

A NOTE ON THE SANSKRIT VERB *pā-*

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As there is an expression in English “to drink in (with one’s eyes)”, in French “boire quelqu’un des yeux” and in German “jemanden mit den Augen verschlingen”, so we encounter in Sanskrit a similar use of the verb *pā-* used in the sense of attentive watching.¹ This attentiveness (*sādaram*), however, in Sanskrit is not confined to the sense of sight, but is further extended to the activity of other organs of senses such as the ears (*śru-*) and nose (*ā-ghrā-*).

It is out of great respect to Professor Parpola, who, with his penetrating insight, has contributed much to Vedic, Indus Valley as well as Epic Studies, that the present writer collects together some examples of the Sanskrit word *pā-* used in the sense of watching attentively, etc., discusses the relevant problems, and dedicates a modest contribution to his Festschrift.

1.1. *pā-* in the Epics

1.1.1. To begin with, let us see an Epic example in which the verb is used in its original meaning of drinking, while, at the same time, indicating its semantic development to the visual faculty of seeing. The well-known three-headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ, Trīśiras Viśvarūpa, is described as follows:

vedān ekena so 'dhīte surām ekena cāpibat
ekena ca diśaḥ sarvāḥ pibann iva nirīkṣate (MBh. 5.9.5)

‘With his one face [= mouth] he recites the Vedas, with [the second] one he drank wine and with [the third] one he gazes at steadfastly, as if drinking in all the directions.’²

¹ Cf. Walter 1904: 12.

² Cf. *yena sarvā diśo rājan pibann iva nirīkṣate*
tasmād vaktrād viniṣpetus tittirās tasya pāṇḍava (MBh. 5.9.37).

1.1.2. Similarly, the dreadful Vṛtra is described as follows:

*te 'paśyaṃs tejasā bhūtaṃ tapantam asurottamam
pibantam iva lokāṃs trīn nirdahantam ivāmbaram* (R. 7.76.11)

‘These [gods] saw the best of the Asuras, heating [all] beings with his effulgence, drinking in as it were the three worlds and burning the atmosphere.’

1.1.3. However, the majority of the contexts of *pā-* in this sense are rather characterized by curiosity and affection. Thus, in the scene of the first encounter of Śantanu with Gaṅgā, we read:

*tāṃ dr̥ṣṭvā hr̥ṣṭa-romābhūd vismito rūpa-saṃpadā
pibann iva ca netrābhyāṃ nāṭṛpyata narādhipaḥ* (MBh. 1.92.28)

‘When he saw her, he shivered, astounded by the perfection of her shape; and this overlord of men could not cease drinking her [in] with his eyes.’ (van Buitenen)

Here we notice the implication of attentiveness, or eagerness.

1.1.4. Strong affection is implied in the following passage. On his departure to the forest, Rāma looked back at the citizens of Ayodhyā who followed him:

*avekṣamāṇaḥ sasnehaṃ cakṣuṣā prapibann iva
uvāca rāmaḥ snehena tāḥ prajāḥ svā prajā iva* (R. 2.40.5)

‘Rāma gazed at his people with affection, as if to drink (*pra-pā-*) them in with his eyes. And he spoke to them affectionately as though they were his children.’ (Pollock)

1.1.5. Similarly, the *gopīs* looked at Kṛṣṇa affectionately:

*tās tasya vadaṇaṃ kāntaṃ kāntā gopa-striyo niśi
pibanti nayanākṣepair gāṃ gatam śaśinaṃ yathā* (H. 63.19)

‘These lovely cowherd-girls drink in with the casting of a glance his lovely face like the moon incarnate on the earth at night.’

1.1.6. Also, we read:

*tam anyā bhāva-vikacair netraiḥ prahasitānanāḥ
pibanty atr̥ptā vanitāḥ kṛṣṇaṃ kṛṣṇa-mṛgekṣaṇāḥ* (H. 63.31)

‘Other women, with their faces smiling and eyes comparable to the black antelope, unsatiated drink Kṛṣṇa in with their eyes blooming with love.’³

1.1.7. The object of watching, then, becomes nectar for the eyes (*nayanāsava*). When Pradyumna brought Māyāvātī to Dvārakā, the ladies in the town were delighted.

