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The Ripeness of Poetry: Innovation in the Concept of *kāvya*pāka as Introduced by Bhoja

SUMMARY: The paper examines the contribution of Bhoja, an 11th-century theoretician of Sanskrit literature, to the theory of *kāvya*pāka—the maturity or ripeness of poetry. The concept relies on comparison between a poem and a fruit as they likewise must come to fruition to reach perfection—the state when they are most pleasing to their recipients. The theory is mentioned in numerous important Sanskrit works on poetics. However, different theoreticians perceive the state of perfection in poetry somewhat differently. Bhoja provides yet one more view on this matter. Although he relies on his predecessors, and in some points agrees with them, he also offers fresh perspectives on the subject. The paper focuses on the analyses of relevant passages from Bhoja’s works, *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* and *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, concerning the subject of *kāvya*pāka, and compares them with the views of other theoreticians as summarized in the first part of the study.

KEYWORDS: *kāvya*pāka, *pāka*, *prauḍhi*, Bhoja, *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, poetics

What does ‘perfection’ mean in the context of poetry? What makes a poem perfect and ready to be displayed to the public? The opinion that the ultimate, perfect piece of poetry does not exist would probably prevail today and so would the view that it is up to the reader

to interpret literary work and judge its merits according to his or her own preferences. However, the theoreticians of Sanskrit poetics undertook the arduous and, in their view, necessary task of defining perfection in poetry and to that end developed the theory of *kāvya-pāka*. One of those who contributed the most to this concept was the 11th-century King Bhoja of the Paramāra dynasty.

The word *pāka* comes from the verbal root *pac* which means ‘to cook’, ‘to ripen’, ‘to mature’, ‘to bring to perfection or completion’. Therefore, the basic meaning of *pāka* as a noun is ‘cooking’,¹ ‘cooked food’, ‘ripeness (as in a fruit)’ or ‘maturity’. However, its secondary meaning is ‘excellence’, ‘perfection’, ‘full development’. Theoreticians of Sanskrit literature used the term *kāvya-pāka* to describe the state where a poem has attained its final form, was ready and finished, hence the poet could stop working on it. Although the word *pāka* was used in the context of poetry to denote specific literary quality, it still maintained its association with its primary meanings as the degree of maturity of a poem was compared to the measure of ripeness of different kinds of fruits. Over the centuries, theoreticians of Sanskrit literature expressed different views as to what brings about the maturity in a poem. One of the first authors to use the term *kāvya-pāka* and provide its definition was Vāmana (c. 8th–9th century); however, already before him Bhāmaha (c. 7th century) compared badly composed poetry to an unripe wood apple.² Later on, the discussion on *kāvya-pāka* could

¹ *Pāka* is also a branch of *sāstra*. *Pākaśāstra* or ‘science of cooking’ is the knowledge of Indian ayurvedic cuisine. According to *Āyurveda*, food was one of *tristambha*—three pillars of human life and therefore there were numerous treatises devoted to culinary art, for example *Pākadarpaṇa* of Nala or *Bhojanakutūhala* of Raghunātha.

² “That *Kāvya* which is displeasing and difficult to analyse is ugly though it may possess *Rasa*. The composition of some people is like the unripe wood apple”. (*Kāvya-lāṅkāra* 5.62: *ahr̥dyam asunirbhedam rasavattve ’py apeśalam | kāvyam kapit-tham āmam yat keśāmcit tādṛśam yathā*, translation Naganatha Shastri 1970: 110–111). Wood apple is a fruit of *limonia acidissima*, commonly known also as elephant-apple.

be found in all major works on poetics, although it was never considered an essential critical device (Battistini 2016: 145).

One of the most important views which gave a new perspective to the idea of poetic maturity was presented by Bhoja. However, in order to evaluate his input into the theory of *kāvya**pāka*, one needs to take a closer look at the opinions of his predecessors since Bhoja refers to them and their ideas while formulating his own judgment.

