

An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory

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Lecture- 40

Guna or Poetic Merit: Anandavardhana, Namisadhu and Pratiharenduraja

Hello everyone,

In the previous lecture, we saw the theory of *guṇa* propounded by Vāmana. We saw that Vamana holds an important position in the history of the concept of *guṇa*, since he is the first theorist to divide the *guṇas* into *śabda guṇas* and *artha guṇas*. *Śabdaguṇas* are the poetic merits concerning the sound, while *artha guṇas* are the *guṇas* that deal with the sound. He lists ten *guṇas* under each category. According to Vamana, *guṇas* are more important than *alaṅkāras*. The only function of *alaṅkāra*, according to Vāmana, is to beautify a *kāvya* that is already beautified by *guṇas*. According to Vāmana, the *Vaidarbhī* style where all the ten *guṇas* are found, is the best style to compose a *kāvya*. He also holds that just the presence of *alaṅkāras* is not enough to transform a piece of writing into *kāvya*. According to him, *guṇa* is the essential quality that needs to be present in all forms of *kāvyas*. In this class, we are going to see the theory of *guṇa* conceptualized by two other theoreticians, namely Ānandavardhana, Namisadhu and Pratihārenduraja.

Ānandavardhana's defined *guṇa* on the basis of the mental changes effected by the evocation of *rasa*. According to Ānandavardhana, there are three identifiable mental states in the experience of *rasa*, namely *druti* or the softening of the heart, *dīpti* or the excitement, and *vikāsa* or the expansion of heart. Corresponding to these three mental states experienced by a *sahṛdaya*, Ānandavardhana acknowledged only three *guṇas* in his *Dhvanyāloka*, namely, *mādhurya*, *ojas*, and *prāsāda*. The *druti* that you experience in *śṛṅgāra*, *hāsya* and *karuṇa* *rasas* was termed *mādhurya* (2.8); the *dīpti* felt during *raudra*, *vīra* and *adbhuta* *rasa* was termed *ojas* (2.9); and *prāsāda* is the ability of a *kāvya* to communicate its *rasas* to the reader (2.10). According to Ānanda, only *mādhurya* and *ojas* were distinctly different from each other as they were attached to particular *rasas*; *prāsāda* could occur with any *rasa*. While describing the theory of *mādhurya*, Ānandavardhana disagrees with Bhāmaha's opinion that *śravayatva* or the quality of being pleasing or soothing to the ear is unique to the quality called *mādhurya*. He is

of the view that this is a quality that can be found in *ojas* as well. Ānandavardhana's schema considers *guṇas* as dependent on *rasa*, as opposed to the letters or poetic style. Ānanda notes, "Whatever depends on the predominant sense, that is *rasa*, should be regarded as qualities or the *guṇas*. On the other hand, whatever resides in the non-predominant sense like the words and their literal meanings, should be considered as ornaments or figures of speech, just like bracelets, etc." (2.5 g). It should be noted that although Ānandavardhana reduces the number of *guṇas* to three, he does not try to logically refute the theory of ten *guṇas* mentioned by Bharata, Daṇḍin and Vāmana. This is something that the later theorists like Mammaṭa, Viṣvanātha and others have taken upon themselves.

Raghavan succinctly summarizes the view of Ānandavardhana on the question of *guṇa* in the following words. According to Raghavan, "*mādhurya* and *ojas* are the two main *guṇas* standing opposite to each other. *Prasāda* pertains to all *rasas*. These two *mādhurya* and *ojas* divide *rasas* into two sets, with *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa* on the one hand, having nothing but *mādhurya*, and *raudra*, *vīra* and *adbhuta* on the other, having nothing but *ojas*. As regards the other *rasas*, *hāsya*, *bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa*, Abhinavagupta tries to show that there is a varying proportion of *mādhurya* and *ojas*. *Hāsya*, being an ancillary of *śṛṅgāra*, also has *mādhurya* and *ojas* in an equal degree, since it is of the form of the expansion of the heart. In *bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa*, the *vibhāvas* have *ojas* and hence *ojas* predominates" (326).

