MN 8 — Sallekha Sutta: The Discourse on Effacement

English translation by Nyanaponika Thera.

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Text

1. Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery.

2. Then one evening the venerable Maha-Cunda[1] rose from meditative seclusion and went to the Blessed One. Having paid homage to him, he sat down at one side and spoke thus to the Blessed One:

3. "Venerable sir, there are these various views that arise in the world concerning self-doctrines or world-doctrines.[2] Does the abandoning and discarding of such views come about in a monk who is only at the beginning of his [meditative] reflections?"[3]

"Cunda, as to those several views that arise in the world concerning self-doctrines and world-doctrines, if [the object] in which[4] these views arise, in which they underlie and become active,[5] is seen with right wisdom[6] as it actually is,[7] thus: 'This is not mine,[8]

this I am not,[9] this is not my self'[10] — then the abandoning of these views, their discarding,[11] takes place in him [who thus sees].

The Eight Attainments

4. "It may be, Cunda, that some monk, detached from sense-objects, detached from unsalutary ideas, enters into the first absorption that is born of detachment, accompanied by thought-conception and discursive thinking, and filled with rapture and joy, and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'abidings in ease here and now.'[12]

5. "It may be that after the stilling of thought conception and discursive thinking, he gains the inner tranquillity and harmony of the second absorption that is free of thought-conception and discursive thinking, born of concentration and filled with rapture and joy; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'abidings in ease here and now.'

6. "It may be that after the fading away of rapture, the monk dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly aware, and he experiences a happiness in his body of which the Noble Ones say: 'Happily lives he who dwells in equanimity and is mindful!' — that third absorption he wins; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'abidings in ease here and now.'

7. "It may be that with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, he enters upon and abides in the fourth absorption, which is beyond pleasure and pain and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'abidings in ease here and now.'

8. "It may be that, with the entire transcending of perceptions of corporeality,[13] with the disappearance of perceptions of sense-response,'[14] with non-attention to perceptions of variety,[15] thinking: 'Space is infinite,' some monk enters upon and abides in the sphere of infinite space; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'peaceful abidings.'

9. "It may be that by entirely transcending the sphere of infinite space, thinking: 'Consciousness is infinite,' some monk enters and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'peaceful abidings.'

10. "It may be that by entirely transcending the sphere of infinite consciousness, some monk enters and abides in the sphere of nothingness; and he then might think: I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble One's discipline they are called 'peaceful abidings.'

11. "It may be that, by entirely transcending the sphere of nothingness, some monk enters and abides in the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; and he then might think: 'I am abiding in effacement.' But in the Noble One's discipline it is not these [attainments] that are called 'effacement'; in the Noble one's discipline they are called 'peaceful abidings.'

Effacement

12. "But herein, Cunda, effacement should be practiced by you:[16]

(1) Others will be harmful; we shall not be harmful here — thus effacement can be done.[17]

(2) Others will kill living beings; we shall abstain from killing living beings here — thus effacement can be done.

(3) Others will take what is not given; we shall abstain from taking what is not given here — thus effacement can be done.

(4) Others will be unchaste; we shall be chaste here — thus effacement can be done.

(5) Others will speak falsehood; we shall abstain from false speech here — thus effacement can be done.

(6) Others will speak maliciously; we shall abstain from malicious speech here — thus effacement can be done.

(7) Others will speak harshly; we shall abstain from harsh speech here — thus effacement can be done.

(8) Others will gossip; we shall abstain from gossip here — thus effacement can be done.

(9) Others will be covetous; we shall not be covetous here — thus effacement can be done.

(10) Others will have thoughts of ill will; we shall not have thoughts of ill will here — thus effacement can be done.

(11) Others will have wrong views; we shall have right view here — thus effacement can be done.

(12) Others will have wrong intention; we shall have right intention here — thus effacement can be done.

(13) Others will use wrong speech; we shall use right speech here — thus effacement can be done.

(14) Others will commit wrong actions; we shall do right actions here — thus effacement can be done.

(15) Others will have wrong livelihood; we shall have right livelihood here — thus effacement can be done.

