

MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA

Sutta 121

**A Little Spell of
Emptiness**

Translated from the Pāli by
Michael M. Olds



BuddhaDust Publications

Los Altos

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Buddha Dust

Bits and scraps, crumbs, fine

Particles that drift down to

Walkers of The Walk.

Then: Thanks for that, Far-Seer!

Great 'Getter-of-the-Get'n!



May all beings be well and happy

May I act with friendliness in thought, word, and deed

towards all living beings

in whatsoever of the ten directions they may abide

whether far or near

May I sympathize with their pains and sorrows

Empathize with their situations

and be at all times objectively detached.

*"I, Ānanda, Live in the Fullness of Emptiness
Empty of Empty Habits
Not an Empty Habitat"*

**Majjhima Nikāya
3. Upari Paṇṇāsa
3. Suññata Vagga**

Sutta 121

Cūḷa Suññata Suttam

A Little Spell of Emptiness

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Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa

In the name of The Lucky Man,
Aristocrat, Consummately Self-Awakened One

For my Mother and Father,
in gratitude for giving me this life.

To My Teachers
in the order encountered
H.C. Warren, Buddhism in Translations,
The Pali Text Society translators
T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, F.L. Woodward,
E.M. Hare, I.B. Horner,
and all those too little sung heros
that came before
and laid the foundations of today's Dhamma resources.
Ven. Jinamurti
Ven. Mew Fung Chen
Ven. M. Puṇṇaji
Carlos Castaneda

I HEAR TELL:

**Once Upon A Time, The Lucky Man,
Sāvatti-Town,
East-Park,
The Palace of Migara's Mother came-a revisiting.**

**At this time, Ānanda,
just emerging from his afternoon's sit down practice,
went to the Teacher,
greeted him,
and sat down to one side.**

There he said:

**"Bhante, at one time, The Lucky Man was residing among the Sakyans
in the market town of Nagaraka,
and I, also, was there.**

**In that place,
I recall having heard, learnt, studied, grasped,
face-to-face with the Lucky Man,
this statement made by him:**

'At this time, Ānanda, I reside in the fullness of emptiness.'

Did I hear this correctly?"

"Yes, Ānanda, you heard, learnt, studied, grasped this correctly.

**Previously, as well as now,
I reside in the fullness of emptiness.**

**In the same way, Ānanda,
as this Palace of Migara's Mother
is *empty* of the disturbances of the city:**

***empty* of elephants,**

cows,

horses asses;

***empty* of dealings with gold and silver;**

***empty* of groups of men and women,**

and there is only this that remains to disturb the emptiness:

that is, the vibration emanating from the Beggars here;

in the same way, a Beggar,

paying no attention to the disturbances of the city,

paying no attention to human beings,

pays attention only to the vibration emanating from the forest.

He takes to paying attention only to perception of the forest,

and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of the city.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of human beings.'

He understands:

'This way there is only that disturbance
emanating from perception of the forest.'

Thus he understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of the city.'

He understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of human beings.'

He understands:

'This way there is only this that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration which emanates
off perception of the forest.'

In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present;
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:

'That being; this is.'

Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.

And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to human beings,
paying no attention to the forest,
he takes to paying attention
only to perception of earth,
and cleans out,
tidies up

and liberates his mind.

**In the same way as he would regard a bull's hide,
stretched out to cure,
held down by a hundred pegs,
it's life done gone;
when he pays attention to earth,
he does not think about anything on earth
such as dry land
or rivers
or swamps
or marshes with plants with branches and thorns
or mountains
or plains,
but he only just pays attention
to the vibration emanating from
perception of earth.**

**He takes to paying attention
only to perception of earth,
and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of human beings.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of the forest.'**

Thus he understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of human beings.'**

He understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of the forest.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is only this
that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration emanating from
perception of earth.'**

**In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present;
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:**

'That being; this is.'

**Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.**

**And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to the forest,
paying no attention to earth,
he takes to paying attention only
to perception of The Sphere of Space,
and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of the forest.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of earth.'**

Thus he understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of the forest.'**

He understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of earth.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is only this
that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration emanating from
perception of the Sphere of Space.'**

**In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that**

'That being, this is.'

**Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.**

**And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to earth,
paying no attention to The Sphere of Space,
he takes to paying attention
only to perception of the Sphere of Consciousness,
and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of earth.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Space.'**

Thus he understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of earth.'**

He understands:

**'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Space.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is only this
that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration emanating from perception of the Sphere of Consciousness.'**

**In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:**

'That being, this is.'

**Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.**

And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,

paying no attention to The Sphere of Space,
paying no attention to The Sphere of Consciousness,
he takes to paying attention
only to perception of The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-There,
and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Space.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from the perception of The Sphere of Consciousness.'

Thus he understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of the Sphere of Space.'

He understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Consciousness.'

He understands:

'This way there is only this
that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration emanating from perception of the Sphere Where Nothing's-
to-be-Had-There.'

In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:

'That being, this is.'

Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.

And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to The Sphere of Consciousness,
paying no attention to The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-There,
he takes to paying attention
only to perception of The Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-

Perception,
and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Consciousness.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-
There.'

Thus he understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of the Sphere of Consciousness.'

He understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from the perception of The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-
There.'

He understands:

'This way there is only this
that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the vibration emanating from perception of the Sphere of Neither-
Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.'

In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:

'That being, this is.'

Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.

And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-There,
paying no attention to The Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-
Perception,
he takes to paying attention
only to the serenity of mind that is Signless,

and cleans out,
tidies up
and liberates his mind.

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-
There.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from perception of the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-
Perception.'

Thus he understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-
There.'

He understands:

'This way is *empty* of disturbance
emanating from perception of The Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-
Perception.'

He understands:

'This way there is only this that disturbs the emptiness:
that is,
the six sense-realms bound to this body
reacting to life.'

In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:

'That being, this is.'

Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.

And again, Ānanda, deeper than that,
paying no attention to The Sphere Where Nothing's-to-be-Had-There,
paying no attention to The Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-
Perception,
he takes to paying attention only to the serenity of mind that is Signless,
and cleans out,

tidies up
and liberates his mind.

He understands:

'This Mental High-Getting that is Signless
is something that has been own-made, thought out.

Whatever has been own-made
or thought out
is subject to change and coming to an end.'

Knowing and seeing this,
his heart is free
from the grip of sense pleasures,
his heart is freed
from the grip of living,
his mind is free
from the grip of blindness.

In Freedom
comes the knowledge of Freedom,
and he knows:

'Left Behind is Rebirth,
Lived is the Best of Lives,
Done is Duty's Doing,
Crossed over Am I;
No More It'n and At'n for Me!'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from the grip of sense pleasures.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from the grip of living.'

He understands:

'This way there is no disturbance
emanating from the grip of blindness.'

Thus he understands:

'This way is *empty* of the disturbance
emanating from the grip of sense pleasures.'

He understands:

'This way is *empty* of the disturbance
emanating from the grip of living.'

He understands:

**'This way is *empty* of the disturbance
emanating from the grip of blindness.'**

He understands:

**'This way there is only this that disturbs the emptiness,
that is the six sense-realms bound to this body
reacting to life.'**

**In this way he regards that which is present
as *empty* of that which is not present,
and, with regard to what remains,
he understands that:**

'That being, this is.'

**Thus, Ānanda, there is in the case of this case,
a sitting-down-to-empty-out
that results in surpassing purity.**

**And, Ānanda, all those Shamen or Brahmen
of the long distant past
who attained the highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and made it a habitat,
all of them did so
by attaining this same highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and making it a habitat.**

**And, Ānanda, all those Shamen or Brahmen
who in the far distant future
will attain the highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and make it a habitat,
all of them will do so
by attaining this same highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and making it a habitat.**

**And, Ānanda, all those Shamen or Brahmen
who at present
are able to attain the highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and make it a habitat,
all of them do so by attaining
this same highest surpassing purity of emptiness
and making it a habitat.**

Wherefore, Ānanda, train yourself this way:

**'I will attain
the highest surpassing purity of emptiness**

and make a habitat of that.'"

Thus spake the Lucky Man.

And uplifted in mind, Ananda was delighted by the Lucky Man's talk.