The first, essential view relating to *pāka* was provided by Vāmana in his work *Kāvya**lāṃkārasūtravṛtti*. Vāmana considered the concept of *pāka* to be connected with *vaidarbhī* poetic diction or *rīti* and an element engendering admiration of the connoisseurs.³ Thus, *pāka* was considered crucial to poetry and a factor that made a poem good. According to Vāmana, there were two kinds of *kāvya**pāka*: *śabdapāka*—‘perfection of words’—and *arthapāka*—‘perfection of meaning’. He focused on the *śabdapāka*, about which he said:

ādhanoddharaṇe tāvad yāvad dolāyate manaḥ |
padasya sthāpīte sthairyē hanta siddhā sarasvatī ||
*Kāvya**lāṃkārasūtravṛtti* 1.3.15, *vṛtti*

As long as the mind is hesitating,
there is insertion and removing of words.
But once their firmness is accomplished,
oh, the poetry is perfect!⁴

Thus, according to Vāmana, a poem is ripe when not a single word needs to be replaced by its synonym. During the creative process, a poet tries to use different words and arrange them in different ways in order to find the best ones for the particular poem. The *śabdapāka*

³ *vacasi yam adhiśayyā syandate vacakaśrīr. vitatham avitathatvaṃ yatra vastuprayāti | udayati hi sa tāḍṛk vāpi vaidarbhirūtau saḥṛdayahṛdayānām rañjakaḥ ko'pi pākāḥ ||* (*Kāvya**lāṃkārasūtravṛtti* 1.2.21 *vṛtti*)

⁴ All the translations in the article are mine unless otherwise stated.

is attained when every word fits in perfectly and the poet is sure that he neither wants to nor needs to change anything. Therefore, it can be said that for Vāmana, *śabdapāka* denotes the dexterity and precision in combining words in order not only to obtain a result melodious and pleasant to the ears, but also to achieve the artistic aim envisaged by the poet. Hence, *śabdapāka* in Vāmana's view is very close to another term from the theory of Sanskrit literature—*śayyā*. The term *śayyā* literally means 'bed', 'couch', 'lying', 'sleeping'. In the Sanskrit theory of literature, it is used to express relation between words in a literary composition, relation allowing the words to lie together in such comfort as a body in bed. Therefore, it is not possible to remove or substitute any of the words as this would destroy their perfect agreement. One could say that certain words are somehow predestined for expressing the particular intention of the poet. *Śayyā* can be thus understood as the verbal perfection of a work, and, therefore, is very closely related to the theory of *kāvya-pāka* (Lipowska 2016: 352).

In another passage (*Kāvya-lamkārasūtravṛtti* 3.2.15), Vāmana distinguishes different levels of *kāvya-pāka*. The first one is characterized by the full manifestation of *guṇas* (*guṇasphuṭatvasākalyam*) and Vāmana compares it to the full ripeness of a mango. A literary work which is based on well-formed verbs and nouns and is qualified by a not easily intelligible subject is the second level of *kāvya-pāka* because it possesses only some of the *guṇas*. This type of work may be described as ripe as an aubergine and is not appreciated by the connoisseurs; however, it is still poetry. Vāmana then points out works that do not possess any *guṇas*. He does not consider them poetry and compares them to an unripe wood apple.

The next theoretician of Sanskrit literature who offered important input to the theory of *kāvya-pāka* was Maṅgala (10th century).⁵ Maṅgala called his concept *pariṇāma*, which, similarly to *pāka*, means

⁵ The work of Maṅgala has not been preserved as a whole, however, fragments of the text were quoted by Rājaśekhara in his *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*. See also Krishnamoorthy 1971.

‘ripeness’, ‘maturity’, ‘result’. According to him, a poet could master the skill of composing perfect poems through writing exercises and practice. Maṅgala described this skill as proficiency in using nouns and verbs. He identified *kāvya*pāka with *sauśabdyā*—the right formation of grammatical forms. Therefore, for Maṅgala, *kāvya*pāka was connected more to the grammatical knowledge and constructing correct sentences than to an artistic expression (Lipowska 2016: 353).

