We are happy to share the highlights of our 2019 Dharma retreats!
Lama Tharchin Rinpoche started the Annual Trekchod Retreat at Pema Osel Ling in 2001. Trekchod – Cutting Through – one of the highest Dzogchen practices, is traditionally offered only to students who have finished their Ngondro or have special permission from the lama.

After Rinpoche’s parinirvana in 2013, our most kind teacher Lama Pema Dorje Rinpoche, led the Trekchod retreat. Sadly, in July 2018, he also passed into parinirvana.

In 2019 Lama Sonam Rinpoche continued Trekchod Retreat with incredible teachings on HH Dudjom Rinpoche's Dorje Drolo cycle. This retreat had increased time for private meditation - appreciated by all!

Lama Sonam Rinpoche felt Dorje Drolo trekchod teachings would be especially powerful this year as Kyabje Dudjom (Yangsi) Rinpoche gave the Dorje Drolo empowerment at our 2018 Summer Retreat.
“All practitioners need to have this kind of practice to prevent obstacles... The best medicine for degenerate times is Dzogchen practice.” - Lama Sonam Rinpoche


Vajrakilaya Gutor/Losar Retreat
Jan. 26 – Feb. 5, 2019

This was our 30th Vajrakilaya Losar Gutor Retreat to remove obstacles and negativity for the New Year. We also accumulated 100,000 Shenpa protector prayers, a Losar tradition started by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche. Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche has also encouraged this extremely powerful practice.

Sangha members helped sponsor the Shenpa offerings at Pema Osel Ling and also recited the mantra in their homes to dispel obstacles.

Tulku Thadral Rinpoche was the Dorje Lopon and bestowed the Empowerment for Putri Rekphung (The Razor that Destroys at a Touch) – a Vajrakilaya practice from HH Dudjom Rinpoche.

"It is very important for all of you to practice Vajrakilaya with protectors ... especially to accumulate prayers of offering, praise, fulfillment and invocation to Shenpa Marnak."

Excerpt from Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche’s 2017 Letter to Pema Osel Ling
The retreat began with the sangha’s malas collected and blessed for practice. Personal phurbas were also collected and put on the shrine for the retreat, gathering blessings.

The large zorchen torma, made each year from a mold sculpted by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, sat in front of the sangha in our shrine room throughout retreat, absorbing the negative energy of the old year during Vajrakilaya sessions.

**Gutor Day**

[Zorchen torma]

[Black Hat Gutor Ceremony]
With a Black Hat ceremony, the Zor torma was thrown into the bonfire to incinerate this negativity and overcome obstacles for the new year.

After the burning of the Zor torma, we shared Tibetan fortune soup in the shrine. The lamas read our fortunes, as the negativity from the old year burned up outside!

**Losar Day**

Losar morning, we performed Lake Born Vajra and Khandro Norla pujas with tsok, after bringing in the New Year with offerings to the Three Jewels – tsampa, auspicious rice, homemade chang (alcohol) and tea.
**Nang Jang**  
**Buddhahood Without Meditation Teachings**  
**March 15 – 17**

We were honored to have **Chakung Jigme Wangdrak Rinpoche** continue his series on **Dudjom Lingpa’s** profound Dzogchen text for the fourth year.

![Chakung Jigme Wangdrak Rinpoche](image)

A descendant of Dudjom Lingpa, Rinpoche’s wisdom and warmth are reflected in his teachings. Rinpoche again gave the Nang Jang empowerment, kindly allowing new students to join the series.

![Chakung Rinpoche giving Nang Jang empowerment](image)

**Cascading Waterfall**  
**Ngondro Retreat**  
**April 13 - 21**

**Cascading Waterfall of Nectar,** the seminal work of **Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche,** is a Ngondro Commentary that actually presents the complete Buddhist teachings - from Ngondro to Dzogchen.

"**Dungse Rinpoche** was a reincarnation of Longchenpa. His writing is not coming from intellectual mind but from his realization of luminous non-duality wisdom mind."

**Lama Tharchin Rinpoche**

Acharya Sam Bercholz, one of the few people empowered by Dungse Rinpoche to teach this text, has been coming to Pema Osel Ling for the first weekend of our Ngondro Retreat for years.

![Acharya Sam Bercholz](image)

In 2019, he once again shared his profound understanding of this incredible masterpiece, as well as engaging stories of 23 years spent with Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche.
The following week-long Ngondro retreat was led by Lama Sonam Rinpoche, Druppon Freddie Trancoso, and Amy Green. This retreat offered teachings, instructions, extensive time for accumulations and personal interviews.

Students from around the world, many who are members of our Ngondro Program, expressed deep gratitude to our teachers for the chance to learn, be inspired, and chip away at the daunting task of the Ngondro “mission”.

