

Emptiness

§1. “This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a contemplative or brahman, to ask: ‘What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, when I do it, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, when I do it, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?’”

—MN 135

§2. “What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?”

“For reflection, sir.”

“In the same way, Rahula, bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions are to be done with repeated reflection.

“Whenever you want to perform a bodily action, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily action I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results? If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then any bodily action of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a bodily action, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily action I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily action, with painful consequences, painful results? If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a bodily action, you should reflect on it... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily action with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

[Similarly with verbal actions]

“Whenever you want to perform a mental action, you should reflect on it: ‘This mental action I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results? If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then any mental action of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not cause affliction... it would be a skillful mental action with happy consequences, happy results, then any mental act of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a mental action, you should reflect on it: ‘This mental action I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful mental action, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a mental action, you should reflect on it.... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful mental action with painful consequences, painful results, then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling distressed... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful mental action with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

“Rahula, all those contemplatives & brahmans in the course of the past who purified their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“All those contemplatives & brahmans in the course of the future who will purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, will do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“All those contemplatives & brahmans at present who purify their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions, do it through repeated reflection on their bodily actions, verbal actions, & mental actions in just this way.

“Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself: ‘I will purify my bodily actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my verbal actions through repeated reflection. I will purify my mental actions through repeated reflection.’ That’s how you should train yourself.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, Ven. Rahula delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

—MN 61

§3. “Monks, these four types of individuals are to be found existing in world. Which four?”

“There is the case of the individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment. Then there is the case of the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquility of awareness. Then there is the case of the individual who has attained neither internal tranquility of awareness nor insight into phenomena through heightened discernment. And then there is the case of the individual who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

“The individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness, but not insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, should approach an individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment and ask him: ‘How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?’ The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: ‘Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.’ Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has

attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

“As for the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquility of awareness, he should approach an individual who has attained internal tranquility of awareness... and ask him, ‘How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?’ The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: ‘The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way.’ Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

“As for the individual who has attained neither internal tranquility of awareness nor insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, he should approach an individual who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment...and ask him, ‘How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated? How should fabrications be regarded? How should they be investigated? How should they be seen with insight?’ The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: ‘The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way. Fabrications should be regarded in this way. Fabrications should be investigated in this way. Fabrications should be seen in this way with insight.’ Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.

“As for the individual who has attained both internal tranquility of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, his duty is to make an effort in establishing (‘tuning’) those very same skillful qualities to a higher degree for the ending of the (mental) fermentations.

“These are four types of individuals to be found existing in world.”

—AN 4:94

§4. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi in the Eastern Monastery, the palace of Migara’s mother. Then in the evening, Ven. Ananda, coming out of seclusion, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “On one occasion, when the Blessed One was staying among the Sakyans in a Sakyan town named Nagaraka, there—face-to-face with the Blessed One—I heard this, face-to-face I learned this: ‘I now remain fully in a dwelling of emptiness.’ Did I hear that correctly, learn it correctly, attend to it correctly, remember it correctly?”

[The Buddha:] “Yes, Ananda, you heard that correctly, learned it correctly, attended to it correctly, remembered it correctly. Now, as well as before, I remain fully in a dwelling of emptiness. Just as this palace of Migara’s mother is empty of elephants, cattle, & mares, empty of gold & silver, empty of assemblies of women & men, and there is only this non-emptiness—the singleness based on the community of monks; even so, Ananda, a monk—not attending to the perception [mental note] of village, not attending to the perception of human being—attends to the singleness

based on the perception of *wilderness*. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of wilderness.

“He discerns that ‘Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of village are not present. Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.’ He discerns that ‘This mode of perception is empty of the perception of village. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of wilderness.’ Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: ‘There is this.’ And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

“Further, Ananda, the monk—not attending to the perception of human being, not attending to the perception of wilderness—attends to the singleness based on the perception of *earth*. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth. Just as a bull’s hide is stretched free from wrinkles with a hundred stakes, even so—without attending to all the ridges & hollows, the river ravines, the tracts of stumps & thorns, the craggy irregularities of this earth—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of earth. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its perception of earth.

