



how a mistake can be perpetuated and the wrong interpretation will continue to carry on.

Western culture seems to rely heavily on books as a credible source. We often hear people saying, 'I read it in a book' or 'It is a credible source because it is written in a book'. The incomparable Buddha Shakyamuni said, 'You must analyse what I say, just like you would analyse gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it. Don't take my words out of mere faith'. Although the Buddha was omniscient and there would be no reason to doubt his words, he cautioned his followers that what is said or written down could contain mistakes. So the Buddha was indicating the need to really investigate and analyse everything, and not just readily accept it.

Here the Buddha has provided us with the means to develop sound reasoning and wisdom within ourselves. The analogy he used is how gold is tested to check its authenticity. Traditionally, the purity of gold was authenticated by using three specific techniques: burning, cutting and rubbing it. These three methods of analysis range from a gross level to a more subtle level.

If gold is not pure and is mixed with another substance, then the impurity would be very apparent when the gold is fired. Further analysis would be to cut the gold, when subtler levels of impurity would become evident. The most subtle method of determining impurity was to rub the gold. So the methods used to authenticate whether gold was pure or not ranged from the very obvious to the very subtle.

These three levels of analysis are applied to investigating the teachings as well. The three-fold analysis refers to the three criteria for validating a phenomenon:

1. Obvious things are not contradicted by valid bare perception.
2. Slightly obscure things are not contradicted by valid inference based on the force of evidence.
3. Extremely obscure things are not contradicted by valid inference based on scriptural authority.

If something is obvious then we do not need much reasoning, because we can perceive it directly with our senses and thus authenticate its validity. As more hidden phenomena or slightly obscure things cannot be directly perceived by our senses, we have to resort to further reasoning, by using valid inference based on the force of evidence. To authenticate extremely hidden phenomena or very obscure things, we have to rely on the sources from omniscient powers through their quotations and so forth.

This three-fold analysis is the method of investigating the authenticity of any phenomenon. This indicates how it is not easy to give a straightforward answer like, 'this is how it is' when something is not really clear yet.

To give an analogy of something that is obvious, if a faulty consciousness perceives yellow as blue, then that is something that can easily be contradicted by a direct sense perception, because we all know that yellow cannot be blue. However the impermanence of an object is not obvious to us and cannot be perceived directly, so we have to resort to valid inference in order to understand impermanence. Similarly, wrong conceptions such as viewing something that is impermanent as being permanent, or what is selfless as having a self, can be contradicted only with valid inference and reasoning. The authentication of citations, such as, 'through generosity one will obtain wealth in a future lifetime' can only be done by reliance on our belief in

the reliability of the source of that citation. It is difficult by mere reasoning or logic to prove that by being generous in this life, one will obtain wealth in the next life, therefore one accepts this to be authentic and true by resorting to the source of the citation i.e. the person who presented it. Thus, inference based on scriptural authority will authenticate extremely hidden phenomena.

When the Buddha showed us how to authenticate the Dharma by using these three modes of analysis, he presented a very profound means of developing a deep understanding and profound wisdom within oneself. As the Buddha said, 'Do not take my words out of mere faith, but use your own wisdom to analyse what I say'. He then presented us with a clear method of authentication through the three modes of analysis. This is really very profound.

It is because of this spirit of investigation that many people find Buddhism very appealing even in these times. It gives people the time and space to think about it themselves, and they don't have to immediately believe what the teachings say. It's not dogmatic in saying, 'you have to believe what is presented; it is not acceptable if you don't'. That is not how the Dharma is presented at all. People find Buddhism very appealing because of the gentle and profound ways of presenting it.

In giving his disciples the freedom to investigate and find out through their own analysis whether what he presented was true or not, the Buddha was showing in effect how his teachings are in fact flawless—even though he was not claiming that he was right. One of the Buddha's qualities was that he was fearless in presenting the truth. Because there is no doubt that it will be contradicted or found to be faulty, there is nothing to hide or fear. So there is no reason not to allow others the full freedom to investigate and find out for themselves whether it is true or not.

The Buddha instructed his listeners to accept what he said only when they found it to be true through their own investigation and reasoning. This, in effect, goes to show that on a more profound level the Buddha's teachings are flawless. In presenting his teachings the Buddha was not saying 'I am right, and there is no room to find any fault with it'. Rather, he presented it in a way for others to fully investigate it for themselves, which is in fact showing how profound his teachings are. The point is that we have to be wary when others come across in a way where they say that their teaching is flawless and that it has to be accepted as the truth.

It is essential that we fully understand how the Buddha presented the Dharma, in such a way as to allow his disciples to develop their own inner wisdom. With such inner wisdom, one will gain full confidence in the truth of the Dharma itself. So this presentation is a way to really develop the full potential of the disciples. When we understand how the Buddha presented his teachings, we can also learn from that. When we are in a position to share the Dharma with others, we can do so in the same spirit, without fear or doubt; but not expecting or forcing the listeners to believe whatever one says either.