Amy Green, one of Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche’s senior students, was asked by Dungse Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche to lead Ngondro study.

This was the first year that Drubpon Freddie Trancoso joined our Ngondro teaching team. Freddie has done two three-year retreats with Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, helps guide our Three-Year Retreat students, is one of our main umzes (chant leaders), mentors for our Ngondro Program and teaches at the Wisdom Center. We were so happy to have him join the Ngondro Retreat teaching team in 2019.
We had the great fortune to have Shingdup Tulku Rinpoche, head of Zangdokpalri Monastery, established by HH Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong, India, bestow the Troma Nakmo empowerment.

When he was five years old, HH Dudjom Rinpoche recognized him as the incarnation of Shingdup Ngawang Gyurmed Tenzin, and composed this long life prayer for him:

*The essence of all the infallible Buddhas, Padmasambhava; The three roots; the spiritual heroes; and the dakinis; May the power of their truth enable the life of Dodrul Pema Gyurmed Namgyal To be always firm, and may his activities pervade all of space!*

After the empowerment, Lama Sonam Rinpoche gave wonderful teachings on Troma Ngondro and led us in practice. A number of sangha members are working diligently on their Troma Ngondro, and these teachings and retreat time were extremely helpful.

Chakung Jigme Wangdrak Rinpoche also offered teachings for Saga Dawa Duchen, which occurred during our Troma Retreat.
Although many sangha had received these empowerments before, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche said, “Each time we receive a wang (empowerment) we pacify broken samaya and refresh blessings. - I received the same wang many times.”

“Until our samaya is flawless, receiving empowerment again and again is of unimaginable benefit!

Lama Sonam Rinpoche

Shitro Ngakso
June 28-30

Shitro is a powerful accumulation, dedicated to world peace and repairing samaya. The entire sadhana of this purification puja was completed each day.

“For whoever has a connection to this Shitro practice, the seed of samsara will be destroyed.”

Lama Sonam Rinpoche

Practice each day included the Neydren Ceremony to assist sentient beings who have died and or are wandering in the bardo. The names of loved ones were burned as part of the ceremony on June 30.
We were fortunate once again to do Drupchen with our kind lamas, including Lama Gyaltse Rinpoche, Tulku Jamyang Rinpoche, Khenpo Sonam Rinpoche, Lama Sonam Rinpoche and Kumar Lama.

With a dedicated group of participants, the sadhana was kept going throughout the day and night with mantra, music, dancing, fire pujas and tsok.

Drupchen is a closed retreat and we set the boundaries each year with the “Kings” (symbolic wooden structures) of the four directions. Each morning a small group with a lama do a ceremony at each direction. This was one of the activities that our teens participated in.
We performed the four traditional fire pujas (jinseks) - as we do each year. The jinseks correspond to energy, direction, color, time of day, and activity.

Jinseks are complex and take many hours of preparations. This year, our teens were a big part of preparing and carrying out the jinseks, along with our chopens and lamas. It was a wonderful way for them to connect to this sublime Vajrayana practice!
On the last day, we received the **Collection of Seven Treasures siddhis** during the final puja with tsok, which was interspersed with sacred dancing throughout. This brought new meaning to the sadhana and the dances.

We ended the day with a performance of Traditional Tibetan dance.

In 2019 there was a transition to new leadership, with parents of younger children stepping up to organize the program.

The younger children (ages 2-11) learned about the Dharma and the Tibetan language, and enjoyed making arts and crafts.

**Khenpo Sonam Rinpoche** gave a lesson to the younger kids each day, and took them, along...
with the teens, for a hike down the stupa road to talk about saving lives and to release worms under the redwoods.

The teens spent time learning rituals and instruments, making torma and jinseks.

"I love all of you so much from my heart because we are vajra brothers and sisters. Anyone who is a vajra brother and sister means that we have no separation until reaching enlightenment"

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's Sixth Parinirvana Anniversary
August 5

As we have for the past six years, we did Dorsem Lama Chöpa (Vajrasattva) sadhana on this parinirvana anniversary of our founder and most kind and sublime teacher, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche.

"I love all of you so much from my heart because we are vajra brothers and sisters. Anyone who is a vajra brother and sister means that we have no separation until reaching enlightenment"
"When our teachers pass into parinirvana, this means that through their immeasurable compassion, they will be performing their wisdom activity in a different way. One of their activities is to remind us of the inescapable truth of impermanence - to compel us to practice seriously.”

Lama Sonam Rinpoche

We are deeply grateful that Rinpoche continues to share his skillful wisdom and kindness at Pema Osel Ling each year.