“He discerns that ‘Whatever disturbances that would exist based on the perception of human being are not present. Whatever disturbances would exist based on the perception of wilderness are not present. There is only this modicum of disturbance: the singleness based on the perception of earth.’ He discerns that ‘This mode of perception is empty of the perception of human being. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of wilderness. There is only this non-emptiness: the singleness based on the perception of earth.’ Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: ‘There is this.’ And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

“Further, Ananda, the monk—not attending to the perception of wilderness, not attending to the perception of earth—attends to the singleness based on the perception of *the dimension of the infinitude of space*.... not attending to the perception of earth, not attending to the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of *the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness*.... not attending to the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space, not attending to the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness—he attends to the singleness based on the perception of *the dimension of nothingness*.... not attending to the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness—attends to the singleness based on *the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception*.... not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on *the theme-less concentration of awareness*. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its theme-less concentration of awareness.

“He discerns that ‘Whatever disturbances would exist based on the perception of the dimension of nothingness are not present. Whatever disturbances would exist

based on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of nothingness. This mode of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. There is only this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, & pure.

"Further, Ananda, the monk—not attending to the perception of the dimension of nothingness, not attending to the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—attends to the singleness based on the theme-less concentration of awareness. His mind takes pleasure, finds satisfaction, settles, & indulges in its theme-less concentration of awareness.

"He discerns that 'This theme-less concentration of awareness is fabricated & mentally fashioned.' And he discerns that 'Whatever is fabricated & mentally fashioned is inconstant & subject to cessation.' For him—thus knowing, thus seeing—the mind is released from the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"He discerns that 'Whatever disturbances would exist based on the fermentation of sensuality... the fermentation of becoming... the fermentation of ignorance, are not present. And there is only this modicum of disturbance: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' He discerns that 'This mode of perception is empty of the fermentation of sensuality... becoming... ignorance. And there is just this non-emptiness: that connected with the six sensory spheres, dependent on this very body with life as its condition.' Thus he regards it as empty of whatever is not there. Whatever remains, he discerns as present: 'There is this.' And so this, his entry into emptiness, accords with actuality, is undistorted in meaning, pure—superior & unsurpassed."

—MN 121

§5. "There are these ten totality-dimensions. Which ten? One perceives the earth-totality above, below, all-around—non-dual (*advayam*), unlimited. One perceives the water-totality... the fire-totality... the wind-totality... the blue-totality... the yellow-totality... the red-totality... the white-totality... the space-totality... the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around: non-dual, unlimited. These are the ten totalities. Now, of these ten totalities, this is supreme: when one perceives the consciousness-totality above, below, all-around—non-dual, unlimited. And there are beings who are percipient in this way. Yet even in the beings who are percipient in this way there is still aberration, there is change. Seeing this, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with that. Being disenchanted with that, he becomes dispassionate toward what is supreme, and even more so toward what is inferior."

—AN 10:29

§6. *Mogharaja*:

How does one view the world
so as not to be seen by Death's king?

The Buddha:

View the world, Mogharaja,
as empty—
always mindful,
to have removed any view in terms of self.
This way one is above & beyond death.
This is how one views the world
so as not to be seen by Death's king.

—*Sn 5:15*

§7. Then Ven. Ananda went to the Blessed One and on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One, "It is said that the world is empty, the world is empty, lord. In what respect is it said that the world is empty?"

"Insofar as it is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self: Thus it is said, Ananda, that the world is empty. And what is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self? The eye is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self. Forms... Eye-consciousness... Eye-contact is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self.

"The ear is empty....

"The nose is empty....

"The tongue is empty....

"The body is empty....

"The intellect is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self. Ideas.... Intellect-consciousness.... Intellect-contact is empty of a self or of anything pertaining to a self. Thus it is said that the world is empty."

