



One Earth Sangha

Fullness and Letting Go, Meditating in Autumn

Audio Transcript

If you want a little peace, let go a little.

If you want a lot of peace, let go a lot.

If you want complete peace, let go completely.

– *Ajahn Chah*

Autumn is an exquisite season, one that has so many gifts. The light of the sun is softer, casting long shadows across the earth. Fruits are heavy on the bows of trees. The turning colors of the leaves cloak the forest in rich golds and crimson. And for many, it is a time of reflection. It is a poignant time where we leave the exuberance of summer and head into a more melancholic season, tinged with a sadness for the loss of that fullness, where life begins its slow release into the fallow winter. It is an invitation for us to slow down, to pause, to gather the harvest both from the land, but also from within.

The once blooming plants and the lush green canopy begin to brown and wilt. Leaves slowly shed from branches and bushes. As we watch the autumnal wind strip the trees of their canopy, we are reminded of the ways trees let go, releasing their leaves to the air, their fruit to the ground, to become food for the forest and compost for new life. And in this time we may reflect for ourselves of what we need to shed, of where we are being asked to release, to not hold on, to let go to the winds that blow through our life, to live more lightly in this world, to be prepared for the next season, the next chapter in our journey.



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In this meditation, take a walk into a forest or woodland, or out into dried meadows or harvested farmland where the presence of autumn is evident. Meander in the forest or among trees where you can see the verdant canopy turning golden, crimson, and brown. Observe the plants in the ground and see how their colors are also slowly turning, their leaves and stems wilting, drying, heading slowly towards the earth. As you mindfully stroll, take in the sights of autumn and sense into the quality of this particular season of release, as you see leaves falling to the earth. What does it evoke within you? Notice the mood that autumn can bring. Is it one of melancholy, poignancy, tenderness, peace, sadness, joy, contemplation? Sometimes, for some, there can be resistance to the presence of autumn as it brings the knowledge of the cold and darker winter ahead. Be open to whatever quality arises within you now.

After meandering for a period of time, find somewhere to sit where you can take in the presence of the autumnal landscape. As you sit on the browning earth, sensing your connection with the ground and opening up your senses, notice the colors around you, notice all the signs of life slowing down that autumn can reveal. Perhaps you can sense the quality of restfulness that is present after the industriousness of summer, or maybe there is still the fullness of autumn, as you see the fruits on trees. Then, after a time of taking in this landscape visually, close your eyes and feel into what qualities are present in your body. As you sense your body resting on the ground in the same way that the leaves begin to rest into the earth, how does your body feel in response to autumn? Perhaps there's a quality of ease or softness that is reflecting something similar in the environment. Perhaps there's a sense of poignancy, reflectiveness, melancholy. Or perhaps what this



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season evokes for you is a peacefulness, a peace of release, of letting go, of slowing down.

And as the colder temperatures and the winds begin to remind the trees that it is their turn to release their summer coat of leaves, perhaps you feel a similar invitation. What is being asked of you to shed, to release, to let go, relinquishing what no longer serves you, releasing habits, patterns, activities that interfere with your wellbeing or the wellbeing of others? What burden, what load are you being invited to put down, to release, so you can move through life more lightly, more freely?

Continue to ponder these questions and reflections, and continue to inquire as to what this autumnal season evokes for you and what gifts letting go may bring in your life. You may continue to sit in this way to reflect, for as long as feels helpful and fruitful, and you may also wish to journal if any insights come about during this poignant time. And whenever you're ready to transition back into your next activity, continue to be aware of this season's gifts and what it's inviting of you.

This is a meditation featured in Mark Coleman's book, [A Field Guide to Nature Meditation: 52 Mindfulness Practices for Joy, Wisdom and Wonder](#).