

ALBERTA DEEPENING PRACTICE PROGRAM

September 2017 – July 2019

Heather Martin is offering a program of study and practice for those dharma students who are interested in deepening both their understanding of the Buddha's teachings, and deepening their meditation practice, to facilitate further insight and release on their path to awakening.

Our explorations will be based on three areas:

- Mindfulness, based on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.
- Friendliness (Metta) practices;
- Engaging actively in this world with and from our Buddhist understandings and perspective.

Mindfulness / Insight Meditation.

The Satipatthana Sutta is the most detailed meditation instructions the Buddha gave. This fourfold training covers awareness of the Body; the quality of our momentary experiences (Vedana); the Mind and its coverings (Cittanupassana); and Dharma views of our experiences. Brilliant scholar and very dedicated practitioner, Bikkhu Analayo has studied this topic in great depth, publishing a text of his PhD on this Sutta.

By both exploring his writings and practices (and other materials) and putting them into our own meditation practices, we'll be able to experience for ourselves just how significantly liberating they can be.

Metta = Friendliness. Engaging our hearts, finding meaning, and caring for ourselves, those with whom we relate, and our world, is essential for a meaningful and satisfying life, as well as on our path to awakening. A variety of practices and approaches will be explored over the course of the program, including such areas as: deepening compassion, forgiving, enhancing gratitude, the meaning of dedication, receptivity and more.

Engaged Buddhism. Our beautiful and fragile world requires special attention and care in these turbulent and worrisome times, particularly of environmental crisis. We will consider how our Dharma values and perspectives can be expressed through our thoughts, words and activities; How to participate skilfully and effectively, without falling into the traps of greed, hatred and delusion.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

A two-year (21 month) program, containing, in *each* of the two years:

- Two weekend non-residential retreats (one in Calgary in the fall, and one in Edmonton in late winter);
- One 6-day residential retreat in Calgary (in June);
- Studies, readings and practices offered monthly;
- A monthly discussion group (an evening or a morning), facilitated by senior students Carmen Wyatt (assisted by Leslie Ellestad) in Calgary and Olenka Melnyk, (assisted by Kat Boehm) in Edmonton, which will include Heather's participation via remote access.

QUALIFICATIONS

This is being offered to those who have a meditation practice, and who wish to strengthen, enliven and deepen it. It is neither a beginning course for those new to meditation, nor a course exclusively for those with long meditation experience. However familiarity with the basic teachings of the Buddha and some familiarity with the foundation meditation techniques of the Theravada or Insight tradition is assumed and expected.

COMMITMENT

Participation in the full program is requested.

Participants are expected to attend the four weekend and two 6-day retreats. The materials will be presented to cover the full range of topics over the two year period.

Just as when attending a residential retreat, each person's full and whole-hearted participation supports everyone involved. If participants attend sporadically, that support is weakened and everyone is adversely affected. Please consider your participation as an offering to your fellow participants, not an obligation.

COSTS

The costs will be the costs of attending the retreats.

There may be some small costs for attending the monthly groups, which may include facility and material costs, depending on whether or not a rent payment will be required, which in turn, will depend on the numbers of people attending. Some support for the facilitators would be appreciated.

As well as participating (remotely) in the monthly meetings, Heather will be available by phone to participants on an individual basis, to support and clarify the subjects being studied. All Heather's teachings, including the study materials, are offered on a DANA basis.

CALENDAR

2017	September	22 – 24	Non-residential weekend retreat in Calgary.
2018	February	2 - 5	Non-residential weekend retreat in Edmonton
	June	11 – 16	Residential 6-day retreat in Calgary.
	October	12 – 14	Non-residential in Calgary – more info TBD
2019	February	(tba)	Non-residential weekend retreat in Edmonton
	June	(tba)	Residential 6-day retreat in Calgary.

APPLICATION

To apply for the program, please contact Heather by email heathermartin.49@gmail.com, and you will be sent an application form.

TIMELINE:

DEADLINE for applications will be July 1, 2017.

PARTICIPANTS will be confirmed by July 15, 2017.

CONTACTS:

Heather Martin – heathermartin.49@gmail.com

For Heather’s bio and background, please see www.saltspringinsightmeditation.ca.

Olenka Melnyk (Edmonton) – olenkamelnyk@shaw.ca

Carmen Wyatt (Calgary) - carmw@telus.net