A body represented in the mind - An Already Here Adventure

A choose-your-own-adventure practice book

An original temple welcome, complete practices, and choices you can follow on paper.

Begin at The temple garden on page 2.

Scenes are shuffled. Follow the page numbers at the end of each scene. You can stop or change direction whenever you choose.

The temple garden

An original fictional welcome

You step through a small gate into a well-kept garden. Beyond it stands a small but beautiful Theravada Buddhist temple. Inside, one man sits in meditation. His face resembles Siddhartha as you have seen him imagined in art. Incense is burning. Three meditation pads lie before him.

You may sit or move on. If you sit, he opens his eyes, smiles, and greets you: “Welcome. The path is wide. You may begin with your own ordinary experience, and see what it reveals.”

Your adventure

A body represented in the mind. An optional map of modern representation exercises and their limits.

“Try each invitation gently. You can question it, change direction, rest, or leave. Keep what helps and let the rest go. Ancient wisdom is an invitation to investigate, not a promise of an experience.”

Reading this book

Start using either choice below. After that, follow the page numbers rather than reading straight through. Scenes are deliberately shuffled; one scene may run over several pages. Choices appear at its end. In a PDF reader you can also click them. Keep a finger or bookmark at your current page when you pause. Two optional meetings with the man lead back to the exact scene you left.

Story and practice

This adventure is original fiction with modern practice pauses inspired by ancient wisdom. Choices and consequences are story devices, not historical events.

Detailed adaptation notes and gaps are available at the back of the book, so the telling can unfold without stopping for every editorial explanation.

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 5.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 5.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 59.

The garden does not hurry

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“An imagined form can reveal how attention and agency feel. Let it remain an image, and keep a dependable connection with your actual body and surroundings.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Return to “A body represented in the mind · Leave a bookmark for the day” - turn to page 6.

A body represented in the mind · Leave a bookmark for the day

An imagined form can be explored while ordinary physical support remains clear. This is a modern personal exploration inspired by a wisdom passage, not a recreation or test of its described attainment. Take it over several visits and stop whenever actual and imagined experience become unclear.

The man begins a telling that will accompany the choices ahead. Its ancient lesson is larger than these brief exercises; the present-day scene is our invented doorway into it.

On a moonlit night, King Ajatasattu asks which teacher might help bring his mind some clarity. Ministers name different leaders. Jivaka, his physician, has remained quiet; when invited to speak, he recommends visiting the Buddha in his mango grove. The king sets out with his company. Near the grove, the great quiet frightens him. Could this be a trap? Jivaka reassures him.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Begin with the first practice - turn to page 23.

Explore another way in - turn to page 12.

In the story, chase vividness as proof - turn to page 22.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 4.

Which invitation fits now?

Before constructing a form, you could investigate a simple object or the effort of attention. No vivid image is required.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Walk beside the king through the account of restraint, contentment, attention, and the abandoning of hindrances. Relief is compared with recovering from sickness, being freed from debt or confinement, and arriving safely from a dangerous road. Collectedness is described through images of joy and ease thoroughly pervading the body.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

A smaller construction - turn to page 8.

Less effort before more detail - turn to page 20.

Look at another possibility - turn to page 17.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

A smaller construction

A familiar cup is enough to compare representation with a checkable object.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Walk beside the king through the account of restraint, contentment, attention, and the abandoning of hindrances. Relief is compared with recovering from sickness, being freed from debt or confinement, and arriving safely from a dangerous road. Collectedness is described through images of joy and ease thoroughly pervading the body.

Practice pause

Simple object

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Represent a familiar cup through shape, orientation, texture, or words. Use whichever mode is available.

3. Compare

Compare with the real cup. Separate recalled details from invented ones.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

What could be checked independently of vividness?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 27.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 44.

A smaller construction

A familiar cup is enough to compare representation with a checkable object.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Walk beside the king through the account of restraint, contentment, attention, and the abandoning of hindrances. Relief is compared with recovering from sickness, being freed from debt or confinement, and arriving safely from a dangerous road. Collectedness is described through images of joy and ease thoroughly pervading the body.

Practice pause

Simple object

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Represent a familiar cup through shape, orientation, texture, or words. Use whichever mode is available.

