

THE *GUṆA* IN VĀMANA'S *KĀVYĀLĀNKĀRASŪTRAVṚTTI*

Mari HATTORI

1. Introduction

The *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtravṛtti* (*KASV*) written by Vāmana in the 8th century had an influence on later Sanskrit poetics as a main treatise of *rīti* school which had given much importance to style. In 1977 Gerow gave attention to Vāmana's "view of poetry as an organic whole". Gerow wrote that "He (Vāmana) seems most closely indebted to Daṇḍin (rather than Bhāmaha) in the sense that he assigns great importance to the notion of *guṇa*, or stylistic element; but he differs markedly also from Daṇḍin, not only in trying to organize his subject but in appearing to find in the notion of *guṇa*, and style itself (*rīti*) that very principle that permits the integration of the other principles of analysis (including most particularly *alaṅkāra*) in a holistic view of poetry". But still he has also pointed out the difficulty of the Vāmana's poetics such as the "imprecise notion of the relation between *guṇa* and *alaṅkāra*".¹ The researches of modern scholars, however, have regarded some *sūtras* as the central ideas of this text: style is the soul of literature. Style is a special arrangement of words. The essence of the speciality is quality.² Based on this point of view, in 1991 Chari, although his scope of the stylistics has become so wide as to include *Dhvani* school and *Vakrokti* school in the stylistics, has not taken the poetics of the *KASV* into consideration in comparison to that of the *Dhvani* school and *Vakrokti* school. Chari has criticized

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1 Gerow [1977: 235-237]

2 *KASV* 1.2.6-8: *ritir ātmā kāvyasya. viśiṣṭā padaracanā ritih. viśeṣo guṇātmā.*

that the *Rīti*-school had not offered “an inclusive concept of poetic expression, its nature and mode of functioning”.³

The principles of *KASV* 1.2.6-8 which I have quoted are at least applicable to the verbal qualities (*śabda-guṇas*) in that context of this text and there is still another idea of poetics that is applicable to the semantic qualities (*artha-guṇas*). In the *KASV* 1.2.22 when Vāmana says “the ideal Vaidarbha-style is also possible by the fulfillment of semantic qualities (*artha-guṇa*)”⁴ he is suggesting the idea of the style based on the semantic qualities (*artha-guṇa*), not on the verbal qualities (*śabda-guṇas*). Based on the above principles, Vāmana analyzes verbal qualities (*śabda-guṇas*) in detail. On the other hand, the semantic idea of literature can be seen in the *artha-guṇa* chapter.

In this paper let us focus on Vāmana’s view on the *śabda-guṇas*, or verbal qualities, more broadly to find some characteristics and remarkable points which have not yet been pointed out by the scholars. First, I will focus on the relative aspects of the qualities (*guṇas*). Secondly, I will expand this idea into the verbal analysis related to the caesura.

2. Dynamic aspect of the *śabda-guṇa* in the *KASV*

In a paper published in 1985, Tubb proposed a new analysis of the (*śabda-guṇas*) in the *KASV*. He took up the phonetic texture in the *KASV* as well as that in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, a commentary of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, to show that the remarks of those authors on the *KASV* have to do with “the interrelations and progressions of phonetic structural phenomena” rather than with “the conjunct consonants and the length of compounds and the occurrence of specified phonemes”⁵ which had been mistaken by the later tradition. Let me now attempt to extend the observation of Tubb, who has pointed out “the relative aspects of the arrangement of sounds” into the idea of the relative aspects of double *guṇas* in the *KASV*.

The definition of the lucidity (*prasāda*), a kind of quality (*guṇa*), and the objection to it are mentioned in the *KASV* 3.1.6.

3 Chari [1990: 133]

4 *KASV* 1.2.22: *sāpi vaidarbhī, tāsthyāt. sāpīyam arthaguṇasampat vaidarbhīty ucyate. tāsthyād ity upacārato vyavahāraṃ darśayati.*

5 Tubb [1985: 568]

The lucidity (*prasāda*) is looseness (*śaithilya*).

Objection: But this (lucidity) is a fault because the essence of it is the reverse of the floridity (*ojas*). So, why can you consider this lucidity as a kind of quality (*guṇa*)?⁶

The same opinion as this objection which does not consider looseness (*śaithilya*) as a quality is mentioned in the definition of the coherence (*śleṣa*) in the *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 1.43a.