(16) Others will make wrong effort; we shall make right effort here — thus effacement can be done.

(17) Others will have wrong mindfulness; we shall have right mindfulness here — thus effacement can be done.

(18) Others will have wrong concentration; we shall have right concentration here — thus effacement can be done.

(19) Others will have wrong knowledge; we shall have right knowledge here — thus effacement can be done.

(20) Others will have wrong deliverance; we shall have right deliverance here — thus effacement can be done.

(21) Others will be overcome by sloth and torpor; we shall be free from sloth and torpor here — thus effacement can be done.

(22) Others will be agitated; we shall be unagitated here — thus effacement can be done.

(23) Others will be doubting; we shall be free from doubt here — thus effacement can be done.

(24) Others will be angry; we shall not be angry here — thus effacement can be done.

(25) Others will be hostile; we shall not be hostile here — thus effacement can be done.

(26) Others will denigrate; we shall not denigrate here — thus effacement can be done.

(27) Others will be domineering; we shall not be domineering here — thus effacement can be done.

(28) Others will be envious; we shall not be envious here — thus effacement can be done.

(29) Others will be jealous; we shall not be jealous here — thus effacement can be done.

(30) Others will be fraudulent; we shall not be fraudulent here — thus effacement can be done.

(31) Others will be hypocrites; we shall not be hypocrites here — thus effacement can be done.

(32) Others will be obstinate; we shall not be obstinate here — thus effacement can be done.

(33) Others will be arrogant; we shall not be arrogant here — thus effacement can be done.

(34) Others will be difficult to admonish; we shall be easy to admonish here — thus effacement can be done.

(35) Others will have bad friends; we shall have noble friends here — thus effacement can be done.

(36) Others will be negligent; we shall be heedful here — thus effacement can be done.

(37) Others will be faithless; we shall be faithful here — thus effacement can be done.

(38) Others will be shameless; we shall be shameful here — thus effacement can be done.

(39) Others will be without conscience; we shall have conscience here — thus effacement can be done.

(40) Others will have no learning; we shall be learned here — thus effacement can be done.

(41) Others will be idle; we shall be energetic here — thus effacement can be done.

(42) Others will be lacking in mindfulness; we shall be established in mindfulness here — thus effacement can be done.

(43) Others will be without wisdom; we shall be endowed with wisdom — thus effacement can be done.

(44) Others will misapprehend according to their individual views, hold on to them tenaciously and not easily discard them;[18] we shall not misapprehend according to individual views nor hold on to them tenaciously, but shall discard them with ease — thus effacement can be done.

The Arising of Thought

13. "Cunda, I say that even the arising of a thought concerned with salutary things [and ideas][19] is of great importance, not to speak of bodily acts and words conforming [to such thought].[20] Therefore, Cunda:

(1) The thought should be produced: 'Others will be harmful; we shall not be harmful here.'

(2) The thought should be produced: 'Others will kill living beings; we shall abstain from killing living beings here.'

(3)-(43)...

(44) The thought should be produced: 'Others will misapprehend according to their individual views, hold on to them tenaciously and not easily discard them; we shall not misapprehend according to individual views nor hold on to them tenaciously, but shall discard them with ease.'

Avoidance

14. "Suppose, Cunda, there were an uneven road and another even road by which to avoid it; and suppose there were an uneven ford and another even ford by which to avoid it.[21] So too:

(1) A person given to harmfulness has non-harming by which to avoid it.

(2) A person given to killing living beings has abstention from killing by which to avoid it.

(3) A person given to taking what is not given has abstention from taking what is not given by which to avoid it.

(4) A person given to unchastity has chastity by which to avoid it.

(5) A person given to false speech has abstention from false speech by which to avoid it.

(6) A person given to malicious speech has abstention from malicious speech by which to avoid it.

(7) A person given to harsh speech has abstention from harsh speech by which to avoid it.

(8) A person given to gossip has abstention from gossip by which to avoid it.

(9) A person given to covetousness has non-covetousness by which to avoid it.

(10) A person given to thoughts of ill will has non-ill will by which to avoid it.

(11) A person given to wrong view has right view by which to avoid it.