3. Compare

Compare with the real cup. Separate recalled details from invented ones.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

What could be checked independently of vividness?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Another way into this moment

Before constructing a form, you could investigate a simple object or the effort of attention. No vivid image is required.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Walk beside the king through the account of restraint, contentment, attention, and the abandoning of hindrances. Relief is compared with recovering from sickness, being freed from debt or confinement, and arriving safely from a dangerous road. Collectedness is described through images of joy and ease thoroughly pervading the body.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

A smaller construction - turn to page 10.

Less effort before more detail - turn to page 48.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Ease without a requirement

Let the ordinary body remain the starting point.

An outline may begin to form, or it may not. The man leaves imagination a modest task. It can show how a represented boundary feels without claiming to reveal a hidden physical body. An ordinary change in attention is already enough material for curiosity.

Practice pause

Tranquility Throughout the Body

Before you begin

Use a supported posture you can adjust without strain.

1. Arrive

Notice contact at the seat, back, and hands, using the parts available to you. Distinguish ordinary pressure from efforts to hold yourself still.

2. Choose

Choose a neutral or comfortable area as a starting point. Let breathing continue on its own rather than making calm a breathing task.

3. Explore

Imagine the quality of that area as a roomy atmosphere around the whole body. Invite other areas into the field without demanding they match it.

4. Vary

Alternate between that wide invitation and one precise contact detail. Adjust an uncomfortable posture instead of trying to imagine discomfort away.

5. Compare

Notice whether ease spreads, stays local, disappears, or sits beside tension. Compare actual sensation with the atmosphere you are imagining.

6. Consider

Let the whole body be represented with its uneven qualities. Decide whether this offers enough steadiness for a further practice today.

7. Return

Allow the imagined atmosphere to disperse while leaving any ordinary ease alone. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

Can tranquility include an area that has not relaxed?

Notice, without grading

Where was effort necessary or unnecessary?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 56.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Return with what is useful

The story can finish while ordinary life remains unfinished. Let the practices end, recognize your actual surroundings, and choose a practical next action.

The place you have been exploring continues beyond your part in it. There is still work to do and information nobody possesses yet. The man is waiting at the temple to receive an ordinary person, not an example of a completed teaching. A useful direction can be carried without making the story’s ending settle the rest of your life.

Notice, without grading

Keep what helps and let the rest go. Completing this adventure records participation, not concentration, insight, or release.

Back at the temple

You return through the well-kept garden to the small temple. Incense drifts past the three meditation pads. The man opens his eyes, smiles, and welcomes you back.

The man speaks

You compared a represented body with actual support. Keep the distinction usable, and let every image be something you can set aside.

“You are welcome to walk another adventure, or return to ordinary life. There is nothing you need to prove before you go.”

An ending

To return to ordinary life, close the book here. Finishing marks participation, not an attainment.

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Sit in the temple and begin a fresh visit - turn to page 2.

A different direction is possible

You can follow another detail, continue with the shared stretch, or explore the fictional shortcut and its consequences.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay through the larger telling rather than stopping at an unusual capacity. The account proceeds through further forms of knowledge toward the ending of the deep currents of craving. The spiritual point is not simply having a more vivid imagined form.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Less effort before more detail - turn to page 20.

Continue with the next practice - turn to page 27.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Change the emphasis

Explore a chosen shift of attention without making every detail obey.

Actual contact is still available beneath the experiment. Returning to it does not spoil the inward work. It tests whether the image is serving a life that includes other sensations and practical tasks, rather than demanding that the whole world be arranged to keep the representation intact.

Practice pause

Making Attention Malleable

Before you begin

Use two accessible references, such as hand contact and an ordinary sound.

1. Arrive

Rest with both references available. Notice which one attracts attention before you make a choice.

2. Choose

Intend to emphasize the first reference, then the second, then both. Keep this order simple enough to remember without rehearsal.

3. Explore

Follow the sequence slowly. Imagine attention as a window whose size you can change while the body remains supported.

4. Vary

Reverse the order and include a pause without selecting either reference. If one channel is unavailable, compare two contact points.

5. Compare

Compare chosen shifts with spontaneous shifts. Notice lag, resistance, effortless changes, or times when the intention had little effect.