When we think about it, the Buddha used an incredibly profound method of presenting the teachings of Dharma as a way to really develop personal wisdom and clarity. This is particularly so with respect to how to develop the method and wisdom within oneself, giving us a very clear blueprint of how to develop that.

Now we return to the text.

#### 2.1.2.4. IF NOT REFORMABLE, BANISHING THEM FROM THE COUNTRY

The relevant verse reads:

*337. Once you have analysed and thoroughly recognised  
The angry murderers,  
Have them banished  
Without killing or tormenting them.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

*Once you have recognised the angry murderers who intend to kill the king or others, have them imprisoned and thoroughly analyse whether they intended to further engage in ill behaviours such as murders and the like; if they don't then let them remain in equanimity. If however they are seen not able to restrain themselves from previous misdeeds of murdering and so forth, then have them banished without killing or tormenting them.*

Those who have committed a major crime such as *murder*, or even an attempted assassination, should be *imprisoned*, where their behaviour needs to be *thoroughly analysed* over time to determine their tendency to commit these negative deeds again. If they are found to be quite safe and not likely to repeat those evil deeds, then they should be left *in equanimity*, as they are, with no further punishment. *If however they are seen* to be of a nature where they are *not able to restrain themselves* and cannot conform to normal behaviour, they will need to be *banished* to places where they cannot carry out any evil deeds against others. That place should not be one where they themselves will be harmed by others.

As you may know, in some cultures murderers may be mobbed and killed by the people. Other punishments include gouging out their eyes, or cutting off their arms or legs. These are very harsh and severe punishments, which bring about much suffering. Rather, for their own good and for the good of others, it is better to banish them to a place where their own welfare is taken care of, with food and so forth, but where they cannot harm others. In the past some traditions sent them beyond certain boundaries and they were not allowed to return. In fact, they might find like-minded people as company in that area! *[laughter]*

We need to really pay attention to this compassionate advice to the king about how to care for his citizens. The advice is not to imprison those who have not committed severe crimes, but to free them. Even if you need to imprison them, then during their time in prison, make it possible for them to feel as comfortable as possible. If the query is raised, 'Aren't they being imprisoned to inflict suffering upon them? Why make them happy in prison?', then the answer is that the point is not to inflict suffering upon them, but to enable them to reform and become good and better citizens again. That is the purpose of imprisonment.

Even though this advice was given to the king and we feel that it doesn't relate to us, the point about being considerate to others with an evil nature and so forth is something we really need to bear in mind. We never know what kind of situation we might get into where we have to make judgements and so forth about others. Therefore we need to be mindful of this advice and take it as a personal instruction.

The analogy of a mother having to inflict harsh measures upon her child in order to instil good behaviour was explained earlier. When people are released from prison, check their behaviour to ensure they no longer have any

tendencies to commit evil deeds. If they are found to be reformed and are behaving well, leave them in equanimity as they are. But if they are found to have the tendency to commit further evil acts, they should be banished to a place where they are not harmed, or killed or tortured or subjected to harsh punishments.

#### 2.2. Developing previously non-existent practices

This is sub-divided into two:

2.2.1. Achieving practices

2.2.2. Ceasing non-virtues

##### 2.2.1. Achieving practices

This has two further subdivisions:

2.2.1.1. Sending out representatives

2.2.1.2. Examples

##### 2.2.1.1. SENDING OUT REPRESENTATIVES

The first verse relating to this heading reads:

*338. In order to maintain control, oversee all the country  
Through the eyes of agents.  
Always conscientious and mindful,  
Do what accords with the practices.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

*In order to maintain control, send out agents without it being known that the king had sent them, to oversee all the country and get an overview through the eyes of agents; always encourage others to be conscientious and mindful, and do what accords with the practice; this means to deter others from engaging in wrong actions by maintaining conscientiousness.*

The next verse under the same heading reads:

*339. Continually honour in an exalted way  
Those who are foundations of good qualities  
With gifts, respect, and service,  
And likewise honour all the rest.*

With respect to this verse Gyaltsab Je's commentary states:

*Continually honour in an exalted way those who are foundations of good qualities, fully-ordained monks and so forth, with gifts, respect, and service; and likewise honour and be generous to all the rest who may not have as many qualities.*

It is clearly explained here that *fully ordained monks and so forth*, which includes other levels of ordained sangha i.e. fully ordained nuns, novice monks and nuns, and even lay people who have taken vows, are worthy of respect because of the vows they have taken. They are to be honoured and respected *with gifts, and likewise honour all the rest who may not have as many qualities*, as they are also an object of honour and respect. This again, is very profound advice indicating that there although there are objects that are worthy of honour and respect, we also need to honour those who may not conventionally regarded as objects of respect. So in this way it indicates that all beings are worthy of respect.

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