Another extensive contribution to the theory of *kāvya*pāka was made by Rājaśekhara (10th century) and his learned wife, Avantisundarī. Their position was expounded in the fifth chapter of *Kāvya*mīmāṃsā. Disagreeing with the opinions of Vāmana and Maṅgala, Avantisundarī called the inability to substitute words by their synonyms simply a lack of creativity and a weakness on the part of the poets.

Rājaśekhara shared Avantisundarī’s opinion that the perfection of poetry can be obtained while using different words. In his view, the essence of the concept of *pāka* lies in the verbal scope and may be perceived as the power of speech. Therefore, according to Rājaśekhara, poetical perfection is much more than grammatical correctness. It depends also on sounds and combinations of words, their relationship to the topic, and the ability to induce particular *rasa*. Rājaśekhara, similarly to Maṅgala, believed that writing perfect poems requires practice. He considered *pāka* as defining not only the perfection of a literary work but also the maturity of the poet himself—only a proficient poet is capable of writing a perfect poem.

In his further divagations on literary perfection, Rājaśekhara turns to the basic meaning of the term *pāka*. He provides classification of nine kinds of poetic perfection and compares them to the ripeness of different fruits. He indicates three kinds which are truly good (grape, mango and coconut), three which need further work (jujube, tamarind, cucumber) and three which are not acceptable (neem, eggplant, betel nut). He refers to taste sensations associated with consuming the particular fruit and compares them to the location of *rasa* in literary works. Rājaśekhara remarks that there are many more kinds of *pāka*; however, he selects nine exemplary ones for

the sake of instructing young poets who want to engage in the exercise and refine their writing skills.

Bhoja refers to *pāka* in two of his treatises devoted to the theory of Sanskrit literature—*Sarasvatīkaṅṭhābharaṇa* and *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*; however, it is the first one, where he gives more space to the subject, that is of greater importance. Therefore, its passages shall be analysed first.

In the *Sarasvatīkaṅṭhābharaṇa* Bhoja focuses on the concept of *pāka* in the section called *śabdagaṇa*—‘the quality of expression’. However, instead of *pāka*, Bhoja uses the term *prauḍhi*. The meaning of *prauḍhi* is very similar to that of *pāka*—maturity, perfection, growth, full development, boldness, exertion, but it lacks the previous culinary connotations. The noun *prauḍhi* comes from the verb *vah* with a prefix *pra*, which means ‘to carry forward’, ‘to show’. However, this does not mean that Bhoja totally abandons all reference to the ripeness of fruits. Besides, he is not the first theoretician to use the term *prauḍhi* in the context of Sanskrit theory of literature. The term occurs earlier in the prologue to *Rāmābhyudaya*, a play written by king Yaśovarman of Kannauj (8th century). A verse in Yaśovarman’s work mentions *prauḍhi* of *śabda* and *artha*, twin concepts related to poetics, and the verse is subsequently quoted both by Bhoja in the ninth chapter of *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* and Ānandavardhana in his *Dhvanyāloka*. Similar term, *prauḍhatvam*, can be found in the prologue of *Mālatīmādhava* by Bhavabhūti (8th century). As V. Raghavan observes, “This seems to have developed into the *prauḍhi* forming the *arthagaṇa ojas* in Vāmana, III.2.2” (Raghavan 1973: 225–226). Vāmana defines one of the *arthagaṇas*—namely *ojas*—as *arthasya prauḍhir*, “the maturity of meaning” (*Kāvyaśāstraśūtrasūtra* 3.2.2). Thus for Vāmana *prauḍhi* is equated to the ability to write with the intended results in mind. It is also the power to express a vast range of meanings in few words as well as to describe a small thing in an intriguing and elaborate way. The main difference between Vāmana and his predecessors in defining *prauḍhi* is that Vāmana classifies it only as an *arthagaṇa*, while Yaśovarman and Bhavabhūti ascribe it to two categories: *śabda*

and *artha* (Raghavan 1978: 255–256). However, the first theoretician of Sanskrit literature to list *prauḍhi* as an independent *guṇa* is Bhoja.

