

Some sporadic notes on the *Bṛhaddesī*

H. C. Bhayani

1. *Travaṇā*

The fourth chapter of the *Bṛhaddesī*⁽¹⁾ (=BD.) describes *Bhāṣhās* according to *Yāṣṭika*. There the first *Bhāṣā* of the *Ṭakka-rāga* is called *Travaṇā* (BD.2, 132, v.16; p. 138, v. 39). Similarly the ninth *Bhāṣā* of the *Pañcama-rāga* is called *Trāvaṇī* (p.134, v.28; p. 164, 100-101) and it is called *deśa-sambhavā* (v-101). In the Notes (*virmarśa*) the editors have observed that *trāvaṇa* or *travaṇa* is not known as a geographical name.

In *Rājaśekhara's Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* (first half of the tenth century), *Travaṇa* occurs twice as the name of a country. In the list of the countries in the Western region of India is mentioned *Travaṇa* along with *Surāṣṭra*, *Daśeraka*, *Bhṛgukaccha*, *Kaccha*, *Ānarta*, *Arbuda* etc. (ch. 17, p. 233). Again in the seventh chapter while describing the regional characteristics of poetry-recitation it is said that the poets of *Surāṣṭra*, *Travaṇa* and allied regions recite even Sanskrit poetry with a touch of *Apabhraṃśa*. Accordingly *Travaṇa* was the name of a country in the west in the vicinity of *Surāṣṭra*, *Kaccha*, etc. It was possibly in Rajasthan.

2. *Harṣapūrī*

The third *Bhāṣā* of the *Mālavakaiśika Rāga* is called *Harṣapūrī* (BD. 2, p. 150, v. 65). The editors say that *Harṣapūra* is not known as a geographical name (p. 311, note 25).

Harṣapura was known as a city and an administrative province in Gujarat during the *Cālukya* period. It is mentioned in a copperplate grant (dated 910-911 A.C.) of the period of the *Rāṣṭrakūṭa* king. *Kṛṣṇa-II*. There the province is called *harṣapura-ardhāṣṭama-sāta* (i.e. *Harṣapura-750*). It is identified with *Harsol* in the *Sabarkantha* district of the present-day Gujarat. In the form *harṣapūra* the vowel is lengthened metri-

1. श्रीमत्तद्भूमिनिर्णीता बृहदेशी. Ed. P. L. Shrivastava. Part I. 1922 part 2, 1926.

causa.

(See 'Gujarāt no Rajkiy ane Sāmskr̥tik Itihās', part I, ed. R. C. Parikh, H.G. Shastri, 1972, p. 374).

3. Sātavāhanikā

The second Bhāṣā of the Kakubha Rāga is called Sātavāhanikā (BD.2, p. 134, v.23 ; the ms. reading is **sālāvāhanikā**) or **Sātavāhinī** (p.154, v.74 ; to be emended as **sātavahani**).

The name derives from the name of the royal poet Sātavāhana (Pk. **sālāvāhana**, **sālāhana**), the famous literary figure and author of the Prakrit anthology **Gāhākosa** or **Gahāsattasāi**, who ruled at Pratiṣṭhāna (modern Paithan in Maharashtra) during the first or second century of the Christian era.

In the Prakrit section of the **Siddhahema-sābdānuśāsana**, Hemacandra, while connecting Pk. **sālāvāhana**, **sātāhana** with Sk. **sātavāhana**, has given **sālahaṇī bhāsā** as an illustration of the occurrence of the form **sālāhana**. It is quite tempting to connect this with the Sātavāhanikā Bhāṣā of BD. In that case **bhāsā** in Hemacandra's illustration (which is most probably taken over from some earlier source) does not mean 'language', but a type of Grāmarāgas.

4. Ambāherī

The twelfth Bhāṣā of the Ṭakka Rāga is called Ambāherī (BD.2, p. 132, v.19; the ms. reading here is **ambāhīrī** ; p. 144, v.54). The editors have observed (p.310, note 20) that Ambāhera is not known to be a geographical name. They suggest the connection of that term with Ambara, modern Amer near Jaipur in Rajasthan.

Now it is obvious that some of the names of the Bhāṣās do not have any connection with a geographical place-name, e.g. Lalita, Kolāhali, Madhuri, Vesari etc.

