

## **The Chanting of Om**

When we chant Om (pronounced Aum), there are four parts, the A sound the U sound the M sound and the aftersound. Each part should be of equal length. As we chant Om we want to start the sound deep in the belly and draw the energy up into the chest, into the head to resonate and then release it as we breathe in to prepare for the next one.

The beginning of the Om is the birth, the new activation of energy, then it has a moment of development and stability before it begins to mature and dissipate — the "M" sound. We need to ensure that we do not become so caught up in the birth, activation and stability of the sound that we forget to leave breath for the M; each part should be of equal length. The "M" teaches us about the appropriate time to let go — it is a small death — before the aftersound, which you can interpret in whatever way you wish.

The chanting of Om is a bit like entering the forest; when we first walk in we see the abundance of life, the multitude of trees and sounds everywhere. If we look closer however, we see that there is an equal part of death and decay, the one dependant on the other. If we look closer still, we see that even those trees and plants that appear to be dead are not really, different animals and plants live on them and inside of them and so really we begin to realise that it is not death at all, but a transformation in preparation for renewal.

Just as in a forest, all of the trees do not drop down dead at the same time, nor should our Om's all begin and die at the same time. As we chant let's all begin at different times so there is no part where all of the "trees" die, there is no point of silence, as you chant listen to the sounds around you, let our chanting of Om be like the symphony and wisdom of the forest, let our Om be a transformation in preparation for renewal.