In the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* 1.77 king Bhoja defines the literary perfection, *prauḍhi*, in this manner: “The full development of an expression is known by the name ‘*prauḍhi*’” (*ukteḥ prauḍhaḥ parīpākāḥ procyate prauḍhisamjñayā | Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* 1.77). He described *prauḍhi* as *prauḍha parīpāka*—“full development”, “full ripeness” of an expression. It seems that he wants to emphasize that literary perfection is the quality of the final shape of the work. This definition is expanded in the commentary written by Ratneśvara (c. 14th century): “This perfection (*prauḍhi*) is the ripeness (*pāka*) of poetic speech. Ripeness is the impossibility of replacing words with their synonyms” (*ukter vākyasyāyaṃ pākāḥ sā prauḍhiḥ | śabdānām paryāyaparivartāsahatvaṃ pākāḥ | Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa*, commentary to 1.77). To support his statement, the commentator then quotes a verse by Vāmana, *Kāvyaśāstrasūtravṛtti* 1.3.15. It can be seen that, according to Ratneśvara, Bhoja mostly agrees with his predecessor on the meaning of *kāvya-pāka* while rejecting the views of Avantisundarī and her husband, who consider the inability of substituting words by their synonyms as a weakness of a poet.

After the definition of *pāka*, Bhoja provides an example—a verse, which according to Jalhana⁶ should be attributed to Cittapa.⁷ It is used to indicate the classification of *pākas* and how to determine their kinds:

*abhyuddhrtā vasumatī dalitaṃ ripūrah
kṣiptakramaṃ kavalitā balirājalakṣmīḥ |*

*atraikajanmani kṛtaṃ yad anena yūnā janmatraye tad akarot puruṣaḥ
purāṇaḥ ||*

⁶ Minister of the Yādava King, Kṛṣṇa, who in 1257 compiled an anthology, *Sūktimuktāvalī*. The compilation is particularly important as it contains Rājaśekhara’s verses praising great Sanskrit poets (Krishnamachariar 1974: 385–386).

⁷ Poet who flourished in the first half of the 11th century. He was probably a court poet of King Bhoja. His stanzas are frequently quoted in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa*. (Sircar 1953: 125–126).

*atra prakṛtisthakomalakaṭhorebhyo nāgaropanāgaragrāmyebhyo
vā padebhyo 'bhyuddhṛtādīnām grāmyādīnām ubhayeṣām
vā padānām āvāpodvāpābhyām sanniveśacārutvena yo 'yam
ābhyāsiko nālikerapāko mṛdvīkāpāka ityādir vākyaparipākaḥ
sā prauḍhir ity ucyate | tathā caitad vākyam nālikerapāka ity
ucyate | evaṃ sahakāramṛdvīkāpāke apy udāharaṇīye iti ||
Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa 1.77*

The Earth rendered prosperous, the enemy's chest torn asunder, by stomping step the fortune of tributary kings devoured.

What was accomplished by this young man in one lifetime, was done by Viṣṇu in three lives.⁸

Here the expression's full ripeness, that is the ripeness of coconut, ripeness of grapes, etc. is called *prauḍhi*, and it results from practice in [supplying] charm to the composition by adding and removing words of both kinds like *grāmya* etc., like *abhyuddhṛta* etc.; or by normal, tender and harsh or sophisticated, common and rustic words.⁹ And therefore, this sentence is called ripe as coconut. The ripeness of mango and grape shall be illustrated in the same way.