(12) A person given to wrong intention has right intention by which to avoid it.

(13) A person given to wrong speech has right speech by which to avoid it.

(14) A person given to wrong action has right action by which to avoid it.

(15) A person given to wrong livelihood has right livelihood by which to avoid it.

(16) A person given to wrong effort has right effort by which to avoid it.

(17) A person given to wrong mindfulness has right mindfulness by which to avoid it.

(18) A person given to wrong concentration has right concentration by which to avoid it.

(19) A person given to wrong knowledge has right knowledge by which to avoid it.

(20) A person given to wrong deliverance has right deliverance by which to avoid it.

(21) A person overcome by sloth and torpor has freedom from sloth and torpor by which to avoid it.

(22) A person given to agitation has non-agitation by which to avoid it.

(23) A person given to doubting has freedom from doubt by which to avoid it.

(24) A person given to anger has freedom from anger by which to avoid it.

(25) A person given to hostility has freedom from hostility by which to avoid it.

(26) A person given to denigrating has non-denigrating by which to avoid it.

(27) A person given to domineering has non-domineering by which to avoid it.

(28) A person given to envy has non-envy by which to avoid it.

(29) A person given to jealousy has non-jealousy by which to avoid it.

(30) A person given to fraud has non-fraud by which to avoid it.

(31) A person given to hypocrisy has non-hypocrisy by which to avoid it.

(32) A person given to obstinacy has non-obstinacy by which to avoid it.

(33) A person given to arrogance has non-arrogance by which to avoid it.

(34) A person difficult to admonish has amenability by which to avoid it.

(35) A person given to making bad friends has making good friends by which to avoid it.

(36) A person given to negligence has heedfulness by which to avoid it.

(37) A person given to faithlessness has faith by which to avoid it.

(38) A person given to shamelessness has shame by which to avoid it.

(39) A person without conscience has conscience by which to avoid it.

(40) A person without learning has acquisition of great learning by which to avoid it.

(41) A person given to idleness has energetic endeavor by which to avoid it.

(42) A person without mindfulness has the establishment of mindfulness by which to avoid it.

(43) A person without wisdom has wisdom by which to avoid it.

(44) A person given to misapprehending according to his individual views, to holding on to them tenaciously and not discarding them easily, has non-misapprehension of individual views, non-holding on tenaciously and ease in discarding by which to avoid it.

The Way Upward

15. "Cunda, as all unsalutary states lead downward and all salutary states lead upward, even so, Cunda:

(1) A person given to harmfulness has harmlessness to lead him upward.[22]

(2) A person given to killing living beings has abstention from killing to lead him upwards.

(3)-(43)...

(44) A person given to misapprehending according to his individual views, to holding on to them tenaciously and not discarding them easily, has non-misapprehension of individual views, non-holding on tenaciously and ease in discarding to lead him upward.

Quenching

16. "Cunda, it is impossible that one who is himself sunk in the mire[23] should pull out another who is sunk in the mire. But it is possible, Cunda, that one not sunk in the mire himself should pull out another who is sunk in the mire.

"It is not possible, Cunda, that one who is himself not restrained, not disciplined and not quenched [as to his passions],[24] should make others restrained and disciplined, should make them attain to the full quenching [of passions].[25] But it is possible, Cunda, that one who is himself restrained, disciplined and fully quenched [as to his passions] should make others restrained and disciplined, should make them attain to the full quenching [of passions]. Even so, Cunda:[26]

(1) A person given to harmfulness has harmlessness by which to attain to the full quenching [of it].

(2) A person given to killing living beings has abstention from killing by which to attain to the full quenching [of it].

(3)-(43)...

(44) A person given to misapprehending according to his individual views, to holding on to them tenaciously and not discarding them easily, has non-misapprehension of individual views, non-holding on tenaciously and ease in discarding by which to attain the quenching [of them].

Conclusion

17. "Thus, Cunda, I have shown to you the instruction on effacement, I have shown to you the instruction on thought's arising, I have shown to you the instruction on avoidance, I have shown to you the instruction on the way upward, I have shown to you the instruction on quenching.

