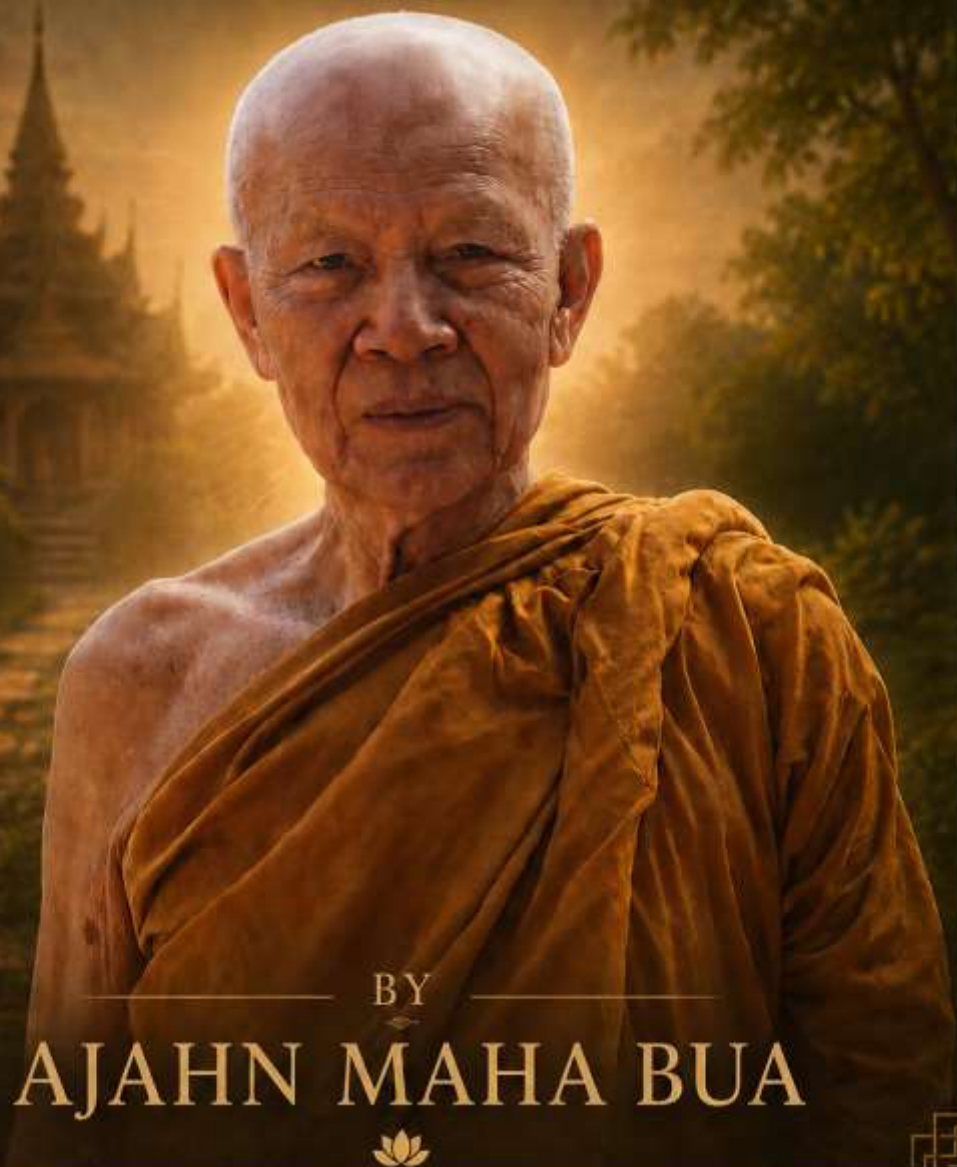




THE PATH TO ARAHANTSHIP



BY
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The Path To Arahantship

(Simplified Version)

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Please read the following notes:

This is a Dhamma talk given by Ajahn Maha Bua and translated into English by Bhikkhu Dick Sīlaratano.

But this eBook is not based on the original version. Instead, I used ChatGPT to simplify the meaning of the teachings and translate most of the Pali words used in the original version into English. However, I have retained some Pali words such as Citta, Nibbana, Samsara, and others.

The most important aspect of this teaching is the removal and elimination of all kilesas from the mind. In this eBook, kilesas have been translated as mental defilements.

Therefore, whenever you read the term mental defilements, it refers to kilesas.

Kilesas are mental defilements caused primarily by the three unwholesome roots, which are greed, hatred, and delusion that cloud the mind from the truth.

Another important term is Citta. Citta refers to both the True Mind and the Fake Mind. When Citta refers to the one that still has kilesas, it is referring to the Fake Mind. When Citta refers to the one that has no kilesas, it is referring to the True Mind, which is pure and bright.

If you encounter any monks from any Theravada monasteries, please print this eBook and give it to them. They are unlike lay practitioners such as you and me, who can easily surf the

internet and find Dhamma eBooks, some monks may not have the same access to such resources.

This eBook teaches Theravada practitioners how to attain Arahantship. It is based on the actual experiences of Ajahn Maha Bua, who successfully attained Arahantship and Nibbana. This eBook is an extremely rare and extremely precious teaching. As Buddhists, we should all cherish this eBook and never underestimate the insight and wisdom found in it.

#1 - Beginner Stage in Meditation

At present, only the Buddha's words remain in Buddhism. Only his teachings and scriptures are left. Please understand this clearly. Because of the corruption caused by mental defilements, the true spiritual principles are no longer widely practiced in modern Buddhism. As Buddhists, we often allow our minds to become restless and confused, completely covered by mental defilements coming from every direction. These defilements become so powerful that no matter how hard we try, we cannot rise above them. Most people are not even interested in trying. They simply ignore the problem and let themselves be overwhelmed. They do not even try to resist. Because they lack mindfulness and do not pay attention to the results of their thoughts, everything they think, say, and do becomes controlled by mental defilements. They surrendered to these destructive forces a long time ago and now no longer have the motivation to control their wandering thoughts. When mindfulness is absent, mental defilements work freely day and night in every activity. As a result, they constantly burden and oppress the hearts and minds of people with suffering.

During the time of the Buddha, his direct disciples truly practiced the Buddhist path. They left worldly life with the clear purpose of going beyond suffering. No matter their social position, age, or gender, once they ordained under the Buddha's guidance, they changed the way they thought,

acted, and spoke to follow the Dhamma. They abandoned mental defilements and stopped following their influence from that moment onward. With sincere effort, they directed all their energy toward purifying their hearts and removing the contamination created by mental defilements.

True effort means a meditator constantly tries to maintain steady mindfulness, always watching over the mind. When mindfulness carefully observes all mental and emotional activity at all times and in every posture, this is called “right effort.” Whether we are doing formal meditation or not, if we sincerely try to keep the mind focused on the present moment, we can continually protect ourselves from the danger of mental defilements. Mental defilements constantly create thoughts about the past and the future. This distracts the mind and pulls it away from the present moment and from the mindfulness needed to maintain proper effort.

For this reason, meditators should not let the mind wander into worldly thoughts about the past or the future. Such thoughts are always connected to mental defilements and become obstacles to practice. Instead of following the habit of focusing outward on worldly matters, meditators must turn inward and become aware of the mind’s inner world. This is extremely important.

Many meditators fail to achieve good results because they are not firm enough in applying the basic principles of meditation. I always teach my students to practice carefully

and with a clear and specific focus. In this way, they can achieve good results. It is important to find a suitable meditation object to prepare the mind properly for this work. I usually recommend using a meditation word whose continuous mental repetition acts like an anchor, quickly grounding the mind in calmness and concentration. If a meditator only focuses on awareness itself without using a meditation word as an anchor, the results are often uncertain and inconsistent. The mind's knowing nature is too subtle to give mindfulness a stable foundation, so the mind easily wanders into thinking and distraction, pulled away by mental defilements. Meditation practice then becomes unstable. Sometimes it seems to progress smoothly and easily, but suddenly it becomes difficult again. Progress disappears, confidence weakens, and the mind becomes confused. However, if we use a meditation word to firmly anchor mindfulness, the mind can quickly enter a calm and concentrated state. It will also be able to maintain that calmness more easily.

I speak about this from my own experience. When I first began meditating, my practice did not have a strong foundation. Since I had not yet discovered the correct way to care for my mind, my practice constantly changed. Sometimes it improved steadily, but then it quickly declined and returned to its original untrained condition. Because of my intense effort in the beginning, my mind entered a calm and concentrated state that felt solid and stable like a

mountain. But because I lacked the proper method to maintain that state, I relaxed and became careless. That was when my practice began to decline. I did not know how to stop the decline, so I reflected deeply, trying to find a stable foundation that could keep the mind steady. Eventually, I realized mindfulness had weakened because my foundation was wrong: I did not have a meditation word to serve as a precise object of attention.

I had to begin my practice all over again. This time I firmly established a stable foundation and held onto it no matter what happened. That foundation was buddho, recollection of the Buddha. I made the meditation word buddho my only object of attention. I focused on mentally repeating buddho and excluded everything else. Buddho became my sole concern while mindfulness carefully directed all my effort. I stopped thinking about progress or decline. Whatever happened, I would simply let it happen. I was determined not to follow my old habits of thinking about the past—when my practice had once progressed well and later collapsed—or thinking about the future, hoping my former happiness and satisfaction would somehow return by itself. All along, I had failed to create the conditions needed for success. I merely wished for improvement and then became disappointed when it did not appear. In truth, desire for success does not create success; only mindful effort does.

This time I resolved that no matter what happened, I would simply allow it to happen naturally. Worrying about progress and decline only created agitation and distracted me from the present moment and the work I needed to do. Only the mindful repetition of buddho could prevent changes and instability in my meditation. It was essential to center the mind firmly in present-moment awareness. Discursive thinking could not be allowed to disturb concentration.

To practice meditation sincerely and reach the end of all suffering, you must fully commit yourself to each stage of the path. Nothing less than complete dedication will succeed. To experience the deepest levels of calm and concentration and to develop profound wisdom, you cannot be lazy, halfhearted, or uncertain, lacking firm principles to guide your practice. Meditators who lack strong commitment to the principles of practice can meditate their entire lives without achieving the proper results. In the beginning stages of practice, you must find a stable meditation object to anchor the mind. Do not casually focus on something vague, like awareness itself, which is naturally present within the mind. Without a clear object of attention to hold onto, it becomes almost impossible to prevent the mind from wandering. This leads to failure. Eventually, disappointment arises and you may stop practicing altogether.

When mindfulness loses its object, mental defilements quickly drag the mind into thoughts about the past or the

future. The mind becomes unstable and wanders endlessly without finding peace or satisfaction even for a moment. This is how meditators lose progress and watch their meditation collapse. The only solution is to use one simple and clear object of attention, such as a meditation word or the breath. Choose whichever feels most suitable for you and focus firmly on that one object alone. Complete dedication is necessary for the task.

If you choose the breath as your meditation object, become fully aware of every in-breath and every out-breath. Notice the feeling created by the movement of the breath and place your attention on the point where that feeling is strongest, such as the tip of the nose. Clearly know when the breath enters and when it leaves, but do not follow the breath inward or outward. Simply keep attention fixed on the point where the breath passes. If it helps, combine the breathing with the silent repetition of buddho, thinking bud while breathing in and dho while breathing out. Do not allow wandering thoughts to interrupt your work. This is training in present-moment awareness, so remain alert and attentive at all times.

As mindfulness gradually becomes stronger, the mind will stop paying attention to harmful thoughts and emotions. It will lose interest in its usual distractions. Free from disturbance, the mind will settle deeper and deeper into calmness and stillness. At the same time, the breath—which

feels coarse at the beginning—will gradually become more refined and subtle. Eventually, it may become so refined that it completely disappears from conscious awareness. At that moment, there is no awareness of breathing left. Only the Citta's pure knowing nature remains.

#2 - Advanced Stage in Meditation

My choice was Buddho meditation. From the moment I made my decision, I kept my mind from wandering away from the repetition of Buddho. From the time I woke up in the morning until I went to sleep at night, I forced myself to think only of Buddho. At the same time, I stopped worrying about whether my meditation was improving or declining. If my meditation improved, it would improve with Buddho; if it declined, it would decline with Buddho. In either case, Buddho was my only concern. Everything else was unimportant.

Maintaining such one-pointed concentration was not easy. I had to force my mind to stay connected with Buddho every single moment without interruption. Whether I was sitting in meditation, practicing walking meditation, or doing ordinary daily tasks, the word Buddho remained deeply present in my mind at all times. By nature, I was always very determined and uncompromising, and this helped my practice greatly. In the end, my commitment became so strong that nothing could weaken my determination; no wandering thought could separate my mind from Buddho.

As I practiced like this day after day, I always made sure that Buddho stayed closely connected with my present-moment awareness. Soon, I clearly experienced calmness and concentration arising within the Citta, the mind's essential knowing nature. At that stage, I began to see the extremely

subtle and refined nature of the Citta. The longer I absorbed myself in Buddho, the more subtle the Citta became, until eventually the subtlety of Buddho and the subtlety of the Citta merged together and became one single knowing essence. I could no longer separate Buddho from the subtle nature of the Citta. No matter how hard I tried, I could not make the word Buddho appear clearly in my mind anymore. Through continuous effort and perseverance, Buddho had become completely united with the Citta, so Buddho itself no longer appeared separately in awareness. The mind became so calm, still, and subtle that nothing remained there—not even Buddho. This state was similar to the stage where the breath becomes so refined that it disappears from awareness.

When this happened, I felt confused. My entire practice had depended on holding firmly to Buddho. Now that Buddho was no longer appearing, I did not know where to place my attention. Up to that point, Buddho had been my foundation. Now it had vanished. No matter how hard I tried to bring it back, I could not recover it. I was uncertain and puzzled. All that remained was the deeply subtle knowing nature of the Citta—a pure, simple, bright, and clear awareness. There was nothing solid or concrete within that awareness for me to hold onto.

At that moment, I understood that nothing enters the field of awareness when consciousness reaches such a deep and

subtle condition. I had only one choice left: since Buddho had disappeared, I had to focus on the essential knowing awareness that remained fully present and obvious at that moment. That consciousness had not disappeared at all; in fact, it filled everything. All the mindfulness that had previously focused on repeating Buddho was redirected toward the subtle knowing presence of the calm and unified Citta. I kept my attention firmly fixed on that subtle knowing essence until eventually its strong clarity began to fade, allowing normal awareness to return once again. As ordinary awareness returned, Buddho naturally appeared again. I immediately brought my attention back to the repetition of Buddho. Before long, my daily practice developed a new rhythm: I concentrated deeply on Buddho until consciousness entered the bright and clear state of the Citta's essential knowing nature. I remained absorbed in that subtle awareness until normal consciousness returned, and then I focused again with even stronger determination on the repetition of Buddho.