The coherent (*śliṣṭam*) is what lacks looseness (*śaithilya*).⁷

Similar examples where looseness (*śaithilya*) is regarded as a defect are abundant in the *Kāvyaḍarṣa*. Lahiri compared the floridity (*ojas*) of the *KASV* with the coherence (*śleṣa*) of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa*, and it might be possible that we could identify the objection mentioned in the *KASV* with this passage of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa*. Therefore, we can observe that Vāmana dared to use the word looseness (*śaithilya*) which had been regarded as a defect for the definition of the lucidity (*prasāda*). Then, there remains a second question of why Vāmana used the word looseness (*śaithilya*) for the explanation of quality? The following passages continue in the *KASV*.

Answer: The lucidity (*prasāda*) is a quality, because it appears along with the floridity (*ojas*). The pure one (pure lucidity) can not [be a quality]. But it (lucidity) is a fault if it appears alone.⁸

The opinion of the *KASV* agrees with the *Kāvyaḍarṣa* up to the point that the looseness (*śaithilya*) can not be a quality without appearing along with the floridity (*ojas*), but it is the *KASV* which mentioned the lucidity (*prasāda*) as looseness (*śaithilya*), and this lucidity (*prasāda*) will be a quality when appearing along with the floridity (*ojas*). Regarding 'samplava (appearing along with)' of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*), the following passages continue.

In some places, we can also appreciate the balance (*sāmya*) between floridity (*ojas*) and lucidity (*prasāda*), and in other

⁶ *KASV* 3.1.6: *śaithilyam prasādaḥ. nanu ayam ojaviparyayātmādoṣaḥ, tat katham guṇaḥ.*

⁷ *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 1.43a: *śliṣṭam asprṣṭaśaithilyam.*

⁸ *KASV* 3.1.7: *guṇaḥ prasādaḥ. ojasā saha samplavāt. sa śuddhas tu doṣa eveti.*

places the superiority (*utkarṣa*) of one to the other by experience.⁹

In this way, there are three variations of the ‘*samplava* (appearing along with)’ of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*), such as balance, superiority of the floridity (*ojas*) to the lucidity (*prasāda*), and superiority of the lucidity (*prasāda*) to the floridity (*ojas*). The *Kāmadhenu*, the commentary on the *KASV*, mentioned those as triple modes (*triprakāra*).

Therefore, we can conclude that the *KASV* used a new explanation of the relation between two qualities, by this special way of changing the coherence (*śleṣa*) in the *Kāvyaḍarśa* to the floridity (*ojas*) and also defining the lucidity (*prasāda*) as looseness (*śaithilya*).

There is no other reference to the relation between the two qualities in this *śabda-guṇa* chapter. However there is a remark on the relation of two elements in the explanation of the symmetry (*samādhi*), and it seems to parallel those explanations of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*).

The symmetry (*samādhi*) is a sequence of ascent (*āroha*) and descent (*avaroha*).¹⁰

In the following passages, Vāmana explains the two elements, ascent and descent, by using the word sequence (*krama*) and the word replacement (*parihāra*), and he distinguishes them from the relation between the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*).

Objection: [We can] not [consider symmetry as] a quality, because it takes the form of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*).

Answer: No [that is not true], because [ascent and descent are] not appearing along with one another mutually. Furthermore, the comparison of ascent (*āroha*) to the floridity (*ojas*) or the comparison of descent (*avaroha*) to the lucidity (*prasāda*) are not fixed correspondences. If you take them (ascent and descent) as an acute state of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*),

⁹ *KASV* 3.1.9: *sāmyam utkarṣas caujaḥprasādayor anubhavād eva*.

¹⁰ *KASV* 3.1.12: *ārohāvarohakramah samādhiḥ*.

we can understand. As these two (ascent and descent) depend upon a peculiar element and it is only a quality.¹¹

According to the above, ascent (*āroha*) and descent (*avaroha*) are included as acute stages of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*) which are coexisting. That is, we can observe a prominent contrast: the relation between the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*) has a dynamic coexistence showing a mode, such as balance or superiority. On the other hand, the relation between ascent and descent is a static state, which depends on a quality of symmetry (*samādhi*).