Ānandavardhana then proceeds to analyse the relation between *samghaṭana* and *guṇas*. What is a *samghaṭana*? A *samghaṭana* is a special arrangement of words. In other words, *samghaṭana* is the style or texture. This is somewhat similar to what Vāmana calls *rīti*. The *samghaṭana* plays a vital role in suggesting *rasas*. For example, Ānanda notes that in the *karuṇa* *rasa* or the aesthetic emotion of the tragic and *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra* or love-in-separation the uncompounded *samghaṭana* is expected. On the other hand, when other *rasas* are being presented, such as *raudra* or the fury, a texture of medium length compounds is desirable and sometimes, to express *vīra* *rasa*, even a texture of long compounds can be used. Since, *samghaṭana* plays a vital role in suggesting *rasas*, do we need to assume that *guṇas* that are dependent on *rasas* also depend upon *samghaṭana*? This is indeed a valid question. But Ānandavardhana objects to this argument. Ānandavardhana says when we say that *samghaṭana* plays an important role in suggesting the *rasas*, we do not mean to say that *samghaṭana* is always an essential component to suggest the *rasas*. According to Ānanda, *rasas* can be suggested by individual words or letters, as well. So it is not correct to say that the presence of the

samghaṭana is necessary to suggest rasas; the rasas are dependent upon samghaṭana, and therefore the guṇas that are depend upon the rasas also depend upon samghaṭana. Ānanda says, “But this objection does not hold, because it has been shown that rasa and the like can be suggested through phonemes and words. Or, if we admit that sentences suggest rasa and the like, we need not admit that these sentences depend by rule on any particular texture. One may thus say that the base of the qualities consists only of words, words that are untextured [i.e., free to belong to any one of the three textures] so long as they are accompanied by some particular suggestive meaning”.

According to Ānanda, the quality called prasāda is particularly important. He says that it should pervade the whole poetic composition. It is necessary for all the *rasas* and styles. If the poetic composition is bereft of the quality of *prasāda*, that composition will not be able to bring forth emotions like *karuṇa* and *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*. Ānanda proclaims that the general conception is that the absence of compounds is necessary for the production to emotions like *karuṇa* and *vipralamba-śṛṅgāra*. But even the absence of compounds will be of no use in the production of *rasas* like *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa*, if the work is devoid of *prasāda guṇa*. But if the work is endowed with the quality called *prasāda*, it will be able to suggest the aforesaid *rasas*, even in the presence of compounds. Therefore, *prasāda* is an unavoidable element in *kāvya*. Let us listen to the statement of Ānanda in this respect. He says, The quality called “clarity” is required throughout all types of texture, for it has already been said that it is “common to all the *rasas* and common to all the textures.” If one swerves from clarity, even a texture without compounds will not suggest tragedy or love-in-separation. If one holds to it, even a texture of medium length compounds will not fail to reveal them. So clarity is always to be sought”.

We know that Ānandavardhana is particularly critical of the views of Vāmana. Ānanda does not subscribe to Vāmana’s notion that the presence of all the ten guṇas is necessary for an ideal *kāvya*. So, Vāmana always prefers the *vaidarbhī* style where all the guṇas are present. But Ānandavardhana does not agree with Vāmana on this point. According to Ānanda, the guṇas can not coexist simultaneously. For example, *ojas* and *mādhurya* could never occur at the same time. He disagreed with Vāmana on this issue.

Ingalls et.al very succinctly summarizes Ānandavardhana’s position of guṇas in the following words:

"From the time of Bharata, the critics spoke of the guṇas of poetry. The early critics emphasized the qualities of sound. Later, qualities of meaning came in for their share of attention. But in all these critics the qualities were considered virtues in themselves. Now the *Dhvanyāloka* reduces the ten qualities of Bharata to three: *mādhurya* or sweetness, *ojas* (force), and *prasāda* (clarity); and *Dhvanyāloka* regards them as virtues only insofar as they lead the audience to *rasa*. This is Ānanda's position: the qualities reside in the sound and sense but depend on, exist only for the production of, the *rasa*. Abhinava goes even further, saying that the qualities are ultimately qualities of the *rasa*, of the experience itself. Their names are then applied metonymously to the sound and the sense that bring about such an experience."

Namisādhu is a Jain scholar and a commentator of Rudraṭa's *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*. In the history of guṇas, Namisādhu occupies an important role, since, he comes up with a rather exotic idea about the notion of guṇa. We get to see his theory of guṇa primarily in his commentary on Rudraṭa's *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*. In his commentary on Rudraṭa's *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, Namisādhu opines that śabdāḷaṅkāras and arthāḷaṅkāras are artificial ornaments like bangles and pendants, while rasas are the natural guṇas like saundhya and other qualities. Thus, Namisādhu has two kinds of guṇas, namely kṛtima guṇas and sahaja guṇas. While the term kṛtima guṇas represent qualities, ornaments or figures of speech like upamā, sahajaguṇas stand for rasas. He also mentions that śabdāḷaṅkāras are śabdaguṇas, while arthāḷaṅkāras are arthaguṇas.