It was during this period that I first established a strong spiritual foundation in meditation. From then onward, my practice steadily progressed and never declined again. Day by day, my mind became more peaceful, calm, and concentrated. The instability that had troubled me for so long completely disappeared. Concerns about whether my practice was progressing or declining were replaced by mindfulness firmly rooted in the present moment. The

strength of this mindfulness was so powerful that thoughts about the past or future could no longer enter the mind. My entire focus remained in the present moment—each silent repetition of Buddhho as it appeared and disappeared. I had no interest in anything else. Eventually, I became convinced that the reason my mind had previously been unstable was because I lacked mindfulness from not using a meditation word as a firm anchor. Before that, I had only focused on a general sense of inner awareness without a clear object, allowing thoughts to easily invade and distract the mind.

Once I understood the correct method for this beginning stage of meditation, I dedicated myself to the practice so completely that I refused to let mindfulness weaken even for a single moment. From the time I woke up in the morning until I fell asleep at night, I remained consciously aware of my meditation throughout every moment of the day. It was an extremely difficult training that required the highest level of concentration and endurance. I could not relax my mindfulness even briefly. Because I was so deeply focused on internalizing Buddhho, I barely noticed what was happening around me. My ordinary daily activities seemed blurred and unclear, but Buddhho always remained sharp and distinct in my awareness. My dedication to the meditation word was absolute. With this strong foundation supporting my practice, calmness and concentration became so firm and steady that they felt solid like a mountain.

Eventually, this unshakable state of mind itself became the main focus of mindfulness. As the Citta gained greater inner stability and unity, the meditation word Buddhō gradually faded from awareness, leaving only the calm and concentrated knowing nature of the mind standing out clearly on its own. By this stage, the mind had entered a deeply concentrated state of focused awareness that seemed to exist independently without relying on any meditation method. Completely calm and unified, the knowing presence itself became the sole object of attention. This state of mind was so strong and powerful that nothing else could arise to disturb it. This is known as the mind remaining in continuous concentration. In other words, the Citta itself had become completely unified in concentration.

Speaking more deeply about meditation practice, there is an important difference between temporary meditative calm and a continuous state of concentration. When the mind gathers itself and enters a calm and concentrated condition for a period of time before returning to ordinary awareness, this is called meditative calm. The calmness and concentration last only while the mind remains absorbed in that peaceful state. Once ordinary awareness returns, those special conditions slowly fade away. However, as meditators become more skilled at entering and leaving this calm and unified condition again and again, the mind gradually builds a strong and stable inner foundation. When this foundation becomes completely unshakable in every situation, the mind

is said to have entered a continuous state of concentration. At that point, even after the mind leaves deep meditative calm, it still feels solid, steady, and inwardly focused, as though nothing can disturb it.

The Citta that remains continuously unified in concentration is always balanced and undisturbed. It feels completely full and satisfied. Because of this strong sense of inner unity and concentration, ordinary thoughts and emotions no longer have any effect on the mind. In such a condition, the mind no longer wants to think about anything. Completely peaceful and content within itself, it feels that nothing is missing.

In this continuous state of calmness and concentration, the Citta becomes extremely powerful. Previously, the mind constantly craved thoughts and emotions, but now it sees them as bothersome disturbances. Before this, the mind was so restless that it could not stop thinking and imagining even if it wanted to. Now, with concentration as its normal condition, the mind has no desire to think at all. It sees thinking as something unnecessary and disturbing. When the Citta's essential knowing nature stands out clearly all the time, the mind becomes so deeply inwardly focused that it cannot tolerate disturbances. Because of this deep peace and the tendency of concentration to lull the mind into such satisfying tranquility, people who attain this continuous concentrated state often become strongly attached to it. This attachment continues until they reach a higher stage of

practice where wisdom becomes dominant and brings even greater fulfillment.

#3 - Investigate and Contemplate on the Pain, Body and Citta (Part 1)

Painful feelings are natural conditions that constantly change from mild to severe. As long as we do not turn them into a personal problem, they have no special meaning for the Citta. Pain itself is just pain, so the Citta can remain unaffected. The physical body is also simply what it is. By itself, it gives no special meaning to feelings or to a self—unless the Citta creates those meanings and then suffers because of them. External conditions are not the true cause of suffering. Only the Citta creates suffering for itself.

When I got up that morning, I felt an indescribable boldness and courage. I was amazed by the nature of what I had experienced because nothing like it had ever happened in my meditation before. The Citta had completely cut off its connection to all external objects and gathered inward with true courage. It entered a majestic stillness because of my careful and thorough investigation. When it withdrew from that state, it was still filled with fearless courage, completely unafraid of death. I now understood the correct methods of investigation, so I knew I would not fear pain the next time it appeared. Pain would still be the same kind of pain. The body would still be the same body. And wisdom would still be the same wisdom I had used before. Because of this understanding, I felt openly fearless toward both pain and death.

Once wisdom clearly understood the true nature of what dies and what does not die, death became something ordinary. Hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, and bones eventually return to their original elemental state, which is simply the earth element. Since when has the earth element ever died? When the body breaks apart and decomposes, what does it become? Every part simply returns to its original condition. The earth and water elements return to their natural state, as do the wind and fire elements. Nothing is destroyed. These elements merely come together temporarily to form a body where the Citta takes up residence. The Citta—the great creator of delusion—enters and gives life to this body, then carries the burden by creating a sense of self from it: “This is me. This belongs to me.” By claiming ownership of the body, the Citta gathers endless suffering and burns itself with its own false beliefs.

The real problem is the Citta itself, not the body made of physical elements. The body is not an enemy that constantly threatens us. It is simply a separate reality that naturally changes according to its own conditions. Only when we wrongly identify with it does it become a burden. That is exactly why we suffer from physical pain and discomfort. The body itself does not create suffering; we create the suffering ourselves. I clearly saw that no external condition can truly make us suffer. We misunderstand things, and that misunderstanding creates the fire of pain that burns in the heart.

I understood clearly that nothing truly dies. The Citta certainly does not die. In fact, it becomes even more obvious and clear. The more thoroughly we investigate the four elements and separate them back into their original properties, the more clearly the Citta stands out. So where is death? And what actually dies? The earth, water, wind, and fire elements do not die. And how could the Citta die? It becomes even clearer, more aware, and more insightful. This essential knowing nature never dies, so why is there such fear of death? Because the Citta deceives itself. For countless ages it has tricked itself into believing in death, even though nothing truly dies.

So when pain appears in the body, we must understand that it is simply a feeling and nothing more. Do not make it personal or think that it is happening to “you.” Pain has been part of the body since the day of birth. The pain experienced at the moment of birth was already extremely intense. Human beings are born through suffering. Pain has been there from the very beginning, and it will not change its nature. Physical pain always follows the same pattern: it arises, stays for a short time, and then disappears. Arising, remaining briefly, and disappearing—that is all pain really does.

Investigate painful feelings in the body so you can see them clearly as they truly are. The body is simply a physical form that has existed since birth. But when you believe that you

are the body, then when the body hurts, you feel that “you” are hurting. At that point, the body, the pain, and the awareness of them become mixed together into one thing: “my painful body.” Physical pain arises because something in the body is malfunctioning. It depends on the body, but it is not itself a physical object. Awareness of the body and awareness of feelings both depend on the Citta, which knows them. But when the knowing awareness misunderstands them, emotional suffering arises. The pain not only hurts physically, but it also creates fear and worry that something is wrong with “me” or “my body.” Unless these three things—the body, the pain, and the knowing awareness—are clearly separated and understood, physical pain will always create emotional suffering.

The body is simply a physical reality. We may believe many things about it, but those beliefs cannot change the truth. Physical existence is one basic truth. The four elements—earth, water, wind, and fire—come together in a certain form to create what we call a “person.” This physical form may be called male or female and may be given a name and social identity, but in reality it is only a physical heap. All the body’s parts combine together to create this one physical form. Every separate part belongs to the same basic reality. The four elements combine in many ways. In the body we speak of skin, flesh, tendons, bones, and other parts. But do not be fooled into thinking they are separate realities just because

they have different names. See them all as one single physical reality.

As for feelings, they exist in their own separate area. They are not part of the body. The body itself is not feeling. It does not directly participate in pain. These two groups—the body and feelings—are easier to observe than memory, thoughts, and consciousness, because memory, thoughts, and consciousness disappear immediately after arising. Feelings, however, remain for a short time before disappearing, making them easier to observe clearly during meditation.

When painful feelings arise, focus directly on them and try to understand their true nature. Face the pain directly. Do not try to escape by shifting attention somewhere else. And do not secretly wish for the pain to disappear. The purpose of investigation is to gain true understanding. Relief from pain is only a side result of clearly understanding the truth. Relief itself should not become the main goal. Otherwise, emotional frustration will arise when the desired relief does not come. Simply enduring pain stubbornly without wisdom will also not work. Neither will focusing only on pain while ignoring the body and the Citta. To gain correct understanding, all three must be included in the investigation. The investigation must always be direct, careful, and purposeful.

#4 - Investigate and Contemplate on the Pain, Body and Citta (Part 2)

The Lord Buddha taught us to investigate pain so that we can see it as merely a condition that arises, stays briefly, and then disappears. Do not become attached to it. Do not think of pain as something personal or as part of who you are, because that goes against its true nature. Such wrong thinking also weakens the methods used to investigate pain and prevents wisdom from seeing feelings as they really are. Do not create problems for yourself where none truly exist. Simply observe the truth of pain as it arises, remains for a short time, and then vanishes. That is all pain really is.

After using mindfulness and wisdom to separate the painful feeling, turn your attention toward the Citta and compare the feeling with the awareness that knows it. Are they really the same thing? Then compare the Citta with the body in the same way. Are they identical in any way? Focus carefully on each one and do not allow the mind to wander away from the object you are investigating. Keep your attention firmly fixed on the specific point under examination. For example, focus directly on the pain and analyze it until you clearly understand its characteristics. Then turn to the Citta and try to see its knowing nature clearly. Are the pain and the awareness that knows it truly one thing? Is there any way they can be made into the same reality? And what about the body? Does it share the same nature as the Citta? Is it the

same as the feeling? Are any of these three similar enough to be combined together as one?

The body is physical matter, so how could it possibly be the same as the Citta? The Citta is a mental reality, an awareness that knows. The physical elements that form the body have no awareness at all. They cannot know anything. The earth, water, wind, and fire elements know nothing. Only the mental element knows. Since this is true, how could the knowing nature of the Citta ever be identical to the body's physical elements? Clearly, they are completely separate realities.

The same truth applies to pain. Pain itself has no awareness and no ability to know anything. Pain is simply a natural condition that appears together with the body, but it does not know the body or even know itself. Painful feelings depend on the body as their physical base. Without the body, they could not arise. But they have no physical form of their own. Sensations connected to the body are interpreted in such a way that they seem inseparable from the part of the body where they are felt. Instinctively, the body and the pain are combined together, making it seem as though the body itself is pain. We must correct this misunderstanding by carefully investigating both the nature of pain as a feeling and the physical characteristics of the area where the pain is strongly felt. The goal is to clearly determine whether the painful area—such as a knee joint—actually possesses the

characteristics of pain itself. What shape does pain have? What posture does it have? Feelings have no shape or posture at all. They are simply formless sensations. The body, however, has a definite shape, color, and appearance, and none of these are changed by pain. The body remains exactly the same as before the pain arose. The physical body itself is not altered by pain because pain is a separate reality and cannot directly affect the body.

For example, when a knee hurts or a muscle aches, the knee and muscle are only bones, ligaments, and flesh. They are not pain itself. Although pain and the body exist together, they each maintain their own separate nature. The Citta knows both of them, but because its awareness is clouded by delusion, it automatically assumes that pain is mixed into the bones, ligaments, and muscles of the knee. Due to this same ignorance, the Citta also assumes that the entire body is part of oneself. Because of this, pain becomes mixed together with the sense of self. “My knee hurts. I am in pain. I do not want this pain. I want it to disappear.” This desire to get rid of pain is a mental defilement that increases suffering by turning physical pain into emotional suffering. The stronger the physical pain becomes, the stronger the desire to escape it becomes, creating even more emotional distress. These conditions continuously feed one another. In this way, through our own ignorance, we burden ourselves with suffering.

To see pain, body, and the Citta as separate realities, we must view each one correctly and independently. We must allow them to stand apart instead of combining them together into one identity. As long as they remain tied together as part of our self-image, we cannot view them clearly or separate them properly. As long as we continue to see pain as something personal, there will be no way to escape this problem. When the body, feelings, and the Citta are all merged together, there is no space for wisdom to work. But when we investigate them carefully with mindfulness and wisdom, moving back and forth between them, analyzing and comparing their distinct qualities, we begin to see clear differences among them. Then their true nature becomes obvious. Each exists independently according to its own reality. This is a universal truth.

As this deep realization sinks into the heart, the pain begins to weaken and slowly fades away. At the same time, we begin to understand the true connection between pain and the “self” that grasps it. That connection comes from inside the Citta and extends outward to include both the body and the pain. The experience of suffering originates from the Citta’s deep attachment to self, which creates emotional suffering in response to physical pain. Remaining fully aware throughout the process, we follow the painful feeling inward to its source. As attention stays focused on it, the pain gradually withdraws and pulls back toward the heart. Once we clearly realize that it is attachment within the heart that causes pain

to become a personal problem, the suffering disappears. Sometimes the pain vanishes completely, leaving only the pure knowing nature of the Citta standing alone. At other times, the physical pain may still remain, but because emotional attachment has been removed, it is no longer experienced as suffering. Pain and the Citta are now seen as two completely different realities that no longer affect one another. Since the Citta no longer clings to pain, all connection between them has been cut off. What remains is the pure knowing essence of the Citta, peaceful and undisturbed even while pain continues within the body.

No matter how intense the pain may be at that time, it cannot affect the Citta in any way. Once wisdom clearly understands that both the Citta and the pain are real but each exists according to its own separate nature, they no longer interfere with one another. The body is simply a mass of physical matter. The same body that existed when pain appeared is still there after the pain disappears. Pain does not change the nature of the body, and the body does not change the nature of pain. The Citta is simply the awareness that knows pain arises, remains briefly, and disappears. But the true knowing nature of the Citta itself does not arise and cease like the body and feelings do. The knowing presence of the Citta remains the one stable reality.

Since this is true, pain—no matter how severe—cannot disturb the Citta at all. You can even smile while intense pain

is present because the Citta stands separate from it. The Citta continues to know everything clearly without becoming entangled in feelings, and therefore it does not suffer.

This level is reached through strong and continuous use of mindfulness and wisdom. At this stage, wisdom itself strengthens concentration. Because the Citta has investigated all aspects thoroughly until complete understanding arises, the Citta reaches the fullest depth of concentration at that moment. It gathers inward with such courage and subtlety that it is impossible to fully describe. This extraordinary awareness comes from completely analyzing all things and then letting them go. Normally, when the Citta uses concentration meditation to enter calmness, it becomes peaceful and still. But that calmness is not nearly as subtle or profound as the calmness attained through wisdom. Once mindfulness and wisdom have directly fought against mental defilements and overcome them, the calmness that appears afterward becomes truly extraordinary every time.