Like his predecessor Rājaśekhara, Bhoja uses different kinds of fruits to explain differences between different types of *prauḍhi*. The ripeness of grape, mango, and coconut represent three kinds of *pāka* compositions, which according to Rājaśekhara, as being artistically mature, testify to the artistic fineness of the text—no further work on them is required. According to Bhoja, they are the only pure

⁸ In this stanza the poet compares deeds of a young hero (probably his royal patron) to the deeds of three *avatāras* of Viṣṇu (Varāha, Narasiṃha and Vāmana) by employing *śleṣas* (*abhyuddhṛtā* can be translated also as 'lifted up' and *balirājalakṣmīḥ* as 'the fortune of King Bali').

⁹ Terms 'normal', 'harsh' and 'tender' refer to sound aspect of words while 'sophisticated', 'common' and 'rustic' refer to their semantic aspect.

kinds of poetical perfection; however, he admits that there are more types which originate by mixing them. At the end of his commentary, Ratneśvara remarks that these new kinds of *pāka* configurations belong to the category of *arthapākas* and therefore they are discussed in the fifth chapter of *Sarasvatīkaṅṭhābharana*. Those mentioned here are discussed in the second chapter along with *śabdaguṇas*; therefore, it may be assumed that they are *śabdapākas*. Although Bhoja compares the three categories of *pāka* or *prauḍhi* to the same kinds of fruits as Rājāśekhara, he perceives them in a different way. His thoughts on the subject are explained by Ratneśvara in the commentary:

*prauḍha iti | upakramopasamhārayor nirvyūḍhaḥ sa cāyaṃ nā
likerasahakāramrdvikopalakṣaṇais trividho gīyate | tad yathā
nālikeraphalaṃ pakvaṃ tvaci kaṭhinaṃ śirāsv avivṛtakomalaprāyaṃ
kapālikāyāṃ kaṭhinataraṃ tathā kaścit samdarbho mukhe kaṭhinas
tadanantaraṃ mṛduprāyas tataḥ kaṭhinataro nālikerapāka ity
ucyate | tathā hi—prakṛtodāharaṇe prathamapāde 'bhuyuddhṛteti
varṇacatuṣṭayam ārambhe kaṭhinaṃ 'vasumatī dali' iti varṇaṣaṭkaṃ
komalaṃ 'taṃ ripūrah' ity anusvārarephadīrghair akṣaracatuṣṭayam
kaṭhinataraṃ | atrāpi taṃ iti mṛduprāyaniveśena komalakapāl
ikāmukhabhāgasārūpyaṃ draḍhayatīty asmadārādhyāḥ | evaṃ
dviitīyādipādātraye catuṣkaṣaṭkacatuṣkair nālikeraphalasāmyam
unneyam | kathaṃ punar evaṃvidhaḥ pākaḥ saṃbhavatīty ata āha—
atreti | abhyāseṇa nirvṛtta ābhyāsikaḥ | kāvyam kartuṃ vicārayitum
ca ye jānanti tadupadeśeṇa karaṇe yojane ca paunaḥpunyena
pravṛttir abhyāsaḥ | [Mammāṭa, Kāvya prakāśa 1.3 vṛtti] asāv api
kathaṃ pākaviśeṣo bhavatīty ata āha—sanniveśacārutveneti | (...)
bhavati hi saḥṛdayānām evaṃ anyat padaṃ nāstīti vyavahārah |
so 'yaṃ racanāsiddhiviśeṣaḥ kathaṃ anyathā tajjātīyam eva pad-
am anyatra samdarbhe niveśitaṃ na tathā svadate | ata evāsau
vākyaguṇaḥ | kāṭhinyam ca saṃyogair dīrghair vā svarair bha-
vati | yathātraivodāharaṇe ripūra ityādau | sūptinīyutpatillakṣaṇas
tu vārtākapākaḥ kaiścid uktaḥ, sa tu suśabdatālakṣaṇaguṇa eva |
evaṃ iti | yathā drākṣāphalaṃ tvaca ārabhya komalam antarā
dviṭricaturāsthisaṃpāditaṃ kiṃcit kāṭhinyam evaṃ kaścit sam-
darbham upakramopasamhārayoḥ komala eva madhye kaṭhina*

