YASA stands for "fame", "glory", or "reputation". In an oral society like ancient India, such fame and reputation were inevitably of considerable significance as a source of information. The early Buddhist attitude towards yasa shows various facets, where on the one hand a favourable reputation is seen as a benefit of living a moral life, yet at the same time emphasis is given on developing that inner strength that is able to withstand the vicissitudes of fame and disrepute, in order to eventually transcend all unnecessary concern with it.

Fame is one of the factors that contribute to a king's self-confidence, (A. III, 151); and one of the factors that ensure that a person is respected wherever he or she goes (Dhp. 303). The Brahmadāyu Sutta describes how a crowd assembled to listen to the Buddha would get up and make room for a Brahmin, who had come to join them, on account of his fame (M. II, 142). The importance of yasa is also reflected in the Sopada Sutta, according to which an eminent Brahmin was warned by fellow Brahmans that, if he were to go and visit the Buddha, the Buddha's fame would increase at the expense of this eminent Brahmin's fame (D. I, 113). The same discourse reports that, when this Brahmin nevertheless decided to visit the Buddha, he was quite worried that, in case he should ask the Buddha a clumsy question, he would incur the ridicule of the assembled crowd and hence a loss of his fame. He was concerned that a loss of fame would in turn diminish his income, since that depended on his reputation, yassa kho pana yasa hi vyathā, bhogā pi tassa hi vyayyam, yasoaddhi kho pan' anāhākamp bhogā (D. I, 118).

Other sources for a loss of fame are when one transgresses due to being under the influence of desire, anger, fear or delusion which will lead to a gradual loss of fame, comparable to the waning moon (A. II, 18). Anger is in fact particularly prone to lead to a decrease in one's good reputation (A. IV, 95).

For the sake of establishing a good reputation, the Siddhārtha Sutta lists several qualities such as being wise, virtuous, kind, humble, free from sloth, unshaken by adversities, and generous (D. III, 192). A discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya lists confidence, virtue, generosity and wisdom as factors that will lead to yasa (A. II, 66), while other discourses in the same collection highlight that offering food as an expression of generosity is especially productive of a good reputation (A. II, 64; A. III, 42). A verse in the Dhammapada recommends such qualities as energy, mindfulness, pure conduct and self control for the same purpose (Dhp. 24). Hence, it is meaningless to pray and wish for fame, since one should instead develop the qualities that lead to it (A. III, 48).

A verse in the Theragāthā presents the development of the noble eightfold path as a source for fame (Th. 35). The yasa of one who has taken refuge, who observes the five precepts and is generous, will spread in all directions. Such fame is superior to the fragrance of any flower, as the scent of a flower is not able to move against the wind and thus will not be able to reach all directions (A. I, 226; cf. also Dhp. 54).

In the case of some devas, the circumstance that they outshine other devas in the realm of the Thirty-three in respect to yasa — which here appears to stand mainly for "glory" — is because in their earlier existence on earth they lived the holy life under the Buddha (D. II, 208). This holds true even when someone was a pauper in his former existence (S. I, 232), or a leper who, though not gone forth, had reached stream-entry before passing away (Ud. 50). In fact, taking refuge in the three jewels is a crucial condition for being reborn in a heavenly realm endowed with yasa (S. IV, 275).

A drawback of yasa is highlighted in the Sappurisa Sutta, which indicates that the gain of yasa can lead to conceit, to looking down on others who are not famous and renowned (M. III, 38). Yet, as the same discourse points out, it is not due to fame and renown that unworthy qualities in the mind diminish. Hence, whether one is famous or not, the real question is if one is practising in accordance with the Dhamma. The dangers of succumbing to the attraction of fame and gains is highlighted in a discourse in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, according to which due to infatuation with fame and gains Devadatta had taken a path that in the end led him to an evil borne (A. IV, 160). Hence fame gained by wrong means is but one of the armies of Mara (Sn. 438). Besides, even rightly gained fame is of little use when death comes (Th. 554). The Bhaddālī Sutta indicates that, once fame has manifested, the things related to the influxes, asattvāṁ yā dhammā, also manifest in the monastic community. As a consequence of this, rules and regulations have to be promulgated in order to restrain such unworthy influences (M. I, 445).

