

## Engaging with the Living Mandala Garden

There are multiple meaningful ways of engaging with the Living Mandala Garden. Below are a few suggestions on how you can use the Mandala as a space for contemplation and spiritual practice.

### Contemplation

Contemplation is a meaningful way to make use of the Mandala Garden. Through contemplation you can reflect on the interconnection between all things in the universe. You can sit or stand at a suitable distance from the Mandala and focus your attention on it. You can observe the various plants, insects, rocks, water, human efforts, seasonal changes, etc. that went into making the Mandala as you are witnessing it. There is a whole ecosystem within the boundaries of the Garden. You can reflect on that. You can also connect that to the larger world reflecting on how interconnected and interdependent the world is.

The Mandala is also a symbolic representation of the universe in Buddhism and other Dharmic traditions. While engaging with the Mandala, bring to your mind the various species that occupy the universe. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the center of the Mandala represents liberation, the goal of Buddhism. The surrounding spaces indicate the various levels of our path to that goal and the realms/stages that occupy our *samsaric* journey.

### Circum-ambulation

It is a widespread practice in Buddhist traditions to circum-ambulate sacred religious and spiritual spaces and structures. The Mandala is also an important spiritual structure. Circum-ambulating the Mandala can be a relaxing activity. You can start circum-ambulating by keeping your right side closer to the Mandala. While walking in silence, you can be mindful of your steps not to rush through, keeping your eyes focused on the path ahead. You can do as many rounds as you want. You can also whisper prayers, chants, recitations while doing the circum-ambulation. Some suggestions for Buddhist chants:

- “May all beings be happy, safe, and protected” and/or “May I be happy, safe, and protected” ([learn more](#))
- “Om Mani Padme Hum” ([learn more](#))
- “Namo Amitabha/Omituofa” ([learn more](#))

### Reciting/Chanting Buddhist Chants

Chanting is an important practice in Buddhist traditions. It helps with calming, cultivating focus, reconnecting with oneself, and uplifting the mood. There are various chants to choose from considering the rich diversity in Buddhist traditions. Below are a few suggestions:

- The virtues of the Triple-Gem – Buddha, Dharma, Sangha: [Tibetan with English translation](#), [Pali with English translation](#)
- Heart Sutra in [Chinese](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese & Sanskrit](#)

### Meditating around the Mandala

As a beautiful and pleasant space, the Mandala can also be a good spot to meditate around. In this case, you can just sit or lie down around the Mandala and meditate on your own or by listening to recorded instructions.