6. Consider

Choose a smaller change that remains comfortable. Malleability here includes being able to abandon the sequence rather than completing it at any cost.

7. Return

Let the window image and the sequence end together. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

Where does attention follow an invitation, and where does it have its own momentum?

Notice, without grading

What could be adjusted and what remained uncertain?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 39.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Less effort before more detail

Work within your capacity and shorten the invitation if attention is tiring.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay through the larger telling rather than stopping at an unusual capacity. The account proceeds through further forms of knowledge toward the ending of the deep currents of craving. The spiritual point is not simply having a more vivid imagined form.

Practice pause

Attention with a lighter touch

Take care

Persistent, unexplained, or worsening fatigue deserves medical attention. Work within your care plan; never use these experiments to push through exhaustion or delayed symptom worsening. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Settle somewhere supported. Pick an available, neutral sensation such as the touch of a sleeve or an ordinary sound; avoid uncomfortable body areas. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

4 minutes. For one minute, gently keep the chosen detail in mind, returning without force. For the next minute, let it come and go without tracking it. Repeat those two minutes once. Notice effort in the brow, jaw, or shoulders without needing to change it. If any form of attention costs too much, spend the remaining time resting with eyes open.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Which condition felt less demanding? Distinguish a quieter mind from a less effortful way of meeting a busy mind. Keep the lighter option if useful.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which approach costs less today?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Fruits of the contemplative life

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 27.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

A fictional turn

Explore this as a story only. The character could chase vividness as proof. What direction would you like to follow?

A shortcut offers to remove the uncertainty that has made the journey human. You can hear why the offer is attractive without accepting its terms. The man leaves the fictional consequence available to inspect, and leaves another direction open. The point is discovery, not catching a reader in a mistake.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Follow that fictional direction - turn to page 35.

Try the shared stretch instead - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Leave a bookmark for the day

Going naked, braiding the hair, covering the body with dirt or dust, fasting, lying on the ground, or sitting still cannot purify someone who has not overcome craving.

Give practical intentions somewhere to wait before beginning representation work.

The man begins far from an imagined body, on a moonlit night when a troubled king asks what a life of training can visibly offer. A physician leads him to a quiet grove. The long answer will pass through conduct, restraint, and deep collectedness before any unusual capacity is described. That distance matters.

Practice pause

Settling Unfinished Intentions

Before you begin

Choose an ordinary unresolved matter; leave overwhelming conflicts for supported work.

1. Arrive

Sit with support and notice where attention keeps returning. Identify one unfinished promise, conversation, or task without reviewing your whole life.

2. Choose

Describe the matter in a plain sentence. Distinguish an action you owe from a demand that everything must be resolved before you can rest.

3. Explore

Choose one honest next action, such as correcting a statement or arranging a conversation. Write a realistic time to return to it; act first if it cannot wait.

4. Vary

Imagine placing that intention in an open notebook beside your seat. Let it remain available while you attend to actual bodily contact.

5. Compare

Compare this with trying to push the matter away. Notice any difference in rehearsal, tension, or ease; agitation or no change can also occur.

6. Consider

Decide whether a short exploration now fits your responsibilities. Staying with simple contact or finishing to act on the matter are equally available.

7. Return

Set down the imagined notebook while keeping the practical reminder. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What becomes easier when an intention is acknowledged rather than silently carried?

Notice, without grading

What genuinely needs a reminder rather than more rehearsal?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 42.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Leaving can be part of this path

Rest, company, another practice, or an ordinary responsibility may be the next part of the walk. You do not owe the adventure a return.

The man leaves the gate unlatched. The imagined scene can remain unfinished while you answer a person, move your body, eat, or rest. Leaving the path is not made into a flaw in your character. A bookmark is an invitation, not a debt; the story can meet you again if returning is useful.

Notice, without grading

Your previous place remains available in your account when signed in, or in this browser for guests when storage works. Return only if it is useful.

An ordinary pause

You may close the book, explore ordinary life, and return to this page whenever you choose. Leaving can be part of walking the path.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

A workable kind of steadiness

Movement and adjustment need not be treated as failures.