This is the path for meditators who practice in order to penetrate the truth of the five aggregates, using painful feeling as the main object of investigation. This practice became the foundation of my fearlessness in meditation. I saw with complete certainty that the true knowing nature of the Citta could never be destroyed. Even if everything else were completely destroyed, the Citta would remain untouched. I realized this truth with perfect clarity at the

moment when the Citta's pure knowing essence stood completely alone, entirely separate from everything else. Only that knowing awareness remained, shining clearly in its own majestic presence. The Citta released the body, feelings, memory, thought, and consciousness, entering a pure stillness completely free from all connection with the five aggregates. At that moment, the five aggregates no longer functioned in relation to the Citta at all. The Citta and the aggregates existed independently because meditation had completely separated them from one another.

This attainment brings a sense of amazement unlike anything ever experienced before. The Citta remains suspended in a peaceful stillness for a long time before eventually returning to normal awareness. After withdrawing from that state, it reconnects with the five aggregates again as before. Yet it remains absolutely certain that it has experienced a state of extraordinary calm completely separate from the five aggregates. The certainty of this amazing spiritual experience can never be erased.

Because of this unshakable certainty that became firmly established in my heart through direct experience, no argument or doubt could ever shake it again. Therefore, I returned to my concentration meditation practice with even greater determination and dedication than before. The powerful attraction of this certainty pulled the heart deeply inward. The Citta quickly entered calmness and concentration

again as it had before. Although I had not yet fully freed the Citta completely from the influence of the five aggregates, I became deeply inspired to continue striving toward the higher stages of Dhamma.

#5 - Investigate and Contemplate on the Body (Part 1)

No matter how deep or continuous concentration may be, it is not the final goal. Concentration alone cannot completely end all suffering. However, concentration provides the perfect foundation for launching a full attack against the mental defilements that create suffering. The deep calmness and stability developed through concentration become an excellent base for developing wisdom.

The problem is that concentration feels so peaceful and satisfying that meditators can easily become attached to it without realizing it. This happened to me. For five years I was attached to the peace of concentration practice so strongly that I believed this peacefulness itself was Nibbāna. Only when my teacher, Ajahn Mun Bhuridatta, forced me to see this misunderstanding was I able to move forward into the practice of wisdom.

Unless concentration supports the development of wisdom, it can actually pull meditators away from the path leading to the end of suffering. Everyone who works hard to develop concentration should be aware of this danger. The true purpose of concentration on the path is to support and strengthen wisdom. Concentration is very suitable for this because a calm and focused mind feels fully satisfied and no longer seeks distractions outside itself. Thoughts about sights,

sounds, smells, tastes, and physical sensations no longer disturb awareness when the mind is firmly established in concentration. Calmness and concentration become the mind's nourishment. Once the mind is fully satisfied with this inner peace, it no longer wanders into useless thinking. At that point, it becomes fully prepared for the careful investigation, contemplation, and reflection that lead to wisdom. If the mind has not yet settled down—if it still chases after sensory experiences, thoughts, and emotions—then investigation cannot lead to true wisdom. It only leads to endless thinking, guessing, and speculation based on memory and imagination. Instead of leading to wisdom and the ending of suffering, such uncontrolled thinking becomes the very cause of suffering.

Because concentration creates a sharp and inwardly focused mind, it supports the work of investigation and contemplation extremely well. That is why the Lord Buddha taught us to first develop concentration. A mind that is no longer distracted by wandering thoughts and emotions can focus directly on whatever appears in awareness and investigate it according to truth without interference from imagination or speculation. This principle is extremely important. Investigation then becomes smooth, skillful, and natural. This is the nature of genuine wisdom: it investigates, contemplates, and understands clearly without being distracted or misled by assumptions.

The practice of wisdom begins with the human body because the body is the most obvious and visible part of our personal identity. The goal is to penetrate and understand the body's true nature. Is the body really what we have always believed it to be—something beautiful, desirable, and truly part of who we are? To test this belief, we must thoroughly investigate the body by mentally separating it into its individual parts, piece by piece and section by section. We must carefully study the truth of this body that we know so well by viewing it from many different angles. Begin with the hair of the head, the hair of the body, the nails, the teeth, and the skin. Then continue to the flesh, blood, tendons, and bones. After that, examine the internal organs one by one until the whole body has been mentally taken apart completely. Analyze this collection of different body parts carefully so that the true nature of the body becomes completely clear.

If you find it difficult to investigate your own body in this way, begin by mentally examining another person's body instead. Choose someone outside yourself, perhaps a person of the opposite sex. Visualize each body part and each organ as clearly as possible and ask yourself honestly: Which part is truly beautiful? Which part is genuinely attractive? Put the hair into one pile. Put the nails and teeth into another pile. Separate the skin, flesh, tendons, and bones as well. Which pile deserves desire and attachment? Look carefully and answer truthfully. Remove the skin mentally and place it in

front of you. Where is the beauty in this thin layer of tissue that merely covers flesh and internal organs? Do all these body parts together really create a beautiful person? Once the skin is removed, what remains to admire in the human body? Men and women are exactly the same in this respect. There is not even a small amount of true beauty inside the body. It is only a collection of flesh, blood, and bones that deceives people everywhere into becoming attached to it with desire and lust.

It is the duty of wisdom to expose this deception. Investigate the skin carefully because the skin is the great deceiver. Since it covers the whole body, it is the part people always see. But what exactly does it cover? It covers flesh, muscles, bodily fluids, and fat. It covers the skeleton, tendons, and sinews. It covers the liver, kidneys, stomach, intestines, and all the internal organs. Nobody has ever claimed that the body's internal organs are beautiful objects worthy of passion and desire. By investigating deeply, without fear or hesitation, wisdom reveals the body's true nature clearly. Do not be deceived by this thin covering of skin. Peel it away mentally and look underneath. This is the practice of wisdom.

To truly see this truth clearly and without doubt, you must be extremely persistent and diligent. Practicing this contemplation only once or twice, or only occasionally, will never produce clear results. You must approach the practice as though it is the most important work of your entire life—as

if nothing else in the world matters except the investigation you are doing at that very moment. Time does not matter. Place does not matter. Comfort and convenience do not matter. No matter how long it takes or how difficult it becomes, you must continue body contemplation relentlessly until all doubt completely disappears.

Body contemplation should fill every breath, every thought, and every movement until the mind becomes fully absorbed in it. Nothing less than complete dedication will produce direct and genuine insight into the truth. When body contemplation is practiced with total commitment, each body part becomes fuel feeding the fire of mindfulness and wisdom. Mindfulness and wisdom then become like a blazing fire that burns through the human body part by part while investigating and uncovering the truth with intense determination. This is what is meant by the practice of intense spiritual effort.

Focus especially on the body parts that strongly capture your attention and whose truth feels easiest to understand. Use these parts as tools to sharpen wisdom. Expose them mentally and tear them apart repeatedly until their naturally unpleasant and repulsive nature becomes obvious.

Meditation on the unattractive nature of the body means seeing clearly that the body's true condition is impure and disgusting. By nature, the body is filthy and unattractive. Essentially, the whole body is like a living corpse—a breathing

container filled with waste and decay. Only the thin layer of skin covering it makes it appear acceptable. Everyone is deceived by this outer covering because it hides the body's true nature. Simply removing the skin mentally reveals the body exactly as it truly is.

Compared to the flesh and internal organs underneath, the skin appears attractive. But look at it more carefully. Skin is rough, wrinkled, oily, sweaty, and full of unpleasant smells. We must constantly wash and clean it every day just to keep it presentable. How attractive is that really? And the skin is inseparably connected to the flesh underneath and therefore connected to all the unpleasantness inside the body as well. The deeper wisdom investigates, the more repulsive the body appears. From the skin all the way to the bones, there is nothing truly beautiful or desirable at all.

#6 - Investigate and Contemplate on the Body (Part 2)

When body contemplation is practiced correctly, it becomes very intense and requires continuous mental effort.

Eventually, the mind grows tired, and at that point it is appropriate to stop and rest. When meditators deeply engaged in body contemplation take a break, they return to the concentration practice they have carefully developed.

Reentering the stillness, peace, and concentration of samādhī, they rest in complete calmness where no thoughts or mental images disturb the Citta. The burden of investigating with wisdom is temporarily laid aside so the mind can relax completely in tranquility. Once the mind has rested fully in samādhī, it naturally withdraws feeling refreshed, energized, and ready to continue the difficult work of body contemplation again. In this way, samādhī supports wisdom and makes wisdom sharper and more effective.

After withdrawing from samādhī, investigation of the body should immediately begin again. Every time mindfulness and wisdom investigate, the investigation must happen fully in the present moment. To be truly effective, each investigation must feel fresh and spontaneous. Do not let your investigations become copies of previous experiences. You must maintain a direct awareness of the present moment at all times. Forget what you learned before. Forget what happened during previous investigations of the body. Focus

only on the present moment and investigate from there alone. This is the true meaning of mindfulness. Mindfulness keeps the mind fixed in the present so wisdom can focus sharply. Past experiences belong to memory and should be set aside, otherwise memory will pretend to be wisdom. This is simply the past imitating the present. If memory replaces direct present-moment awareness, true wisdom cannot arise. Therefore, be careful of this tendency in your practice.

Continue examining and analyzing the body again and again, using every perspective wisdom can create until you become completely skilled in all aspects of body contemplation. True mastery of this practice produces clear and penetrating insight. It reaches directly into the true nature of the body in a way that completely changes how the meditator sees the human form. Eventually, wisdom becomes so skilled that when looking at people, their bodies seem to break apart instantly. When wisdom fully masters this practice, instead of seeing a person, we see only flesh, tendons, and bones. The whole body appears as a mass of raw flesh. The skin disappears immediately, and wisdom sees directly inside the body where all the unpleasant organs and bodily fluids fill every cavity. Whether male or female, the skin—which people normally find attractive—is ignored completely. Wisdom sees only the repulsive reality hidden beneath it.

Wisdom can penetrate the truth of the body with complete clarity. The body's apparent beauty disappears entirely. Then

what remains to be attached to? What is there to desire? What in this body deserves clinging? Where inside this mass of flesh is the “person”? Mental defilements create deception about the body, fooling people into believing in beauty and exciting lustful desire. But the object of that desire is false from the very beginning. When seen clearly through wisdom, the body naturally repels desire rather than attracts it. Once this delusion is exposed by wisdom, the human body appears in all its unpleasant detail. Seen clearly and directly, the mind naturally withdraws from it immediately.

Persistence and perseverance are the keys to success. Always remain diligent and alert while applying mindfulness and wisdom to this work. Do not become satisfied with partial success. Every time you contemplate the body, carry the investigation through completely to its conclusion. Then mentally rebuild the image of the body and begin again from the start. As wisdom penetrates deeper into the body, the various parts gradually begin to break apart, decay, and disintegrate before your inner vision. Carefully follow this process of decay and destruction. Mindfully observe every detail while wisdom focuses on the unstable and impermanent nature of this body that the world admires so strongly. Allow intuitive wisdom to initiate the process of decay and observe what happens. This is the next stage of body contemplation.

Follow the natural process of decay as the body decomposes and returns to its original elements. Decay and destruction are the natural destiny of all living things. Eventually, everything breaks down into its elemental parts, and those elements scatter apart. Let wisdom become the destroyer by mentally visualizing the process of decay and decomposition. Focus especially on the flesh and soft tissues as they gradually rot away until only disconnected bones remain. Then mentally rebuild the body again and restart the investigation. Every time wisdom destroys the body in contemplation, restore it mentally and begin the process again from the beginning.

This practice is a very intense form of mental training that requires great skill and strong mental endurance. The rewards are equal to the strength and intensity of the effort made. The more skillful wisdom becomes, the brighter, clearer, and more powerful the mind grows. The clarity and strength of the mind seem limitless, while its speed and agility become astonishing. At this stage, meditators feel a strong sense of urgency because they begin to see clearly the danger hidden in attachment to the human body. The danger can no longer be ignored.

Previously, people grasped the body as something valuable, beautiful, and worthy of admiration. But now they see it only as a pile of decaying bones and flesh, and they feel deeply repelled by it. Through the power of wisdom, a dead and

decaying corpse and a living human body are understood to be exactly the same in nature. No real difference remains between them.

You must continue investigating repeatedly, training the mind until wisdom becomes highly skilled. Avoid all speculation and imagination. Do not allow thoughts about what you should be doing or what the results may mean to interfere with the investigation. Simply focus on the truth that wisdom reveals and allow truth itself to speak. Wisdom naturally knows the correct path and clearly understands the truths it uncovers. When wisdom becomes completely convinced of the truth about any aspect of the body, attachment to that aspect naturally disappears. No matter how intensely the mind investigated it before, once the truth is fully realized, the mind feels completely satisfied and has nothing more to search for there. Then the mind naturally moves on to investigate another aspect, and then another, until all doubts are completely removed.

As you continue striving in this way, probing deeper and deeper into the body's true nature while remaining fully focused in the present moment, awareness becomes increasingly sharp and intense. Eventually, this intensity exhausts the mind. Experienced meditators instinctively know when it is time to rest the mind again in samādhi. At that moment, they let go of all investigation and focus on only one meditation object. Completely laying down all burdens, they

enter the cool, peaceful, and refreshing calmness of samādhī. In this way, samādhī becomes a separate practice entirely. No thoughts of any kind disturb the Citta's knowing nature while it rests peacefully in one-pointed concentration. While the Citta is absorbed in complete stillness, the body and the outside world temporarily disappear from awareness. Once the Citta has rested fully, it naturally withdraws back to ordinary awareness on its own. Like a person who has eaten a full meal and rested well, mindfulness and wisdom return refreshed and ready to work again with renewed strength. Then, with firm determination, concentration practice is temporarily set aside and the practice of wisdom resumes once more. In this way, samādhī becomes an excellent support for wisdom.

#7 - Investigate and Contemplate on the Body (Part 3)

The body is extremely important to investigate because most human desires are connected to it. Looking around the world, we can clearly see that people are deeply trapped by sexual desire and obsessed with the human body. As meditators, we must honestly face the challenge of our own sexual desire, which comes from a deep craving for sensual pleasure.

During meditation practice, this defilement becomes one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual progress. The deeper we investigate the body, the more obvious this becomes. No other mental defilement weighs down the mind or controls it as strongly as sexual craving. Since this craving is rooted in the human body, exposing the body's true nature gradually weakens the mind's strong attachment to it.

Body contemplation is the most effective antidote to sexual attraction. Success in this practice can be measured by the gradual weakening of sexual desire in the mind. Step by step, wisdom uncovers the true reality of the body and cuts away deep attachments in the process. As attachment weakens, the mind becomes more free and open. To truly understand the importance of these results, meditators must experience them personally. Trying to explain them in words would only encourage imagination and speculation. These results arise naturally within each meditator according to that person's

own character and temperament. Simply focus completely on the causes—the actual practice—and allow the results to appear naturally. When they arise, you will recognize them clearly and without doubt. This is a natural law.