18. "What can be done for his disciples by a Master who seeks their welfare and has compassion and pity on them, that I have done for you, Cunda.[27] There are these roots of trees, there are empty places. Meditate, Cunda, do not delay, lest you later regret it. 'This is my message to you."

Thus spoke the Blessed One. Satisfied, the venerable Cunda rejoiced in the Blessed One's words.

[The concluding verse added by the 'Theras of the First Council:]

Deep like the ocean is this Suttanta on Effacement, Dealing with forty-four items, showing them in five sections.

Notes

1.

Maha-Cunda Thera was the brother of the venerable Sariputta Thera.

2.

Self-doctrines or world-doctrines (atta-vada, lokavada). According to Comy., this refers: (a) to the twenty types of personality-belief (sakkaya-ditthi), i.e., four for each of the five aggregates (khandha); (b) to eight wrong views about self and world, as being eternal, not eternal, both eternal and not eternal, neither eternal nor not eternal, and the same four alternatives concerning finite and infinite.

3.

In a monk who is only at the beginning of his (meditative) reflections (adim-eva manasikaroto). Comy.: "This refers to one who is at the beginning of his insight-meditation (vipassana-bhavana) and has not yet attained to stream-entry," when the fetter of personality-belief is finally eliminated. The beginner's insight-practice extends from the "discernment of mentality and corporeality" (namarupa-pariccheda) up to the "knowledge of rise and fall" (udayabbaya-ñana), on which see Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga), Chs. XVIII, XX, XXI.

According to the Comy., the Thera's question concerns those who overrate the degree of their achievement, i.e., those who believe that, in their meditative practice, they have achieved this or that result while actually they have not. Overestimation (abhimana), in that sense, "does not arise in ignorant common people (bala-puthujjana) who are entirely engrossed in worldly life, nor does it arise in Noble Disciples (ariya-savaka); because in a stream-winner the overestimation does not arise that he is a once-returner, etc. Self-overestimation can occur only in one who actually practices (meditation) and has temporarily subdued the defilements by way of tranquillity or insight. Maha-Cunda Thera, being an arahant, was no self-overrater himself, but in formulating his question, he put himself in the place of one who is; or, as others say, there may have been such "self-overraters" among his pupils, and for conveying to them the Buddha's reply, he put his question.

4.

(The object) in which (yattha). Comy.: yattha (where) = yasmim arammane. The object, or basis, the five aggregates, because all false views on self and world can refer only to the five aggregates or to one of them. See Discourse on the Snake Simile (Wheel No. 47/48), p. 8, and Anatta and Nibbana, by Nyanaponika Thera (Wheel No. 11), p. 18 (quotation).

5.

In which these views arise (yattha uppajjanti), i.e., arise for the first time, without having occurred earlier (Comy.).

Underlie (anusenti), i.e., habitually occur (cf. anusaya, "tendency," which may be latent or active). Comy.: "This refers to views which, having been indulged in repeatedly, have become strong and have not been removed." Sub.Comy.: "By ultimate elimination (samuccheda-vinaya-vasena)."

Become active (samudacaranti). Comy.: "Wrong views have arrived at the (action-) doors of body and speech," i.e., which have found expression in words and deeds.

6.

With right wisdom (sammappañña). Comy.: "With insight-wisdom, ending with the knowledge pertaining to the path of stream-entry."

7.

As it actually is (yatha-bhutam). Comy.: "Because the five aggregates exist only in that manner (i.e., as something 'that is not mine,' etc.). But if conceived in the way 'It is mine,' etc., it simply does not exist (n'ev'atthi)."

8.

This is not mine: hereby craving (tanha) is rejected.

9.

This I am not: this refers to the rejection of conceit (mana).

10.

This is not my self: this refers to the rejection of false views (ditthi).

11.

Abandoning... discarding (pahanam... patinissaggo). Comy.: "Both terms are synonymous with the ultimate eradication of wrong views, taking place at stream-entry when the fetter of personality belief is destroyed."

12.

Now the Buddha speaks, on his own, of another type of "self-overrater," i.e., of those who have realized any of the eight meditative attainments (samapatti) and believe that this signifies true "effacement" (sallekha).