In the chapter of the verbal quality (*śabda-guṇa*) in the *KASV*, Vāmana described, specially about the lucidity (*prasāda*) and the symmetry (*samādhi*), not only the characteristic point of individual quality (*guṇa*) but also the relations between the two elements which have contrast. That is, the relation between the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*) in the former, and ascent (*āroha*) and descent (*avaroha*) in the latter. The state of the lucidity (*prasāda*) can exist relatively so long as it appears along with the floridity (*ojas*). This was distinguished clearly from the absolute state of the symmetry (*samādhi*), which contains the sequence of ascent and descent. These results lead to the conclusion that Vāmana intentionally used the word looseness (*śaiṭhilya*) which was considered as a fault in the earlier *Kāvya-darśa* in the definition of the lucidity (*prasāda*) for the purpose of showing the relative and dynamic aspects of the *guṇa*-s.

The theory of the *guṇa* in the *KASV* influenced later poetics. We can see an echo of the coexistence of the floridity (*ojas*) and the lucidity (*prasāda*) of the *KASV* in the *Vakroktijīvita* written by Kuntaka in the 10th century.

[The lucidity (*prasāda*) in the brilliant style (*vicitra mārga*) consists in] the arrangement of the un-compounded words and this is well-known among poets. In this style, the lucidity (*prasāda*) as it is, mostly it has a slight touch with the floridity (*ojas*).¹²

11 *KASV* 3.1.13: *na pṛthak, ārohāvarohayoḥ ojaḥprasādarūpatvāt. KASV* 3.1.14: *na, asaṃpṛkṭatvāt. KASV* 3.1.15: *na cāyam ekānto niyamāḥ yadojasyārohaḥ, prasāde cāvaroha iti. KASV* 3.1.16: *ojaḥprasādayoḥ tivrāvasthā, tāv iti ced abhyupagamaḥ. KASV* 3.1.17: *viśeṣa-pekṣitvāt tayoḥ. sa viśeṣo guṇāntaram eva.*

12 *Vakroktijīvita* 1.45: *asamastapadanyāsaḥ prasiddhaḥ kavivartmani/ kiṃcid ojaḥ sprśan prāyaḥ prasādo 'py atra dr̥ṣyate//*

Here Kuntaka is referring to the slight touch of the lucidity (*prasāda*) with the floridity (*ojas*). Raghavan explained about the *Abhinavabhāratī*, a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Abhinavagupta, like this: “When we come to the Guṇa-prakarāṇa itself, we see that in the exposition of ten Guṇas, Abhinavagupta completely follows Vāmana.”¹³ However, Abhinavagupta, who is a contemporary with Kuntaka, while explaining the lucidity (*prasāda*), even though he quotes the example of the *KASV* and uses the word looseness (*saiṭhilya*) he mentions just like this, “One *guṇa* can shine [by itself]. Therefore [*prasāda* can be] proved by its experience”.¹⁴ Thus he did not give any explanation of the *prasāda* which can appear along with the *ojas*. So it may be difficult to say that the concept of *samplava* (coexistence) was effective, or universal among all poeticians. But, still one can believe, this consideration about the relative and dynamic level which is in Vāmana’s view on poetic language is a valid argument for precise understanding of the characteristic point of this text and the real intention of the author.

3. The broken caesura (*yatibhraṣṭa*)

As a further example of Vāmana’s verbal analysis, let us consider his explanation of the ‘*yatibhraṣṭa*’ or broken caesura, where we can see another difference between the *Kāvyaḍarśa* and the *KASV*. The definition of the *yatibhraṣṭa* is mentioned in *KASV* 2.2.3. as follows:

[A statement] with broken caesura is what has unpleasant pause.¹⁵

This definition corresponds with the explanation in the *Kāvyaḍarśa* 4.29.

The break between words at the right places in a verse is known as caesura (*yatī*). [A statement] which lacks this is a broken caesura (*yatibhraṣṭa*) and it is offensive to the ears.¹⁶

¹³ Raghavan [1963: 271]

¹⁴ *Abhinavabhāratī* (vol. 2) p. 336, ll.7-8: *ekas ca guṇaḥ ko 'pi śobhata iti*. Tubb [1985:574] reads this passage “*ekas ca guṇo [na] śobhata iti*” and interpretes “no quality is appealing solitary.”

