

YASA stands for "fame", "glory", or "reputation". In an oral society like ancient India, such fame and reputation was 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 where he or she goes (*Dhp.* 303). The *Brahmāyu 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 *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*, according to which an eminent Brahmin was warned by fellow Brahmins 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 yaso hāyetha, bhogā pi tassa hāyeyyūṃ, yasoladdhā kho pan' amhākaṃ 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 *Sīṅgalovāda 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 be 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 unwholesome 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 Māra (*Sn.* 438). Besides, even rightly gained fame is of little use when death comes (*Th.* 554). The *Bhaddāli Sutta* indicates that, once fame has manifested, the things related to the influxes, *āsavaṭṭhāniyā dhammā*, also manifest in the monastic community. As a consequence of this, rules and regulations have to be promulgated in order to restrain such unwholesome 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, *aṭṭha lokadhammā* (*D.* III, 260).¹ 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, *kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato*. 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).

*Yaso ca appabuddhinaṃ,
viññānaṃ ayaso ca yo,
ayaso ca seyyo viññānaṃ,
na yaso appabuddhinaṃ.*

[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 alābho ca*, blame and praise, *nindā ca pasamsā ca*, and happiness and pain, *sukhañca dukkhañca*.

YASODHARĀ. Yasodharā (*Bdst.Skt.*) is identified in late Buddhist works with the lady designated Rāhulamātā, 'Mother of Rāhula', wife of the Bodhisatta Siddhatta Gotama (*Bdst.Skt.* Siddhārtha or Sarvārthasiddhi 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.* I.82). The Buddha, however, got his young son ordained by the venerable Sāriputta 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 *Buddhavaṃsa* (xxvi.15) calls her Bhaddakaccā but, strangely, its commentary (*BuA.* 293) replaces it with the name Yasodharā proving its late entry into the Pāli tradition. The *Manorathapūranī* (AA.1.376 f), however, identifies Rāhulamātā with the senior nun Bhaddā Kaccānā — a variant of the above Bhaddakaccā- named in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (1.25) as the foremost among the *bhikkhūṇīs* who had attained greatness in supernormal knowledge (*mahatiyo abhiññāpattānaṃ aggā*). 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 Kaccānā 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 satahassādhikāṃ asaṃkheyyaṃ*) (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-kañcanaṃ viya*) she was named Bhadda-kañcana but later she came to be called Kaccānā 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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