The common meaning of sallekha* is austere practice or asceticism; but in the Buddha's usage it is the radical "effacing" or removal of the defilements.

*[Sallekha (= sam-lekha) is derived from the verbal root likh, to scratch; hence likhati (a) to scratch in, to write; (b) to scratch off, to remove: samlikhati, "to remove fully." An interesting parallel is "ascesis," derived from the Greek askeuein, to scratch. The rendering by "effacement" is Ñanamoli Thera's; Soma Thera has "cancelling"; I. B. Horner, "expunging."]

The eight stages of meditation given here in the discourse, consist of the four fine-material absorptions (rupajjhana) and the four immaterial absorptions (arupajjhana). Comy. says that these meditative attainments "are in common with the ascetics outside (the Buddha's Dispensation)."

Comy.: "The overrater's meditative absorption is neither 'effacement' nor is it the 'path of practice for effacement' (sallekha-patipada). And why not? Because that jhana is not used by him as a basis for insight; that is, after rising from jhana he does not scrutinize the (physical and mental) formations" (see Visuddhimagga transl. by Ñanamoli, Ch. XVIII, 3). His jhana produces only one-pointedness of mind, and is, as our text says, an "abiding in ease here and now."

13.

"By 'perceptions of corporeality' (rupasañña) are meant the absorptions of the fine-material sphere (rupajjhana) as well as those things that are their objects" (Visuddhimagga).

14.

Perceptions of sense-response (lit. resistance, patigha-sañña) are perceptions arisen through the impact of the physical sense bases (eye, etc.) and their objects.

15.

Perceptions of variety (ñanatta-sañña) are perceptions that arise in a variety of fields, or various perceptions in various fields. This refers to all perceptions belonging to the sense sphere (kamavacara).

16.

Comy.: "Now, the Blessed One shows in forty-four ways where effacement should be practiced. But why are harmlessness and the other states regarded as effacement, unlike the eight meditative attainments? Because they are a basis for the supramundane (lokuttara-padaka); while, for outsiders, the eight attainments are merely a basis for (continuing) the round of existence (vatta-padaka), (because by non-Buddhists they are practiced for the sake of rebirth in higher worlds). But in the Buddha's Dispensation, even the Going for Refuge is a basis for the supramundane.

Sub.Comy.: "If one, wishing to overcome the suffering of samsara, goes with joyful confidence for refuge to the Triple Gem, then this Refuge will be for him a supporting condition for higher virtue, etc. (i.e., higher mentality and higher wisdom), and it may gradually lead him to the attainment of the path of understanding (dassana-magga; i.e., stream-entry)."

The Forty-four Ways of Effacement

(1) Harmful and harmless are not attached to a group of standard doctrinal categories as most of the other qualities are. On "harmlessness" see Note 17.

(2)-(11) are the courses of action (kammapatha), unsalutary (akusala) and salutary (kusala), referring to body (2-4), speech (5-8) and mind (9-11).

(12)-(18) are the last seven factors of the eightfold path (wrong and right), also called the eight states of wrongness or rightness (micchatta, sammatta). The first path factor, right (or wrong) view, is not separately mentioned, being identical with (11).

(19)-(20) are often added to the eightfold path.

(21)-(23) are the last three of the five hindrances (nivarana); the first two are identical with (9) and (10), and therefore not repeated here.

(24)-(33) are ten of the sixteen defilements (upakkilesa) mentioned in MN 7 (Simile of the Cloth).

(34)-(36) are called in the Commentary the miscellaneous factors (pakinnaka).

(37)-(43) are the seven "good qualities" (saddhamma), mentioned in MN 53 Comy.: "In this connection they are mentioned as forming the complete equipment required for insight (vipassana-sambharo paripuro)."

(44) is unattached to any group of terms. (See Note 18).

17.

Comy.: "Harmlessness is called 'effacement,' because it effaces harmfulness, i.e., it cuts it off (chindati). This method of explanation applies to all other terms."