¹⁵ *KASV* 2.2.3: *virasavirāmaṃ yatibhraṣṭam*.

Though there is no rigid explanation of ‘*pada* (word)’ in the *Kāvyaḍarṣa*, Ratnaśrījñāna, a commentator of this text, annotated it as “A word is what ends in a case-ending or a personal-ending”.¹⁷ The author of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa* adds in other verses that “There is a nature of a word (*padatva*) which lacks a suffix”¹⁸ but “poets never compose such a verse which is harsh on the ears”.¹⁹

The *KASV*, on the other hand, gives a different explanation of the minimum unit of the word (*pada*) where the caesura can be placed.

[The broken caesura happens] when a minimum unit of a root-base or a noun-base is split and usually this fault does not have to do with the euphonic junction of letters (*svara-saṁdhi*).²⁰

The *KASV* shows an example where a caesura is placed between root-base and suffix.

śobhām puṣya/ty ayam abhinavaḥ sundarīnām prabodhaḥ.

(This fresh awakening of the beautiful lady increases charm.)

In this example, the root-base and the suffix are considered as a word (*pada*) respectively. From these remarks about the broken caesura (*yatibhraṣṭa*) in two texts, one comparative point of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa* and the *KASV* becomes clear. The *Kāvyaḍarṣa* considers a set of root-base and suffix or a set of noun-base and suffix as a word (*pada*). On the other hand, the *KASV* considers each of all these elements as a word (*pada*) where we can place a caesura.

Let us now return to the explanation of the word (*pada*) by Ratnaśrījñāna, a commentator of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa*. The explanation “A word is what ends in a case-ending or a personal-ending” was quoted from Pāṇini’s definition of a word²¹ and this definition has been accepted among grammarians. And it is the grammarians who were the most influential to poetics regarding the linguistic analysis. On

16 *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 4.29: ślokeṣu niyatasthānaṃ padacchedaṃ yatim viduḥ. tadapetaṃ yatibhraṣṭaṃ śravaṇodvejanaṃ yathā.

17 Ratnaśrī, p. 264: ślokeṣu padyeṣu viṣaye padasya saptīnantasya virāmaḥ chandaḥśāstra-prasiddhaḥ padacchedaḥ.

18 *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 4.31ab: lupte padānte śiṣṭasya padatvaṃ niścitaṃ yathā.

19 *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 4.32ab: tathāpi kaṭu karṇānām kavayo na prayuñjate.

20 *KASV* 2.2.4: taddhātunāmbhāgabhedo svarasaṁdhyakṛte prāyeṇa.

21 *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.14: saptīnantan padam.

the other hand, the minimum unit of *pada* by Vāmana which is noun-base, verbal-base and suffix can be compared with that of later logicians.²²

4. Conclusion

The above-mentioned arguments on the relative aspect of the qualities (*guṇa*-s) and the verbal analysis related to the caesura still have a limit because they are concerned only with the verbal aspects of literature and not with the semantic aspects. This dualism, separation of verbal research from semantic research, might be another limit of the Vāmana's stylistics in addition to his difficulties pointed out by the earlier scholars such as Gerow and Chari. But, still, the dynamic aspect of literature which was discovered by Vāmana's verbal approach itself may be related to the essential point of Indian aesthetics.

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²² Cf. *Tarkasaṃgraha*, p. 50: *śaktam padam*. Raja [1977: 19] refers to this definition of a word and says: "it may be noted that to the modern Naiyāyika-s the stem and the suffix are separate *pada*-s, each being significant by itself." V.N. Jha [1980: 85-86] explains that the concept of *pada*, which had been considered as a finished form by old Naiyāyikas such as Gautama, has changed as a meaningful unit of an expression in the *Gautamasūtravṛtti*, the *Upaskāra* on the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* and the *Tarkasaṃgraha*. Sharma [1998: 37-44] regarded Laugākṣi Bhāskara, Jagadīśa, Viśvanātha, and Annambhaṭṭa as those who made the new approach to *pada*. All these modern Naiyāyikas belonged in the 17th century.

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Research Fellow
Japan Society for the Promotion of Science
Nagoya