



One Earth Sangha

Attuning to the Natural Elements

A Guided Meditation with Lama Rod Owens

Lama Rod Owens offered this practice to participants in our March 2024 EcoDharma Exploration. Visit the program page for the full recorded gathering, as well as additional resources: [Embracing EcoDharma as A New Saint](#)

Just echoing some of what I shared in the first part of our talk, what many of us are just kind of lacking is, for me, what feels like a fundamental attunement to the natural world, the kind of fundamental elemental attunement, which is what I talk about in *The New Saints*, and also what I've been practicing. And not just practicing on my own, actually, but actually working with other teachers, other kinds of spiritual teachers to get these kinds of attunements that maybe many of us feel like are kind of absent from our dharma practice and from the ways Dharma has been taught to us and transmitted as well. So much of my practice and work has been about saying, okay, this is what I need, I don't see this maybe happening in my dharma circles, so I'm going to go outside of my dharma circles to see how other spiritual practitioners are working with these things.

And I just really encourage you to do that. Just to really get curious and to explore how other kinds of practitioners are doing work with the natural world and really inviting those practices back into your drama practice as well. So this is what you're going to get, this kind of attunement. Just going through the body, going through just the elements to get, to really have this felt sense, this kind of elemental energy that's so much a part of our experience. And my hope is that you're able to take this



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practice and really start developing it and working with it in your own space and time to feel this connection to the natural world, okay.

So let's begin. And so I always begin practice just by inviting all of us to allow our bodies to come into a position that feels appropriate for us. And this will be roughly about 20 minutes of practice.

And sometimes I just like to ask my body what it needs, and of course the body speaks through sensation. I try to tend to the sensations my body is offering me in terms of how to take care of it, in this practice period.

<silence>

Again, I invite you to reflect on your intentions for practice and really just realigning with the intentions of Buddha Dharma in general, which is to get free from suffering, to remember our innate awakened nature and to also help others get free and to remember. So this is our intention for practice.

And you can also reflect on who you're practicing on behalf of or who you would like the energy of this practice to flow towards. And I call this the pre-Dedication of Merit. I just do the Dedication of Merit upfront just to get clear, who are you practicing for? Who needs the support of this practice? Who are the people or the communities around you who need this practice? And of course, practicing for the land, practicing for the planet, for our animal siblings and so forth. And of course, this kind of aspiration begins to really open our practice. We begin to experience expansion, connection.



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<silence>

Just a couple more seconds here.

<silence>

And when you're ready, I invite you to shift your attention to your seat, noticing how the seat is rising to hold your body, how the weight of your body and the seat meet, and for a moment resting your attention on that sensation with the body and the seat.

<silence>

And when you're ready, I invite you to shift your attention, even lower, beginning to touch into the land, the Earth under us. Noticing how our attention, which now maybe is expanding into this awareness, is touching into the awareness and the consciousness of the land.

And this is a very abstract experience for sure. But if we think about the land, if a thought arises about the land and the Earth, we are indeed touching the land, the Earth, and touching into the consciousness of the land. When you've touched into the consciousness, can you allow your awareness to expand within the consciousness of the land, the Earth?

And as we begin to do so, really connecting to this energetic experience of stability or groundedness, the experience of foundation or structure. Because as we expand into the Earth, we're also at the same time being held by the Earth.



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We begin to experience the labor or the work of the land itself. The work of nurturing, of caretaking, supporting life. The work of just being, in its most natural direct expression. And this is what the natural world is, just being, allowing.

<silence>

And slowly we begin to shift our awareness. Just back up, around our bodies. And we slowly began to recognize the expression of the Earth element and Earth's consciousness within our physical bodies. So maybe we began to recognize the weight of our bodies as an expression of the Earth, our density, the way that our bones and muscles and organs create structure and support for us, how that's an expression of the Earth as well.

Maybe the stability, the groundedness that some of us may experience from our bodies in this moment. That too being an expression of the Earth, consciousness and elements. Reflecting on how our bodies are indeed expressions of the Earth and how the Earth is indeed expressions of our bodies. Letting our awareness kind of dwell within this profound relationship, this profound connectivity and belonging.

<silence>

When you're ready, I invite you to shift your attention to your breath and just noticing the in breath and the out breath, noticing the flow of air in and out of the body, of oxygen being inhaled, carbon being released, the cycle of coming and going, of movement, sustaining life and health of our body through breath,



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beginning to see breath as an expression of wind and air in the world and the natural world.

As we breathe, we're breathing with and through all the cycles of air and all the movement of air in the world. How our breath is an expression of the gentle breeze on the spring day or the torrent, strong winds of the storm. How this wind carries the materials that all living organic beings need to sustain life. And that our breath can bring us into this deeper, much more intimate relationship, not just the wind and air, but with all beings.

Letting your awareness abide here, within this profound relationship of breath and body and the world around us.

<silence>

When you're ready, I invite you to maybe begin to notice our heartbeats and how our hearts work to move blood throughout the body. Blood being also an expression of water, of hydration. This water being used to dissolve, to break down, to digest, to transport, to expel and remove, beginning to become aware of how water is so integral to our living and our health and our wellbeing. Even noticing the saliva in our mouths, the moisture of our eyes, the moisture in our bladders, in our stomachs, in our blood, in our cells, in our tissue. The same water and moisture present within the world around us, and rivers and lakes and oceans and streams, and brooks and rain, water held deep within the Earth. Water circulating through the bodies and the structures of all living organic beings.



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Resting our awareness within this profound presence and offering of water in our bodies and within the world around us.

<silence>

When you're ready, I invite you to shift your attention to the warmth of your body, the heat, the source responsible for transformation in our bodies, for energy in our bodies, for warmth in our bodies.

The mechanism of our digestive system, solar plexus at the navel button, knowing that the heat in our bodies is the same heat and warmth we experience in the world, the same heat and warmth, the fire itself, the same warmth and energy radiated from the sun, that lights up and warms this whole galaxy, the solar system in particular.

Allowing ourselves to experience this nourishment from the warmth in and around us.

<silence>

And allowing these elements to come into a kind of balanced community together where every expression is being held.

<silence>

When you're ready, I invite you to shift your attention back to the seat again, noticing the weight of the body, meeting the seat.



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I invite you just to offer just gratitude to the Earth, to our bodies, to the elements, to the natural world, offering gratitude to our teachers and guides and mentors as well, offering gratitude to the sangha.

And lastly, offering a deep appreciation back to yourself as well.

<silence>

And when you've completed these gratitudes, just beginning to reawaken your bodies through some simple movements, maybe a few deep breaths.

So thank you so much for your practice.