Sub.Comy.: "But why is harmlessness (or nonviolence, ahimsa) mentioned at the very beginning? Because it is the root of all virtues; harmlessness, namely, is a synonym of compassion. Especially, it is the root-cause of morality because it makes one refrain from immorality which has as its characteristic mark the harming of others. Just as the killing of living beings has the harming of others as its mark, so also the taking away of others' property; for 'robbing a man's wealth is worse than stabbing him.'* Similarly, chastity removes the cause for the pains of child bearing, etc., and there is hardly a need to mention the harm done by adultery.

*[This is given in Pali as direct speech or quote; perhaps it was a common adage.]

"Obvious is also the harm done to others by deception, by causing dissension and by backbiting. The mark of harming others is also attached to gossip because it takes away what is beneficial and causes to arise what is not beneficial; to covetousness, as it causes one to take what is not given; to ill will, as it causes killing, etc.; to wrong views, as they are the cause of all that is un-beneficial. One who holds wrong views may, in the conviction of acting righteously, kill living beings and incite others to do likewise. There is nothing to say about other (and lesser immoral acts induced by false views).

"Harmlessness (i.e., the principle of non-violence) has the characteristic mark of making one refrain from immorality which, on its part, has the mark of harming. Hence harmlessness is an especially strong productive cause of morality; and morality, again, is the basis for concentration of mind, while concentration is the basis for wisdom. In that way harmlessness (non-violence) is the root of all virtues.

"Furthermore, in the case of the highest type of men (uttamapurisa) who have noble aspirations, who act considerately and wisely, also their mental concentration and their wisdom, just as their morality, is conducive to the weal and happiness of others. In that way, too, compassion is the root of all virtues, and therefore it has been mentioned at the beginning.

"Now, (after harmlessness), the salutary courses of action (kusala-kammapatha; 2-11) are to show that these states are produced by harmlessness. Then follow the eight states of rightness (11-18) to show that they must be brought about by basing them on morality, which is the root of these virtues. Now the separation from the hindrances (21-23, and 16, 17) is included to indicate that this is the primary task for one intent on purifying (his practice of) the eightfold path. Then follows the cleansing from the defilements (24-33) to indicate that effacement is accomplished by giving up anger (24), etc. And the cleansing from the defilements will be successful when aided by amenability to advice, noble friendship and heedful diligence (34-36).

"Now the seven noble qualities (37-43) are included to show that they will come to perfection in him who is endowed with amenability and the other (two factors); and that they, on their part, after having strengthened insight, will lead to the paths of sanctitude. (See end of Note 16.)

"Finally, the passage on 'misapprehending according to one's individual views,' etc. (44) is meant to indicate that for such a one (i.e., for one bent on effacement) that wrong attitude is an obstacle to the attainment of the supramundane virtues and is, therefore, to be avoided totally. This passage on misapprehending (about which see Note 18) is also meant to show that one who, by the right conduct here described, is in the process of attaining one of the paths of sanctitude, will be led to the acme of effacement (by this last-mentioned threefold way of effacement).

"In this manner should be understood the purpose of stating these forty-four modes of effacement as well as the order in which they appear in the discourse."

18.

Comy.: "A single wrong view (or wrong attitude), which is an obstacle for the supramundane qualities and hence does not lead to emancipation, is here described in three aspects:

(a) Others will misapprehend according to their individual views (sanditthi-paramasi). Sub.Comy.: sa(m) = attano, one's own. Paramasi means setting aside the actual nature of a

thing, one conceives it differently (sabhavam atikkamitva parato amasana).

(b) Hold on tenaciously (adhanaggahi). Sub. Comy.: adhana = dalha, tight, firm.

(c) Discards not easily. Comy.: "There are those who can discard their views on seeing a convincing reason. But others, even if shown many reasons, cannot give up their views; and of them it is said that they 'do not discard easily.' It refers to those who cling firmly to a subjective view that has occurred to them, believing 'only this is the truth.' Even if the Buddhas or others show them reasons, they do not relinquish their views. Such people, whatever idea they conceive, be it in accordance with Dhamma or not, will say: 'So it has been told by our teacher. So we have learned it'; and they will withdraw into themselves like a turtle drawing its limbs into its shell. They hold on to their views with the tight grip of a crocodile and do not let go."