eva | saṃyogadīrghasvaramātrakṛtamanākkāṭhorabhāvo mṛdvīkāpāka ity ucyate | (...) ata eva kavikalpalatākārādibhir ukto nīlakapīthapākaścaturtho nāsti | yadvac ca pariṇatam sahakāraphalam ārambhād eva komalam asthani tu kaṭhoraprāyam evam aparāḥ saṃdarbho mukhād ārabhya mṛdur antare kaṭhinatarāḥ sahakārapāka ity ucyate | (...) te 'mī traya eva śuddhapākāḥ | vyatikarajanmānas tu bhūyāmsaḥ | eta evārthapākāḥ pañcame prakāntareṇa pratipādayisyante || Sarasvatīkaṅṭhābharaṇa commentary to 1.77.

‘Perfection’ is accomplished at the beginning and at the end and it is divided into three types: coconut, mango, and grape. As the ripe fruit of coconut is hard in its skin, in its chief part there is a soft covering layer, and [then] it is much harder in its shell, in the same way some composition is harsh at the beginning, immediately after [that] rich in softness, but then harder again.¹⁰ This is the ripeness of the coconut. Thus, in the first *pāda* of the mentioned example, the beginning four syllables in *abhyuddhṛta* are hard, six syllables in *vasumatī dali* are soft, four syllables in *taṃ ripūrah* are harder because of *anusvāra*, letters *r*, and a long vowel. And here, according to our authorities, *taṃ* by arrangement rich in mildness, strengthens the conformity of the soft, shell and the upper side parts [of the expression]. Thus, in the three *pādas* beginning with the second, the resemblance to a coconut fruit should be ascertained by [the sequence of] four, six, and four syllables. Therefore, in the sentence starting with ‘here’ he [Bhoja] said how this kind of *pāka* arises. “Resulting from practice” (*ābhyāsika*), that is accomplished through exercise. Exercise is a repetitive practice in constructing and composing under the supervision of those who are skilled in writing and evaluating poetry. He said how that kind of *pāka* forms—“through the beauty of the composition” (...) Even if there is another word, it does not exist for the connoisseurs –

¹⁰ Coconut as a fruit also has three pericarp layers: exocarp (outer layer), mesocarp (fibrous husk) and endocarp (hard shell). Bhoja referred only to them, leaving out what is inside the coconut fruit: seed, coconut water and endosperm (white flesh).

this is the common practice. This is the peculiarity of accomplished composition. How could it be otherwise? If its synonyms were put somewhere else in the composition, it would not be that pleasant. Therefore, this is *vākyaguṇa*—a quality of expression. And hardness occurs because of the consonant clusters or long vowels. Like here, in the example “*ripūra*”, etc. Someone said that the ripeness of eggplant is characterized by proficiency in declination and conjugation, but this is the *guṇa* known as *suśabdatā*—the felicity of speech. Starting from ‘*evam*’: As the softness of the grape starts with the skin, and inside it has a little hardness as it is filled with two, three or four seeds, in the same way, some compositions at the beginning and the end are soft and in the middle are hard. Ripeness endowed with slightly hard nature due to consonant clusters and long vowels is called the ripeness of the grape. (...) ¹¹ Therefore, as the author of *Kavikalpalatā* and some others stated, there is no fourth *pāka* of blue wood apple. And as the ripe fruit of mango is soft at the beginning, but is hard in the kernel, another kind of composition, starting at the beginning as sweet, but harder in the middle, is called mature as mango. (...) ¹² These three are indeed pure *pākas*. There are more [types] born from mixing them. Those are indeed *arthapākas* and will be explained in the fifth chapter in another way.