*tatas taṃ kāma-saṃkāśaṃ kāntayā saha saṃgatam
prekṣantyo hr̥ṣṭa-vadanāḥ pibantyo nayanāsavam* (H. 99.32)

‘Then, watching with cheerful countenance the Kāma-resembling Pradyumna, who is accompanied by a lovely lady, and drinking nectar for the eyes ...’⁴

1.1.8. A similar expression (*rasāyana*) is met with in Rāma’s nostalgic thought of Sītā. In his address to Lakṣmaṇa we read,

*kadā nu cāru-bimboṣṭhaṃ tasyāḥ padmam ivānanam
īśad unnamya pāsyāmi rasāyanam ivāturaḥ* (R. 6.5.13)

‘Gently raising her lotus-like face with its lovely Bimba-like lips, when shall I drink it in as a sick man nectar?’⁵

1.1.9. Attentiveness in watching is often preceded by wonder. Toward the dénouement of the Rāmāyaṇa, all the people were amazed at the striking resemblance between Rāma and the two young singers, that is, Kuśa and Lava:

*hr̥ṣṭā ṛṣi-gaṇās tatra pārthivās ca mahaujasah
pibanta iva cakṣurbhryāṃ rājānaṃ gāyakau ca tau* (R. 7.85.6)

‘In their delight, the sages and powerful princes drink in as it were with their eyes the king and these twin singers.’⁶

³ Cf. *mukham asyāparā vikṣya tṛṣitā gopa-kanyakāḥ
raty-antara-gatā rātrau pibanti rati-lālasāḥ* (H. 63.32).

⁴ Other examples which are not included in the Critical Edition are as follows:

*āmūlam asakṛd viṣṇuṃ paśyāmi ca punaḥ punaḥ
pibāmi netra-yugmena vapuḥ kṛṣṇasya kevalam* (H. 3.114.29);
*adrākṣam adrākṣam ahaṃ sunirvṛtaḥ
piban pibaṃ tasya vapuḥ purātanam
netreṇa mīlad-vivareṇa kevalam
dhanyo ’ham asmīti tadā vyacintayam* (H. 3.118.9).

⁵ The similarity of its future form *pā-syā-mi* with *paś-yā-mi* may have caused a scribal error. Cf. Vaidya’s note ad loc. (p. 33).

⁶ Other examples are also found in the Bombay edition:

1.1.6. The same attentiveness can be noted in Vidura's discourse on the king's duty:

*ṛju paśyati yaḥ sarvaṃ cakṣuṣānupibann iva
āśīnam api tūṣṇīkam anurajyanti taṃ prajāḥ* (MBh. 5.34.22)

'If a man sees (*paś-*) everyone straight with his faculty of sight as if drinking them in (*anu-pā-*: looking after carefully), his subjects love him even when he is just sitting silent.'

1.1.11. Except for first two examples, all the others are accompanied by words indicative of affection (*sneha*, *anuraj-*) and joy (*hṛṣṭa*) and the beholders never tire (*atrīpta*) of gazing.

1.2. *pā-* in Classical Sanskrit Literature

Having examined the Epic usage, we shall proceed to see the usage in classical Sanskrit literature. Here again, first let us see an example in which the verb *pā-* has an application to sight, while still retaining its original meaning 'to drink'.

While showing the lake Pampā from the aerial car, Rāma addressed Sītā as follows,

dūrāvātīrṇā pibatīva khedād amūni pampā-salilāni dṛṣṭiḥ
(Raghuvamśa 13.30cd)

'My sight (*dṛṣṭi*), descending from afar, drinks in (*pā-*), as it were, out of fatigue, these waters (*salila*) of the Pampā.'

Here the poet intends to use the word *pā-* with the two meanings of drinking and seeing.⁷

In this chapter, however, due to an increasing number of examples, it would be better to classify them into several categories, according to the persons involved, the watching one and the watched.

*vacasā sāntvayitvainam locanābhyāṃ pibann iva
ākhyāhi mama tattvena rākṣasānām balābalaṃ* (Bombay 6.19.7 = R. 6.App.9.2-3);
*madhuraṃ ślakṣṇayā vācā netrābhyāṃ ca pibann iva
sarvataḥ suhr̥do mahyaṃ śarīraṃ bhrātaras tathā*
(R. 7.App.5.15-16 = Bombay 7.39.23).

Cf. also R. 6.App.75.19-20 which has *bhavantaḥ* for *sarvataḥ*.

⁷ One may take the following verse also in two meanings, to drink (= kiss) and to see (*pāsyasi ... mukham*):

*teṣāṃ dikṣu prathita-vidiśā-lakṣaṇām rāja-dhanīm
gatvā sadyaḥ phalam avikalaṃ kāmukatvasya labdhā
tīropānta-stanita-subhagaṃ pāsyasi svādu yasmāt
sabhrū-bhaṅgaṃ mukham iva payo vetravatyāś calormi* (Meghadūta 24).

