

## SANSKRIT AND PRAKRIT PĀMARA

### THE SEMANTIC AND SOCIAL CONTENTS OF A PECULIAR WORD

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Sanskrit *pāmara* and its Prakrit and Modern Indo-Aryan equivalents have a broad semantic field. The meaning of the word ranges from a very negative connotation “a low man”, “an outcast”, “a fool” to a positive term denoting a peasant who is a member of a rural community with full powers. The present paper explores the various shades of meaning of the word and their possible social background. The term first appeared in early mediaeval times and has remained productive in the various Modern Indo-Aryan languages spoken in India. The negative connotations of the word are typical of traditional Sanskrit lexicons, while the positive ones were used by poets and playwrights.

*Key words:* *Pāmara*, a low man, an outcast, a fool, peasant, agricultural householder.

Traditional Indian society has generally been conceived as a strict, hierarchically structured system. In other words, Indian society can best be characterised as a caste system, a highly organised network precisely described in the vast *dharmaśāstra* literature in Sanskrit. The authors of these works were the brahmins, a special group of people at the top of traditional Indian society. This society seems to be static in which there is little room for changes. If there were any, they can hardly be detected in these brahmanic texts. This problem has properly been recognised by the best Indian historians, however, the refinement of this general picture meets definite barriers for the paucity of textual sources other than this literature.

I think a rewarding method can be the investigation of the semantic contents of aptly selected words used to express social ideas. The present paper is meant for a case study of the term *pāmara*. My work can be considered a scrutiny into various texts from various ages.

The meanings of the word in Monier-Williams are as follows: “a man of lowest extraction”, “a wretch”, “villain”, “an idiot”, “fool” (*MW*, p. 619). The Prakrit noun has the following meanings: (1) “*kṛṣīvala*” (ploughman), “*karṣak*” (ploughman), “*khetī*

*kā kām karnevālā grhasṭha*” (a householder making field-work); (2) “*halkī jāti kā manuṣya*” (a man of a low caste); (3) “*mūrkhā*” (a fool), “*bevakūf*” (an ignorant, foolish man), “*ajñānī*” (an ignorant person) (*Pāia-sadda-mahaṅṅavo*, p. 588). The word as a *tatsama* is very richly represented in the Modern Indo-Aryan languages too. In Urdū and classical Hindī it means “wicked man”, “sinner”, “a man of the lowest extraction”, “a man engaged in any degrading occupation”, “idiot”, “fool” (Platts 1884, p. 219).

Sanskrit *pāmara* is originally derived from *pāman* m. “a kind of skin-disease, cutaneous eruption, scab” (*MW*, p. 619) and as an adjective *pāmar-ā-* / *pāman-a-* means “affected with scabies” (Burrow 1973, p. 135). Sanskrit *pāman* is first attested in the Śaunakīya Atharvaveda (ca. 1200–1000 BC) 5, 22, 12 in the meaning “rash”, “mange”, but it is not a proper medical term (Zysk 1985, pp. 42, 145). The Chāndogya-Upaniṣad (7th century BC) 4, 1, 8 speaks of a man under a cart scratching his sores (Olivelle 1998, p. 128).

In the following I collect and analyse the occurrences of the word in Sanskrit and Prakrit texts. Because of the fluid chronology I will give the commonly accepted dates of the single works.

### Sanskrit and Prakrit texts containing the word *pāmara* in chronological order

<i>Name of work</i>	<i>Date</i>
Amarakośa of Amarasimha	6th century AD
Sattasaī of Hāla	3rd–8th century
Gāudavaho of Vākpatirāja	first half of the 8th century
Kuṭṭanīmata of Dāmodaragupta	second half of the 8th century
Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana	9th century
Karpūramañjarī of Rājaśekhara	880–920
Āryāsaptaśatī of Govardhana	11th century
Vaijayantī of Yādavaprakāśa	circa 1050
Subhāṣitaratnakośa of Vidyākara	circa 1100
Pavanadūta of Dhoyī	12th century
Abhidhānacintāmaṇi of Hemacandra	1089–1172
Deśīnāmamālā of Hemacandra	1089–1172
Rājatarāṅgīnī of Kalhaṇa	1148–1149
Saduktikarṇāmṛta of Śrīdharadāsa	circa 1205
Medinīkośa of Medinīkara	14th century
Hitopadeśa of Nārāyaṇa	circa 1400
Bhāminīvilāsa of Jagannātha	first half of the 17th century