When body contemplation reaches the point where understanding and direct experience become fully united with wisdom, the mind becomes completely absorbed in these investigations day and night. This stage is extraordinary. Wisdom moves through every part of the body with incredible speed and skill, examining every detail and every aspect in search of truth. At this stage, wisdom begins to arise automatically and becomes a natural habit of the mind. Because wisdom is now so quick and sharp, it can immediately detect even the most subtle mental defilements and weaken even the strongest ones. Wisdom at this level becomes fearless and unstoppable. It is like a powerful river crashing through a canyon, impossible to stop or turn aside. Wisdom rushes forward to confront every form of craving and attachment created by the defilements. Since sexual craving is extremely stubborn and powerful, the battle against it feels like a great war. Because of this, only a bold and uncompromising effort can succeed. At this stage, the meditator instinctively understands that nothing less than a total struggle will be enough.

As wisdom gains greater mastery over body contemplation, it constantly changes and improves its methods so that it does

not fall into the traps of mental defilements. Wisdom always tries to stay ahead of them, continually searching for new approaches and adjusting its methods. Sometimes it changes emphasis; sometimes it uses different subtle techniques. In this way, wisdom remains flexible and skillful in its investigation.

As practice becomes more advanced, there comes a stage where all attachment to one's own body and the bodies of others appears to have disappeared completely. But in truth, a hidden attachment still remains. It has only gone into hiding and has not yet been fully destroyed. This point is extremely important. Although it may seem as though attachment is gone, it is actually concealed by the power of body contemplation. Therefore, do not become careless or overconfident. Continue strengthening mindfulness, wisdom, and diligence. Mentally place the entire body in front of you and examine it carefully. This is your body. What will eventually happen to it? At this stage, wisdom has become so fast and powerful that the body immediately breaks apart and disintegrates before your inner vision. Every time you place the body before the mind—whether your own or another person's—wisdom automatically tears it apart and destroys it. This process has now become completely natural and habitual.

Finally, when wisdom becomes fully skilled at penetrating the deeply unpleasant nature of the body, place the whole mass

of flesh, blood, and bones clearly before your mind and ask yourself: Where does this feeling of disgust come from? What is the true source of this repulsiveness? Focus carefully on the unpleasant image before you and observe closely. You are now approaching the deepest truth. At this important stage of body contemplation, do not allow wisdom to break apart or destroy the body image. Keep the unpleasant image fixed clearly in the mind and carefully observe the feeling of disgust itself. You have created a feeling of revulsion toward this image, but where does that feeling actually arise from? Who is it that considers flesh, blood, and bones disgusting? These things simply exist according to their own natural condition. Who is creating the feeling of disgust toward them? Focus directly on this question. Watch carefully to see where this feeling moves and where it goes. Wherever it moves, follow it closely with mindfulness and wisdom.

This is the decisive stage of body contemplation. At this point, the root of sexual craving is destroyed completely. As you focus continuously on the feeling of repulsiveness created by body contemplation, the feeling of disgust toward the body gradually withdraws inward until it is completely absorbed back into the mind itself. Without being forced, it naturally returns to its original source. This is the critical turning point in body contemplation, where the final truth about sexual craving and the body is fully understood. When the mind fully absorbs this feeling of repulsiveness, a profound realization suddenly appears: the mind itself creates feelings of disgust,

and the mind itself creates feelings of attraction. The mind alone creates ugliness, and the mind alone creates beauty. These qualities do not truly exist in external objects. The mind projects these ideas onto things and then deceives itself into believing that they are beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive. In truth, the mind is constantly painting mental pictures of itself and of the world around it, and then believing those pictures to be real.

At this stage, the meditator realizes with complete certainty that the mind itself creates both attraction and repulsion. The flesh, blood, and bones that were previously the object of investigation contain no real ugliness or beauty within themselves. The human body is not naturally disgusting or naturally attractive. It is the mind that creates these feelings and projects them onto what it sees. Once wisdom clearly penetrates this deception, the mind immediately abandons all external ideas of beauty and ugliness and turns inward to examine the true source of these illusions. The mind itself is both the deceiver and the one being deceived. Only the mind creates images of beauty and ugliness. Therefore, the unpleasant body images that were previously viewed as external objects are now absorbed back into the mind together with the feeling of revulsion that the mind itself created. Both are understood to be the same thing. When this realization occurs, the mind lets go of external images, lets go of attachment to physical forms, and in doing so releases sexual attraction completely.

Sexual attraction is rooted in perceptions about the human body. Once the real source of those perceptions is uncovered, their entire foundation collapses, and attachment naturally disappears by itself. The powerful influence of sexual craving—which has controlled the mind for countless ages, pushing it endlessly toward birth and death—is finally destroyed. This hidden craving no longer has power over the mind. The mind has now moved beyond its influence and become free.

#8 - Conclusion and Results From Practicing Investigation and Contemplation

Please use this explanation only as a guide pointing the way forward, not as something to memorize word for word. I am always careful about giving very detailed explanations because I do not want students to cling to my words and create fixed ideas about the truth they are searching for. My words by themselves cannot awaken wisdom in you. Only mindful awareness firmly grounded in the present moment can lead directly to the truth. Never assume beforehand what the truth is. Do not speculate or build theories about meditation practice. And do not mistakenly believe that reading and understanding these explanations means that you truly understand body and mind. Only direct insight developed through mindfulness, investigated with wisdom, and supported by diligent effort can penetrate the truth.

At this stage of practice, the body has been fully internalized and the power of sexual attraction has already been broken. To continue progressing further, you must now use the same meditation method as a training exercise. The purpose is to train mindfulness and wisdom to become even faster, sharper, and more precise when dealing with the extremely subtle movements of the mind. Place the unpleasant image of the body before the mind as usual and observe how it

withdraws back into the mind. Then place the image before the mind again and repeat the process, carefully observing how the image merges back into the mind itself. Practice this repeatedly until the mind becomes highly skilled at it. Once true skill develops, the image immediately dissolves back into the mind the moment attention focuses on it. When the basic truth behind sexual attraction has been clearly understood, the next step is to continue training the mind through this purely mental exercise. Sexual attraction itself is no longer a major problem because its main root has already been cut off permanently. It cannot return in the same powerful way as before. However, although most of it has been destroyed, subtle traces still remain, like tiny particles of dirt or rust clinging to the mind.

At the stage where external images fully merge into the Citta's own inner image, we can say that at least half of the work of eliminating sensual desire has been completed successfully. This marks the entrance into the final and most advanced stage of practice. The remaining subtle traces of sensual desire must now be gradually removed using the same training method described earlier. Constantly refining the contemplation and the absorption of unpleasant body images strengthens wisdom further. As wisdom grows more skillful, larger portions of sensual desire are completely destroyed. As wisdom becomes increasingly powerful, the speed at which the images disappear into the mind also increases. Eventually, the moment attention touches an

image, it immediately rushes into the mind, merges with it, and vanishes completely. Through continuous practice, this process becomes faster and faster. At the highest level of skill, the image disappears the instant it enters the mind. This investigation is extremely important for progress in the final stage of practice, where sensual desire has already been defeated and is retreating completely. Soon every remaining trace of it will be eliminated.

Once the meditator reaches the final stage and sees clearly the true source of beauty and ugliness, sensual desire can never rise up again. Its control over the mind has been broken permanently, and this state can never reverse. Even so, more work still remains in order to remove every last trace of sensual desire completely. This work takes time. The investigation at this stage becomes very subtle, complex, and rapid, with body images appearing and disappearing at incredible speed. Very intense effort is required to uproot every final trace of sensual desire. However, by this stage the meditator instinctively understands what must be done. The investigation naturally develops its own momentum without needing instruction from anyone else.

Mindfulness and wisdom have now become completely habitual, working together with amazing speed and precision. By the time this investigation reaches its final stage, body images vanish immediately as soon as they appear. It no longer matters whether the images merge into the Citta or

not; only their appearance and disappearance are noticed. Images arise and vanish so quickly that the distinction between inner and outer no longer matters. Eventually, these images flicker in and out of awareness so rapidly that they cannot remain stable even for a moment. After every disappearance, the Citta experiences a deep sense of emptiness—emptiness of images and emptiness of form. Within this emptiness, an extremely refined awareness becomes very clear. Each time an image appears and disappears, the sense of emptiness becomes even deeper. At this stage, the Citta's knowing nature becomes extraordinarily subtle and powerful, dominating awareness completely. Finally, all body images created by the mind disappear entirely and only emptiness remains. Within this emptiness, the Citta's pure knowing nature stands alone, unmatched and completely dominant. When all mentally created body images finally cease, sensual desire is completely destroyed. The contemplation of the body has now reached its completion.

When the meditator finally realizes directly that all physical form is naturally empty—empty of personality, empty of beauty, empty of ugliness—the tremendous danger caused by sensual desire becomes fully understood. This destructive defilement spreads poison everywhere. It damages human relationships and disturbs the entire world, twisting people's thoughts and emotions and creating anxiety, restlessness, and endless dissatisfaction. Nothing else causes as much

disturbance and suffering in human life. It is one of the most destructive forces in the world. When sensual desire is completely destroyed, the entire world appears empty. The force that sets people's hearts on fire and creates chaos in society has now been defeated and buried. The fire of sexual attraction has been extinguished permanently, and nothing remains to trouble the heart anymore. Once sensual desire is eliminated, Nibbāna appears very near. Sensual desire hides the truth and blinds people from seeing reality clearly. Therefore, when sensual desire is finally destroyed, the path, the fruits of practice, and Nibbāna can all be seen clearly and directly. They are now close at hand.

#9 - The Stage of Anagami and the Further Investigation and Contemplation

To summarize, the stage of Anagami is reached when sexual desire no longer controls the mind. After this, the Anagami must continue using the same methods of investigation that brought this result, developing and refining them further until images of the body no longer appear within the Citta. The mind creates mental images and then becomes attached to its own creations. A fully accomplished Anagami understands this with complete certainty. The human body, and everything people believe it represents, are only deceptions created by the mind itself. The body is merely a mass of material elements combined together. It is not a person; it is neither beautiful nor ugly. It simply exists according to its natural condition. The mind creates the false appearance that we perceive, and then becomes deceived by its own false perceptions.

All the organs of the human body are only instruments used by the knowing nature of the Citta. The knowing awareness of the Citta spreads throughout the whole body. This spreading of consciousness through the body is entirely an expression of the Citta itself. The physical elements that make up the body have no awareness of their own. They do not know anything and possess no consciousness. Knowing and sense awareness connected with the body arise only from the Citta and its activities. The eyes, ears, and nose can

perceive objects only because of the awareness of the Citta. These organs are simply tools through which sense consciousness operates. By themselves, they have no awareness at all.

Normally, we believe that the eyes themselves can see. But when the true nature of the body is fully understood, we realize that the eyeball is only a piece of flesh. It is the consciousness flowing through the eyes that actually sees and knows visual objects. Consciousness uses the eyes as instruments to access the visual world. The eyes are no different from the eyes of a dead animal lying beside the road. The physical eye has no real value on its own; it is basically lifeless matter. This truth becomes known with complete clarity. So how can the body be oneself? How can it truly belong to oneself? Such a belief is unnatural.

This truth becomes especially clear when consciousness that normally spreads throughout the body gathers inward and enters deep concentration. At that moment, the whole body appears as nothing more than a lump of matter—a log or tree stump. When the Citta leaves deep concentration, awareness spreads back through the body again, filling every limb and every part. Awareness and knowing are natural functions of the Citta, not of the physical body. In ordinary waking consciousness, a meditator at this stage clearly knows that the Citta and knowing are one timeless reality, while the physical body itself knows nothing. During deep

concentration, the body may disappear from awareness, but awareness itself never disappears.

In truth, this is an unchanging law of nature. However, when mental defilements enter the Citta, they make us cling to everything as “me” or “mine,” causing confusion between our true nature and the body and senses it animates. This is how defilements operate. Wisdom works in the opposite way. It sees the body clearly for what it really is and corrects this misunderstanding. Defilements always cling to the body and make us believe it is an important part of ourselves. Wisdom sees the body only as a collection of ordinary physical substances, and because of this, it releases all personal attachment to it.

The brain, for example, is only a lump of matter. It is simply a tool used by consciousness. When the Citta enters deep calm and concentration, the awareness that normally spreads throughout the body gathers together into one central point in the middle of the chest. The knowing quality becomes very clear at that point. It does not come from the brain. Although memory and learning are connected with the brain, direct realization of truth is not. From the beginning stages of concentration practice onward, true progress in meditation is experienced and understood in the heart alone. This is where truth is realized, and sincere meditators know this through direct experience. When it comes to understanding the true nature of reality, the brain itself is not useful. The peaceful

and radiant qualities of the Citta are experienced in the heart. They shine clearly from that point. Every aspect of the Citta, from the grossest to the most subtle, is experienced there. And when all mental defilements are finally destroyed, they also cease there.

Within the Citta, memory and thought are the main causes of delusion. Beginning in the later stages of body contemplation at the level of Anagami, these mental parts become the main focus of investigation. Once the body is no longer a major issue, the meditator naturally turns attention toward feelings, memory, thoughts, and consciousness. Among these, memory and thought are especially important. They constantly arise together to create mental images and meanings. The same principles of investigation still apply, but now the focus is no longer the body. Instead, the thinking process itself becomes the object of examination.

With deep introspection, wisdom watches thoughts and memories arise and disappear, arise and disappear, continuing endlessly as a chain of mental activity. No sooner does a thought appear than it vanishes again. No matter what kind of thought it is, the result is always the same: it lasts only a moment before disappearing. The investigation focuses directly on the thinking process itself, penetrating deeply into the knowing nature of the mind. Wisdom follows every thought and every small idea as it appears and fades away, then immediately observes the next one. This is a

difficult and exhausting task that requires complete attention day and night. At this stage, time and place no longer matter. The investigation can continue constantly for weeks or even months while mindfulness and wisdom struggle with the endless flow of mental activity.

This work is mentally exhausting. Wisdom examines every aspect of mental activity without stopping, day and night. While observing thoughts, it also uses thoughts themselves to question and examine the workings of the mind in order to discover truth. This kind of thinking serves the path of practice. Wisdom uses it as a tool for uncovering reality. It is not ordinary thinking driven by craving and suffering. Even so, because the investigation is so intense, the mind eventually becomes tired, dull, and sluggish after many hours of effort. When this happens, the mind must rest. More than at any other stage, the mind now needs regular periods of calm concentration. Yet because the results gained through wisdom seem so extraordinary compared to the peaceful stillness of concentration, meditators are often reluctant to rest in concentration. The mind feels bright, energetic, and highly alert, so concentration may appear inactive and unproductive. In reality, however, concentration is an essential support for wisdom.