Thanksgiving Retreat
“Essence of Butter”
Lama Sonam Rinpoche
Nov. 29 - Dec. 1

Longchenpa’s Precious Treasury of Pith Instructions
Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche
November 16-17

Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche was able make these profound Dzogchen teachings accessible on a very practical level. Rinpoche's unique teaching style and deep understanding of this ancient wisdom brought the teachings to life and made it seem possible for anyone with the right motivation to apply them in their daily life!
Every year on Thanksgiving we perform an Amitabha tsok and host a Thanksgiving dinner, followed by three days of retreat. This year the dinner was followed by a spontaneous dance party – echoing Pema Osel Ling Thanksgivings of the past! Great food and great fun had by all!

For retreat, Lama Sonam Rinpoche, taught on Pith Instructions Like the Essence of Butter. This terma, revealed by Orgyen Dorje Lingpa, contained Guru Rinpoche’s teaching to Yeshe Tsogyal on how to practice during one’s life to prepare for the time of death.

The teachings were beautiful – simple, profound, and powerful!

**Vajra Armor Healing Retreat**
December 2-8

This week-long retreat provided students an opportunity to practice the Vajra Armor Healing Mantra in a supportive and private setting. **Lama Sonam Rinpoche** gave the oral transmission, as well as individual guidance and several group teachings.
"When beings engage in non-virtue, 
Causing war and committing vast evil, 
Food and medicine will diminish in potency, 
At that time, Vajra Armor - the one Mantra, 
that is the source of 100,000 methods - will be needed..."  Padmasambhava

Some fortunate individuals will be taking a full month for personal, in-depth practice of Vajra Armor or other personal practice, in our Drubdra cabins during Jan. 2020, before the new students begins their 3-Year retreat at Losar. (Cabins still available for Jan.)

Kyabje Dungse Thinley  
Norbu Rinpoche’s Dechö  
December 28

This year Dungse Rinpoche’s Dechö (parinirvana anniversary) will fall on the first day of Trekchod Retreat. Everyone is welcome - we will be doing a full day of Vajrasattva Puja with tosk and self-empowerment. Please join us!

"During this time, we can remember Rinpoche's wisdom, his kindness, how much that has penetrated our mind... we can practice together and attain fully enlightened Buddhahood always together. Then we don't have any separation, from life to life.”  
Lama Tharchin Rinpoche

Remembering Ama-la

Sadly this year, Ama-la (Pema Chhuing), beloved mother of Tulkju Jamyang Rinpoche, Lama Sonam Rinpoche and Semo Sonam
Rinpoche, passed away at Pema Osel Ling on February 7th.

We performed 3 days of Shitro puja in our shrine room with Tulku Thadral Rinpoche, Tulku Jamyang Rinpoche, Lama Sonam Rinpoche, Kumar Lama and many guests, who all loved Ama-La. The lamas also did Vajrasttva puja for 49 days.

For Ama-la, there was nothing more satisfying than practicing her profound Buddhist beliefs - whether helping to hold the end of the dungchen horn as we closed the boundaries for Drupchen, or making full prostrations in the shrine well into her 90s. We continue to miss her bright and inspiring presence.

Ama-la was 97 years old and her entire life was dedicated to dharma. In spite of great tragedy and hardship in her life, her faith in Dharma was profound and her devotion to the Buddhist path and her teachers was an inspiration to everyone who met her.
Ngondro Program

“Many thanks to you [staff] and Lama Sonam Rinpoche for the Ngondro program - according to calculations, I'm within a month of "halfway there" - wherever 'there' is!” Ngondro Program student

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche created the Vajrayana Foundation Ngondro Program in Feb. 2013. They designed the program to give serious students structure and guidance to help them complete their Ngondro from start to finish.

Participation in the program requires a commitment to practice and study. The number of hours for each accumulation depends on an individual’s capacity. We offer each student a personal mentor to work with to develop a personal schedule in order to finish in 1 to 6 years. Enrollment is open - students can join at any time.

This year, we have continued to host our bi-monthly teaching and accumulation practice session webcasts.

We have expanded our website to include: More direct how-to videos, video streaming, downloadable texts, audio files, archive of four years of weekly teachings and quotes from Dudjom Rinpoche, Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche.
Drubdra was established by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche in 1992 and retreats have continued since then without interruption.

"In the West there are many Dharma practitioners and many teachers, but I feel that the students lack a real overview of the body of the Dharma teachings from beginning to end. In order to serve the Vajrayana teachings, I would like to open the road to understanding Dharma in its entirety.”  Lama Tharchin Rinpoche

The most recent retreat, which concluded on Dakini day October 23, had been under the guidance of Kyabje Dudjom (Yangsi) Rinpoche, Sangye Pema Zhepa. The retreat was led by Lama Pema Dorje Rinpoche (1942-2018), Lama Sonam Rinpoche, and Drubpon Pema Rigdzin (Frederico Trancoso), with support from Lama GyaltSEN Rinpoche and Tulku Jamyang Rinpoche.