The Amarakoṣa 2, 10, 16 states:

*vivarṇaḥ pāmaro nīcaḥ prākṛtaś ca pṛthagjanaḥ  
nīhīno 'pasado jālmaḥ kṣullakaś cetaraś ca saḥ.*

According to the editors and translators of the critical edition, all these synonyms simply mean “a low man” (Sardesai–Padhye 1969, p. 91). But I am inclined to recognise some shade of meaning and tentatively render the passage as follows:

“He, the *Pāmara*, a man belonging to a mixed caste, a low man, a vulgar man, a man of // lower caste or character or profession, a vile man, an out-cast, a man of contemptible livelihood, a poor man, a rejected/low man.”<sup>1</sup>

The Sattasāi 164 reads:

*vaṃkaṃ ko pulaijījāi  
kassa kahijjāi suhaṃ va dukkhaṃ va  
keṇa samaṃ va hasijjāi // pāmarabahale haaggāme.*

“To whom can I give a sly glance, // With whom can I share my joys and sorrows, // With whom can I joke, // In this dump of a village // Full of yokels?” (P. Khoroché’s and H. Tieken’s translation)

The Gāudavaho 598 reads:

*ṭivīḍikkīa-ḍimbhāṇaṃ ṇava-raṅgaa-gavva-garua-mahilāṇa  
ṇikkampa-pāmarāṇaṃ bhaddaṃ gāmūsava-ḍiṇāṇa.*

“Blessed (and happy) are the days of village festivals when children are adorned (*ṭivīḍikkīa*), women feel the pride of (wearing) pink-coloured (*ṇavaraṃgaa*) sarees, // while the (poor) farmers (look on disinterested) without a tremor of excitement.” (N. G. Suru’s translation)

The Kuṭṭanīmata 866 reads:

*bahalośṭravilīptashtitajūṭakakāṇamallikāmālyah  
pāmaranāryā dr̥ṣṭaḥ smaro 'hamiti manyate viṭo grāmyah.*

“Daubed with a lot of vetiver, // His standing mass of matted hair // Is braided through his jasmine wreath: // The rustic rake, when he’s observed // By peasant girls thinks to himself: ‘I am the very God of Love’.” (Cs. Dezsó’s and D. Goodall’s translation)

A Prakrit verse in the commentary to Dhvanyāloka 3, 40 reads:

*upphajjāēṃ asohiṇṭeṃ phalakusumapattarahaāe  
verīeṃ vaimṇeṃ dento pāmara ho ohasijjīhasi*

“For putting a fence around this badarī // that grows in an out of the way spot, // is ugly, and lacks flower, leaf and fruit, // every one, O peasant,

<sup>1</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, translations of the texts are mine.

will laugh at you.” (D. H. H. Ingalls’s, J. M. Masson’s and M. V. Patwardhan’s translation)

The Karpūramañjarī 1, 20, 29 reads:

*tā maha mahābamaṇassa vaṇeṇa taṃ tumaṃ laha jaṃ phagguṇasamae sohañjaṇo dohalaṃ lahadi jaṃ ca pāmarāhiṃto galibaḍallo lahadi.*

“[Is it?] well then, as sure as I’m a great Brahman (lit., by the word of me, a great Brahman), you shall get that by which, about February or March, the longings of the horse-radish tree are satisfied; and that which a strong but lazy bull gets from the outcastes.” (S. Konow’s translation)

The data of the Vaijayantī 3, 5, 50 are as follows:

*pulkasāt pāmaram* “the *pāmara* [is born from] a *pulkasa*”, i.e., from a man of a despised tribe; 5, 4, 22 *nīce tu hīnāpaspāmaretarabarāḥ*” *pāmara* means low, vile, low, and barbarian”; 7, 4, 20 *pāmāro* ‘*pasade*’ *jñe ca bālīṣo bālamurkhayoḥ*, i.e. “*pāmara* means an outcast, stupid, simpleton, a child.”