It may be observed that Bhoja designates his classification of *prauḍhi* differently than Rājaśekhara. The latter describes ripeness of coconut as “sweet at the beginning and at the end” (*ādyantayoḥ svādu nālikerapākam*), the ripeness of grape as “not sweet at the beginning, but sweet at the end” (*ādāv asvādu pariṇāme svādu mṛdvīkāpākam*), and the ripeness of mango as “mediocre at the beginning and sweet at the end” (*ādau madhyamam ante svādu sahakārapākam*). Therefore, for Rājaśekhara, *pāka* is connected with the taste, whereas Bhoja takes into account the anatomy of the fruit, distinguishing its soft and hard

¹¹ I omit the example of stanza 5.34 from *Kumārasambhava* and the stanza of an anonymous author which comes with no further explanation.

¹² I omit the example of the stanza of an anonymous author.

parts. He sees the ripeness of coconut¹³ (*nālikerapāka*) as semi-hard at the fleshy part, soft inside and hard when one considers the shell, the ripeness of grape (*mṛdvīkāpāka*) as soft but with some hardness inside and the ripeness of mango (*sahakārapāka*) as soft at the beginning and hard at the end. Therefore, he compares the texture of the particular layers of the above mentioned fruits to the phonetic attributes of the respective parts of the poem. According to him, the hardness of speech is caused by an accumulation of long vowels, *anusvāras*, consonants, the semi-vowel *r*, and consonant clusters. It is the right distribution of this hardness in the literary work and an accurate balance of sounds, that makes a poem perfect. It cannot be too harsh, but it cannot be too soft either—some hardness is desirable for literary composition. Hence, Bhoja is the first theorist to emphasise the sound effects of a literary work in the context of the theory of *pāka* and explains all the features clearly. Now it is also obvious why according to him it is impossible to substitute words with their synonyms in a mature poem—this would affect the perfect balance of sounds.

Bhoja's predecessors related the theory of *kāvya-pāka* to the allocation of taste in different fruits—therefore, the association was quite close to the *rasa* theory. Bhoja, on the other hand, examined the inside of the fruit; he divided the fruit into different layers and compared those to poetry. It is worth noting that his observations on the structure of fruits were botanically accurate. While explaining each type of *pāka*, he referred to the three actual pericarp layers of the fruit's anatomy. Therefore, in his approach, the relation between botany and poetics is more strongly outlined than in the views of the preceding theoreticians. It is also interesting to note that all image examples used by the theoreticians are, from the botanical point of view, fruits although their names may suggest differently (i.e. coconut, betel nut, cucumber, aubergine).

¹³ The 15th-century Sanskrit and Telugu poet, Śrīnātha, also compared the style of Sanskrit poetry to a ripe coconut. He pointed out that because of hard shell it is difficult to reach the sweet part of coconut—similarly, Sanskrit poetry, because of its elaboration also requires an effort from its reader (Narayana Rao: 1995).

All fruits used by the theoreticians to describe different kinds of *pāka* are indigenous to the Indian Subcontinent. Probably the authors intentionally chose the most easily accessible and widely known fruits. The most popular in India are fruits mentioned by Vāmana: mango, eggplant and wood apple. On that account, theoreticians could be sure that descriptions were clear and their symbolic meaning easily comprehensible to the readers. And were it not the case, aspiring poets could easily procure those fruits and use them as empirical tools to fully understand each type of *pāka*.

Bhoja and Ratneśvara agree with Rājaśekhara also on another matter. They believe that the ability to write perfect poems depends on extensive writing exercises. The commentator explains how young poets should train themselves in poetry. For him, the most important factors seem to be the frequency of undertaking the exercise and the supervision of a skilled teacher. Rājaśekhara says nothing about how young poets should develop their skills in attaining the perfection; however, at the end of his classification of *pākas* he mentions that he prepared the whole expose specifically for those who train in writing poetry. Perhaps he wants them to be able to determine by themselves the ripeness of their works.