1.2.1. *Between young women and the charming man*

1.2.1.1. Thus, the young ladies were eager to see the youthful Buddha on his arrival at the Padmaśaṅḍa-grove:

*tasthuś ca parivāryainam manmathākṣipta-cetasah
niścalaiḥ prīti-vikacaiḥ pibantya iva locanaiḥ* (Buddhacarita 4.3)

‘And they stood around him, their minds absorbed in love,
and seemed to drink him in with eyes that were moveless
and blossomed wide in ecstasy.’ (Johnston)

1.2.1.2. Similarly, ladies watched prince Aja:

*tā rāghavam drṣṭibhir āpibantyo
nāryo na jagmur viśayāntarāṇi
tathā hi śeṣendriya-vṛttir āsām
sarvātmanā cakṣur iva praviṣṭā* (Raghuvamśa 7.12)⁸

‘Drinking in the son of Raghu with their eyes,⁹ these ladies
did not care about other objects, for the function of their
remaining organs of sense had all together entered, as it
were, that of sight.’¹⁰

Here, the application of *pā-* to the activity of the eyes seems to be due to the priority of the visual faculty to the other sense organs (*indriya*). That is to say, the eyes here occupy the central position among all the sense organs of perception.¹¹

1.2.2. *Between a man and his beloved*

1.2.2.1. Avimāraka gazes at his beloved Kuraṅgī:

⁸ Almost the same wording is used in the Kumārasambhava 7.64. Cf. Śiśupālavadha 13.40cd: *mada-vibhramāsakalayā pape punaḥ sa pura-striyaikatamayaikayā dṛśā*. Here Mallinātha glosses: *pape ... satṛṣṇam drṣṭam*. Cf. also Walter 1904: 30.

⁹ Mallinātha: *drṣṭibhir āpibantyo* ‘titṛṣṇayā paśyantyaḥ.

¹⁰ Cf. *tvayy āyattaṃ kṛṣi-phalam iti bhrū-vilāsānabhijñaiḥ
prīti-snigdhair janapada-vadhū-locanaiḥ pīyamānaḥ
sadyaḥ sirotkaṣaṇa-surabhi kṣetram āruhya mālam
kiṃcī paścād vraja laghu-gatir bhūya evottareṇa* (Meghadūta 16).

Mallinātha here glosses: *pīyamānaḥ* as *sādaram viḥṣyamānaḥ san ...
animeṣa-darśana-sukha-rasa-sarāṃśi mantharita-pakṣmaṇā cakṣuṣā pītam iva
komala-kapola-pālī-pratibimbitaṃ vahanṭibhir ...* (Harṣacarita 75.9–11).

¹¹ Cf. Gonda 1969: 8–10 and 66. Cf. also Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya 16.7 (*dūrāsūtara-vṛtṭyā* 1.23c): *tayor api cakṣuṣodūratore vṛtṭiḥ | paśyato 'pi dūrān nadīm tac-chabdāsraṇāḍ
atas tat pūrvam uktam* (cf. Vallée Poussin 1980: 44). I owe this Buddhist reference to my friend Marek Meyer of the University of Warsaw.

*bhaye 'pi yadi tādṛṣaṃ nayana-pātra-peyaṃ vapuḥ
kathaṃ nu suratāntara-pracura-vibhramaṃ tad bhavet* (Avimāra 2.6)

‘If even in danger she has such beauty for eyes to feast on
(lit. to be quaffed in the goblet of eyes), what a wealth of
graces would there be twixt dalliance?’ (Woolner)¹²

1.2.2.2. Guhasena saw his wife in her disguise of a merchant:

*so 'pi tāṃ puruṣākārāṃ dūrād dṛṣtvā pibann iva
priyāyāḥ sadṛṣaḥ ko 'yaṃ vaṇik syād ity acintayat* (KSS 13.182)

‘He, seeing her afar off in the dress of a man, as it were,
drank her in with his eyes, and thought to himself: “who
may this merchant be that looks so like my beloved
wife.”’¹³

1.2.3. *Between a woman in love and a messenger who brings
good tidings of her beloved*

1.2.3.1. Kādambarī was cheered up by her maid Patralekhā,

*ity evam ukte mayā prīti-dravārdayā dṛṣṭyā pibantīva mām ...
makaraketu-śara-jarjaritāṃ bhittveva lajjām ...* (Kādambarī 413.11ff.)

‘Thus addressed by me (Patralekhā), [Kādambarī] as if
drinking me in with her eyes melted by affection, and
dissolving bashfulness which is shattered by the arrows of
the god of love ...’

1.2.3.2. She received Meghanāda who informed her of good news:

¹² At the final reunion, Kādambarī gazed at Candrāpīḍa:

vismṛta-nimeṣā pibantīva bhāvārdayā dṛṣā suciram ālokya ... (Kādambarī 603.1–2).

Vasantasenā describes Madanikā in love with Sajjalaka:

*ammo iaṃ sā adisiṇiddhāe diṭṭhīe keṇa vi maṇusseṇa
pibantī via saha mantaāntī ciṭṭhai* (Cārudatta 4.1.15–16).