The Āryāsaptaśatī 262 reads:

*tvayi kugrāmavaṭadruma vaiśravaṇo vasatu vasatu vā lakṣmīḥ pāmarakuṭhārāpātātkāsaraśirasaiva te rakṣā.*

“O fig tree of the little village! Whether Kubera or Lakṣmī dwell in you, your // protection from the fall of a poor man’s axe comes just from a buffalo head!” (D. Minanakis’s translation)

or

“O, fig tree in a forest village! What protects you against the peasant’s axe cutting you down, even if Kubera or Lakshmi were living inside // you, is merely a buffalo’s head.” (F. Hardy’s translation)

The Prabodhacandrodaya prologue to act five (Kapstein 2009, p. 198) reads:

*pāṣaṇḍadigambarakāpālikādayas tu pāmarabahuleṣu Pāñcālamālavābhīrānartasāgarānūpeṣu nigūḍhaṃ sañcaranti.*

“The heretic Jains, Skullmen, and others, as well, are roaming in hiding among the plentiful outcastes in maritime regions such as Panchāla, Malva, Abhīra and Anārta.” (M. T. Kapstein’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaśoṣa 297 reads:

*garvāyante palālaṃ prati pathikaśataih pāmarāḥ stūyamānā gopān gogarbhīnām sukhayati bahalo rātriromanhabāṣpaḥ prātaḥ prṣṭhāvagāḍhaprathamaravirucirgāmasīmopaśalye ete siddhārthapuspacchadanacitahimaklinnapakṣmā mahokṣaḥ.  
yogeśvarasya*

“The peasants now grow haughty,  
 being flattered by a hundred travelers for their straw;  
 at night the cows in calf, chewing the cud,  
 keep warm the herdsmen with their breadth;  
 at dawn the first rays of the sun play on the great bull’s back  
 as he lies covered with mustard flower  
 and eyelids thick with frost upon the village common.”  
 YOGĒŚVARA (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥ 300 reads:

*kṣetropāntapalāyāmānaśaśakadvandvaṃ parīkṣyāparān  
 āhūyātirasena karṣakajanānābaddhakolāhalāḥ  
 hastāropitadātraraḥḥajulaguḍairvṛddhairavṛddhaiḥ saha  
 tyaktvā śālicikartīṣāmita ito dhānvantyaṃ pāmarāḥ.*

“Seeing a brace of rabbits start from a corner of the field,  
 the peasants, calling joyfully their fellows with a great haloo,  
 run, old and young, with sickles, slings and sticks,  
 abandoning their reaping of the rice.” (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥ 318 reads:

*vāraṃ vāraṃ tuṣārānilatulitapalāloṣmaṇāṃ pāmarāṇāṃ  
 daṇḍavyāghaṭṭanābhīḥ kramapihitarucau bodhyamāne kṛśānau  
 uddhūmair bījakoṣoccaṭanapaṭuravaiḥ sarṣapakṣodakūṭaiḥ  
 koṇe koṇe khalānāṃ parisarasakaṭuḥ kīryate ko ‘pi gandhaḥ  
 yogeśvarasya*

“The warmth of their straw borne off by icy winds,  
 time and again the peasants wake the fire  
 whose flame dies ever back, stirring with their sticks.  
 From the smoking bank of mustard chaff,  
 noisy with the crackling of te husks,  
 a penetrating odor spreads  
 to every corner of the threshing floor.”  
 YOGĒŚVARA (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥ 1118 reads:

*sindhora uccaiḥ pavanacalanād utsaladbhis tarāṅgaiḥ  
 kūlaṃ nīto hatavidhivaśād dakṣiṇāvartaśankhaḥ  
 dagdhaḥ kiṃ vā na bhavati masī ceti samdehinībhiḥ  
 śambūkābhiḥ saha paricito nīyate pāmarībhiḥ.  
 sucaritasya*

“By force of evil fate the ocean waves,  
 raised high by wind, have washed ashore  
 a rare sinistral conch.

The poor Pāmarīs who find it  
add it to their heap of shells,  
thinking if burned it might make ink.”  
SUCARITA (D.H.H. Ingalls’s translation)

There is no word for “poor” in the verse, however, it has been implied in the situation.