You can alter one represented feature. Notice how quickly an image becomes something that seems to require consistency. The man lets it remain changeable. A construct can be useful without being promoted into an external fact, a diagnosis, or a permanent identity.

Practice pause

Steadiness Without Rigidity

Before you begin

Choose a posture that permits a small comfortable adjustment.

1. Arrive

Notice your supported posture and a familiar sound or contact. Observe how you currently respond when either changes.

2. Choose

Choose contact as a reference that can be rediscovered. Picture a flexible frame around attention rather than a fixed enclosure.

3. Explore

Let an ordinary thought or sound enter while you keep contact available. Notice whether stability feels like exclusion or room for change.

4. Vary

Make one comfortable physical adjustment, then find the reference again. Use a shift of attention if movement is unavailable.

5. Compare

Compare the periods before, during, and after the change. Steadiness may continue, disappear briefly, or return in a different form.

6. Consider

Decide whether you can allow another small change without bracing. If rigidity increases, stay with ordinary surroundings or finish.

7. Return

Set the flexible frame aside and stop testing steadiness. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

Can I be steady without keeping this moment the same?

Notice, without grading

What helped attention remain flexible?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 18.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

A different optional medium

A remembered sound offers a personal comparison with the form. Keep imagined sound distinct from actual hearing.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Practice pause

Constructed sound

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Recall a familiar bell, voice, or short musical phrase deliberately. Let it end when you choose.

3. Compare

If possible, compare with a recording at comfortable volume. Identify the recalled sound as imagery, not a sound from the room.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

Which mode is available without strain?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue with the story - turn to page 45.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

An optional personal exploration

The library includes practices developed through William’s personal exploration. Their usefulness can be explored even when their precise textual correspondence is uncertain.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Try a different optional medium - turn to page 29.

Leave this exploration and continue - turn to page 45.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Keep the distinction usable

Return to physical contact alone whenever the comparison becomes unclear.

You compare the represented experience with what is actually around you. The room has its familiar shapes and sounds. If the comparison is unsettling, the adventure can end here; support and ordinary activity matter more than keeping an experiment going for the sake of its story.

Practice pause

Physical Contact and Imagined Form

Before you begin

Use a formed outline and a reliable actual contact point.

1. Arrive

Locate pressure where your actual hand or back meets support. Describe one physical detail before recalling the imagined body.

2. Choose

Intend to recognize contact as felt information and the form as something constructed. Use brief labels only while they help.

3. Explore

Let the imagined body occupy its familiar position while actual contact stays available. Notice whether one automatically takes the foreground.

4. Vary

Alternate emphasis without attempting to intensify either experience. Return to contact alone whenever the distinction feels unclear.

5. Compare

Compare texture, location, changeability, and effort in each. Some features may overlap while others remain easy to distinguish.

6. Consider

Describe one clear difference and one uncertain difference. Consider how you recognized each rather than deciding which felt more important.

7. Return

Let the imagined body go and feel the remaining contact directly. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What lets me recognize contact and construction without rejecting either?

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

What difference could be described honestly?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 50.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

The image becomes a claim to defend

In this fictional branch, the character treats a vivid image as proof of special power and dismisses ordinary counterchecks. More effort goes into preserving the claim. Confusion and fear grow when imagination and actual events are no longer kept distinct.

The man does not rescue the imagined situation with a sudden lesson that makes its cost disappear. Someone has been left unheard, a need has gone unmet, or attention has become a wall. This consequence belongs to the fiction. You can retrace the turn and consider another response without practicing harm in your own life.

Notice, without grading

This fictional branch leads to added suffering. It is not a verdict about you. Retrace it, choose another direction, or leave the adventure here.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 22.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

Change only a little

A small voluntary alteration offers a comparison, not a performance of power.

In the king's story, confession returns the great discussion to conduct and consequences. His father's killing is not erased by an impressive night. The point reaches into this gentle experiment: unusual experience does not place anyone beyond honesty, responsibility, or the need to care for other people.

Practice pause

Changing One Quality

Before you begin

Use a familiar form with actual contact easy to recognize.

1. Arrive

Construct a comfortable resting form and notice one quality already present, such as its imagined texture or the breadth of its outline.

2. Choose

Choose one reversible change: smoother texture, a softer edge, or slightly different proportions. Leave posture and other features as they are.