Therefore, the mind must sometimes be forced into concentration. It must temporarily stop all investigation and focus entirely on entering a calm, peaceful, unified state.

There it rests until it becomes fully refreshed and strengthened again before returning to the liberating work of wisdom. As soon as the mind leaves concentration, it quickly returns to investigation. Like a horse eager to run, the mind rushes back toward its main task—the destruction of all mental defilements. But care must be taken so the mind does not become too extreme in its efforts. Excessive investigation can itself become a cause of suffering, allowing thoughts to overpower the mind. The mental processes used by wisdom naturally gather momentum and do not know moderation on their own. From time to time they must be restrained so that balance is maintained between work and rest. At this stage, wisdom naturally functions at full strength. When it is time to rest, concentration must also be practiced with full commitment. This balance is the middle way leading to liberation and Nibbāna.

The Citta and its relationship with mental phenomena become the central focus of investigation at this stage. The Citta is the essential knowing nature at the center of our being. It is pure awareness that simply knows. Awareness of good and bad, along with the judgments connected to them, are only temporary conditions arising within the Citta. Sometimes these activities appear as mindfulness; at other times, as wisdom. But the true Citta itself does not perform activities or create conditions. It simply knows. Activities such as happiness and suffering, praise and blame, or awareness of good and bad are all conditions arising from consciousness

flowing out from the Citta. Because these conditions constantly arise and disappear, they are unstable and unreliable. In this way, memory, thought, and consciousness are all temporary conditions connected with the Citta.

These conditions create the changing flow of mental phenomena. Through the interaction of feeling, memory, thought, and consciousness, images and forms arise within the Citta. The awareness that knows these images is the Citta itself. Mental defilements, such as sensual desire, influence and color this knowing. As long as the Citta believes these inner images are real and solid, desire and aversion will continue to arise. Internal images are then loved or hated according to how they are perceived—good or bad, attractive or repulsive. The mind becomes trapped between these opposites and identifies with a world of duality and instability. The knowing nature of the Citta itself does not arise or disappear, but it imitates the unstable qualities of the defilements and mental phenomena connected to it. When wisdom clearly sees through this deception, the Citta no longer clings to these phenomena even though they continue arising and disappearing within the mind. In this way, the Citta becomes empty of them.

From the moment of birth until now, mental and physical phenomena have been continuously arising and disappearing. By themselves, they possess no lasting substance at all. The Citta's mistaken interpretation gives

them a false appearance of personal reality. The Citta clings to them as oneself or as belonging to oneself. This misunderstanding creates a heavy burden of self-identity that the Citta carries within itself without receiving any benefit. The only result is suffering produced by self-delusion.

When the Citta investigates these things and sees them clearly through sharp wisdom, the body is understood simply as a natural phenomenon existing according to its own physical qualities. It is not part of oneself and therefore is no longer clung to. Bodily feelings—pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings connected with the body—are also clearly understood as natural conditions existing only within their own domain, and attachment to them is abandoned as well. However, wisdom has not yet fully penetrated the subtle feelings arising only within the Citta itself. Emotional and psychological feelings—pleasant, painful, and neutral mental feelings—still continue to attract the attention of the Citta. Although their true nature is not yet fully understood, these subtle feelings remain as reminders that continue encouraging the Citta to investigate further.

#10 - Finally Attained Arahantship

As a whole, the source of thoughts and imagination is called the thinking aggregate. Every thought or small mental movement appears briefly in the mind and then disappears. By themselves, these mental movements have no fixed meaning. They simply arise for a moment in awareness and then vanish without leaving anything behind. Only when the memory and interpretation aggregate takes hold of them do they become thoughts and ideas with clear meaning and content. This aggregate is responsible for memory, recognition, and interpretation. It takes small fragments of thought, interprets them, expands on them, and gives them importance, turning them into issues and stories. Then the thinking aggregate continues building upon these issues through endless mental chatter. However, memory and interpretation are the main cause behind the process. As soon as a thought appears, memory immediately grabs it, labels it as something, and begins disturbing the mind. These two mental activities are the main source of trouble.

Together they create stories of happiness and suffering, then convince us that these stories are real and belong to us. By relying on memory to recognize everything appearing in awareness, the mind gives meaning to experiences and becomes attached to them.

Thoughts arise and disappear with clear beginnings and endings, like flashes of lightning or fireflies blinking on and

off. When observed carefully, the memory and interpretation aggregate is much more subtle than the thinking aggregate. Thoughts burst quickly into awareness and form the basic material for thinking. Memory and interpretation, however, are not experienced as quick flashes. When the mind is completely still and mental activity becomes very quiet, we can clearly observe how each mental process arises. Memory and interpretation slowly spread through the Citta like ink spreading through paper, gradually expanding until a mental image forms. Following this process, thoughts begin constructing stories around those images, and those stories eventually seem to take on a life of their own. Thinking about anything always begins when memory recognizes and interprets small mental movements, shaping them into recognizable images that thoughts then continue to expand upon. Both of these mental activities are natural processes. They arise on their own and are separate from the awareness that knows them.

When the Citta has investigated these mental processes repeatedly, continuously, and without stopping, it gradually becomes highly skilled. Through wisdom, we first let go of attachment to the physical body. In the beginning stages of investigation, wisdom sees through the body before it fully sees through the other mental aggregates. Later, the Citta gradually releases attachment to feelings, memory, thoughts, and consciousness in the same way.

Simply speaking, the Citta lets go only when wisdom fully understands the mental components of personality. Before wisdom clearly sees them, the Citta continues clinging to them. Once wisdom penetrates them completely, the Citta releases them all, realizing they are merely temporary mental movements within the Citta and possess no real substance. Whether thoughts are good or bad, they all arise and disappear in exactly the same way. No matter how thoughts appear, they are only temporary creations formed by memory and thought, and they always vanish. There are no exceptions. No thought lasts longer than a brief instant. Since thoughts have no lasting duration, they also have no true substance or reliable meaning. Therefore, they cannot be trusted.

So what keeps producing these endless thoughts? What continues creating them moment after moment? One thought appears, then another follows, constantly deceiving us. They come from sights, sounds, tastes, smells, bodily sensations, feelings, memories, thoughts, and consciousness. We automatically believe the assumptions we make about our experiences, continuing the deception until it burns within our hearts like fire. The Citta becomes contaminated by these mental habits and assumptions.

The purpose of investigation is to remove these contaminating factors. When they disappear, the true nature of the Citta becomes visible. We then see that whenever the

Citta does not move outward to become involved with objects, it naturally remains calm, peaceful, and radiant. As the saying goes: “Monks, the original Citta is naturally bright and clear, but it becomes defiled by passing mental defilements.” This original radiant Citta refers to the mind that continues wandering through birth and death in the cycle of rebirth. It can be compared to the mind of a newborn child whose mental abilities are not yet developed enough to fully understand sense objects. It does not refer to the completely pure Citta that has fully gone beyond rebirth.

As the Citta is investigated more deeply step by step, all the mental defilements that once moved around freely gather together into a single radiant center within the Citta. This radiance is extremely magnificent and captivating. At first, even the highest mindfulness and wisdom can become fascinated by it. It is an entirely new experience unlike anything encountered before. It appears extraordinary, majestic, and awe-inspiring, as though nothing could compare with it. And why should it not appear that way? For countless lifetimes, this radiance has ruled over the three worlds of existence like a supreme king. Since beginningless time, it has controlled the Citta completely. As long as the Citta lacks the mindfulness and wisdom needed to free itself, this radiance continues controlling it and causing rebirth in many different states of existence through the power of subtle defilements. In truth, it is this refined inner radiance

that keeps living beings wandering endlessly through birth and death.

Once the Citta fully understands the body, feelings, memory, thought, and consciousness with complete certainty, only very subtle mental movements remain within the Citta. These appear as delicate forms of thought causing subtle activity inside the mind: subtle happiness, subtle suffering, and subtle inner radiance. That is all they are. At this stage, supreme mindfulness and wisdom focus entirely on these subtle inner movements, constantly observing and examining them.

The radiance created by the gathering together of mental defilements appears as a very refined point of brightness centered within the Citta. Occasionally, a subtle dullness arises and slightly clouds this radiance, causing a very subtle form of suffering to appear as well. In reality, brightness and dullness are simply two sides of the same conditioned reality. At this level, radiance, dullness, and subtle suffering always appear together.

Because of this, whenever the Citta experiences this wonderful radiance, it also feels slightly concerned that the experience might change or become disturbed at any moment. Mindfulness and wisdom work constantly to protect and preserve the radiance from becoming clouded. Yet no matter how subtle these disturbances are, they still belong to mental defilements. Therefore, meditators must never

become complacent. Wisdom must continue examining these subtle changes in the Citta's radiance with complete persistence.

To remove this subtle anxiety and completely resolve the issue, ask yourself: What exactly is this radiance? Focus carefully on it until you truly know. Why does it change? One moment it shines brightly; the next moment it becomes slightly dimmed. One moment there is subtle happiness; the next moment subtle suffering appears. One moment there is complete satisfaction; the next dissatisfaction quietly enters. Observe carefully this subtle happiness that still shows slight instability. Then notice the slightest appearance of suffering. At this refined level of mind, even the smallest irregularity becomes noticeable. Why does this subtle state of the Citta continue changing in different ways? It is not completely constant or reliable. Continue investigating fearlessly. Do not fear that destroying this radiance means destroying your true nature. Focus directly on this central point until you clearly see that the radiance possesses the same characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self as every other phenomenon already investigated. The only difference is that this radiance is far more subtle and refined.

At this stage of investigation, nothing should be accepted blindly or trusted within the realm of conditioned reality. Bring your attention deeply into the Citta and allow wisdom to continue its work. Every false appearance originates within

the Citta itself, and this radiance is the most obvious of them all. It is the ultimate illusion. Because you cherish and protect it more than anything else, you naturally hesitate to disturb it. Nothing in the physical body appears as extraordinary as this inner brightness. It creates such amazement and fascination that you instinctively want to preserve it. Yet this very radiance is actually fundamental ignorance itself, although you do not yet recognize it. Since you have never encountered it before, you naturally become deceived by it. Later, when mindfulness and wisdom become fully mature, the truth will reveal itself clearly without outside help. Then you will know: this is ignorance. True ignorance is nothing more than this mesmerizing point of brilliance. Do not imagine ignorance as some ugly demon or monster. In reality, it appears as the most beautiful and attractive thing in existence.

True ignorance is very different from what people normally imagine. Therefore, when meditators first encounter it, they fail to recognize it, and their practice becomes stuck there. Without a teacher to guide them and explain how to investigate further, they may remain trapped for a long time before understanding its true nature and moving beyond it. But with proper guidance, meditators can quickly understand the principle involved and investigate this radiant center directly without trusting it. This investigation must be carried out in exactly the same way as every other natural phenomenon.

After letting go of attachment to all five aggregates, the Citta becomes extremely refined. Although it has released everything else, it still has not released attachment to itself. The knowing nature of the Citta remains affected by the fundamental ignorance that does not yet understand its own true essence, and therefore it still clings to itself. At this point, all ignorance gathers into one central location within the Citta. Since all external attachments through the senses have already been cut off, ignorance has nowhere else to go and gathers inward instead. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body once served as channels through which ignorance flowed outward toward sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Once mindfulness and wisdom permanently close these channels, ignorance loses all external outlets. Only a subtle inner vibration remains within the Citta itself. Since it no longer has outward activity, it relies completely on the Citta as its base. As long as wisdom has not fully transcended it, ignorance continues appearing as subtle happiness, subtle suffering, and overwhelming radiance. Therefore, the Citta continues focusing its investigation on these subtle experiences.

Every conditioned reality, no matter how refined, bright, or magnificent, always shows some slight instability. These tiny irregularities are enough to attract the attention of the Citta and encourage further investigation. The subtle happiness and suffering arising within the Citta, as well as the amazing radiance shining from it, all originate from ignorance. But

because we have never experienced them before, we become deluded and attach to them during the early stages of investigation. We fall deeply under the spell of ignorance, believing these subtle feelings and radiant brightness to be our true self beyond all name and form. Unaware of the mistake, we accept this majestic state of Citta mixed with ignorance as our real identity.

But this misunderstanding does not last forever. At this level, supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom never become careless. They constantly observe, examine, and analyze everything again and again. Eventually, truth becomes clear. They notice that the subtle feelings of happiness and suffering still show tiny changes that do not match the majestic radiance of the Citta. Even the smallest trace of suffering is enough to raise suspicion. Why does the Citta continue changing in these subtle ways? Why is it never completely stable? These tiny irregularities within the radiant center of the Citta create just enough movement to attract the careful attention of mindfulness and wisdom.

Once these irregularities are noticed, distrust naturally arises, warning wisdom that further investigation is needed. The knowing quality of the Citta itself now becomes the object of examination. Mindfulness and wisdom focus entirely on this point, trying to discover what this knowing truly is. Everything else has already been thoroughly investigated and abandoned step by step. Only this bright and amazing

knowing presence remains. What exactly is it? As mindfulness and wisdom focus deeply on it, the entire Citta becomes the center of an intense investigation. It turns into a battlefield for supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom. Before long, they completely destroy the ignorance hidden within the Citta that once appeared so glorious and magnificent. It is totally wiped away until not even the smallest trace remains.

When investigated with sharp and penetrating wisdom until fully understood, this final illusion suddenly breaks apart and disappears in a completely unexpected way. That moment of awakening can be described as complete enlightenment or the total destruction of the endless cycle of birth and death. At that moment, absolute certainty arises. When the radiant center disintegrates, something even more extraordinary—something long hidden by ignorance—is fully revealed. It feels as though a tremendous earthquake shakes the entire universe within the Citta. This moment, when the Citta breaks free from all conditioned reality, is beyond description in its wonder and magnificence. It is precisely here, when ignorance is finally extinguished, that the path of complete liberation becomes the fruition of complete liberation. The path reaches perfection, and full enlightenment is attained. Dhamma and the Citta become completely perfected. From that moment onward, all problems end. This is the true nature of Nibbāna.

When the condition once believed to be so magnificent finally breaks apart, something impossible to describe appears fully. That reality is Absolute Purity. Compared to this purity, the ignorance once treasured so highly is like cow dung compared to pure gold. Even a small child knows which is more valuable, so no further comparison is necessary.

The destruction of ignorance marks the final arrival of both the path and fruition of enlightenment. It is like climbing the stairs to a house: one foot remains on the final step while the other reaches the floor inside the house. We cannot yet say we have fully entered until both feet stand firmly inside. In the same way, the Citta fully reaches Dhamma only when it stands completely within the supreme reality of Nibbāna. From that moment onward, the Citta is entirely free. It no longer performs any activity aimed at removing defilements because nothing remains to remove. This is the fruition of full enlightenment, experienced only by those completely free from mental defilements while still alive.