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥṣa 1152 reads:

*rajjuḥṣeparayonnamadbhujalatāvyaktaikapārśvastanī  
sūtracchedavilolaśaṅkhavalayaśrenījhaṇatkāriṇī  
tiryaḡvistrītapīvaroruyugalā pṛṣṭhānativyākṛtā-  
bhogaśronīrudasyati pratimuhuh kūpādapaḥ pāmarī.*

“Her graceful arm, raised to pull strongly on the rope,  
reveals from that side her breast;  
her shell bracelets jingle,  
the shells so dancing as to break the string.  
With her plump thighs spread apart  
and buttocks swelling as she stoops her back,  
the Pāmarī draws water from the well.” (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥṣa 1173 reads:

*ete saṃtatabhrīyamānacaṇakāmodapradhānā manaḥ  
karṣantyūṣarasamṇiveśajaraṭhacchāyāḥ sthālīgrāmakāḥ  
tārūnyātīśayāgrapāmaravadhūsollāsahastagraha-  
bhrāmyatpīvarayantrakadhvanīr asadgambhīragehodarāḥ.*

“They charm the heart, these villages of the upper lands,  
white from the saline earth that covers everything  
and redolent with frying chickpeas.  
From the depths of their cottages  
come the deep rumble of a heavy handmill  
turning under the fair hands of a Pāmara girl  
in the full bloom of youth.” (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥṣa 1176 reads:

*durupahitahaleṣāsārgaladvāramārātparicikitapurandhrīpātītābhyaṇabhāṇḍam  
pavanarayatiraścīstoyadhārāḥ pratīcchanvīṣati valitaśṛṅgaḥ  
pāmarāḡgāramukṣā.*

“Though the door is bolted with a clumsily set plowshaft  
and the frightened housewife throws whatever gear she has at hand,  
still, rather than receive  
the stream of rain driven slanting by the wind,  
the bull with twisted horns  
forces his way into the Pāmara’s house.” (D. H. H. Ingalls’s translation)

The Subhāṣitaratnaḥ 1699 reads:

*tātaḥ ṣṛṣṭim apūrvavastuviṣayām eko 'tra nirvyūḍhavan  
niṣṇātaḥ kavikuñjarendracarite mārge girām vāguraḥ  
revāvindhapulīndrapāmaravadhūjhañjhānilapreṣita-  
prāye 'rthe vacanāni pallavayituḥ jānāti yogeśvaraḥ.  
abhinandasya*

“My father was unique in that his work  
took for its subject what had not before been treated.  
Vāgura was well versed in the path of speech  
trod by former master poets.  
Yogeśvara knew how to make words blossom  
when he wrote of the Revā and the Vindhyas,  
of Pulindra and of Pāmara girls,  
and of a message carried by the monsoon wind.”  
ABHINANDA (D. H. H. Ingalls's translation)

The Pavanadūta reads:

*krīḍāśokakramukabahulā rāmaramyopakañṭhāḥ  
sampatsyante pathi pathi tava prītaye prasthitasya  
pīnottuṅgastanabharanamatpāmarīpremalobhān  
nirvicchedabhramitapathikāḥ pallayaḥ palvalonyaḥ.*

“Along your way as you journey on,  
scattered for your pleasure,  
their boundaries adorned with groves  
full of lovely ashóka and betel trees,  
will be little hamlets with ponds  
where wayfarers wander incessantly,  
lusting after the affections  
of lowly women bent over  
from the weight of their full, pert breasts.” (J. Mallinson's translation)

The Rājararaṅgiṇī 1, 369 reads:

*ramyaiḥ śailapathairvrajañśramavaśācchāyām śritaiḥ  
śākhināmāsīnapracalāyitena  
sumahaddukhaḃ visasmāra saḥ  
dūrātpāmarapūtīkṛtaiḥ śrutipathaprāptaiḥ prabuddhastvabhūddrṣṭo  
nirjharavāribhiḥ  
saha manahśvabhre nimajjann iva.*

“Marching on the lovely mountain paths, and seeking, when tired,  
the shade of the trees,  
he forgot by dint of his [daily] halting and marching his truly great  
misfortune. But

when roused by the shouts of the low [hill-] folk, which reached  
his ear from afar, he  
appeared to sink back, as it were, into depths along with the waters  
of the mountain-torrents.” (M. A. Stein’s translation)

The term can be attested in two lexicons compiled by the learned Jain monk, Hemacandra. The *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* 596 states: *nīcaḥ pāmāro barbarāśca*, “*pāmāra* is a low man and a barbarian”. The *Deśīnāmamālā* 6, 41 states: *atha pāmāro kuṭumbīti saṃskṛtasamaḥ*, “now *pāmāra* means an agriculturist householder, identical with Sanskrit.”