3. Explore

Inhabit the changed version briefly. Notice how a single feature affects the whole and whether a feeling of “my form” accompanies it.

4. Vary

Restore the original quality, pause at actual contact, and try the change once more. Avoid adding more changes when the first becomes interesting.

5. Compare

Compare familiarity, ownership, and ease in each version. The new quality may remain conceptual, feel compelling, or resist your intention.

6. Consider

Name what seemed continuous despite the difference. Distinguish something you noticed from something you assumed would remain.

7. Return

Release both versions rather than choosing one to keep. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What made this still seem like the same form?

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

What changed with intention?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

You can also finish here

Life can be difficult for someone who is modest, impartial, calm, thoughtful, and committed to living honestly.

Readiness is a choice about today’s capacity, not a rank.

The king's discourse does not stop at unusual abilities. Its account goes on toward knowledge and the ending of deep patterns of craving. The modern room is not a shortcut through that sequence. You can enjoy an imaginative capacity without deciding that vividness has measured your spiritual development.

Practice pause

Readiness Without Expectation

Before you begin

Try after a familiar settling practice; keep an ordinary task available for afterward.

1. Arrive

Feel support and name your current surroundings. Notice fatigue, eagerness, hesitation, and any expectation of a dramatic experience.

2. Choose

Imagine a simple open doorway representing the choice to continue. Give equal space to entering, waiting, and leaving.

3. Explore

Form a small image or spatial idea, change one feature, and release it. Then return to a real contact point without rushing.

4. Vary

Try the same brief cycle using words instead of a picture. Notice whether changing the medium makes choice easier or harder.

5. Compare

Check whether you can locate the room, distinguish the construct, and stop willingly. Interest alone need not decide the next step.

6. Consider

Choose one Formation practice, another Preparation practice, or an ending. Name the reason in terms of what you noticed today.

7. Return

Close the imagined doorway and let the readiness question rest. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What would proceeding with curiosity rather than expectation look like today?

Notice, without grading

Would exploring or stopping be more useful today?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 53.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Gather without force

A few available details can be enough for this visit.

You meet your actual support before making an image. A chair, a floor, the weight of the hands: these are not obstacles to an inward adventure. They are the places to return. The king's story concerns a full religious training; the modern story here concerns representations you can knowingly try and set aside.

Practice pause

Gathering Scattered Attention

Before you begin

Begin with a familiar contact point and an unhurried interval.

1. Arrive

Notice your supported hands, the room, and the current pace of thought. Let this be a baseline before changing attention.

2. Choose

Choose one contact point as a place to return. Intend to recognize a departure rather than prevent every departure.

3. Explore

Imagine several loose threads resting together in an open palm. Let the image suggest gathering while keeping the actual palm recognizable.

4. Vary

Include an ordinary sound beside contact, then return to contact alone. Try this once more without shortening or deepening the breath.

5. Compare

Compare scattered, narrow, and gathered attention. A crowded field, repeated switching, or a faint center are all specific observations.

6. Consider

Ask whether returning feels available without a struggle. Choose another brief round, simpler contact, or an ending on that basis.

7. Return

Let the thread image disappear and stop gathering deliberately. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What distinguishes gathering attention from trying to make experience quiet?

Notice, without grading

Which details remained recognizable?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 13.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Carry only what helps

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“The freedom to set an image aside matters as much as the ability to sustain it. Vividness is an experience to investigate, not proof of an external event or an attainment.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Return to “A smaller construction” - turn to page 9.

Another way to represent

Talking a lot does not make someone learned; patience and freedom from hatred and fear show real learning.

Words or spatial relations can be explored without trying to see an internal picture.

There is a chance to change or dissolve what was represented. Nothing outside you needs to obey for the experiment to be complete. Let the freedom to revise the image count alongside the ability to sustain it. A useful tool does not have to demand a permanent room of its own.

Practice pause

Form Without a Visual Picture

Before you begin

Choose a nonvisual mode even if visual imagery is available.

1. Arrive

Notice the actual direction of your hands and the pressure of support. Begin with information available without trying to see an inner image.

2. Choose

Choose spatial relations, imagined texture, or movement as your main medium. Describe a resting form in one simple sentence if helpful.

