out by EBMC on a Dana basis
5. After each individual in-person or phone interview with the guiding teacher
6. For the costs, expenses, and Teachings of the 5-day residential retreat ending the year long program
7. Any other opportunity that you feel moved to support the efforts of the Teachings or the Program is greatly appreciated

Guiding Teacher

Larry Yang, MFA, MSW, LCSW, teaches meditation retreats nationally and has a deep interest in creating access to teachings of spiritual liberation for diverse multicultural communities. Larry has practiced extensively in the US, Burma, and Thailand, with a six month period of ordination as a Buddhist monk under the guidance of meditation master Ajahn Tong. He is a core teacher and on the Leadership Sangha (Board) of the East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland, CA. He teaches the POC and LGBTQ retreats at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and provided the multicultural component of the third Community Dharma Leader training program (CDL) at Spirit Rock. He will be one of the coordinating teachers of the fourth CDL program beginning in 2010.

Larry's article, "Directing the Mind Towards Practices in Diversity" was included in Friends on the Path: Living Spiritual Communities, by Thich Nhat Hanh. He is a co-editor of Making the Invisible Visible: Healing Racism in Our Buddhist Communities, developed for building inclusive, multicultural communities within spiritual practice. Larry has contributed to the groundbreaking anthology, Dharma, Color, and Culture—a volume that provides the perspectives from practitioners of color across the entire spectrum of Buddhist traditions.

Born to and raised by immigrant parents from Shanghai, Larry has explored culture, race, gender, orientation, and the experiences of difference and commonality for most of his life. Larry is trained as a psychotherapist and has been a consultant in cultural competency, diversity, and multicultural issues. His website is: www.larryyang.org

Timeline

Applications must be received by October 15, 2008, through both email and snail mail.

Program Cost

On an all-Dana basis (the Practice of Generosity). See detailed description below.