

Ngöndro Program at Pema Ösel Ling



Dudjom Tersar Refuge Tree

What is Ngöndro and why will you benefit?

Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche said in his introduction to *A Cascading Waterfall of Nectar*, “As an example of the importance of the preliminary practices [Ngöndro], if someone wants to build a special house or temple, the most important part of the construction is the foundation in order for the building to be stable.” Similarly, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche taught, “Ngöndro is called a preliminary practice because it lays a foundation for the two main stages of Vajrayana practice: the creation stage and the completion stage. Since it contains all paths to the realization of enlightenment, every effort should be made to complete the Ngöndro in order to fully cultivate and realize its profound benefits.”

Ngöndro is the gateway to the advanced practices of Dzogchen, as well. The lamas of the Vajrayana Foundation have required students to finish their Ngöndro in order to participate in Rushen (a secret practice that comprises the Dzogchen preliminaries), the annual Trekchöd (Cutting Through Solidity) teachings, and in other advanced practices at Pema Osel Ling.

Program Objective:

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche designed the program for serious students of the Dharma, to give them structure and guidance to help them complete their Dudjom Tersar Ngöndro from start to finish.

What Do You Get?

- **Personal interview** with Lama Sonam Rinpoche or Lama Gyaltzen Rinpoche once a year, either in person or by Skype.
- **Teaching Seminars** with Lama Sonam Rinpoche and Lama Gyaltzen Rinpoche will be held monthly using a video- or audio-conferencing platform. Participants can submit questions ahead of time through the program administrator. Local program participants may also attend these in person when available.

- **Senior student advisors**, chosen by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche, will be matched with individual participants, and will provide monthly email or phone contact to answer certain questions about Ngöndro practice and to give ongoing support and encouragement.
- **Study and Discussion Group** for members of the program will be facilitated by a senior student and will be held monthly. These may include book discussions, question and answer, and other informal study group activities in an interactive online environment.
- **Recordings of retreat teachings** will be available at a reduced rate for those unable to attend annual Ngöndro retreats at Pema Osel Ling.
- **Lüng (Oral Transmission)**: The Ngöndro lüng can be received from Lama Sonam Rinpoche or Lama Gyaltzen Rinpoche, or from one of an approved list of lamas or approved senior students in different locations in Hawaii, Mexico, East Coast, Europe, etc. Students must receive the lüng in person rather than via the web or telephone, but they are allowed to start their Ngöndro practice beforehand, if necessary.

Practice and Study Commitment:

Participation in the program requires a commitment to practice and study. The total number of hours for each accumulation will depend on an individual's physical capacity. Three tracks are available to choose from, based on an individual's circumstances. Each track has a minimum of required practice. You may switch tracks with advice from your lama and student advisor.

Track A – Completion within 6 years. Minimum required daily practice commitment is 30 minutes, with additional practice periodically. 15 minutes of daily study and contemplation is recommended. With a commitment of 45 minutes per day for both practice and study on weekdays and 1 hour per day on weekends, one should be able to finish the Ngöndro within 6 years. However, participants will be able to work out a schedule with their advisor's input that will fit their individual circumstances as long as there is a minimum of 30 minutes of practice a day. Dedicated retreat may be necessary.

Track B – Completion within 3 years. Minimum required daily practice commitment is 1 hour per day with additional time on weekends or as part of a monthly or annual retreat. 15 minutes of study and contemplation a day is recommended. With a practice commitment of 1 hour per day on weekdays and 3 hours per day on weekends, or a longer retreat monthly or yearly, one should be able to finish within 3 years. Again, participants will be able to work out a schedule with their advisor's input that will fit their individual circumstances as long as there is a minimum of one hour of practice a day.

Track C – Completion within 12 months. With an emphasis on retreat, a commitment of 5 to 6 hours per day, or 3 hours per day on weekdays and 8 to 10 hours per day on weekends and/or a full-time retreat for several months, one should be able to finish within 12 months. This track requires great focus and capacity and requires special permission from the lama and guidance from a senior student to undertake.

- **Teachings, Instruction and Practice in a Retreat Setting:** The second Ngondro retreat, with Lama Gyaltsen Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche, will be held **April 10-16, 2014**. Also, on **March 22-23, 2014**, Sam Bercholz will continue his teachings on Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche's *A Cascading Waterfall of Nectar*, Rinpoche's commentary on the Dudjom Tersar Ngöndro. Ngöndro Program participants are strongly encouraged to attend both retreats if possible. Otherwise, recordings of the teaching will also be available. Attendance each year at the Ngondro Retreat is encouraged and is required at least once over the course of the program.

During these Ngöndro retreats Lama Sonam Rinpoche and Lama Gyaltsen Rinpoche will discuss the meaning behind each practice of the Dudjom Tersar Ngöndro. The lamas, along with senior students, will also give practical how-to instructions on each of the segments. There will be time for group accumulation practice with senior students or individual practice sessions if desired.