Cf. also Mṛcchakaṭīka 4.4 prose: *jadhā adisiṇiddhāe ṇiccala-diṭṭhīe āpibantī via edaṃ
nijjhādi tadhā takkemi eso so jaṇo edaṃ icchadi abhujissaṃ kādum.*

¹³ Queen Sudakṣiṇā saw king Dilīpa after a long interval:

*vaśiṣṭha-dhenor anuyāyinaṃ tam
āvartamānaṃ vanitā vanāntāt
papau nimeṣālasa-pakṣma-paṅktir
uposītābhyām iva locanābhyām* (Raghuvamśa 2.19).

Mallinātha: *yathopoṣito 'tiṛṣṇayā jalam adhikaṃ pibati tadvad atitṛṣṇayādhikaṃ vya-
lokayad ity arthaḥ.* Cf. also, Urvaśī – (*rājānaṃ sasṛḥaṃ paśyantī*) *sama-dukkho pibai vva
maṃ ṇaṇṇehiṃ* (Vikramorvaśīya 1.10.1).

ākulita-tarala-tārakābhyām āpibantī locanābhyām ... pratyuvāca
(Kādambārī 553.6–7)

‘Drinking him in with her eyes, the pupils of which were agitated and tremulous, ... she answered.’

1.2.4. *Between father and son*

1.2.4.1. After a great effort, king Dilīpa finally had a son:

nivāta-padma-stimitena cakṣuṣā
nṛpasya kāntaṃ pibataḥ sutānanam
mahodadheḥ pūra ivendu-darśanād
guruḥ praharṣaḥ prababhūva nātmani (Raghuvamśa 3.17)

‘With his faculty of sight which is unmoved like a lotus in a breezeless place, drinking in¹⁴ the lovely face of his son, the king could not control his great joy within himself, as the great ocean its flood at the sight of the moon.’

1.2.4.2. The aged father in bed looked at his son intensely:

śayana-gata evāhūya taṃ pitā cakṣuṣā pibann iva premṇā pariṣvajya gāḍham
iva (Kādambārī 507.1)

‘His father in bed summoned him and embraced him tightly with affection, as if drinking him in with his eyes ...’

1.2.5. *Between the subjects and the royal family*

1.2.5.1. Having completed the vow, Dilīpa came back to the sight of his subjects:

prajāḥ prajāṛtha-vrata-karṣitāṅgam
netraiḥ papus tṛptim anāpnuvadbhir (Raghuvamśa 2.73bc)

‘With their eyes ever unsatisfied, his subjects drank him in,¹⁵ emaciated because of his vow for his son ...’

1.2.5.2. The people of Videha watched Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa:

tau videha-nagarī-nivāsināṃ
gāṃ gatāv iva divaḥ punarvasū
manyate sma pibatāṃ vilocanaiḥ
pakṣma-pātam iva vañcanāṃ manaḥ (Raghuvamśa 11.36)

¹⁴ Mallinātha: *pibatas tṛṣṇayā paśyato nṛpasya.*

¹⁵ Mallinātha: *papuḥ atyāsthayā dadṛśur ity arthaḥ.*

‘Drinking in with their eyes¹⁶ those two princes as if they were the two Punarvasus descending from heaven, the residents of Mithilā thought of the twinkling of their eyes as troublesome.’¹⁷

1.2.6. *Between a man and the respectful one*

1.2.6.1. In Arāḍa’s encounter with the Buddha, we read:

*tam āsīnaṃ nṛpa-sutaṃ so ’bravīn muni-sattamaḥ
bahumāna-viśālābhyāṃ darśanābhyāṃ pibann iva* (Buddhacarita 12.4)

‘The best of sages, drinking in, as it were, the seated prince with eyes opened wide in reverence, said to him.’

(Johnston)

1.2.6.2. In personal encounter with Harṣa, the sage Divākaramitra respectfully greeted him as follows:

ā tṛpter āpītam amṛtam ikṣaṇabhyām (Harṣacarita 239.14–15)

‘Our eyes are satiated with ambrosia ...’

1.2.7. *Others*

1.2.7.1. Sometimes, one drinks in another’s face, as though he were mad, possessed or unhinged.

*animeṣeṇa ... cakṣuṣā matta ivāviṣṭa iva viyukta iva pibann iva ...
suciram ālokyābravīt* (Kādambarī 525.4–5)

‘With untwinkling eyes, he looked at me for a long time as if mad, possessed, unhinged, drinking [me] in, and then said.’

1.2.7.2. The advent of night is described by Subandhu as follows:

*tataḥ kāmīnī-hṛdaya-saṃkrāmita iva, cakrāṅganā-nayana-yugala-pīta iva,
rakta-kumuda-kośālīḍha iva, kṣīṇatām gataḥ kṣaṇadā-kara-gato rāgaḥ*
(Vāsavadattā 189–190)

‘Then, the glow brought close to night went to destruction as if entered into the heart of a loving woman, as if drunk by the cups of the eyes of female *chickores*, as if licked up by masses of red lotuses.’ (Gray)

¹⁶ Mallinātha: *pibatām* atyāsthayā paśyatām *ity arthaḥ*.

