

VESĀRAJJA and the equivalent *visārada* (Skt. *vaiśāradya* and *viśārada*) stand for "intrepidity" or "self-confidence". Several types or levels of such self-confidence are recognized in early Buddhism.

A fundamental type of intrepidity or self-confidence is the outcome of maintaining ethical conduct. Thus observing the five precepts will be a source of self-confidence when being at home (*S. IV, 250*), as well as when approaching an assembly (*D. II, 86* or *A. III, 253*). Another quality that leads to self-confidence when approaching assemblies is to have a generous disposition, which expresses itself by regularly making offerings and bestowing gifts (*A. III, 39*).

A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* treats the ethical conduct required for self-confidence from a set of related angles. This discourse speaks of being endowed with the wisdom that knows the difference between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome; possessing the energy required in order to act accordingly; and being in possession of faultlessness in regard to deeds by body, speech and mind (*A. IV, 363*). One endowed with such wisdom, energy and faultlessness, and who is also endowed with liberality and kindness, will not experience embarrassment when approaching assemblies, reflecting: 'Why should I be embarrassed, as I am in possession of wisdom, energy, faultlessness and kindness? Only one who is foolish or lazy may be embarrassed, or one whose conduct is blameworthy or who is bereft of kindness'.

A listing of qualities that cause a monk to be self-confident mentions - in addition to confidence, morality, energy and wisdom - also the quality of learning (*A. III, 183*). In regard to learning, another discourse points out that if a monk wanders around aimlessly he will lack self-confidence in this respect, as he will neither learn what is new nor clarify what has already been learned (*A. III, 257*). The same lack of self-confidence will also manifest in regard to the monk's practice, as wandering around aimlessly he will not reach what has not yet been reached, and what he has already reached will be lost again.

The importance of self-confidence comes to the light in the *Mahā-pari-nibbāna Sutta*, according to which the Buddha explicitly proclaimed that he would not pass away before he had not ensured that his

disciples, *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*, as well as *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*, had acquired self-confidence in regard to his teaching (*D. II, 104*). To be endowed with such self-confidence is to be able to effectively deal with the views put forward by others in a debate situation, and to be able to give a well-founded exposition of one's own teachings (*D. III, 123*). To be full of self-confidence even when teaching an assembly is a quality that a monk should in fact make a conscious effort to develop (*A. IV, 314*).

With the attainment of stream-entry a firm degree of self-confidence has been reached, *vesārajappatta*, as through direct and personal experience all doubt and uncertainty has been overcome (e.g. *D. I, 110*; see also *SOTĀ-PAT-TI* and *VICIKIC-CHĀ*). An aspect of a stream-enterer's self-confidence is that he or she has become independent of another in regard to the teaching, *aparapaccayo satthu-sāsane*. With stream-entry a knowledge has arisen that makes the stream-enterer independent of the guidance of others, '*up-pannañāṇo mhi an-aññaneyyo* (*Sn. 55*), and the fetter of doubt has been eradicated for good (*Sn. 231*). The confidence arisen at this point manifests as unshakeable confidence in the Buddha, his teaching and the community of noble ones, and as a firm commitment to ethical conduct (*S. V, 357*). In fact, with stream-entry ethical conduct has become of such firmness that the five-fold fear of evil consequences through killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and intoxication has been left behind (*S. V, 387*) - a powerful source of the stream-enterer's well-founded self-confidence.

A stream-enterer will also be beyond speculating about the existence of a self and beyond getting involved with lucky omens (*M. I, 265*). Nor would a stream-enterer hang on every word of other recluses and Brahmins, wondering if what they propose stems from actual knowledge and vision (*S. V, 443*). Such self-confidence of a stream-enterer is comparable to an iron pillar not shaken by any wind (*S. V, 444*). In addition to being endowed with virtuous conduct and unshakeable confidence, a noble disciple can further increase self-confidence through learning, energy and wisdom (*A. III, 127*).