Another disagreement with former theoreticians discussing *pāka* may be seen in the description of the ripeness of eggplant provided by Ratneśvara in the commentary. It stands in opposition to the statement of Vāmana who says that this kind of ripeness is based on grammatical sophistication and touches a difficult matter; also, it is a peculiarity of bad poetry. Bhoja and his commentator see the linguistic perfection as a merit. For them, it is a *guṇa* of the felicity of expression—*suśabdatā*. Neither the theoretician nor the commentator explain what does the ripeness of eggplant mean in their opinion. It may be observed that Bhoja and Ratneśvara also oppose Maṅgala as they do not consider grammatical correctness as *prauḍhi*.

Bhoja writes about *prauḍhi* also in the first *pariccheda* of *Sarasvatī-kaṅṭhābharāṇa*. He lists it among *arthaguṇas*, providing this definition: “*Prauḍhi* is known as the result of expressing the intended meaning

in poetry” (*vivakṣitārthanirvāhaḥ kāvyē prauḍhir iti smṛtā* || *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* 1.88). Further, Bhoja explains: “Thus *prauḍhi* is the completion of intended meaning because of procurement of mature meaning by separate sentence” (*etāvataḥ prabhūtasyārthasyānekavākyena pratipāditatvād vivakṣitārthanirvahaṇam prauḍhi* || *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* 1.88). Ratneśvara adds: “When great meaning desired by the poet is bestowed on even a short sentence this is *prauḍhi*” (*kaver abhimatasya bhūyaso ‘py arthasya svalpenaiva vākyena pratipādanam prauḍhiḥ* || *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa*, commentary to 1.88). Therefore, according to Bhoja, *prauḍhi*—in the categories of *arthagūṇa*—is the ability of the poet to successfully communicate through a poem the meaning which he constructed in his mind and deliver this meaning in a compendious way. This can be defined as poet’s power to accomplish his intention. According to Bhoja, literature which is mature from the point of view of *artha* is concise but meaningful. A mature poem should not be more elaborate than needed to express everything that was undertaken by the poet. In the definition of *prauḍhi* as an *arthagūṇa* provided by Bhoja, similarities to the views of Vāmana regarding *prauḍhi* in the explanation of another *arthagūṇa*—*ojas*—may be observed. Both theorists consider it the foremost ability of a writer to attain the intended result while imparting momentous sense in a brief speech. Although his definition is in fact devoted to *ojas*, Vāmana specifies also five types of *prauḍhi*, which the fact is not taken into consideration by Bhoja.

Pāka is mentioned by Bhoja in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* one more time. In the fifth *pariccheda*, Bhoja speaks of three *pākabhaktis*. In verse 5.124 he once again mentions the three kinds of *pāka*, already which he discussed in the first *pariccheda*: ripeness of coconut, mango, and grape. The next verse classifies them as *premabhaktis*—varieties of love. The author places them amongst the features of *rasa*. There are no further explanations provided by Bhoja, and this part of *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharāṇa* also lacks commentary.

Bhoja mentions *pāka* in his other treatise on poetics, *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, as well. In the last and thirty-sixth chapter of this work,

he provides a list of twelve *premapākas*—varieties of *preman*, a new *rasa* introduced by Bhoja. However, this chapter has not been preserved as a whole and therefore more than half of the list is lost. The types of *premapāka* that have come to us are as follows: *picumanda*—neem, *kapittha*—wood apple, *kramuka*—betel nut, *kharjūra*—date. V. Raghavan suggests that the next three are kinds of *pāka* mentioned in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* in verse 5.124 (Raghavan 1978: 66). The other five are unknown. It is interesting that *kapittha pāka* is mentioned here, because in the commentary to the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* 1.77 Ratneśvara maintains that in poetics there is no such thing as *nīlakapittha pāka*—“the ripeness of blue wood apples”.

There is no doubt that the contribution of Bhoja to the theory of *kāvya**pāka* was truly significant. Although he was aware of the views of his predecessors, he managed to see the concept in a different light and provide original perspective to the discussion on the perfection of poetry.

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