¹⁷ Cf. also, *kṣīroda-mādhuryam ādāyodgatayā lakṣmyā samupagūḍhaḥ, gāḍham amṛtamaya iva pīyamānaḥ, kutūhalottāna-kaṭaka-loka-locana-sahasraiḥ ...* (Harṣacarita 208.13–14).

1.2.7.3. In the opening of the *Tapatīsaṃvaraṇa*, the stage-manager says that he has been requested for its presentation by the audience, who are eager to taste *rasas* by seeing the drama on stage:

Sūtradhāraḥ – Ārye! adyāham āryamiśrair ājñaptaḥ yathā apūrve 'sminn ādirāja-kathā-sanāthe tapatīsaṃvaraṇa-nāmnī nāṭake nava-rasāni prayogā-mṛtāntarāṇi vayaṃ pāyayitavyā iti (*Tapatīsaṃvaraṇa* 1.1 prose)

‘The Stage-manager – Lady, today I am requested by our noble audience: “You should make us drink in the special nectar (*amṛta*) of presentation, furnished with the nine sorts of sentiment (*rasa*), [embodied] in this new drama named *Tapatīsaṃvaraṇa*, concerning the story of the primary king.”’

1.2.7.4. Yet, there is an example of the lynx-eye, which has nothing to do with affection, curiosity, nor respect. Skandagupta, Harṣa’s commandant of elephants, is described as follows:

atisnigdha-madhura-dhavala-viśālatayā pīta-kṣīrodeneva pibann iḥṣaṇa-yugmāyāmena diśām āyāmam (*Harṣacarita* 197.1–2)

‘A pair of long eyes, exceedingly soft, sweet, white and large, as if they had drunk the Milk-Ocean, gulped down the expanse of heaven.’ (Cowell and Thomas)

1.2.8. As is the case with the Epic examples, in these classical examples also, the verb *pā-* is mostly associated with words expressive of affection (*prīti*, *preman*, *prīti-snigdha*), unsatiability, eagerness (*atrṛpti*, *upoṣita*), vigilance (*animeṣa*), and occasionally of reverence (*bahumāna*) and curiosity (*sa-sprham*).

1.3. ‘To Drink One’s Face’

1.3. Since the object to be beheld attentively (*pā-*) is usually the face of a charming person, which is, in its turn, often compared to a lotus (*padma*: *mukha-paṅkaja*),¹⁸ the phraseology which contains *pā-* in this sense experienced further poetic embellishments.

First, let us see an examples of the lotus-face as the object of the verb *pā-*.

¹⁸ Cf. R. 6.5.13 (quoted above):

*kadā nu cāru-bimboṣṭhaṃ tasyāḥ padmam ivānanam
īśad unnamya pāsyāmi rasāyanam ivāturaḥ.*

1.3.1. The gopīs looked intensely at Kṛṣṇa’s face:

*gotram uddiśya kṛṣṇasya jagire kṛṣṇa-yoṣitaḥ
pibantīva kṛṣṇasya nayanair vadanāmbujam* (H. 2.88.18)

‘The dark-coloured women sang Kṛṣṇa’s name, and drank in, as it were, his lotus-face with their eyes.’

1.3.2. Since the lotus attracts bees around itself, it is natural for the eyes (*netra*, *nayana*) which are attracted by the lotus-face to be compared with bees both in similes (*madhukara yathā*) and metaphors (*netra-bhramara*).

1.3.2.1. The ladies gazed at Kṛṣṇa, when he killed the wrestler:

*vāra-mukhyāś ca tāḥ sarvāḥ kṛṣṇasya mukha-paṅkajam
papur hi netra-bhramarair nimeṣāntara-gāmibhiḥ* (H. 76.13)

‘All the fair-faced ladies drank in Kṛṣṇa’s lotus-face with their bee-eyes, going in an instant.’

1.3.2.2. In Pradyumna’s love-making with Prabhāvatī, we read:

*tato ’syāś ca papau vaktra-padmaṃ madhukaro yathā
ālilīṅge ca suśroṇīm krameṇa rati-kovidāḥ* (H. 2.94.18)

‘Then he drank in her lotus-face like a bee and in due course the connoisseur of love embraced the fair-hipped lady.’

1.3.2.3. The citizens cried, when king Hariścandra was about to leave the town under the curse of Viśvāmitra:

muhūrtaṃ tiṣṭha rājendra bhavato mukha-paṅkajam (48cd)
pibāmo netra-bhramaraiḥ kadā drakṣvāmahe punaḥ
(Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 7.49ab)

‘Wait for a moment, o king! When shall we drink in your lotus-face again with [our] bee-eyes?’