Drubdra – Three-Year Retreat
2016 – 2019

Drub Nyiy Döjö Gatsal (The Joyful Grove that Provides Both Kinds of Accomplishments) is a Nyingma School of Vajrayana Buddhism Drubdra in the Dudjom Tersar Lineage. This
After five days of Pacifying Jinseks (Fire Pujas) the sangha joyfully welcomed the retreatants at Dakini Day Khandro T’huk T’hik tsok at Pema Osel Ling.

The next three-year retreat will begin in 2020. A spot just opened up for a qualified candidate. There is time to enroll.

Please contact drubdra@vajrayana.org for information.

“Now is the time to practice. Don’t think you will have more time later. As the great masters told us, we should practice with the same urgency we would feel if our hair were on fire – we wouldn’t wait until a better time to put it out! Remember impermanence.”  

Lama Sonam Rinpoche

For info email office@vajrayana.org

**Personal Retreat at Pema Osel Ling**

For those without the circumstances to enter a three-year retreat, we offer opportunities for shorter retreats throughout the year.

“Pema Osel Ling is one of the best places to do practice. We have incredible holy supporting objects like the body aspect of Guru Rinpoche’s statue, made by our Lord of Refuge Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, and the mind aspect of our stupas.”

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche

**Retreat Participation By Video Streaming**

We have been wanting to offer streaming of our Dharma activities for years. Our talented IT staff was finally able to bring the internet to the Shrine Room, and in April 2019 we launched our streaming service by offering the Ngondro commentary teachings with Sam Bercholz. Forty-six people participated by streaming the Ngondro Retreat.

To date, we have streamed the full Summer Retreat, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche’s Dechô, Thanksgiving “Essence of Butter” and Vajra Armor teachings with Lama Sonam Rinpoche.
Many people have shared with us how important the video streaming has been to them.

"We just wanted to tell you how much we appreciate all the efforts Lama Sonam and the Pema Osel Ling staff have made to make the teachings available to us via live streaming. We have some health problems that have made it impossible to travel right now. Being able to receive the teachings directly from Lama Sonam have been incredibly beneficial to us. We both felt a profound shift in our consciousness after participating in the Essence of Butter retreat.

“It was particularly sweet for [us] because our first exposure to Pema Osel Ling was during the last time the Essence of Butter teaching was being given, many years ago. When we first walked into the shrine room and we saw the statue of Guru Rinpoche and met our sangha, we knew we had found our heart’s home. Wherever we are we have you all in our hearts and it sustains us.

Being able to join you via a video live stream is a gift that makes our hearts sing and deepens our commitment to practice. We are truly blessed to be part of this mandala and have you all as part of our dharma family. Your efforts to include us in teachings and sadhana are sweet as nectar and so helpful for us to stay on the path. Pema Osel Ling has given us the true meaning of the three jewels.

Please keep the live streaming going if possible; it’s a blessing to us who can’t be there physically." Sangha members, Willow and Don Million

We plan to live stream the Dorsem Lama Chopā puja for Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche’s Decho on December 28.

In addition to streaming, we will continue to look for ways to keep everyone connected with this sacred place and the Dudjom Lineage at Pema Osel Ling, in 2020 and for years to come!
The Vajrayana Foundation/Pema Osel Ling

A Brief History

Lama Tharchin Rinpoche established the Vajrayana Foundation in 1987, upon the advice of Kyabje Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche and Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, to transmit the Dudjom Tersar lineage in the West. The Foundation bought Pema Osel Ling in 1991 and a yearly cycle of teachings and practice began on the land.

In 1998 Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche agreed to guide the Vajrayana Foundation and asked Lama Sonam Rinpoche to administer Pema Osel Ling with Lama Tharchin Rinpoche. In 2011, after Dungse Rinpoche’s parinirvana, Lama Tharchin Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche offered Pema Osel Ling to Kyabje Dudjom Sangye Pema Shepa Rinpoche, who accepted Pema Osel Ling as his center.

We make aspirations that with Rinpoche’s guidance and our sangha’s support, we will be able to preserve Pema Osel Ling as a blessed place to actualize profound Buddhist teachings.

We want to acknowledge and express our deep appreciation to you, the precious jewel of the sangha! The opportunity to work together to help realize our sublime teachers’ aspirations is very precious. Your support will help us carry out a year full of dharma activity in 2020!

Wishing You Peace and Happiness in the New Year!