

DHARMA OCEAN PRACTICE PATH

This is a companion document to *The Training and the Path* document, which is the process of being updated. *The Training and the Path* explains the *view* behind how to approach the many study and practice opportunities that Dharma Ocean offers. This document outlines the resources (residential programs, online programs, audio series, and readings) for each stage of the path as well as the requirements of study and practice in each stage.

Practical Guidance

- Whenever possible, attend in-person programs, either in Crestone or regional.
 - If you do not live in North America but are aiming to fulfill the requirements for applying to Vajra Assembly, some of the residential program requirements can be waived. It will be necessary to demonstrate how you understand and have practiced each yana, and to work closely with your Meditation Instructor throughout.
- Please enroll in only one online course at a time and devote your entire attention to it.
- How to use a audio series set for self-guided study/practice: spend approximately two weeks on each CD, listening to the talk at least twice and doing the meditation every day for that period. For the practice, start by listening to the guided meditation; when you have developed enough familiarity, simply do the practice each day on your own. Periodically, you might listen to the guided meditation again, for you will notice more than before. Work closely with a Meditation Instructor.
- Refuge and Bodhisattva vows must be taken in the Dharma Ocean Lineage.

The Ground Yana

Programs

Dharma Ocean In-Person Programs

Meditating with the Body® (MWTB)

Regional (weekend or longer) retreats may be available in your area

Dharma Ocean Online Courses

Awakening the Body (ATB)

On your own

Your Breathing Body (YBB) audio program (CD or [download](#) via Sounds True)

Practice Requirements

Develop a consistent daily practice of Ground Yana practices, spending at least some time in sitting meditation. In each ground yana course offering, simple meditation instruction is given. This is the practice one should be following when doing sitting meditation.

Readings

The Awakening Body (Ray)

Touching Enlightenment (Ray)

The Posture of Meditation (Will Johnson)

Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism (Trungpa)

The articles on the **Articles & Interviews** page at dharmaocean.org/articles-interviews

For Vajra Assembly

Required

Meditating with the Body and/or Your Breathing Body
Readings

Strongly Recommended

Awakening the Body
Regional retreats as available

The Meditation Yana

Commitment—The Refuge Vow

Maintain a consistent daily practice of ground yana protocols for at least a year before you take the Refuge vow. Take the refuge vow at or near your entry into the Meditation Yana.

Programs

Dharma Ocean In-Person Programs

Winter Meditation Intensive (WMI)
Regional retreats

Dharma Ocean Online Courses

The Somatic Practice of Pure Awareness (SPPA)
Sutrayana, the Foundations Yana (SYFY)

On your own

The Practice of Pure Awareness (PPA) (CD or [download](#) via Sounds True)
A solitary retreat of at least one week. (a dedicated retreat space, or “at home” retreat if need be)

Practice Requirements

Establish a daily meditation practice of at least 45 minutes of Pure Awareness Practice.

Study Requirements

Reading List

Indestructible Truth (Ray)
The Practice of Pure Awareness: Somatic Meditation for Awakening the Sacred (Ray)
The Path is the Goal (Trungpa)
The Myth of Freedom (Trungpa)

Mentoring and Community

1. Take advantage of interviews with senior Dharma Ocean teachers, at programs or when they are offered to the sangha.
2. If you would like to continue this path of practice after attending Winter Meditation Intensive, establish and maintain a relationship with a Dharma Ocean Meditation Instructor.
3. Become a supporting member of Dharma Ocean if you haven't already, which will give you access to the teaching and practice library, a curated selection of guided practices, talks, and articles for each yana.

For Vajra Assembly

Required:

Refuge Vow

Sutrayana, the Foundations Yana

Four weeks of Winter Meditation Intensive (*or another pre-approved regional retreat*)

Readings

Strongly Recommended:

Somatic Practice of Pure Awareness (SPPA)

Solitary retreat of one week

Somatic Descent Yana

Programs

On your own

Somatic Descent: Experiencing the Ultimate Intelligence of the Body (CD or [download](#) via Sounds True)

Readings

Somatic Descent (Ray, forthcoming)

The Power of Focusing, by Ann Weiser Cornell

Practice

Add the Somatic Descent practice into your practice schedule, with a few sessions a week, for at least six months and preferably a full year. This can be done alongside practices from other yantras and online courses.

For Vajra Assembly

Required

At least 20 hours of Somatic Descent practice

Mahayana

Commitment—The Bodhisattva Vow

Take the Bodhisattva vow at or near the beginning of your Mahayana practice. You must have maintained a consistent daily practice for at least a year from the time of taking of the Refuge Vow before taking the Bodhisattva vow.