1.3.3. Drinking in one’s face (*mukha*) with the eyes (*caḥṣus*), that is watching, and drinking with the mouth (*ānana*), that is kissing, seem to be differentiated from each other. Thus, we read in the Kumārasaṃbhava that the god Śiva gazed at Umā, but did not yet dare to kiss her:

*ānanena na tu tāvad īśvaraś
caḥṣuṣā ciram umā-mukhaṃ papau* (Kumārasaṃbhava 8.80cd)

‘Īśvara, for a long time, not with his mouth, but with his eyes,¹⁹ drank in Umā’s face (mouth: *mukha*).’²⁰

2. LISTEN TO AND INHALE

The verb *pā-* is used not only in connection with the eyes, but is further extended to an intent activity of other sense organs.

2.1. It is used in the sense of attentive listening. As we have seen the compound *nayanāsava* for the eyes, so we have here *karṇāmṛta* for the ears.

2.1.1. In addressing the cloud as the messenger, the Yakṣa says:

*mārgaṃ tāvac chṛṇu kathayatas tvat-prayānānurūpam
saṃdeśaṃ me tad anu jalada śroṣyasi śrotra-peyam* (Meghadūta 13ab)

‘Listen, now, while I describe a path fitting for thy journey; thereafter, O Cloud, thou shalt hear my message, a worthy draught for thine ears.’ (Edgerton)²¹

2.1.2. Pārvatī listened attentively to what the Yājñika told her:

*ālocanāntaṃ śravaṇe vitatya
pītaṃ guros tad-vacanaṃ bhavānyā
nidāgha-kāllobhaṇatāpayeva
māhendram ambhaḥ prathamam pṛthivyā* (Kumārasaṃbhava 7.84)

‘Pārvatī drank in the words of her preceptor, stretching both her ears to the corners of her eyes, as the earth, parched by the intense heat of summer, drinks the water of the first showers.’²²

¹⁹ Mallinātha: *sādaraṃ dadarśa*.

²⁰ One may take *pipāsu* in the following passage in the sense of gazing and kissing:

*sa jāta-tarṣo 'psarasaḥ pipāsus
tat-prāptaye 'dhiṣṭhita-viklavārtah
lolendriyāśvena manorathe
jehniyamāṇo na dhṛtiṃ cakāra* (Saundarananda 10.41).

For drinking *adhara* in the sense of kissing, cf. also Śakuntala 1.23:

karaṃ vyādhunvatyāḥ pibasi rati-sarvasvam adharaṃ.

²¹ Mallinātha: *śrotrābhyāṃ peyaṃ pānārtham | atitṛṣṇayā śrotavyam ity arthaḥ | peya-grahaṇāt saṃdeśasyāmṛta-sāmyaṃ gamyate*.

²² Mallinātha: *atyādareṇa śuśrāvety arthaḥ*.

2.1.3. The hero Mādhava requests the heroine Mālatī as follows:

āmatta-kokila-ruta-vyathitā tu hṛdyām
adya śrutiḥ pibatu kiṁnara-kaṅṭhi vācam (Mālatīmādhava 8.4cd)
 ‘O, Kinnara-voiced lady, let my ears, which have been
 annoyed even by the cooing of the intoxicated cuckoos,
 drink now [your] heart-ravishing speech!’²³

2.1.4. As we have seen above in the Sūtradhāra’s announcement *pā-* used in the sense of seeing, the same verb is used for listening:

śravaṇāñjali-puta-peyaṁ viracitavān bhāratākhyam amṛtaṁ yaḥ
tam aham arāgam akṛṣṇaṁ kṛṣṇadvaipāyanaṁ vande (Veṅīsaṁhāra 1.4)
 ‘I salute that Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana, the passionless and
 stainless one, who composed the nectar called the Bhārata,
 fit to be drunk in by our ears which are like cupped hands.’

2.1.5. In prescribing the spy’s behaviour, Kāmandaka says:

tapasvi-liṅgino dhūrtāḥ śilpa-panyopajīvinaḥ
carāś careyuḥ paritaḥ pibanto jagatāṁ matam (Nītisāra 13.27)
 ‘The spies as (= in the disguise of) ascetics, rogues, artisans
 or traders should wander around, drinking in (listening
 attentively)²⁴ what people are thinking about.’²⁵

2.2. Finally, we shall see an example in which the word *pā-* is used in the sense of *ā-ghrā-*, to smell or inhale, the activity of the nose.

2.2.1. *tvan-niṣyandocchvasita-vasudhā-gandha-saṁparka-ramyaḥ*
sroto-randhra-dhvanita-subhagaṁ dantibhiḥ pīyamānaḥ
nīcair vāsyaty upajigamiṣor deva-pūrvam girim te
śīto vāyuḥ pariṇamayitā kānanodumbarāṅgam (Meghadūta 42)

²³ Jagaddhara: *sādaram śṛnotv ity arthaḥ*.