C. When to Begin

Students may begin the program at any time.

D. Additional Materials

Recorded Annual Retreat teachings – These will be available for purchase through the Pema Ösel Ling Dharma Treasures Bookstore (www.dharmatreasures.com). Participants who begin the program after March 2013 are strongly encouraged to listen to the teachings from this first retreat, and subsequent annual retreats that they may have missed.

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's Ngöndro Teachings on DVD – This DVD set is available at a 30% discount for Ngöndro Program participants through *Friends of Lama Tharchin Rinpoche* online at www.heartteachings.com (see Series 19 Dudjom Tersar Ngöndro under the Series Videos tab on homepage). Participants are strongly encouraged to view these detailed teachings, which are a great reference and source of inspiration. The final teaching in this series is also available as a stand-alone DVD with practical application advice from Lama Tharchin Rinpoche. Please contact FOLTR at info@heartteachings.com. The full set is available on loan from the Program lending library.

Books and Reading Material (available at Dharma Treasures Bookstore)

Required

A Cascading Waterfall of Nectar, Thinley Norbu

A Torch Lighting the Way to Freedom, Complete Instructions on the Preliminary Practices, Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdrel Yeshe Dorje

A Commentary on the Dudjom Tersar Ngöndro, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche

Suggested

Vajrayana Foundation Daily Prayers and Practices

The Words of My Perfect Teacher, Patrul Rinpoche

Guide to the Words of My Perfect Teacher, Khenpo Ngawang Pelzang,
Not for Happiness: A Guide to the So-Called Preliminary Practices, Dzongsar Jamyang
Khyentse

Support Materials (most items available at Dharma Treasures Bookstore)

- Meditation cushion
- Puja table
- Basic Vajrayana Buddhist shrine (see “The Vajrayana Shrine” by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, Bero Jeydren Publications; available soon – please contact becky@vajrayana.org)
- Image of the Dudjom Tersar lineage tree
- Mala with counter and/or wrist mala and notebook to keep records of accumulations (basic mala should not be skull or rudraksha, which are used for wrathful practice; bone, other than human skull, is never used)
- Manual or digital counter, if desired
- Prostration board (generally cut from piece of Masonite, found at hardware or lumber store)
- Prostration gloves or cloths for sliding hands on board; folded towel for under knees
- Mandala pan with triangular wooden insert to aid holding for extended periods
- Saffron rice for mandala pan
- Small jewels, crystals or beads for mandala pan may be added to saffron rice
- Cloth to wrap mandala pan and rice; also used for lap when making offerings
- Mandala pan with rings for shrine; or may use image of the Three-thousand-fold Universe

D. Cost

We are offering this Ngöndro Program on a sliding scale from \$21 to \$50 per month, according to an individual’s ability to pay. We are leaving the decision up to participants to determine what will work for them. We want to make this program available to anyone interested, and are trying to keep the charge as low as possible, with the thought that individuals with more fortunate circumstances will be able to contribute at a rate higher than the minimum. All funds raised from the Program will go to cover the Program’s expenses, such as offerings to the lamas, monthly video conferencing services, office and bookkeeping support, etc. Retreat costs are not included in the Program costs.

Vajrayana Foundation members will get the regular 10% discount on retreat and on Dharma Treasures Bookstore purchases. Program participants will be able to charge their Program fee monthly, or may pay on a bi-annual or annual basis. For people with special financial circumstances, please contact our Program Coordinator.

To register for the program, or for more information, contact Becky Loy, our Program Coordinator, at becky@vajrayana.org (831) 531-7577.

Ngöndro Program Registration Form

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Have you have already received the Dudjom Tersar Lung (oral transmission blessing)? Y / N

How long you have been practicing Ngöndro already, and in what lineage? _____

How many of each section have you accumulated?

Refuge and Bodhicitta

with prostrations : _____ Mandala offering: _____ Vajrasattva: _____ Guru Yoga: _____

Which Track do you think is best for you? (Circle one) A B C

Pledge: _____/month (Although it is a sliding scale from \$21 to \$50 per month, we urge each participant to contribute the full Program Fee of \$50/month, if at all possible.)

Method of Payment:

Cash or Check (made out to Vajrayana Foundation) Amount: _____ for _____ months
or Credit Card:

Card holder name, if different: _____

Billing address for card: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Visa or Master Card Number: _____

Expiration date: _____ **Three Digit Code:** _____ (OR) **Use card on file:** _____

One-time charge of \$ _____ **as payment for** _____ **months of the program**

(OR) **Charge my card monthly at \$** _____ **per month**

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(OR) **Staff Authorizing Card:** _____ **Date:** _____