Fame and disrepute, yaso ca ayaso ca, are one of the altogether four pairs of opposites that come under
the heading of being eight worldly conditions, adha lokadhamma (D. III, 260). In order to retain inner fortitude when faced with fame and disrepute, awareness of their impermanent nature is particularly recommendable (A. IV, 158). A noble disciple, equipped with clear awareness that all these worldly conditions are impermanent, unsatisfactory and bound to change, will not delight in fame nor be upset at disrepute. By thus remaining with an attitude of inner balance, the noble disciple will make use of both fame and disrepute as occasions for his or her progress on the path to liberation. That is, gain or loss of fame is of little importance, what really matters is gain or loss of wisdom (A. I, 15).

Though according to the discourses the Buddha had reached the acme of fame (D. III, 126; M. I, 386; S. I, 196), yet, his degree of inner purity was such that he was thoroughly aloof from succumbing to the dangers inherent in becoming famous (M. I, 318). In contemporary society an exceedingly good report had spread about the Buddha, kalyāṇa kītisaddo abhaggato. Yet, the Buddha was not concerned with fame and would even send people away if they did not behave properly, explaining to his attendant that for one who can avail himself of the happiness of deeper meditation, the vulgar happiness of fame holds no attraction (A. IV, 341).

Yasoca ca appabuddhayam, viññāṇam ayaśo ca yo, ayaśo ca sooyo viññāṇam, na yasoca appabuddhayam.

[Comparing] the fame of those with little wisdom, [To] the lack of fame of the wise, Better is the lack of fame of the wise. Not the fame of those with little wisdom (Th. 667).

Anālayo

Reference

1 The other three pairs are gain and loss, lābho ca olābho ce, blame and praise, nindā ca pahasā ca, and happiness and pain, sukhāśīca dukkhaśīca.

YASODHARĀ. Yasodharā (Bd.st. Skt.) is identified in late Buddhist works with the lady designated Rāhulamātā, 'Mother of Rāhula', wife of the Bodhisatta Siddhāra Gautama (Bd.st. Skt. Siddhārtha or Sarvārthaśiddhi Gautama), a character very rarely referred to in early Pāli literature. In fact the designation Rāhulamātā is attested only once in early canonical Pāli works and that too in the Vinaya Mahāvagga, which refers to her sending her son Rāhula to the Buddha to request for his inheritance (Vin.1.82). The Buddha, however, got his young son ordained by the venerable Śāriputta allowing him to be an inheritor of his spiritual wealth rather than the mundane wealth which he had left behind when leaving home life.

But the most intriguing thing about the character of this lady is that besides the name Yasodharā she is known in both the Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit traditions by a number of other names with the designation Rāhulamātā forming a sort of link term among them. The late Pāli canonical text Buddhavamsa (xxvi.15) calls her Bhaddakaccā but, strangely, its commentary (Bu. 293) replaces it with the name Yasodharā proving its late entry into the Pāli tradition. The Manorathapūrana (AA.1.376 f), however, identifies Rāhulamātā with the senior nun Bhaddā Kaccāna — a variant of the above Bhaddakaccā— named in the Anguttara Nikāya (1.25) as the foremost among the bhikkhunī who had attained greatness in supernormal knowledge (mahāsīva abhiññāppattānam uggā). The commentator goes on to say that each Buddha could have only four disciples with this capacity. In the dispensation of the present Buddha, the two chief disciples, the elder Bakkula and the female elder Bhaddā Kaccāna had the same ability. But the commentarial explanations seems to limit this ability to just one of the supernormal powers, viz. the ability to recall one’s past births. These four elders were said to be capable of recalling one incalculable plus one hundred thousand world cycles (Kappa satasahasāśādikānam asamkheyyaṁ) (s.v. Kalpa, for another interpretation of the term). We also have to note here that according to canonical information each world cycle (kappa) consists of four incalculables (A. II.142).

Commenting on the name, the commentary states that since her bodily complexion was like that of solid gold (bhadda-kañcanam viya) she was named Bhaddakañcanā but later she came to be called Kaccāna synonymous with Rāhulamātā. According to this account she commences her career as an aspirant for the foremost position in great supernormal knowledge in the dispensation of the Buddha Padumuttara. But, as shown below, her aspiration to become the wife of the Bodhisatta in the final life extended back to an
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