The *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* 2, 173, 4 reads:

*āhūto hālikenāśrutamiva vacanaṃ tasya kṛtvā kṣaṇaikam  
tiṣṭhāsustabdhāromā kathamāpi viṭapaṃ niḥsamīraṃ vihāya  
dorbhyaṃāvṛtya vakṣaḥsthalamalāsagatirḍīnapādapracārah  
śītkārotkampabhinnasphuṭadadharapuṭaḥ pāmāraḥ kṣetrameti.*

“Called out by the farmer, the boorish farmhand remains for a moment  
as if he has not  
heard the order, and then, with hair bristling, he somehow leaves the  
(still) thicket free  
of breeze, and covering his chest with his hands reaches the field  
with lazy movements,  
slowly pacing the steps, with lips rent asunder and quivering  
in the dewfall.” (A. A. Ramanathan’s translation)

The *Medinīkośa* 135/182 states: *pāmāraḥ khalanīcayoḥ* “*pāmāra* means a mischievous man, a low man.”

The *Hitopadeśa* Book Two, Tale, Tale Eight (Schlegel–Lassen 1829), p. 64, line 22–p. 65, line 1 reads:

*are pāmāra māṃ mahāsatīm virūpayitum kaḥ samarthaḥ.*

“Who, o vile wretch, is able to disfigure me who am very chaste.”

It is a pity that the word *pāmāra* is missing from the consequent edition of the text. For instance, M. R. Kāle (1980, p. 50) in Book Two, Tale Five reads *pāpa* for *pāmāra*.

The *Bhāminīvilāsa* 1, 71 reads:

*līlālunḥitaśārādāpuramahāsaṃpadbharāṇām puro  
vidyāśadmavinirgalatkaṇamuṣo valganti cet pāmārah  
adya śvaḥ phaṇinām śakuntaśiśavo dantāvalānām śaśāḥ  
siṃhānām ca sukkena mūrdhani padaṃ dhāsyanti śālāvṛkāḥ.*

“If foolish persons stealing particles (of knowledge) coming out  
from the abode of



learning swagger before those who have easily acquired immense wealth  
 in the residence  
 of the goddess of learning, in a day or two young birds will easily set  
 their foot on the  
 head of serpents, hares on the head of elephants, and dogs on the heads  
 of lions.” (B. G. Bal’s translation)

According to the commentary to the gloss *pāmarāḥ alpajñānāḥ*, “*pāmaras* are men of little knowledge”. The great French Sanskritist, Bergaigne (1872, p. 73), renders *pāmarāḥ* as “miserable”.

I think that before proceeding to a semantic assessment of the word *pāmara* a brief excursion in various issues pertaining to the texts where it occurs would be desirable. The findings are as follows:

1. The word *pāmara* cannot be attested in Sanskrit or Prakrit texts before the 6th century AD.<sup>2</sup> Out of the fourteen texts eleven can be dated the early mediaeval period which is a clearly distinguished phase in the history of early India.

2. Unsurprisingly, with the exception of the *Vaijayanṭī* and the *Sattasāī*, all these texts have a north Indian provenance. Inside Northern India their provenances show a great variety of geographical areas ranging from Kashmir to Madhya Pradesh from north to south, and from Gujarat to Bengal from west to east. This situation is well in accordance with the political map of early mediaeval India when the so-called peripheral kingdoms such as Kashmir and Bengal appear on the political scene.

3. From the scanty biographical information about some authors of these texts a colourful picture emerges as to their religious and social affiliations. *Amarasiṃha* is a Buddhist, *Hāla* is a king,<sup>3</sup> *Ānandavardhana* is a scholar and a brahmin by birth, *Hemacandra* and *Vākpatirāja* are Jains, *Rājaśekhara* is a brahmin, *Dāmodaragupta* is a minister, *Kalhaṇa* is the son of a minister, *Dhoyī* is a court-poet of the Bengali king *Lakṣmaṇasena*, and *Kṛṣṇamiśra* is a counsellor and follower of the *advaita vedānta* philosophical school. It is noteworthy that these learned men all belonged to the upper strata of Indian society.

4. The distribution of the literary genre of these texts reveals that works of belles-lettres including drama and traditional history in the form of poetry are in majority, and the second category is traditional lexicography. Of special value are those pieces for our analysis which are called by Ingalls as “the poetry of village and field” because they “may have formed the all in all vernacular poets whose works are now lost” (Ingalls 1965, p. 328).