²⁴ Comm.: *matam pibanto hṛdaya-sṭhaṁ kurvāṇā vijigīṣave sūcayitum*.

²⁵ Cf. Rasikapriyā ad Gītāgovinda 12.1 (Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay 1937, p. 90, lines 7ff.):

paśyati diśi diśi rahasi bhagavantam
tad-adhara-madhura-madhūni pibantam (Gītāgovinda 12.1)

(Rasikapriyā: *tad-adhara-saṁsargān madhurāṇi madhūni yāny*
akṣarāṇi tāni śṛṅvantam/atyādaram śravaṇam pānam ucyate)

However, the Rasamañjarī takes it in the sense of *paś-*: *tathā ca tvad-adhara-madhura-madhūni tvatto 'nyasyā nāyikāyā adhara-madhura-madhūni pibantam diśi diśi paśyatīti bhāvah*.

‘As thou seekest to approach Devagiri Mountain, a cool breeze will gently blow for thee; sweet from blending with odors of the earth, which thy showers have refreshed, and inhaled by elephants²⁶ with pleasant sounds in their water-spout trunks, it will ripen the mountain’s wild figs.’
(Edgerton)

2.2.2. There is the expression ‘drinking *yaśas*’ (the victorious glory) repeated in the *Raghuvamśa*.²⁷ The next example of the expression seems to be used in this sense of ‘inhaling’.²⁸ The prince Aja, putting a conch to his lips for blowing (*dadhmau*) it, is described as follows:

yena svahastārjitam ekavīraḥ piban yaśo mūrtam ivābabhāse
(*Raghuvamśa* 7.63cd)

‘He appeared thereby a sole hero drinking in, as it were, victorious glory in the form which was obtained by his own hands.’

Both conch and fame are considered while-coloured,²⁹ and the contact of the lips with the conch in blowing is supposed to inhale fame, although blowing is possible only by exhaling, not inhaling.

3. *pā-* AS MOTION

All the passages discussed above are concerned with the organs of perception (*jñānendriya*), such as *rasana* (drinking), *cakṣus* (seeing), *karṇa* (listening) and *ghrāṇa* (smelling). But, how is it understood, when the same verb *pā-* is used in connection with an organ of action (*karmendriya*), such as *pāda* (foot = walking)? While in the case of *jñānendriya*, the actions indicated by the verb *pā-* (to swallow) are characterized by intensity or eagerness, in the case of *karmendriya* the same intensity seems to take the form of action with the utmost speed.

Thus, in describing a hurrying person, it is often said that he drinks the road (*path*) or his destination (*pradeśa*) with his feet (*pada*). We shall illustrate this by presenting some examples.

²⁶ Mallinātha: *gajaiḥ pīyamānaḥ | vasudhā-gandha-lobhād āghrāyamāṇa ity arthaḥ*.

²⁷ Cf. *papau vasiṣṭhena kṛtābhyanujñāḥ śubhram yaśo mūrtam ivātīṣṇaḥ* (*Raghuvamśa* 2. 69cd);
nārikelāsavaṃ yodhāḥ śātravaṃ ca papur yaśaḥ (*Raghuvamśa* 4.42cd).

²⁸ V. S. Apte’s *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Revised and enlarged edition, Poona 1957) lists this under ‘inhale’.

²⁹ Cf. Hara 1995: 141–142.

3.1. Being informed by a Buddhist monk, the king anxiously hurried to the spot:

tena śakya-putrīyeṇa pradiśyamāna-vartmā padbhyām eva taṃ pradeśam aviralaiḥ padaiḥ pibann iva prāvartate (Harṣacarita 246.2–3)

‘The king made the Buddhist disciple go in front to shew the road, and went on foot after him, seeming to devour the way with his rapid strides.’ (Cowell and Thomas)

3.2. Similarly, we read in the Kādambarī:

rājā tu ... pralaghu-paricarahaḥ pibann iva panthānam (Kādambarī 570.11)

‘The king ... with a few of his retinue hurried to [the lake Achoda] as if drinking up the path.’

3.3. The word *path* is occasionally replaced by *rāja-mārga*:

rayād āpibann iva puro rāja-mārgam ... (Kādambarī 561.12)

‘With the utmost speed, as if drinking the royal road ...’