A *Tathāgata* then is endowed with a supreme type of self-confidence or intrepidity that has altogether four aspects (*M. I, 71* or *A. II, 9*; see also *TA-THĀGATA*). Endowed with this fourfold self-

confidence, a *Tathāgata* is able to roar his lion's roar in any assembly (*D. I*, 175). The four aspects of the *Ta-thāgata's* self-confidence or intrepidity are his certainty that there is no ground whatsoever on which anyone could rightly accuse him that:

- while claiming to be fully awakened, there are some things in regard to which he has not reached full awakening;
- while claiming to have successfully eradicated all influxes, there are still in-fluxes in him that have not been destroyed;
- what he considers to be obstructions to the development of the path are not really obstructions;
- the practice of what he teaches does not lead to complete freedom from *duk-kha*.¹

Thus early Buddhism presents a graded series of self-confidences, which proceed from the self-confidence that emerges out of faultless ethical conduct, via the unshakeable self-confidence that results from the attainment of stream-entry, to the four-fold intrepidity of a *Tathāgata*. What is particularly significant in this graded series is that it presents increasing degrees of self-confidence as the outcome of a deepening realization of the truth of not-'self'. That is, according to early Buddhism the very absence of a sense of self-hood or identity leads to firm self-confidence and an unshakeable degree of intrepidity.

Having seen that he has won the battle [against defilements],
Even the gods honour,
A disciple of the Fully Awakened One,
A great one free from lack of self-confidence.

*Disvā vijitasāṅgāmaṃ,
sammāsambuddhasāvakaṃ,
devatāpi namassanti,
mahantaṃ vītasāraḍaṃ (It. 76)*

Anālayo

References

- ¹ On the Buddha's self-confidence in regard to his mode of teaching See also
A. IV, 83 and
A. V, 36.

VESSAGIRI: The structural remains of an ancient monastery complex consisting of caves which once provided shelter for the meditating monks, one mile to the South West of the Sacred Bodhi Tree on the Anuradhapura Kurenegala Road, is identified at present as those of Vessagiri. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Vessagiri was the place where five hundred youth from the "Vaiśya" (merchant) families stayed, after receiving ordination from Mahinda Mahā Thera.

*"Pañcasatehi vessehi Mahatherassa santike
Pabbajja vasitathānam tathāVessagiri ahul*

"Where five hundred Vessas lived, having received ordination from the Great Thera (Mahinda) was called Vessagiri".

(*Mahāvamsa* Chapter xx verse 15)

Mahāvamsa does not say any thing more in this context. It is not on record as to who was the original builder of Vessagiri. As Vessagiri is referred to in the context of the introduction of Buddhism to the island, there is no doubt that King Devānampiyatissa (250-210 B.C.) first built Vessagiri.

Since the above reference, *Mahāvamsa* is silent on Vessagiri, till the reign of King Vaṭṭagāmini Abhaya or Valagambā (29-17 B.C.) As the *Mahāvamsa* (Chapter XXXIII verse 49 f) describes King Vaṭṭagāmini Abhaya, being defeated by the Tamils, fled and hid in the forest of Vessagiri. The *Vamsathappakāsini* (Vol. II page 615) says that the king fled with his queen and two princes and was hiding in the forest of Vessagiri forest. The Kupikkala Tissa Maha Thera, possibly the chief incumbent recognized the King and provided the king with food, avoiding thereby giving untouched food.²

The king was highly pleased with this sympathetic act and allotted lands to the vihāra for the sustenance of the monks, recording it (in confirmation) on a Ketaki leaf, (*Pandanus odoratissimus*), because he had no writing material with him. After this there is no reference to a vihāra named Vessagiri.

King Kassapa (478-96A.C.) or Sigiri Kassapa: As per the *Mahāvamsa* (Chapter XXXIX verse 10 f), King Kassapa I, popularly called "Sigiri Kassapa" renovated and richly endowed a vihāra named Issarasamanārama.(q.v.).The *Mahāvamsa* says that the king made it larger than the vihāra that existed,

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