Programs

Dharma Ocean In-Person Program

The Body Loves (TBL)

Dharma Ocean Online Courses

Sutrayana Mahayana (SYMY)

Boundless Heart and Loving the Self (BH)

Connection, Communication and Love (CCL) forthcoming

On your own

Awakening the Heart (CD or [download](#) via Sounds True)

The following practices from the Seven-Limbed Bodhicitta Training on the Dharma Ocean website in the Teaching and Practice Library:

1. Bodhicitta Entry Protocol
2. Bodhicitta Body Protocol
3. Dissolving Blockages
4. Unconditioned Love
5. Extending Unconditioned Love to all Realms of Being
6. Dharmakaya Space of the Heart
7. Bodhicitta Shamatha and Vipashyana
8. Opening Beyond Fear
9. Beholding (dyad)
10. Mind Training – the slogans

Practice

During a consistent daily practice, work through the *Awakening the Heart* audio series and the selected practices from the Seven-Limbed Bodhicitta Training. The slogans are daily contemplations that can be done in conjunction with any of the

other bodhicitta practices that you are exploring. Bodhicitta practice is an essential part of your daily practice commitment going forward.

Do a solitary retreat of ten days, concentrating on Bodhicitta practices.

Study Requirements

Complete the Sutrayana Mahayana Course.

Community Involvement

Continue your relationship with your Meditation Instructor and find ways to offer your gifts, experience, and inspiration to your sangha sisters and brothers, in the context of either local or remote sangha events, programs, or other areas of sangha life. This is a very good time to coordinate a Dharma Ocean program or serve within the program mandala in other ways — everyone engaged in the bodhicitta training needs to offer themselves to Dharma Ocean in some way or other. Also, begin to find ways to offer what you are learning and experiencing in the context of your daily life in work situations, family life, and other social contexts.

For Vajra Assembly

Required

- Sutrayana Mahayana (SYMY)
- Bodhisattva vow
- Solitary Retreat of at least one week
- Awakening the Heart audio series
- Selected Seven Limbed Bodhicitta practices

Strongly Recommended

- The Boundless Heart and Loving the Self (BH)
- Connection, Communication and Love, (CCL) forthcoming

Once you have completed the above requirements for Vajra Assembly, contact your Meditation Instructor for an assessment interview.

Vajrayana

Commitment

The commitments unfold in a gradual manner, with each deeper level of instruction, practice, and experience calling us to a deeper engagement. There should be at least a one-year period after taking the Bodhisattva Vow (during which the Mahayana study and practice occurs) before applying to enter the Vajrayana. Students inspired to enter the Vajrayana, may apply to attend “Vajra Assembly” (VA). VA participants are asked to commit to attending the Vajrayana Training Intensive (VTI) the following year. During that interim year, there are certain practices, courses, and readings that precede attendance at VTI.

General prerequisites for Vajra Assembly

- You are very familiar with the teachings and practices of the first 3 yantras (ground, meditation, mahayana).
- You have a regular and stable practice.
- You have fulfilled most, if not all, of the practice and study requirements.
- You are ready to commit to the Vajrayana path for life.
- You understand (at some level) the demands of the Vajrayana path, outer and inner.
- Before applying to Vajra Assembly, study chapters 1-13 in *Secret of the Vajra World* (Ray); and *Journey Without Goal* (Trungpa).
- At least two nine-day solitary retreats. Each nine days must be consecutive.

Attending Vajra Assembly

At this program you will begin your ngöndro (the “preliminary practices” that prepare us for entry into sadhana practice).

Post-Vajra Assembly, Pre-VTI Requirements

1. Regular practice of ngöndro at least three sessions a week and at least one session of Pure Awareness on the other days.
2. A solitary retreat of at least ten days.
3. Complete the first half of the [Mahamudra for the Modern World](#) audio program.
4. Study the VTI 2005 transcript.
5. A continuing, regular relationship with your Meditation Instructor is important.

Attending Vajrayana Training Intensive

People can attend VTI no sooner than one year after their attendance at Vajra Assembly. First-time VTI participants are required to attend the entire retreat, while returnees may be given the option of attending for a specific shorter period.

Full Vajrayana Path Practice Requirements

1. Complete the ngöndro.
2. Attend MI Training (attendance alone fulfills this requirement; full authorization to act as an MI is not necessary).
3. Complete the second half of the [Mahamudra in the Modern World](#) audio program.
4. All Vajrayana students should make every effort to attend the Vajrayana Training Intensive each year.
5. A solitary retreat of at least one month (this can be broken up if necessary). All Vajrayana students are encouraged to incorporate solitary retreats (as feasible), consort practice, and darkness practice at appropriate points on their unique paths.
6. At some point in your Vajrayana journey, complete the *Training in Mahamudra*.
 - a. Daily practice including at least two 45 minute Mahamudra sessions. Include longer practice sessions of three to four sessions at least twice a week.

- b. Solitary retreats are enormously helpful in developing your Mahamudra experience and understanding. Try to accomplish the classical thirty-five day retreat one or more times.
- c. With the counsel of your Meditation Instructor, work your way through the levels of Mahamudra practice.