3.4. When the same motion with the utmost speed is applied to animals, the object of drinking is replaced by *ākāśa*. With Kuntī’s message, Kṛṣṇa hurried to Uplavya with his carriage:

te pibanta ivākāśaṃ dārukeṇa pracoditāḥ hayā jagmur mahāvegā mano-māruta-ramhasaḥ (MBh. 5.135.29)

‘Driven by Dārūka, the horses seemed to drink up space and ran with the speed of thought and wind.’ (van Buitenen)³⁰

3.5. *pā-* characterized by quick motion is further applied to inanimate beings such as arrows, when they are discharged by an eminent archer. Thus, we read:

śara-vara-paripīta-tīvra-bāṇaṃ naravara-nairṛtayoḥ samīkṣya yuddham virata-vividha-śastra-pātam ete harivararākṣasa-sainikāḥ sthitāś ca (Abhiṣekanāṭaka 6.13)

³⁰ The phrase is peculiar to MBh. Cf. also,

te pibanta ivākāśam aśvair aṣṭau mahārathāḥ vyarājayan daśa diśo vaiyāghrair hemacandrakaiḥ (MBh. 7.79.5);
te pibanta ivākāśaṃ yuyudhānaṃ hayottamāḥ prāpayan yavanān śīghraṃ manāḥ-pavana-ramhasaḥ (MBh. 7.95.31).

It is also applied to lions:

te pibanta ivākāśaṃ trāsayantaś carācarān śiṃhā nabhasy agacchanta nadantaś cāru-kesarāḥ (MBh. 3.221.3).

‘The soldiers of the ape and demon armies have given over hurling divers weapons. They stand at ease to watch the fight ‘twixt the Lord of men and the demon, wherein the goodly bolts drink up the sharpest arrow ...’ (Woolner)

Rāma in his fight with the Rākṣasas is described as follows:

*tais trayāṇām śitair bāṅair yathā-pūrva-viśuddhibhiḥ
āyur dehātigaiḥ pītaṃ rudhiraṃ tu patatribhiḥ* (Raghuvamśa 12.48)

‘The sharp-pointed arrows that pierced through the bodies of these three (Rākṣasas), remaining as clean as before,³¹ drank up their life (*āyus*), but it was the birds that drank up their blood (later).’³²

We can see an implication of the utmost speed in action in these examples.

3.6. There is an expression ‘drinking darkness’, indicating sudden appearance as is the case with lightning. Thus, we read:

*taḍitam iva nīla-jaladharodare sphuratīm prabhayā
pibantīm iva triyāmām* (Harṣacarita 114.3–4)

‘[He saw] a girl, appearing like lightning in the midst of dark clouds, suffused by splendour, as if drinking the darkness.’

Suddenness here is tantamount to appearance with the utmost speed.

4. CONCLUSIONS

All these discussions lead us to the following conclusion. The Sanskrit verb *pā-* which primarily means ‘to drink’, the activity essential to the tasting faculty (*rasana*), is transferred to that of the visual faculty (*darśana*) with emphasis on intensity and eagerness (*sādara*). It is particularly used in a romantic context in which the persons involved are gazing at each other with intense affection.

Though imbued with the same intensity, the ‘evil eyes’³³ are foreign to this usage of *pā-*. It is because the idea underlying ‘drinking with eyes’, that is ‘swallowing with eyes’ is of a receptive and absorbing nature, while in the case of the evil eyes which are by nature aggressive and result in malicious destruction, the direction of sight is just the opposite, incoming and outgoing.

³¹ Mallinātha: *atīvegatvena deha-bhedāt prāg eva rudhira-lepa-rahitair ity arthaḥ.*

³² Cf. *pibann iva śaraughāms tām droṇa-cāpavarātīgān
so 'bhyavartata sodaryān māyayā mohayan balam* (MBh. 7.103.2).

³³ For evil eyes, cf. Gonda 1969: 33ff.

The same verb is further used in the sense of 'hearing' with the same connotation of intensity. Here, again, we cannot discern any evil connotation. As we have *nayanāsava* for the eyes, so here we meet *karṇāmṛta*. The basic meaning of 'drinking', i.e. 'swallowing with a gaping mouth', is here also present.

The verb *pā-* is not only construed with the senses of knowledge (*jñānendriya*) such as the eyes, ears and nose, but also with those of action (*karmendriya*). Yet, in the case of the *karmendriya*, the same intensity developed in another direction, that is, quickness in motion with the utmost speed ('drinking up the road with one's feet'), or appearance with suddenness ('drinking up the darkness').

We shall conclude this modest contribution with a hypothetical interpretation of a passage in the *Pratimānāṭaka*, where the author might have had in mind the three meanings discussed above.

Being summoned by his mother, Bharata in his anxiety to meet his relatives hastened to the capital-town Ayodhyā which was, however, bereft of his beloved father Daśaratha and his brother Rāma as well:

*ayodhyām aṭavībhūtām pitrā bhrātrā ca varjitām
pipāsārto 'nudhāvāmi kṣiṇa-toyām nadīm iva* (*Pratimānāṭaka* 3.10)

'I hasten to Ayodhyā, which turned out to be a wilderness, abandoned by my father and brother as well, as a man tormented by thirst (*pipāsā*) hastens to a stream and finds it all dried up.'

Here, intensity in seeing (with the eyes), the quick motion of hastening (by the feet), and finally the ordinary meaning of drinking (by the mouth); all these three might have been in the mind of the author.

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