As for the body, feelings, memory, thought, and consciousness, they are simply natural processes that arise and cease on their own without affecting or contaminating the Citta in any way. The same is true for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Each exists according to its own separate nature. Their existence no longer creates any problem because the Citta is now free from the ignorance that once caused false assumptions about them. Fully

knowing the truth, the Citta understands both its own knowing nature and the reality of all natural phenomena inside and outside itself. Since each thing now remains within its own separate reality, the conflicts that once existed between them disappear completely. All things simply follow their own nature. At this stage, the long struggle between mental defilements and the Citta finally comes to an end.

When truth is known in this way, the Citta no longer feels fear or concern regarding the life and death of the body and mind. The Citta simply observes how natural processes arise, interact, and disappear, and how the body eventually breaks apart at death. But because the essential knowing nature of the Citta never dies, fear of death no longer exists. One accepts death when it comes, and accepts life while it continues. Both are simply different aspects of the same truth.

#11 - The Attainment of an Arahant

(Part 1)

This concludes the investigation of the Citta. At this level, the Citta is forever freed from birth and existence, completely cut off from all forms of ignorance and craving. The state where “ignorance conditions mental formations” comes to a complete end. It is replaced by the fading away and cessation of all conditioned phenomena, bringing the entire mass of suffering to an end.

When ignorance is destroyed, the conditioned phenomena that create suffering are also destroyed. They no longer remain within the knowing nature of the Citta. Conditioned phenomena, such as thoughts that belong to the aggregates, still continue functioning naturally, but they no longer produce suffering. Free from mental defilements, they simply serve as ordinary mental activities. Consciousness still arises, but it does so naturally and peacefully without creating suffering. The sense organs and sense contact also continue according to their own natural conditions. They no longer disturb the Citta because it has fully completed its task. This is the complete ending of all suffering.

When ignorance and all mental defilements are extinguished, they are extinguished within the Citta itself. The destruction of ignorance is also the destruction of the cycle of birth and death. Both exist only within the Citta, because ignorance-

filled craving is the true cause of birth, aging, sickness, and death. Once ignorance completely breaks apart and separates forever from the Citta, total cessation is achieved. The Citta then becomes completely free, vast, boundless, and supremely empty. Nothing limits or obstructs it anymore. All contradictions disappear. When the Citta knows, it knows only truth; when it sees, it sees only truth. This is true emptiness.

There are many levels of emptiness. Deep concentration meditation is one level. In deep samādhi, the body and thinking mind temporarily disappear from awareness, making the Citta seem empty. But this emptiness lasts only as long as the meditation lasts. At the beginning stages of wisdom practice, the Citta can permanently separate itself from the physical body, but it still remains connected to feeling, memory, thought, and consciousness. At that stage, the Citta is empty of bodily forms, but not empty of mental activity. Wisdom can then clearly see that the body is not oneself, allowing attachment to the body to end forever. Yet attachment to the mental activities still remains. By continuing the investigation, the Citta gradually lets go of these mental factors as well. Then only a powerful radiance and a profound mental emptiness remain. This is the great power of genuine ignorance. By continuing to apply full mindfulness and wisdom, ignorance is finally destroyed within the Citta. Once everything contaminating the Citta is removed, genuine emptiness is attained. This emptiness is

complete and permanent, requiring no further effort to maintain. This is true and absolute freedom.

The difference between the emptiness of the ignorance-filled Citta and the emptiness of the pure Citta can be compared to a person standing in an empty room. While standing there admiring the emptiness, the person forgets about himself. Because he sees nothing else in the room, he focuses only on the emptiness and ignores the fact that he himself is still occupying the room. As long as someone remains inside, the room is not truly empty. Only when he leaves does the room become genuinely empty. In the same way, when the Citta lets go of all phenomena, it may appear completely empty. But the one admiring the emptiness still remains. The sense of self, which is the essence of ignorance, is still hidden within the knowing nature of the Citta. This is the genuine ignorance. The self itself is the final obstacle. Once it completely dissolves and disappears, nothing remains to obstruct emptiness. The outer world is empty, and the inside of the Citta is empty as well. True emptiness occurs only when every trace of conventional reality disappears from the Citta.

The destruction of ignorance is unlike the ending of anything previously investigated. Earlier investigations ended with a gradual understanding of their true nature. But the radiance of ignorance disappears instantly, like a flash of lightning. It suddenly flips over and vanishes completely. Only after it

disappears does one realize that it was the true ignorance all along. What remains afterward is entirely unique and absolutely pure. Although it has never been experienced before, there is no room for doubt. Everything that could create doubt vanished together with ignorance. This is the end of all burdens.

Every idea about oneself or one's true essence actually refers to this genuine ignorance. It is this self that knows, understands, shines, and feels happy. The feelings of "I" and "mine" exist here. Everything is done for its sake. But once this ignorance finally disintegrates, the personal point of view also disappears. Actions still happen, but they are no longer done for anyone.

It is like a pot whose bottom has fallen out. No matter how much water is poured into it, nothing remains inside. Thoughts and ideas still arise and cease naturally as functions of the aggregates, but nothing sticks to the Citta because the container that once held them—ignorance—has been destroyed. A thought arises one moment and disappears the next. Since nothing contains it and nobody claims ownership of it, the thought simply vanishes. The nature that knows this complete emptiness is fully content within itself. This is true absolute purity, completely free from all burdens.

The true nature of the Citta is so thoroughly hidden by ignorance that its incredible purity is never seen. The deception of ignorance is so skillfully disguised that

meditators who reach this stage are easily fooled. They become deeply fascinated by what seems to be the Citta's true magnificence. They treasure it so much that they feel they must protect it at all costs, believing that this radiant wonder is their real self.

Genuine ignorance is a single focal point containing many extraordinary and subtle qualities hidden inside it. These qualities contaminate the Citta in the same way a tiny poisoned bait can kill an animal. Since there are no good worldly comparisons for these hidden contaminations, only a brief explanation can be given. They include a radiance so magnificent that it appears complete and perfect; a happiness so exceptional that it seems beyond all conventional reality; a feeling of invulnerability that seems untouchable; and a strong attachment to this radiant state, cherishing it as something supremely precious.

The ignorance-filled Citta appears to possess every virtue. It is bright, fearless, deeply contented, and its knowing quality seems limitless. Yet despite understanding countless things, it still does not understand itself. This is the fundamental ignorance hidden within genuine ignorance. The moment this knowing nature turns back and investigates itself, ignorance instantly disintegrates. Its destruction reveals the true nature of the Citta and the true nature of Dhamma. Ignorance alone had hidden this truth.

Meditators who are not highly skilled in wisdom will struggle to escape genuine ignorance because ordinary ignorance and genuine ignorance are very different. Ordinary ignorance contains many different forms of delusion, both internal and external. It is like a tree with leaves, branches, twigs, and a trunk. Genuine ignorance, however, is like a tree that has already been cut down and stripped of its branches. Through persistent wisdom, the many outward expressions of ignorance are gradually removed one by one until everything converges into a single point within the Citta. At that stage, ignorance no longer has the many activities it once controlled. What remains at that point is the genuine ignorance itself.

The branches of ignorance are countless and varied. All other mental defilements are merely its offshoots. By focusing only on the branches, we overlook the root. Because of this, when we finally encounter genuine ignorance, we fail to recognize it. It is like a vine that spreads far across the ground with countless tangled branches. We must follow the vine all the way back to its source until we find the main stem. There we discover the root. Once the root is pulled out, the entire plant dies.

#12 - How Ajahn Maha Bua Attained Arahantship

The basis of death exists within the Citta itself, because both birth and death appear there. But the Citta itself is never truly born and never truly dies. The defilements that enter and spread through the Citta keep beings trapped in the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Do you understand? Look carefully at the Citta. If you cannot see the poisonous nature hidden in the Citta, then you will not see the poisonous nature of the defilements either. At the highest stage of practice, the radiant and mesmerizing Citta itself becomes the real danger. So do not think only about how precious and wonderful the Citta is, because hidden danger exists there. If you look at the Citta from this perspective, you will see the hidden harm inside it. Do you understand? As long as you continue admiring and valuing the radiant Citta, you will remain trapped there and unable to move beyond it. It is that simple. Remember this warning well. When the final moment comes, you must let go of everything completely. Leave nothing behind. Whatever you still preserve becomes the Ultimate Danger.

Speaking about this reminds me of the time I practiced at Wat Doi Dhammachedi. It was early morning before the meal. At that time, my Citta possessed such incredible brilliance that I was completely amazed by it. I thought to myself, “Why is this Citta so unbelievably radiant?” I stood on

my walking meditation path contemplating that brightness, overwhelmed by how marvelous it seemed. But in truth, that very radiance I admired so much was actually the Ultimate Danger. Do you understand what I mean?

We naturally become fascinated by the radiant Citta. In truth, I myself had already fallen under its spell and been deceived by it. When all other things disappear, attention gathers on this final center point, which is actually the core of the endless cycle of birth and death. This is the condition of fundamental ignorance. This point is the highest level of ignorance, the very summit of the Citta wandering in saṃsāra.

At that stage, nothing else remained, so I simply admired that expansive radiance. Yet that radiance still had a center point. It was like the glowing filament inside a pressure lantern. The filament shines brightly, spreading light everywhere around it. That was the important point that amazed and awed me so deeply. I wondered, “Why is my Citta so extraordinarily bright? It seems as if it has gone beyond the whole world of saṃsāra.” Such is the powerful deception displayed by ignorance at the final stage of practice. At that time, I still did not realize that I had already fallen for its trick.

Then suddenly, a Dhamma teaching arose naturally in my heart, as if someone had spoken directly inside me: “If there is still a point or center of the knower anywhere, that is the nucleus of existence.” I can never forget those words. It was

exactly the teaching I needed at that moment. It pointed directly to that center of radiance. Yet even then, I did not fully understand it. I was confused. “A point? A center?” It referred to the focal point of that radiant brightness.

I began investigating that “point” after Ajahn Mun Bhuridatta passed away. The teaching repeated in my mind: “If there is still a point or center of the knower anywhere, that is the nucleus of existence.” If he had still been alive, he could have immediately explained my confusion by saying: “It is the center point of that radiance.” Then the problem would have ended instantly. The moment I understood its true meaning, I would have recognized its danger, and it would have disappeared immediately. But instead, I continued protecting and preserving it carefully. That was the Ultimate Danger. The center of brilliant radiance itself was the source that produced the whole world of conventional reality.

I will always remember it. It was during the month of February. The body of Venerable Ajahn Mun had just been cremated, and I went into the mountains. There I became trapped by this very problem. It completely bewildered me. In the end, I gained no benefit from the Dhamma teaching that had arisen in my heart. Instead of helping me, it became mixed into the same deep delusion that already covered my mind. I kept wondering, “Where exactly is this point?” Of course, it was simply the center of that radiance, but it never occurred to me that the center of the radiant Citta itself could

be the Ultimate Danger. I still believed it was the Ultimate Virtue. This is how defilements deceive us. Even though I had already been warned that it was the Ultimate Danger, its power still bewitched me and made me see it as the Ultimate Virtue. I will never forget how heavily that confusion weighed on me.

Eventually, I left Wat Doi Dhammachedi and traveled to Sri Chiang Mai in Ban Pheu district. I stayed deep in the forest at Pha Dak Cave for three months before returning to Wat Doi Dhammachedi, still carrying that mystery in my mind. Then, while staying on the mountain ridge there, the problem was finally solved.

When the decisive moment arrives, time and place no longer matter. They completely disappear from attention. Only the magnificent natural radiance of the Citta remains. At that stage, nothing else remained for me to investigate. I had already let go of everything else. Only that radiance remained. Except for the center point of the radiant Citta, the entire universe had already been fully abandoned. Can you now understand what I mean when I say this point is the Ultimate Danger?

At that point, supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom gathered together at the center of the Citta and focused the entire force of investigation directly there. I reached a stage where I began wondering why one Citta could display so many different conditions. I can say with certainty that every

aspect of the Citta was clearly known, and every aspect was constantly changing. The moment one state was recognized, it changed into another. One moment it appeared good, another moment bad. The investigation concentrated entirely on that point, examining everything carefully: “Why does this single Citta contain so many changing conditions? Why is it not unified?” Every variation of the Citta was fully understood according to the incredible subtlety of that level of practice, where supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom worked together perfectly. Together, they kept up with every movement of the Citta, no matter how subtle. One moment it was bright, the next slightly dull. “Why does this Citta have so many different states?” One moment there was happiness, the next moment suffering.

Within the realm of conventional reality, these changing conditions always exist within the Citta. Since nothing else remained to investigate, supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom focused directly on the point where these changes appeared. One moment there was happiness, the next suffering; one moment brightness, the next slight dullness.

But you must understand that these changes were extremely subtle, almost impossible to detect. Still, supreme mindfulness remained directly aware of them the entire time.

“Why does the Citta have so many variations?” At that moment, mindfulness abandoned everything else and turned all attention toward the main source. Every part of the

investigation came together within the Citta itself. At the highest level, supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom become so subtle and powerful that they penetrate everything at once. This highest level is different from the automatic mindfulness and wisdom used earlier in practice. Automatic mindfulness and wisdom work together naturally and investigate step by step, cutting through things gradually. But supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom at the highest level penetrate all things simultaneously.

At that time, they were examining the center point of the Citta. Everything else had already been investigated and discarded. Only that small point of knowing remained. It became obvious that both happiness and suffering came from that same source. Brightness and dullness also arose there. Why did one single Citta contain so many different characteristics?

Then suddenly, in one instant, Dhamma answered the question by itself. This is called “Dhamma arising in the heart.” Defilements arising in the heart bind beings to suffering, but Dhamma arising in the heart frees beings from bondage. Dhamma suddenly appeared like a voice within the heart: “Whether dullness or brightness, happiness or suffering, all of these dualities are not-self.” That was the final insight that cut through everything completely. For another person, the final realization might arise through impermanence or suffering, depending on their character.

But for me, it appeared as not-self. The meaning became crystal clear: let go of everything. All of it is not-self.

The moment this was fully understood, the Citta became completely still. Having seen with certainty that everything was not-self, there was nowhere left for the mind to move. The Citta rested perfectly still within that Dhamma. It no longer cared about self or not-self, happiness or suffering, brightness or dullness. The Citta rested peacefully at the center, perfectly neutral and calm. But this calmness existed together with supreme mindfulness and supreme wisdom. It was not a dull or blank state. Outwardly it might have seemed inactive, but inwardly awareness remained complete. The Citta simply rested in total stillness and peace.

Then, from that perfectly neutral state, the nucleus of existence—the core of the knower—suddenly separated and fell away. Having finally been fully seen as not-self, brightness, dullness, and everything connected with them were instantly shattered and destroyed forever.

At the exact moment when ignorance flipped over and disappeared from the Citta, it felt as if the sky collapsed and the whole universe shook violently. In truth, it is ignorance alone that causes beings to wander endlessly throughout saṃsāra. Therefore, when ignorance separated from the Citta and vanished, it felt as though the entire universe collapsed and disappeared together with it. Earth and sky vanished in a single instant. Do you understand?