3. Explore

Construct a relation such as “my hands rest before my trunk.” Let that knowledge organize a whole form without adding color or visual edges.

4. Vary

Imagine a slight change in the form’s hand position while your real hand rests. Return to the original relation and compare the two.

5. Compare

Notice which aspects can change voluntarily and which remain only words. Neither vividness nor a sense of inhabiting has to appear.

6. Consider

Try another available medium once, then choose the one that requires least strain. Record the difference rather than ranking the modes.

7. Return

Let the positional description and any imagined movement end. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

How much form can be known without being pictured?

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

Which medium needs least effort?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Less effort before more detail

Work within your capacity and shorten the invitation if attention is tiring.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay through the larger telling rather than stopping at an unusual capacity. The account proceeds through further forms of knowledge toward the ending of the deep currents of craving. The spiritual point is not simply having a more vivid imagined form.

Practice pause

Attention with a lighter touch

Take care

Persistent, unexplained, or worsening fatigue deserves medical attention. Work within your care plan; never use these experiments to push through exhaustion or delayed symptom worsening. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Settle somewhere supported. Pick an available, neutral sensation such as the touch of a sleeve or an ordinary sound; avoid uncomfortable body areas. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

4 minutes. For one minute, gently keep the chosen detail in mind, returning without force. For the next minute, let it come and go without tracking it. Repeat those two minutes once. Notice effort in the brow, jaw, or shoulders without needing to change it. If any form of attention costs too much, spend the remaining time resting with eyes open.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Which condition felt less demanding? Distinguish a quieter mind from a less effortful way of meeting a busy mind. Keep the lighter option if useful.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which approach costs less today?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Fruits of the contemplative life

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 23.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

What does the experience warrant?

A person who lives with truth, goodness, love, restraint, moderation, and wisdom deserves respect as an elder.

Put observation and explanation into separate accounts. Leave contradictions and uncertainty intact.

The king leaves the grove with a grave past and a teaching larger than the question he brought. You leave a modern representation exercise with a simpler distinction: an image may be meaningful without being an external event. The man welcomes you back without asking you to keep another form alive.

Practice pause

Experience, Explanation, and Evidence

Before you begin

Keep a note nearby and choose a recent, manageable practice.

1. Arrive

Feel support and recall one specific event from the practice. If needed, reconstruct a simple form briefly to clarify what you are referring to.

2. Choose

Write what you noticed in sensory or experiential terms: a boundary softened, a position shifted, or a feeling of ownership appeared.

3. Explore

Write your proposed explanation separately. Notice what the explanation adds, such as a cause, mechanism, or claim about the nature of self.

4. Vary

Ask which part could be checked externally and which is a report of experience. Choose an ordinary check only if one actually fits the claim.

5. Compare

Compare your account with available notes or a repeat observation. Record uncertainty and contradictions instead of making the story smoother.

6. Consider

Write one meaningful unanswered question and one practical thing the experience invites you to try. Meaning can remain even when an explanation is unsettled.

7. Return

Release any recalled scene and put the account aside for now. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

Which part of my account is noticed, inferred, or still unknown?

Notice, without grading

What can be checked, and what remains an interpretation?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 15.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

A modest outline

Use a mode available to you and retain actual support. There is no requirement for a visual picture.

A boundary can make an experience feel protected. It can also become something that must be defended against every interruption. The man gives the image a question rather than an enemy: is this helping you meet ordinary life, or has meeting life become a threat to the image?

Practice pause

The Whole-Body Outline

Before you begin

Begin after Preparation feels workable; use your own familiar body as a reference.

1. Arrive

Rest and locate your actual head, trunk, limbs, and support in whatever way is accessible. Notice the difference between feeling a part and knowing its position.

2. Choose

Intend a complete outline in the same seated or resting posture. Let the form reflect your body rather than an ideal or prescribed anatomy.

3. Explore

Build it through a few landmarks, then connect them into a whole. A spatial map or sentence can carry an area without a picture.

4. Vary

Explore both viewing the outline and sensing “I am situated within this form.” Move between these ways gently while retaining seat contact.

5. Compare

Compare coherence, missing regions, and the sense of being inside. A whole may feel present even when its details remain indistinct.