—*SN 35:85*

§8. "Monks, suppose that a large glob of foam were floating down this Ganges River, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a glob of foam? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any form that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in form?

"Now suppose that in the autumn—when it's raining in fat, heavy drops—a water bubble were to appear & disappear on the water, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a water bubble? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any feeling that is past, future, or

present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in feeling?

“Now suppose that in the last month of the hot season a mirage were shimmering, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a mirage? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any perception that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in perception?

“Now suppose that a man desiring heartwood, in quest of heartwood, seeking heartwood, were to go into a forest carrying a sharp ax. There he would see a large banana tree: straight, young, of enormous height. He would cut it at the root and, having cut it at the root, would chop off the top. Having chopped off the top, he would peel away the outer skin. Peeling away the outer skin, he wouldn’t even find sapwood, to say nothing of heartwood. Then a man with good eyesight would see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a banana tree? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any fabrications that are past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing them, observing them, & appropriately examining them—they would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in fabrications?

“Now suppose that a magician or magician’s apprentice were to display a magic trick at a major intersection, and a man with good eyesight were to see it, observe it, & appropriately examine it. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in a magic trick? In the same way, a monk sees, observes, & appropriately examines any consciousness that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near. To him—seeing it, observing it, & appropriately examining it—it would appear empty, void, without substance: for what substance would there be in consciousness?

“Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he grows dispassionate. Through dispassion, he’s released. With release there’s the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

—SN 22:95

§9. “There is the case where a monk, withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities, enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an

arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the resolution of all fabrications; the relinquishment of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; Unbinding.’” [Similarly with the other levels of jhana up through the dimension of nothingness.]

—AN 9:36

§10. “There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—does not discern what ideas are fit for attention or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention and attends [instead] to ideas unfit for attention.

“And what are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen fermentation of sensuality arises in him, and the arisen fermentation of sensuality increases; the unarisen fermentation of becoming arises in him, and the arisen fermentation of becoming increases; the unarisen fermentation of ignorance arises in him, and the arisen fermentation of ignorance increases. These are the ideas unfit for attention that he attends to....

“This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’

“As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self* ... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self* ... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self* ... or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions—is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity.* This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

“The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—discerns what ideas are fit for attention and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention and attends [instead] to ideas fit for attention....

“And what are the ideas fit for attention that he does attend to? Whatever ideas such that, when he attends to them, the unarisen fermentation of sensuality does not arise in him, and the arisen fermentation of sensuality is abandoned; the unarisen fermentation of becoming does not arise in him, and the arisen fermentation of becoming is abandoned; the unarisen fermentation of ignorance does not arise in

him, and the arisen fermentation of ignorance is abandoned. These are the ideas fit for attention that he does attend to. Through his not attending to ideas unfit for attention and through his attending to ideas fit for attention, unarisen fermentations do not arise in him, and arisen fermentations are abandoned.

“He attends appropriately, *This is stress.... This is the origination of stress.... This is the cessation of stress.... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress.* As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by seeing.”

—MN 2

§11. Kaccayana: “Lord, ‘Right view, right view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right view?”

The Buddha: “By & large, Kaccayana, this world is supported by (takes as its object) a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world as it actually is with right discernment, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it actually is with right discernment, ‘existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one.

“By & large, Kaccayana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings (sustenances), & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or latent tendencies; nor is he resolved on ‘my self.’ He has no uncertainty or doubt that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, one’s knowledge is independent of others. It is to this extent, Kaccayana, that there is right view.”

—SN 12:15

§12. “Then, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress.”

Through hearing this brief explanation of the Dhamma from the Blessed One, the mind of Bahiya of the Bark-cloth right then and there was released from fermentations through lack of clinging/sustenance.

—Ud 1:10

§13. “The Tathagata, when seeing what is to be seen, doesn’t construe an [object as] seen. He doesn’t construe an unseen. He doesn’t construe an [object] to-be-seen. He doesn’t construe a seer.

