

Ngondro Retreat at Pema Osel Ling

March 25 to April 2, 2017

Pre-Retreat Information

Our Ngondro Retreat is coming up quickly, and we hope that you are looking forward to spending 9 days immersed in the Preliminary Practices at Pema Osel Ling! If you came to this retreat last year, you know that Sam Bercholz is a wonderful story teller and gives heart-felt teachings that come from his years of personal interactions with Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and from his own practice experience.

Both Sam and Amy Green will be teaching primarily from Rinpoche's [Cascading Waterfall of Nectar](#), which we recommend you have for reference. We are also strongly recommending Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's [Ngondro Commentary](#). You may purchase copies of these (and many other books related to Ngondro) at [Dharma Treasures](#) and have the copy held for pick up on either Friday between 11 am and 6 pm or Saturday before the beginning of teachings from 9 am to 10:30 am. Additionally, the store will be open throughout the retreat during most lunch and dinner breaks. You will see the "hold for pickup" option online after you enter the "ship to" information. [Here](#) a text list for the retreat, with the links for purchase.

If you are interested in hearing Sam Bercholz' teachings on the *Cascading Waterfall of Nectar* from prior Ngondro retreats, we have these available for download at Dharma Treasures: [2013-2015](#); and [2016](#). We also want to call your attention to the amazing new book Sam has recently published, [A Guided Tour of Hell, A Graphic Memoir](#). We expect that he will bring in stories from this book during his teachings, especially as it relates so closely to Ngondro.

We recommend that you bring or plan to purchase at least some of the following items, which will be extremely useful for your Ngondro practice. We will provide a "starter kit" consisting of a plastic plate and either rice or corn for practicing the mandala offering while you are here.

- [Mala](#) (with counters is helpful)
- Fingerless gloves, socks, wash cloths, hot pads or similar for bare floor; or [furniture sliders](#) for carpet, for protecting hands during prostrations
- Knee pads, pillow or folded towel for protecting knees during prostrations
- [Mandala pan](#)
- Lap cloth for using mandala pan, either red or yellow, approximately 36-42 inches square
- Saffron-dyed rice (we will provide instructions when you are here) or dried corn kernels for mandala offering
- Few semi-precious stones, glass beads or other special items for mandala offering
- Counter (lots of possibilities)
- Beach towel and hand towel
- Notepad and pen/pencil

Updated March 10, 2017

We offer butter lamps and tsok every day at Pema Osel Ling and encourage retreat participants to contribute towards these offerings. We read the names of donors and loved ones for whom they are making offerings each evening at the tsok puja. Please also know that your retreat fee does not include any personal offerings you would like to make to lamas and teachers at the end of retreat.

[Here](#) is a link to some general information about retreats at Pema Osel Ling, including suggestions about what else to bring. There are driving directions and links to some shuttle services on our [website](#). Getting to Pema Osel Ling from our local airports (San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco) can be challenging. We do not ordinarily arrange retreatant pickup at the airport, but one of our sangha members can provide that service for a reasonable fee with some advance notice.

If you arrive on Friday, March 24, please come to the administration office across from the Offering Pond near the main entrance to register and receive your housing assignment. If you know that you will be arriving after 7 PM, please let us know (office@vajrayana.org) ahead of time to make arrangements. If you are commuting and plan to arrive Saturday morning, come directly to the shrine room to register between 7:15 and 7:45, when the first session starts. Park in Parking Lot A and take the marked path down the hill to the shrine room. The first meal of the retreat is Saturday breakfast and the last meal will be lunch on Sunday, April 2.

You may also be interested to know that we have a [Ngondro Program](#) to help support your practice after retreat. The program directors, Regina DeCosse and Stefan Graves, will be providing more information when you are here.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Pema Osel Ling Retreat Staff