No one judged or decided anything at that moment. That natural truth revealed itself and completed itself automatically. The universe collapsed by itself. From the perfectly neutral state of the Citta, everything happened suddenly. In one instant, the entire cosmos seemed to flip over and disappear. It was unbelievably magnificent. Truly beyond words. This is the extraordinary nature of the Dhamma that I now teach.

Tears flowed from my eyes when it happened. Even now, remembering that moment still brings tears. These tears belong only to the aggregates of body and mind. Please understand that they were not part of the pure state that appeared at that moment. That pure state revealed itself suddenly in all its unimaginable magnificence. I want all of you who are careless in practice to understand what the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha is truly like. Oh, it was so unbelievably wonderful! Tears streamed down my face as I exclaimed in amazement: “Is this how the Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment? Is this what Enlightenment truly is? Is this what true Dhamma is like?” It was something I had never imagined before. It appeared suddenly, completely unexpected. Even now, the memory remains vivid and alive within me.

My entire body trembled at that moment. It is difficult to explain. Everything happened simultaneously: the sky collapsed and the world vanished completely. Again and

again I repeated: “Is this how the Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment?” But in truth, there was no need to ask anymore because I had directly encountered the Truth itself. “Is this what the true Dhamma is? Is this what the true Sangha is?” At that moment, all three became one single supreme reality, what I call the Dhamma-element. “How can the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha all be one and the same?” I had never imagined such a thing possible.

Previously I had always understood them separately: “The Buddha is the Buddha. The Dhamma is the Dhamma. The Sangha is the Sangha.” This understanding had remained with me since childhood. But when the Supreme Dhamma appeared fully and clearly, all three were revealed as one single reality—the true nature of the marvelous Dhamma itself. The moment it appeared, everything that had previously been hidden and unknown became completely illuminated. I am not inventing stories to deceive anyone. Even now, that extraordinary Dhamma still moves and amazes me. Its light fills everything, illuminating the entire universe. Nothing remains hidden anymore.

At that moment, the reality of karma and the existence of heavens and hells became absolutely undeniable. I wish all skeptics could experience such certainty. Many people are deceived by defilements into believing there are no consequences of evil actions, no consequences of good actions, and no heavens or hells. But these realities have

existed since beginningless time. They have always been present everywhere. People simply have not perceived them yet. Do you understand? These truths have always existed. They continue harming those who remain ignorant of them and blinded by the deception of defilements, unable to see the truth.

#13 - The Attainment of an Arahant (Part 2)

This concludes the investigation of the Citta. At this stage, the Citta is forever freed from rebirth and worldly existence. It is completely separated from ignorance and craving. The condition where ignorance causes mental formations to arise completely ends. In its place comes the complete fading away and ending of all conditioned phenomena, bringing an end to the whole mass of suffering.

When ignorance is destroyed, the conditioned activities that create suffering are also destroyed within the Citta. Thoughts and mental activities that belong to the aggregates still continue naturally, but they no longer create suffering.

Without defilements corrupting them, they simply guide mental activity in a natural way. Consciousness still arises, but it does so purely without producing suffering. The senses and their contacts continue to function according to their own natural characteristics. They no longer disturb the Citta that has fully completed its task. This is the total ending of suffering.

When ignorance and all defilements are destroyed, they are destroyed within the Citta itself. The destruction of ignorance is the destruction of the endless cycle of birth and death. Both must end inside the Citta because the ignorance-filled Citta is the root of rebirth, aging, sickness, and death.

Craving, driven by ignorance, is the main cause of all these things, and it exists only within the Citta. Once ignorance completely breaks apart and is forever removed, total freedom is achieved. The Citta then becomes vast, open, and completely empty without limits or boundaries. Nothing confines it anymore. All conflict disappears. When the Citta knows, it knows only truth. When it sees, it sees only truth. This is true emptiness.

There are many levels of emptiness. Deep concentration meditation is one level. In deep concentration, awareness of the body and thinking temporarily disappears, making the Citta seem empty. But this emptiness lasts only as long as the meditation state lasts. At the beginning stages of wisdom practice, the Citta permanently separates itself from attachment to the body, though it still remains attached to feeling, memory, thought, and consciousness. The Citta becomes empty of bodily forms, so images of the body no longer arise within it, but mental concepts still remain. Wisdom at this stage clearly sees that the body is not oneself, so attachment to the body ends forever. Yet attachment to mental activity still remains. Through deeper investigation, the Citta eventually lets go of these mental factors as well. Then all that remains is an extraordinary radiance filling the universe, a limitless brightness and profound emptiness. This is the great power of genuine ignorance. By continuing to use the full strength of mindfulness and wisdom, ignorance is finally destroyed within the Citta. When everything mixed

into the Citta is removed, true emptiness is attained. This emptiness is permanent and requires no effort to maintain. This is complete freedom for the Citta.

The difference between the emptiness of the ignorance-filled Citta and the emptiness of the pure Citta can be compared to a person standing inside an empty room. While standing there admiring the emptiness, the person forgets that he himself is still inside the room. As long as someone remains there, the room is not truly empty. Only when that person leaves does the room become completely empty. In the same way, after the Citta lets go of all external things, there still remains the one who admires the emptiness. That subtle sense of self is still present within the knowing nature of the Citta. This is the real ignorance. The self is the final obstacle. Once it completely disappears, no obstacle remains. Then everything is empty: the outside world is empty, and the inside of the Citta is empty. True emptiness occurs only when every trace of conventional reality disappears from the Citta.

The destruction of ignorance is unlike the ending of anything previously investigated. Earlier phenomena ended with a clear understanding of their true nature. But the radiance of ignorance disappears instantly, like a flash of lightning.

Suddenly it flips over and vanishes completely. Only after it disappears does one realize that it was the true ignorance all along. What remains afterward is entirely unique and absolutely pure. Although it has never been experienced

before, there is no doubt about it at all. Every cause for doubt has vanished together with ignorance. This is the end of all burdens.

Every idea about “myself” or “my true essence” refers to this genuine ignorance while it still remains. All investigation is done to uncover it. This self is the one that knows, understands, shines brightly, and experiences happiness. The ideas of “I” and “mine” are hidden right here. Everything is done for its sake. Once it completely breaks apart, the personal viewpoint disappears too. Actions still happen, but they are no longer done for anyone.

It is like a pot whose bottom has fallen away. No matter how much water is poured into it, nothing remains inside. Thoughts and ideas still arise and pass away naturally through the aggregates, but nothing sticks to the Citta because the container that once held them—ignorance—has been destroyed. Thoughts arise and vanish instantly. Since nothing holds onto them and no self claims ownership over them, they simply disappear. The nature that knows this complete emptiness is perfectly content within itself. This is true purity, completely free from every burden.

The true nature of the Citta is so deeply hidden by ignorance that its incredible purity is never seen. The trap of ignorance is so skillfully disguised that meditators reaching this stage are easily deceived. They become fascinated by what appears to be the Citta’s true wonder and treasure it deeply, wanting

to protect it at all costs. They feel that this wonderful radiance is truly who they are.

Genuine ignorance is a central point filled with many strange and wonderful qualities that are impossible to imagine beforehand. These qualities contaminate the Citta in the same way a tiny piece of poisoned bait can kill an animal. Among these qualities are an extraordinary radiance that seems complete and perfect, an exceptional happiness flowing from that radiance that seems beyond the entire world of conventional reality, a feeling of complete invulnerability, and a strong attachment that treasures this radiant nature like precious gold.

The ignorance-filled Citta appears to possess every virtue. It is bright, fearless, deeply content, and its knowing quality seems limitless. Yet despite knowing everything else, it does not know itself. This is the fundamental ignorance hidden within genuine ignorance. The moment this knowing nature turns back to examine itself, ignorance instantly breaks apart. When that happens, the truth of the Citta and the truth of Dhamma are revealed. Only ignorance had hidden them from view.

Meditators who are not highly skilled in wisdom will have great difficulty escaping from ignorance because ordinary ignorance and genuine ignorance are very different. Ordinary ignorance contains many forms of delusion, both external and internal, all mixed together. It is like a tree with leaves,

branches, twigs, and a trunk. Genuine ignorance is like that same tree after all its branches have been cut away. Through persistent wisdom, the outgrowing activities of ignorance are gradually removed until everything gathers into one single point within the Citta. At that stage, ignorance no longer has its many outward activities. What remains is genuine ignorance itself.

The branches of ignorance are many and varied. All other mental defilements are only its branches and twigs. By focusing on these outer branches, people often overlook the root itself. Because of this, when they finally arrive at genuine ignorance, they become confused and fail to recognize it. It is like a vine spreading everywhere across the ground with many tangled branches. One must carefully follow the vine back to its source until reaching the main stem. Only there can the root be found. Once the root is pulled out, the entire plant dies.

#14 - The Decision to Teach the Dhamma

What could possibly be hotter than the fires of hell?

According to conventional understanding, there are five extremely grave actions that lead to the fiercest hells. These five actions are: killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an Arahant, physically harming a Buddha, and deliberately creating division within the Sangha. The results of these evil actions are clearly known within the heart. At the moment of enlightenment, the reality of heaven and hell becomes completely obvious. There is then no need to ask where they exist. The Buddha did not speak falsely. He directly knew these things and explained them exactly as he saw them.

Ahh! This supreme Dhamma is unbelievably profound and marvelous. It completely encompasses everything within the heart. When the truth is seen so clearly, there is no further need for questioning. The clarity perfectly matches the heart itself, leaving no room for doubt.

Later, when I investigated my past lives, it was terrifying to see how many times I had been born and died; how many times I had fallen into hell; and how many times I had risen into heavenly and Brahma realms only to fall back into hell once again. It was like the Citta climbing up and down a staircase endlessly.

But the Citta itself never dies. Do you understand this? The Citta never dies. Kamma is stored within it. Good kamma lifts the Citta upward into heavenly and Brahma realms. But once the good kamma is exhausted, the bad kamma hidden within pulls the Citta back down into hell realms. It is just like climbing up and down stairs. This is how things truly are, so people should wake up and pay attention.

Today I have revealed everything openly, even to the point that tears flowed from my eyes for all of you to see. Is this madness or virtue? Think carefully about it. Listen closely to the Dhamma I teach. I can say with certainty that my Citta has neither courage nor fear. It has gone beyond such emotions completely.

So I investigated my own past births. My goodness! If all the bodies from my countless past lives were spread across the whole of Thailand, there would not be any empty space left. Just one individual alone! Imagine how many births and deaths that would require. They were too many even to count. Then I thought about all living beings everywhere. Every single Citta has gone through the same endless cycle of birth and death. In this respect, all beings are equal. Stretching endlessly into the past are countless dead bodies from previous lives. It was a horrifying sight.

Because of this, I became deeply disgusted when reviewing my past lives. My goodness! After being reborn so many times, I still struggled on, continuing to seek birth again and

again. If Dhamma had not finally ended the process, it would have continued endlessly. The more I investigated the nature of the world, the more unbearable it became. Everywhere I looked, all beings were trapped in the same endless cycle. In this respect, everyone is the same.

Then discouragement suddenly arose in my heart. I thought: “How can I possibly teach this Dhamma to people? What is the use of teaching? Since true Dhamma is so profound, how could anyone understand it? Would it not be better simply to live quietly and then pass away?” I became disheartened and felt little desire to teach. It seemed easier to escape alone rather than help others. At first, I could not see much benefit in teaching. But my reflections did not stop there. They continued to develop naturally within my heart.

As I looked at the condition of the world, I felt discouraged. Some people seemed so lost in darkness that they appeared hopeless. The Buddha called such people *padaparama*. Then I saw other types of individuals called *neyya* and *vipacitaññu*. *Neyya* individuals can still be trained in Dhamma. Sometimes they progress, and sometimes they fall back. If careless, they lose ground; but if diligent, they can progress quickly. Their future depends on their effort.

(Note:

Ugghatitaññu: One who understands the truth *immediately* upon a brief explanation.

Vipacitaññu: One who requires a more detailed, expanded explanation to grasp the truth.

Neyya: One who requires step-by-step guidance, consistent practice, and training over time to realize the truth.

Pada-parama: One who is unable to attain enlightenment in this lifetime and can only achieve a verbal or intellectual understanding of the teachings.)

Vipacitaññu individuals always move steadily toward the goal and never fall backward. However, they progress more slowly than ugghatitaññu individuals, whose wisdom is so sharp that they are ready to break through immediately. They are like cattle waiting at the gate; the moment the gate opens, they rush straight out. Such individuals can attain understanding in a single moment of insight.

All living beings belong to one of these four categories. As I investigated the world, these distinctions became naturally clear. Among humanity, there were still highly capable individuals. Ugghatitaññu individuals were fully ready to transcend suffering quickly. Next were vipacitaññu individuals, steadily progressing toward the goal. Then came the neyya individuals, torn between laziness and diligence within their hearts. Finally there were the padaparama individuals, human only in physical appearance. They had gained nothing beneficial for the future. After death, they could only fall lower and lower because they carried nothing wholesome with them. The upward path was blocked.

Remember this well. I speak directly from my heart. Do you think I am inventing lies?

Compared to a completely pure heart, the whole world resembles a giant garbage heap containing many different grades of trash. From the highest type of person down to the lowest, all kinds are mixed together within the same world of conventional reality. It is a mixture of both good and bad. During my investigation, I carefully examined this great pile and discovered these four different kinds of people.

From that investigation, a realization arose that overcame my discouragement about teaching. A thought suddenly appeared within the Citta: "If this Dhamma is so supreme that almost no one can understand it, then how did I myself come to realize it? What caused this realization?"

As I reflected on the cause, my thoughts returned to the path of practice that had led me there. It was exactly the same path taught by the Lord Buddha: generosity, morality, and meditation. There is no other path. Looking back on my own practice, I realized that if this path worked for me, then it could work for others as well. Perhaps only a few people could truly reach the goal, but certainly some could. I could not deny this. Realizing that at least some people would benefit encouraged me to begin teaching those who were ready to learn.

Afterward, monks gradually gathered around me in the forests and mountains where I lived, and I taught them to be

determined in their practice. Little by little, the teaching spread farther and farther. Today people from throughout Thailand and around the world come to hear Ajahn Maha Bua teach Dhamma. Some travel to listen in person, while others hear recordings broadcast by radio and the Internet.

I can assure you that the Dhamma I teach never departs from the truth I have personally realized. The Lord Buddha taught exactly the same truth that I am now explaining. Sādhu! Although I am insignificant compared to the Buddha, the confirmation of this realization exists clearly within my own heart. Everything I have realized agrees fully with the Buddha's teaching. Nothing contradicts it in any way. That is why I teach with such determination throughout Thailand.