The word **ammāhīraya** occurs in the sense of 'lullaby' in Apabhraṁśa poems of 9th and 10th century A.C.⁽²⁾ For example in the description of a cowherds settlement it is said :

कत्थइ डिभउ परियंदिज्जइह, अम्माहीरउ गेउ झुणिज्जउ ।

(Svayambhū's **Paumacariya**, 24, 13,8)

'In some places a lullaby song is being sung while rocking the child (in a cradle)'. In the same poet's **Harivaṁsapurāṇa**, Yaśodā is described in the following lines as rocking the child Kṛṣṇa in the cradle (**hallaru**, Guj. **hālardū**) and sing a lullaby :

मेहरि अम्माहीरण, परियंदइ हल्लरु । (5,1,9)

In Puṣpadanta's **Mahāpurāṇa** child Rṣabha is described in the following line as being rocked in a cradle while a sweet lullaby is being sung :

परियंदइ अम्माहीरण, सोवंतउ कु-वि सुइहारण । (4,4,13)

There, some initial lines of the lullaby are also given. Accordingly, it is suggested that **Ambāhīri** as the name of **Bhāṣā** (which as a class being related to the **Grāmarāgas**) may be the same as Ap. **ammāhīraya** 'lullaby'. **ambāherī** is called **deśyākhyā** in BD. That qualifier can be also interpreted as 'the name of which is based on / derives from a regional dialect'.

Incidentally, Ap. **ammāhīraya** can be derived from **ammā** 'mummy' + **hīraya** 'diamond'. In the lullabies that were sung the child would have been addressed or referred to as 'O you mine - your mummy's diamond'. Hence a lullaby came to be called **ammāhīraya**.

2. See my paper in Gujarati, '**hālardū, pārnū** in Apabhraṁśa literature', published in 1970 and later included in my collection **Śabdaparīṣīlan** (1973), pp. 101-106.

5. Vesara

BD. states that according to Durgasakti, Rāgas themselves are known as Vesara. (BD.2, p. 108). According to the editors Rāga is another name of Vesarā Giti.

Again BD. has cited Durgasakti to explain the term Vesara. According to the latter Vesara is an alternative form of Vegasara. Vegasara is so called because **svaras** move with speed (**vegasara**) (p. 108). But a little further on p. 116, it is said that Vesaras are so called because the speed of **svaras** is seen in them (i.e. it is an alternative form of **vega-svara**). Editors have noted that the usual meaning of Sk. **vesara** is 'mule', and that Monier Williams' Sanskrit-English dictionary has given **vegasara** also with the same meaning. Now **vegasara** is attested considerably later than **vesara** (from the **Kathāsaritsāgara** and from Hemcandra's **Abhidhāna-cintāmaṇi** (which gives **vesara**, **vegasara** and **aśvatara** as synonyms). Most probably **vegasara** is a later creation to explain **vesara** etymologically. Sk. **vegasara** 'moving speedily' would become **veasara** in Prakrit and later **vesara**. So working backwardly **vegasara** was formed. This attempt to provide **vesara** with artificial etymology to match with its meaning is evident from the BD. passages referred to above which once equate **vesara** with **vegasara** and second time with **vegasvara**. **vesara** 'mule' is a hybrid animal. Whether it implies that Vesarā Giti was called so because of a mixture of two types in its structure is for the musicologists to tell.

6. deśī

In BD. 1, 2 the word **deśī** qualifies **dhvani** (m.). In 1,16 it qualifies **mārga** (m.). In 5,346 it qualifies **rāga** (m.). Elsewhere it qualifies **nṛtta** (n.), **śabda** (m.), **nāman** (n.) etc.

Formally **deśī** is feminine. At BD. 1,14 it is said :

गीयते याऽनुसारेण स्वदेशे देशिरुच्यते ।

(Here **deśī** is modified as **deśī** to suit the metre).

The title **brhaddesī** means 'the great work on **desī rāgas**'.

How to account for the feminine form **desī** in all these usages ? It is of course derived from **deśa** 'region'. Adjectives formed from **deśa** are **deśya**, **deśīya**: The form **desī** functioning as an adjective is evidently a changed form of **deśya**. In several Sanskrit words in later usage we find that their final *-ya* changes to *-ī*, under the influence of Prakrit. Note the following instances (noted in MW.) :

औचिती < औचित्य, चातुरी < चातुर्य, माधुरी < माधुर्य, वैचित्री < वैचित्र्य, वैदग्धी < वैदग्ध्य, वैदुषी < वैदुष्य.

(See H. C. Bhayani, 'Etymological Notes', *Berlines Indologisehe Studies*, 8, 1995, p.9)

These forms are attested from comparatively late Sanskrit texts. So also the word **desī**. The explanation of the term **vesara** as **vegasara** or **vegasvara**, the place-name base of the **bhāṣās travaṇā** and **harsapurīyā**, the use of the form **desī** indicate linguistically rather a late date for BD. So also the term **ambāherī** in the section taken over from Yāṣṭika's work.