“When hearing....

“When sensing....

“When cognizing what is to be cognized, he doesn’t construe an [object as] cognized. He doesn’t construe an uncognized. He doesn’t construe an [object] to-be-cognized. He doesn’t construe a cognizer.

Thus, the Tathagata—being the same with regard to all phenomena that can be seen, heard, sensed, & cognized—is ‘Such.’ And I tell you: There is no other ‘Such’ higher or more sublime.”

—AN 4:24

§14. Then a brahman cosmologist went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Now, then, Master Gotama, does everything exist?”

“‘Everything exists’ is the senior form of cosmology, brahman.”

“Then, Master Gotama, does everything not exist?”

“‘Everything does not exist’ is the second form of cosmology, brahman.”

“Then is everything a Oneness?”

“‘Everything is a Oneness’ is the third form of cosmology, brahman.”

“Then is everything a Plurality?”

“‘Everything is a Plurality’ is the fourth form of cosmology, brahman.

Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.

From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.

From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.

From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.

From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.

From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.

From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.

From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming.

From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.

From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.

“Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.”

—SN 12:48

§15. “And what is the emptiness awareness-release? There is the case where a monk, having gone into the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or into an empty dwelling, considers this: ‘This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self.’ This is called the emptiness awareness-release.”

—MN 43

§16. “Then again, the disciple of the noble ones, having gone into the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or into an empty dwelling, considers this: ‘This is empty of self or of anything pertaining to self.’ Practicing & frequently abiding in this way, his mind acquires confidence in that dimension. There being full confidence, he either attains the dimension of nothingness now or else is committed to discernment. With the break-up of the body, after death, it’s possible that this leading-on consciousness of his will go to the dimension of nothingness. This is declared to be the second practice conducive to the dimension of nothingness.

“Then again, the disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘I am not anyone’s anything anywhere; nor is anything of mine in anyone anywhere.’ Practicing & frequently abiding in this way, his mind acquires confidence in that dimension. There being full confidence, he either attains the dimension of nothingness now or else is committed to discernment. With the break-up of the body, after death, it’s possible that this leading-on consciousness of his will go to the dimension of nothingness. This is declared to be the third practice conducive to the dimension of nothingness....

When this was said, Ven. Ananda said to the Blessed One: “There is the case, lord, where a monk, having practiced in this way—‘It should not be, it should not occur to me; it will not be, it will not occur to me. What is, what has come to be, that I abandon’—obtains equanimity. Now, would this monk be totally unbound, or not?”

“A certain such monk might, Ananda, and another might not.”

“What is the cause, what is the reason, whereby one might and another might not?”

“There is the case, Ananda, where a monk, having practiced in this way—[thinking,] ‘It should not be, it should not occur to me; it will not be, it will not occur to me. What is, what has come to be, that I abandon’—obtains equanimity. He relishes that equanimity, welcomes it, remains fastened to it. As he relishes that equanimity, welcomes it, remains fastened to it, his consciousness is dependent on it, is sustained by it [clings to it]. With clinging/sustenance, Ananda, a monk is not totally unbound.”

“Being sustained, where is that monk sustained?”

“The dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.”

“Then, indeed, being sustained, he is sustained by the supreme sustenance.”

“Being sustained, Ananda, he *is* sustained by the supreme sustenance; for this—the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—is the supreme sustenance. There is [however] the case where a monk, having practiced in this way—‘It should not be, it should not occur to me; it will not be, it will not occur to me. What is, what has come to be, that I abandon’—obtains equanimity. He does not relish that equanimity, does not welcome it, does not remain fastened to it. As does not relish that equanimity, does not welcome it, does not remain fastened to it, his consciousness is not dependent on it, is not sustained by it [does not cling to it]. Without clinging/sustenance, Ananda, a monk is totally unbound.”

—MN 106