From an ordinary perspective, I may sound bold, like a victorious hero. But the supreme Dhamma within my heart has neither boldness nor fear. It has neither gain nor loss, victory nor defeat. Therefore, my teaching comes only from pure compassion. For example, if I see two dogs fighting and pull them apart, I do not care which dog wins or loses. The dogs themselves are the ones biting and suffering. I only separate them to stop the fighting. Dhamma works in the same way. It tries to stop people from constantly quarreling over who is right and who is wrong.

This is similar to what I have said about Thailand. Dhamma must speak according to truth. These days I am deeply involved with the world, constantly trying to stop people

from fighting like dogs. Laypeople and monks alike push themselves forward, shouting and fighting for status and honor. So I teach Dhamma to restore peace among them. Dhamma is truth. If people abandon falsehood and hold firmly to truth, then society and the religion will become peaceful. But while everyone continues fighting, the country remains in turmoil. The Buddha's religion centers on the human heart, yet this sacred ground is being destroyed by conflict.

So I ask everyone to stop. Nothing good comes from fighting like dogs. In truth, there are no winners. Both sides are hurt equally. Step back and let reason guide you. Then Thailand, its people, and the religion can all live peacefully without disaster.

Those who angrily insist they alone are right are already defeated. Arguing itself is wrong. It is like two boxers beating each other in the ring. Both leave wounded and bruised. There is nothing honorable in that. Arguments create bitterness and resentment on both sides. They become battles of ego and opinion where nobody listens to reason. If this continues, the whole country will suffer ruin.

I sincerely ask everyone to reflect on these words. Today I have shed tears while teaching this Dhamma for the benefit of the Thai people. If people stop fighting now, disaster can still be avoided. In worldly terms, those who stand for righteousness win, and those who admit their mistakes for

the sake of peace are also winners. Then both sides can unite harmoniously. But if nobody gives way, then there will only be wounded people on every side. Thailand is a Buddhist country. I do not want to see Buddhists fighting like dogs and staining monasteries with conflict. Please abandon such madness.

Ultimately, hell realms, heavenly realms, Brahma realms, and Nibbāna themselves will reveal who is right and who is wrong, who is virtuous and who is evil. Never think you are beyond falling into hell. Do not cling stubbornly to opinions that oppose the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha. The true land of Dhamma is the heavenly realms and Nibbāna, the dwelling places of virtuous beings. Wrong views only drag people down into ugly conflict and endless suffering. Remember this carefully.

Today I have explained everything to the fullest extent. It has now been 53 years since I attained this supreme Dhamma. Today I described that experience for your benefit. This Dhamma never fails or becomes frustrated. It always remains perfectly true and correct. It naturally expresses itself according to circumstances. Today it expressed itself so powerfully that tears flowed from the eyes of Ajahn Maha Bua for everyone to see. This is the extraordinary power of Dhamma, and it is this same Dhamma that I teach. I never teach casually. I always teach with complete sincerity.

As I have said many times, I was always willing to sacrifice my life for the sake of Dhamma. Most people cannot imagine the effort I put into the practice because they have never practiced in the same way. But I truly made that effort, and these are the results. It shows the power of unwavering determination when used for Dhamma. The stronger the determination, the better the results. Then one can die victoriously instead of being defeated. Remember this well.

#15 - The Conditions After One Attains Arahantship

I tell you honestly: I no longer experience past, present, or future because no trace of conventional reality remains in my heart. I can confirm that nothing of it is left. This is the power of the Buddha's Dhamma in destroying the defilements.

Dhamma exists in the heart. The defilements also exist in the heart and oppose Dhamma. We are the ones caught in the middle, receiving the good and bad results from this conflict, because we belong to the heart just as the heart belongs to us.

Dhamma supports and protects us. Our enemies, the defilements, constantly oppress and overpower us. Both arise from the same place—the heart. Through meditation practice, Dhamma slowly becomes strong enough to defeat the defilements inside us, from the coarse ones to the most subtle ones, until they are completely cut away from the heart. This is what is meant by destroying the entire mass of suffering created by the defilements. When that suffering is destroyed, Supreme Happiness appears; this is the arising of the Supreme Dhamma. It appears exactly where the brightness of Dhamma had long been hidden beneath a thick covering of defilements that blocked its radiance from shining out fully.

I remembered this great experience with tears while giving a recent talk. I have clearly known this experience in my heart since it first happened, but only recently did conditions arise that caused me to speak about it openly. The power of Dhamma is truly overwhelming when it expresses itself. It spreads out in every direction and deeply affects everything it touches. It affects not only the mind but also the body, such as tears flowing from the eyes. When connected with Dhamma, tears can pour out with tremendous force. The problem is that living beings everywhere are blind to the defilements. Tell me, who in this world has truly opened their eyes to see the truth of Dhamma? No one. So when people heard that Ajahn Maha Bua cried openly, they immediately wondered why. "If he has destroyed all defilements and become an Arahant, why is he crying?" Do you see? They mistake the tears for the Arahant itself.

Do you understand that every part of the human body belongs to conventional reality? These parts are connected to the Citta, which is responsible for them. Once the Citta collapses the enemies of conventional reality, those conditioned things are torn apart. Then the pure nature of the Citta shines out completely according to its own natural truth. This is one side of the experience.

Another side is this: at that same moment, a strong physical reaction happens, causing the body to shake and tremble. Is this trembling intentional? No. It is the result of Dhamma's

overwhelming power when it delivers the final blow to the defilements and separates them forever from the Citta. Such a powerful event creates a tremendous impact, as if the whole universe were shaking and trembling. That is what it feels like when Dhamma and the defilements finally separate completely, and the world of conventional reality splits apart from the world of Absolute Freedom. The pure nature of Dhamma then appears in all its supreme magnificence, fully revealed within the heart that experiences it.

Because the body and mind are closely connected with the Citta, they react strongly to this amazing and unique event. The true nature of the Citta had always existed, but it had never shown itself in this way to the body and conscious mind before. Since this experience is completely unprecedented, its impact is enormous. The body and mind are all conditioned things, tools used by the heart. When the Citta collapses the defilements, the pure nature that appears remains entirely unaffected. But the body and mind, which are ruled by impermanence, suffering, and non-self, are strongly affected. According to their unstable nature, reactions arise in them and then cease. But the pure nature of the Citta neither arises nor ceases. This is the difference between the two.

Because of this, it is impossible to compare the pure heart of an Arahant with the filthy physical body. Once someone clearly sees this truth for themselves, no further explanation

is needed. In such a moment, one would simply bow and say “Sadhu” even if the Buddha himself were standing before them. Since the Ultimate Truth is directly known in one’s own heart, there would be no need to ask the Buddha for confirmation. “Nothing surpasses the Supreme Dhamma.” This realization appearing in the heart is the same pure nature possessed by the Arahant. It is a purity that completely goes beyond impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Those laws no longer apply there.

The body and mind are what become excited, such as when tears appear. Tears can arise for many reasons. Sadness causes tears, joy causes tears, smoke causes tears, and onions and garlic also cause tears. So why make such a big issue about tears? Tears are only water, the water element. Just like earth, fire, and wind, water is simply part of conventional reality. When the pure nature of Dhamma suddenly appears, these physical elements become stirred. But the pure nature itself remains completely unmoved. It is natural for the body and mind to react constantly. They respond to good and bad things, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow. They are always excitable in one way or another. But at this moment, it is the sudden appearance of pure Dhamma that moves them.

The body and mind are not the Arahant, and the Arahant is not the body and mind. Without exception, the body and mind belong completely to conventional reality. But that pure nature is entirely free from all traces of conventional reality.

The two cannot mix together. They are completely separate. They only acknowledge each other according to their own nature. The body and mind, being conditioned things, behave according to conditioned laws. Pure nature, appearing by itself, belongs to Absolute Freedom. Since beginningless time, the body and mind of all beings have always remained true to their status as conditioned realities.

After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha and the Arahants did not destroy their body and mind to stop them from functioning. For example, laughter is a natural function of the body and mind, and so are tears. These are simply natural activities of conditioned phenomena. As long as the body and mind remain reasonably healthy, they can continue functioning normally. It is like using earth to build houses. Bricks, cement, stones, sand, and steel all come from the earth. As long as these materials exist, many things can be built from them.

What is wrong with people? Have you all become crazy? That is what I want to ask. People criticize me for shedding tears because of Dhamma, but has any of you ever seen the pure nature of Dhamma? Even I had never seen it before. None of my ancestors had seen that Supreme Dhamma either because they never practiced the path. I am a monk who practiced seriously. Through practice, I steadily gained understanding and wisdom step by step, exactly as I have explained to you. I practiced in this way until I finally reached

the highest attainment, and that realization now expresses itself naturally.

Have any of you ever truly tried to realize the Supreme Dhamma? Or are you all simply sitting blindly with your mouths open, making foolish noises against the pure nature of Dhamma? Why not bark at the filth hanging around your own neck instead? Think carefully about this. That pile of filth is a blazing fire created by greed, anger, and delusion. Every person's heart is polluted by it. Why do you not look at that instead? What is the point of criticizing the highest nature of Dhamma? The Buddha was supreme before all of us. If Ajahn Maha Bua is false to the Buddha's teaching, then all the enlightened disciples of the Buddha would also be false. But those enlightened disciples have always been worthy of honor. Since when did filth become virtuous? What right does filth have to boast and criticize the conduct of an Arahant? It is nothing but a pile of filth. Do you understand?

Do you still not realize that your hearts are filled with defilement? Are you proud of that? Such harmful pride will drag you down even further. If you cannot see the danger of pride, you will oppose Dhamma. Opposing Dhamma is like striking a knife against a stone. What happens then? Or like driving a car into a mountain. Who gets damaged? The bucket of filth is the one destroyed. Those who have transcended the world suffer no harm. As Buddhists, you should remember this principle well: do not use your own

filth to dirty others and destroy yourselves in the process. There is no benefit in doing that. The greatness I speak of—where does it come from? I have already shown it openly for all Thailand to see. Am I truly the greatest villain in the country while everyone else is pure and noble? Think about that carefully.

If you reject reason and truth, what will you accept instead? What are people searching for nowadays? I searched almost to the point of death to discover the Supreme Dhamma that I now teach my disciples with loving compassion. I am not boasting about myself. What is there to boast about? Boasting and gossip are useless extra burdens. What could possibly be added to the perfection of Dhamma? If something more were needed, how could it still be called perfect? Remember this carefully.

Thai Buddhists behave with shocking ignorance. As soon as I speak, the whole country starts barking loudly. It is pitiful, and I feel sorry for them. This is exactly how the Buddha felt when he wondered why the world was so blind. Tears flowed from his eyes out of compassion and amazement at the purity of Dhamma. Seeing how blind people were, the Buddha became discouraged about teaching them. He wondered how people could be so unaware of the filth in their own hearts. The same thing happens today. When people hear Dhamma teachings, instead of appreciating the teaching and trying to practice it sincerely, they criticize the

teacher and harm themselves in the process. Why do they not try to do something beneficial for themselves instead? That is why I firmly say that Thai Buddhists are acting very foolishly.

Ajahn Maha Bua is never disturbed. Let the whole world bark however it wishes; I will continue speaking the truth and remain unaffected. The pure nature of Dhamma cannot be shaken by worldly conditions. Those influenced by bad actions must live with those bad actions. Those influenced by gain or loss must live with gain or loss. When goodness influences someone, goodness becomes their home, meaning they will be reborn according to that good karma. But when wrongdoing controls someone, they live with a burning fire inside their heart. Is that really what you want?

The Buddha's Teaching is always timeless and relevant, just as when he declared:

“Why is there laughter and joy
when the world is constantly burning?
Covered by darkness,
why do you not seek the light?”

Listen carefully to that.

The Dhamma I teach is the same teaching. What madness has overcome all of you? You are following the same path as the drunkards whom the Buddha scolded when he spoke those words. He was speaking to drunken fools, not noble

individuals. This story appears in the scriptures: the Buddha speaking to a group of drunkards. Think about the difference between them and the Buddha. Yet even after being scolded by the Buddha, they still did not recognize their faults.

The tears I recently shed carried the same message. Why are you still unaware of your own faults? Are you even more foolish than those drunkards? If you wish to avoid ruin, ask yourselves this question carefully.

I am now trying with all my strength to help society. In my heart there is no courage and no fear, no gain and no loss, no victory and no defeat. Everything I do to help others comes entirely from loving compassion. I sacrificed everything to attain the Supreme Dhamma that I now teach to you. Those sacrifices were not made to attain evil. I nearly died searching for Dhamma before I could finally proclaim to the world what I had realized. So why can people not accept it? What is happening to Thailand today? That is what I want to know.

The more self-important people become, the more arrogant and conceited they grow until they think they are wiser than the Buddha himself, the Supreme Teacher. Does Thailand not yet realize that its condition worsens day by day? People have become so foolish. No one pays attention to Dhamma anymore. Soon people may even stop visiting monasteries entirely. Look at how people reacted to my recent words. They mocked and ridiculed me with sarcasm. This is exactly what happens when defilements become powerful. When

they saw me shedding tears, they scorned and insulted me. But I remain completely undisturbed. Even if every family in the country criticizes me, I have no quarrel with anyone. I teach only out of loving kindness. Why can people not accept this? Have Thai people truly become this ignorant?

Has the Buddha's Dhamma completely disappeared from the world? Do the Buddha and the Dhamma no longer hold the highest place? Are practitioners who truly realize the Truth by following the Buddha's path now regarded as frauds and enemies? What is wrong with Thai Buddhists? Are they no longer decent human beings? Why are they behaving like a pack of dogs? That is the attitude I am forced to speak with.

But I am not angry with anyone. The strength of my words comes from the power of Dhamma. Dhamma itself is unmoved and holds no anger or resentment toward anyone. Yet Dhamma always expresses itself with full power. The same is true for the defilements—they also express themselves forcefully with all their power. The difference is that the power of defilements brings great harm to the world, while the power of Dhamma cools the fires of the world like water.

Do you think I spoke out of anger? Where would anger come from? Anger comes from the defilements. For someone completely free from defilements, it is impossible to make him angry no matter how hard you try. There is no anger left in his heart at all. If even the smallest amount of anger

remained, he could not be called an Arahant free from defilements. Anger, greed, and delusion are all defilements. Do you understand? Investigate this deeply and you will see the truth.

The physical body is completely part of conventional reality. As long as it remains connected to the pure nature of the Citta, it will naturally respond accordingly. There is nothing strange about this. Where am I wrong? Who here believes they are wise enough to challenge the Dhamma of the Buddha? Come forward and boast openly if you dare.

Go ahead and say, “Ajahn Maha Bua is a foolish monk.” I want to hear all you clever people speak. Come out from your hiding places and boast about your attainments in Dhamma. I truly wish to see something genuine appear, but I see nothing at all. Everywhere I look, I only see lazy people filled with greed, anger, and delusion. What kind of superiority is that? Yet they continue boasting endlessly in their madness.

- The End -