The semantic and social contents of the word is fairly rich and sometimes it is not void from inner contradictions.

It means very frequently “a low man” (*Amarakoṣa*, *Vaijayanṭī*, *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, *Rājataranṅī*). This together with the meanings “a mischievous man” (*Medinī-*

<sup>2</sup> The upper limit of the age of the composition of the *Sattasāī* is around the 8th century.

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that the anthology has only traditionally been attributed to king *Hāla*.

kośa), “a vile man” (Medinīkośa, Hitopadeśa), “a vulgar man” (Amarakośa, Saduktikarnāṃṛta) and “a fool” (Bhāminīvilāsa) have no special social connotation.

The meaning “a poor man” (Amarakośa, Āryāsaptaśatī ?) is obviously a general term.

The meanings “a man of mixed caste” (Amarakośa, Vaijayantī), “a man of lower caste” (Amarakośa), “an outcast” (Amarakośa, Karpūmañjarī, Vaijayantī, Prabodhacandrodaya), and perhaps “a barbarian” (Vaijayantī, Abhidhānacintāmaṇi) promptly indicate the possible caste affiliation of such a person.

It is especially revealing that the literary pieces from the belles-lettres allow us to gain a rather differentiated picture of people of rural India, more particularly of the various strata of peasantry.

There is no doubt that the Jain Hemacandra ranks a *pāmara* the highest as “an agriculturist householder” (*kuṭumbī*). We may add that the same meaning appears on inscriptions (Sircar 1966, p. 169) and in modern Hindi. This meaning is definitely free from social prejudices and the bearers of the name are members of a rural community with full powers.

They are very often regarded as peasants in general (Kuṭṭanīmata, Āryāsaptaśatī, Subhāṣitaratnaśośa, Saduktikarnāṃṛta) and also members of a rural community with full powers. This assumption gets further corroboration from the context of the Kuṭṭanīmata and the verse 1152 of the Subhāṣitaratnaśośa: such a *pāmarī* and a *pāmaranārī*, i.e. a *pāmara* girl appears in scenes connected with the village well. As has long been recognised, outcasts even today are not permitted to pull water from the common well in rural India.

The rendering “a boorish farmhand” (Saduktikarnāṃṛta) is perfectly justified by the context where he is clearly a subordinate person to a peasant cultivator (*hālīka*). His quasi laziness or apathy clearly derives from his hopeless social status.

In the Sattasaī the meaning “a yokel”, i.e., a “simple-minded countryman” is surely a scornful remark. It may point to both his foolish behaviour/appearance and his status in rural society.

Ānandavardhana depicts an ignorant peasant without referring to his social status.

Having surveyed the various meanings of the word, a delicate question can be raised: Why do the authors of the traditional lexicons – unlike the poets and playwrights – consistently attribute a degrading status to the *pāmaras*. Most likely the answer must be sought in the higher caste affiliation of the lexicographers on the one hand and the unbiased views of the poets and playwrights on the other. In the case of the great anthologies, as was seen, the influence of vernacular poetry can be detected.

It cannot go unmentioned that in four verses of the Subhāṣitaratnaśośa and one verse of the Kuṭṭanīmata *pāmara* girls, variously called *pāmarī*, *pāmananārī* and *pāmaravaddhū*, are depicted as the protagonists of different scenes. They all figure as common peasant girls, mostly young, pretty or even beautiful and attractive for men. Negative remarks of their social status or personality are totally missing. All kinds of criticism have been suspended here. At any rate, it looks strange in comparison with what has earlier been said about the *pāmaras*. A possible explanation can be the

unanimously positive attitude of Sanskrit poets to women. This attitude is striking in verse 1699 of the Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa: “Yogeśvara knew how to make words blossom when he wrote of the Revā and the Vindhya, of Pulindra and of Pāmara girls.” In these cases the influence of what Ingalls calls “poetry of the village” is very much at work. In the works of the vernacular poets whose works are no more extant this positive attitude may have been normal.

At any rate, from a careful study of the shades of meaning of the word *pāmara* one can get a glimpse of the stratification of rural society in early mediaeval India.

### Abbreviations and References

- Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* see Śāstrī (1964)  
*Amarakoṣa* see Sardesai – Padhye (1969)  
*Āryāsaptaśatī* see Hardy (2009)  
*Āryāsaptaśatī* see Minakakis (2011)  
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