6. Consider

Note which landmarks you created deliberately and which seemed to arrive on their own. Let the distinction remain approximate if needed.

7. Return

Let the whole outline fade instead of checking every part again. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

What makes a few landmarks feel like one body?

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

Which landmarks were represented rather than physically felt?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 31.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

Clarity is not intensity

Someone who checks rising anger as a driver controls a moving carriage is truly skilled; others merely hold the reins.

Notice the difference between a checkable detail and trying harder to produce one.

The outline acquires detail. With it comes a feeling of position or agency, perhaps the thought that this too is me. The old account gives images of something drawn from a covering to describe its mind-made form. The comparison is not proof that a modern picture has reproduced that event.

Practice pause

Clarity Without Strain

Before you begin

Keep eyes open or softly closed according to comfort.

1. Arrive

Rest and notice one actual texture or point of pressure. Describe only what is already distinguishable before concentrating.

2. Choose

Choose one quality to investigate, such as an edge, rhythm, or location. Intend curiosity rather than a sharper or stronger sensation.

3. Explore

Represent that quality with a simple word or shape. Notice which part is a sensation and which part is your way of describing it.

4. Vary

Ease any unnecessary effort in the face or hands, then attend again. If detail fades, acknowledge the fading without tightening to recover it.

5. Compare

Compare clarity before and after easing. Look for clearer detail, less detail, unchanged detail, and differences in effort as separate observations.

6. Consider

Choose the lightest workable way of attending. A less detailed but more sustainable exploration may fit this session better.

7. Return

Drop the descriptive shape or word and let attention broaden. Release any image or form, feel your actual seat and hands, look or listen around the room, and resume an ordinary activity when steady.

8. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

After the practice

How much of the effort was helping me notice?

Notice, without grading

What became clearer, if anything?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 7.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 26.

How this telling was made

Original telling and modern practice

The temple man, present-day settings, connective descriptions, and reader choices are original literary framing. Historical stories retain their recorded direction. Dialogue is modern paraphrase, not a claimed historical quotation. Practice pauses are modern invitations; reading an outcome does not establish that outcome in the reader.

The source’s prerequisites and claim

Fruits of the contemplative life places the mind-made-body passage after extensive ethical and concentration training. This adventure teaches modern representation exercises and does not identify them with that attainment.

Experience, explanation, and evidence

Vividness, ownership shifts, and imagined movement do not prove external movement or a theory of consciousness. Physical and imagined experience must remain distinguishable; stop if they do not.

Simple object

uncertain. Simple object: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go.

Attention with a lighter touch

supporting. Attention with a lighter touch: Allowing feeling while choosing care may support steadiness. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Settling Unfinished Intentions

supporting. Settling Unfinished Intentions: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Gathering Scattered Attention

supporting. Gathering Scattered Attention: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Physical Contact and Imagined Form

uncertain. Physical Contact and Imagined Form: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go. The imagined-body procedure itself is an original elaboration, not an instruction recovered from the discourse.

Experience, Explanation, and Evidence

supporting. Experience, Explanation, and Evidence: Comparing description, sensation, and ownership can offer introductory inquiry. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release. The imagined-body procedure itself is an original elaboration, not an instruction recovered from the discourse.

Tranquility Throughout the Body

supporting. Tranquility Throughout the Body: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Clarity Without Strain

supporting. Clarity Without Strain: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Steadiness Without Rigidity

supporting. Steadiness Without Rigidity: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Making Attention Malleable

supporting. Making Attention Malleable: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Readiness Without Expectation

supporting. Readiness Without Expectation: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

The Whole-Body Outline

uncertain. The Whole-Body Outline: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go. The imagined-body procedure itself is an original elaboration, not an instruction recovered from the discourse.

Form Without a Visual Picture

uncertain. Form Without a Visual Picture: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go. The imagined-body procedure itself is an original elaboration, not an instruction recovered from the discourse.

Changing One Quality

uncertain. Changing One Quality: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go. The imagined-body procedure itself is an original elaboration, not an instruction recovered from the discourse.

Constructed sound

uncertain. Constructed sound: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go.

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

The arrow

The not-self characteristic

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.