Pratihārendurāja is a name that we have not seen much in our discussion of Sanskrit literary theory. So, before we discuss his theory of guṇa, I think it is important to introduce this theoretician to you. Pratihārendurāja was a disciple of Mukula Bhaṭṭa, the author of the famous *Abhidhāvṛttimātrka*. It is generally believed that Pratihārendurāja lived in the first half of the tenth century. He has written a *laghuvṛtti* or a short commentary on Ulbhaṭa's *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*. This *laghuvṛtti* is of particular importance because it gives a good critical glimpse not only into the theory of Udbhaṭa, but also into the theoretical corpus of writers like Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Vāmana, Ānandavardhana and Rudraṭa. He was very much familiar with Ānanda's theory of dhvani and he expresses his disagreement with it. Scholars often believe that Abhinavagupta's master Bhaṭṭendurāja and Pratihārendurāja are one and the same person. But this continues to remain a conjecture.

Pratihārendurāja is a follower of Vāmana on the question of guṇa. In his commentary on Udbhata's Kāvyaālankāra-sārasamgraha, Pratihārendurāja does not agree with Udbhata's view that there is essentially no difference between guṇas and alaṅkāras. He who is aware of the idea of rasa considers rasa as the soul or ātmā of kāvya. He is of the view that guṇa is eternally associated with the beauty of kāvya and there is no kāvya without guṇas. He observes that a kāvya cannot look good just because of the presence of alaṅkāra and absence of guṇa. This does not mean that he is blindly following Vāmana. When it comes to the number of guṇas, Pratihārendurāja follows Ānandavardhana and says that there are only three guṇas, namely mādhyurya, ojas and prasāda. But here, we also need to note the disagreement of Pratihārendurāja on the nature of guṇa. He does not subscribe to the view of Ānandavardhana that guṇas are the dharmas of rasas. He is of the view that guṇa, being a dharma of śabda and artha, are to help and be in accordance with rasas. Following Ānandavardhana, he defines mādhyurya as āhlādatva or the one that pleases others. Ojas is not defined as dīpti, but as gādhatā, following Vāmana. Prasada is defined in the same manner as it is defined by Ānandavardhana. He is of the view that out of these three, the most important one is none other than prasāda. The other two are in all kāvyas, though the proportion of these two will vary according to the rasas, and their function is to help prasāda in delivering the rasa.

Rājaśkhra also follows the opinion of Ānandavardhana. In the fourth chapter of his Kāvyaṁīmāmsa, Rājaśekhara talks about guṇas. He, like Ānandavardhana, argues that guṇas are only three in number, namely mādhyurya, ojas and prasāda. He outrightly rejects the position that guṇas are five or ten in number. Closely related to the position of Rājaśekhara is the view of Hemacandra. Like Rājaśekhara, Hemacandra also follows the path of Ānandavardhana in his theory of guṇa and opines that there are only three guṇas, namely mādhyurya, ojas, and prasāda. Hemacandra says that of guṇas and alaṅkāras, the former is more important than the latter. He even goes to the extent of arguing that it is possible to have kāvyas even in the absence of alaṅkāras, provided they are embellished by the presence of guṇas. Particularly important is the criticism of Hemacandra against the view that guṇas result from a particular kind of reading. Hemacandra criticizes those scholars who hold that there are five guṇas, viz. ojas, praśda, mādhyurya, sāmya, and audārya. These scholars are of the view that these qualities arise out of pāṭhadharma or a particular kind of reading. The advocates of this theory hold that non-stop reading is ojas, reading with stops here and there is prasāda, reading with rise and fall, perhaps in a sing-song manner is mādhyurya. And, clear and perfect reading with proper pronunciation is audārya. Hemacandra also criticizes the view of scholars who hold that the five guṇas

mentioned also belong to certain meters. These critics opine that Ojas resides in Sragadharā, etc; prasāda in Indravajrā, upendravajrā, etc.; Mādhurya in Mandākrānta, etc; samatā resides in śārdūlavikrīṭita etc, and audārya in the viṣamavṛtta.

So, in this class, we discussed the views of three theoreticians, namely Anandavardhana, Namisadhu and Pratihārenduraja. The most important of all these three is undoubtedly Ānandavardhana. We saw that the theory of guṇa taking a radical turn with Ānandavardhana reducing the number of rasas to three, namely mādhurya, ojas and prasāda. In the next class, we will see the theory of guṇa conceptualized by Bhoja. If you have any doubts about the points, we discussed in the class, please watch the video again. Thank you!