19.

Salutary: kusala, also translated by wholesome, profitable, skillful. These salutary things, says Sub. Comy., are the modes of effacement mentioned.

20.

Sub.Comy.: "For those who cannot take up, by actual application, the practice of effacement, even the arising of a thought (cittuppado), i.e., an inclination for it, is of great importance.

Comy. says that a salutary thought is of great importance as it leads entirely to weal and happiness, and as it is the cause for the subsequent actions conforming to it. Examples are given beginning with the intention to give almsfood to monks, up to the aspiration for Buddhahood. The Sub.Comy., however, says that in some cases the importance is not in the thought itself but only in the actual execution of it. This certainly applies to the intention to give alms, etc. But in the efforts for effacing the defilements, the formation of a mental attitude directed towards it, in other words, the heart's resolve, is certainly an important factor.

This section of the discourse has been condensed in the present translation. But he who has chosen the path of effacement as his way of practice (patipada) is well advised to repeat all forty-four items, linking them with his heart's earnest resolve. Also, the last two sections of the discourse have been condensed.

21.

Comy.: "Parikkamana (lit. going around, circumventing) has the meaning of 'avoiding' (parivajjana). For the avoiding of harmfulness there is the ready road of harmlessness, walking on which one may easily experience felicity among humans or deities, or one may cross over (by that ford) from this world (to the other shore, Nibbana). The same method of explanation applies to the other sentences."

22.

Comy.: "The meaning is this: Any unsalutary states of mind, whether they produce rebirth or not, and whether, in a given rebirth, they produce kamma results or not — all, because of their type, i.e., by being unsalutary, lead downwards (to lower worlds). They are just like that because, on the occasion of their yielding a kamma result, that result will be undesirable and unpleasant.

"Any salutary states of mind, whether they produce rebirth or not, and whether, in a given rebirth, they produce kamma results or not — all, because of their type, lead upwards. They are just like that because, on the occasion of their yielding a kamma result, that result will be desirable and pleasant.

"The connection (in the discourse, between the general principle stated first, and its specific application to the forty-four cases) is as follows: just as unsalutary states lead downwards, so it is with that one state of harmfulness for him who is harmful. Just as all salutary states lead upwards, so it is with that one state of harmlessness for him who is harmless."

23.

Comy.: "In the Noble One's discipline, the 'mire' is a name for the five sense desires."

24.

Not fully quenched (aparinibbuto) Comy.: "with defilements not extinguished (anibbuta-kilesa)."

25.

Comy.: "There may be those who object that this is not correct because some come to penetration of the Dhamma (dhammabhisamaya, i.e., stream-entry) after listening to an exposition of the Teaching by monks or nuns, male or female lay followers, who are still worldlings (puthujjana; i.e., have not attained to any of the paths of sanctitude). Hence one who is still in the mire can pull out others. (Reply:) This should not be understood in that way. It is the Blessed One who here does the pulling out.

"Suppose there is a king who sends a letter to the border region, and the people there, unable to read it by themselves, have the letter read to them by another able to do it. Having learned of the contents, they respond with respect, knowing it as the king's order. But they do not think that it is the letter reader's order; he will receive praise only for his smooth and fluent reading of the letter. Similarly, even if preachers of the ability of Sariputta Thera expound the Dhamma, still they are just like readers of a letter written by another. Their sermon should truly be attributed to the Blessed One, like the decree to the king. The preachers, however, receive their limited praise, just because they expound the Dhamma with a smooth and fluent diction. Hence that statement in the discourse is

correct."

26.

For the connection between the modes of effacement and the preceding simile, Comy. gives two alterative explanations:

(a) Just as one who is not sunk in the mire himself can pull others out of it, similarly he who is harmless himself can quench another's harmful volition.

(b) Just as only he who has quenched his own passions can help one who has not quenched them, similarly only a volition of harmlessness can quench a harmful volition.

27.

Comy.: "So far goes a compassionate teacher's task namely, the correct exposition of his teaching; that, namely, the practice (according to the teaching; patipatti), is the task of the disciples."