

2022 Margha Program Monthly Practice and Reading Guide

February-June

Bodhicitta Series



Listening to the Teaching Sessions: Most of the audio recordings provided as supports for monthly practice are derived from the **Winter Margha Retreat** held January 21-27, 2022. If you attended the retreat on Zoom, you do not need to listen again to any or all of the full teaching sessions, unless you wish to review, refresh, and re-immerse in the teachings. (After all, a lot was presented.) If you did NOT attend the retreat, you are strongly encouraged to listen to ALL the sessions for each month. (We recommend listening to them sequentially over the course of the month. *Just take your time.* You do not need to take notes or worry about missing anything as you listen—the themes are revisited and rewoven by the teachers. Please consider this not as an academic study, but rather as an intensive immersion.)

Practicing with the Meditation Audios: The guided meditation audios for each month were either stand-alone meditation practices or extracted from longer teaching sessions. (The unabridged recordings of longer teaching sessions still contain the guided meditations within.) Often there are multiple versions or variations of the same basic meditation. We recommend listening to all the different meditation audios at least once each, to experience different variations and see which resonate most with you. Then you can choose one or more of the audios to support your regular practice that month. (For each month below, we will indicate the required meditations.)

You need not listen to an audio every time you meditate, of course. Once you are familiar with the meditation, you can engage it on your own at your own pace, if you wish, or you can continue to use the audios occasionally or regularly.

Utilizing the *Innate Compassion and Wisdom Training (ICT) handbook*: Developed by Lama John Makransky, this latest edition provides detailed written instruction for each of the meditations that we will explore during the next six months of the Margha program—replicating the entire arc of practices covered at the Winter Retreat. For each month, we request that you read the section that covers the meditations you will be exploring that month. (The monthly guide below will direct you specifically.)

In addition to meditation instruction, each section offers invaluable advice on preparing for and processing the meditation, especially how to deepen in it and integrate it into daily life. You can find the ICT Handbook under **Documents** on the Margha Material page. Please download and print it out. (If you wish to take full advantage of its coloring for ease of reading, you might consider having a print shop produce it on ivory or cream-colored paper on mid-weight paper stock.)

February—Receptive Mode

Introductory Meditations:

***Mindful Awareness of Abdominal Breathing**

***Mindful Awareness of the Gong**

(Please note these and other introductory meditations in *Foundations* in the ICT Handbook)

Main Meditations for February:

***Caring Moment**

***Caring Moment with Spiritual Field**

***Becoming Deeply Receptive**

***Caring Moment and Becoming Deeply Receptive to Love and Compassion**

Additional Meditation:

***Being a Caring Figure**

Readings:

ICT Handbook: *Foundations*, and Meditations 1, 2, and 3

Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness by John Makransky, pgs. 1-32.

Introduction: “Unleashing the Power of Love”; Chapter 1: “Receiving Love: Key to Life, Key to the Spiritual Path”

The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Shantideva (also translated as: *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva: A New Translation and Contemporary Guide*): Chapter 1: “The Excellence of Bodhichitta”; Chapter 2: “Confession”

March—Deepening Mode

Main Meditations for March:

- *Compassionate Presence to Feelings
- *Three Letting Be's

Continue to explore ***Receptive Mode*** practice with the **Caring Moment, Spiritual Field**, and/or **Being a Caring Figure**, which ever speak most to you, while incorporating “Accessing, Noticing, Including”.

Compassionate Presence to Feelings can be explored on its own or in the midst of any other meditation when strong feelings arise. (Please refer to the ICT Handbook and teaching audios for details.)

Three Letting Be's can be explored on its own and also in the Release phase of any other meditation.

~~**Compassionate Presence to Feelings** and **Three Letting Be's** practices can and should be continuing resources throughout this Margha year.

Optional Meditations and Mantra Supportive Practices:

- *Earth Body Shamatha
- *Shamatha without Support (can be explored during Release phase of any meditation)
- *Buddha Yoga with *Tayata Mantra* (if you resonate with this more traditional Buddhist form)
- *Tara Mantra (mantra chanting naturally facilitates concentration and arouses bodhicitta)

Readings:

ICT Handbook: Meditations 4 and 5

Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness, by John Makransky, pgs. 33-68.

Chapter 2: “Letting Be: Relaxing into Natural Wisdom”

The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Shantideva (also translated as: *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva: A New Translation and Contemporary Guide*): Chapter 3: “Commitment”

April—Inclusive Mode

Meditations for April:

***Extending Love**

***Extending Love to Dear Ones, Strangers, Difficult Ones**

~~Please refer to ICT Handbook and teaching audios for how to work with both variations.

Readings:

ICT Handbook: Meditations 6 and 7

Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness, by John Makransky, pgs. 69-155.
Chapter 3: “Letting It Out: Unleashing Love’s Power”; Chapter 4: “Loving Beyond Boundaries”;
Chapter 5: “Pure Perception and Profound Equanimity”

The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Shantideva (also translated as: *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva: A New Translation and Contemporary Guide*): Chapter 4, “Awareness”

May—Generating Empathy and Compassion

Main Meditation for May:

***Taking Our Suffering Feelings into Compassion for Others**

Supportive Meditation Practices:

***Compassionate Presence to Feelings**

***Three Letting Be's**

~~These **Deepening Mode** practices can be vital to balance and empower compassion.

Readings:

ICT Handbook: Meditation 8

Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness, by John Makransky, pgs. 157-200. Chapter 6: “Compassion as a Liberating Power”

The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Shantideva (*Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva: A New Translation and Contemporary Guide*): Chapter 5: “Vigilance”

June—Extending Compassion

Main Meditations for June

***Extending Compassion to Others**

***Bringing Out a Strong Will of Compassion for Action**

Additional Optional Meditations:

***Offering, Receiving Blessings, and Reunifying with the Natural State**

***Refuge Tree Meditation**

Supportive Meditation Practices:

***Compassionate Presence to Feelings**

***Three Letting Be's**

~~You might consider alternating days of engaging these challenging compassion practices with the **Deepening Mode** practices, along with **Receptive Mode**, as needed.

Readings:

ICT Handbook: Meditations 9 and 10

Awakening Through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness, by John Makransky, pgs. 201-241. Chapter 7: “Living Life Anew and Embodying Deep Goodness”; “Epilogue”

The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Shantideva (also translated as: *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva: A New Translation and Contemporary Guide*): Chapter 6: “Patience”

