

JOHANNES BRONKHORST

Studies on Bhartrhari, 8: prākṛta dhvani and the Sāṃkhya tanmātras¹

(published in: *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27(1/2)(Guruvandana: Essays in Indology in Honour of K. Bhattacharya), 1999, pp. 23-33)

Bhartrhari distinguishes between the word itself (sometimes called *sphoṭa*) and the sounds that manifest it. These sounds themselves are subdivided in one passage of the *Vākyapadīya* into *prākṛta dhvani* and *vaikṛta dhvani*. These two expressions have puzzled modern scholarship. J. F. Staal offers the following interpretation (1969: 519 [123]): "Bhartrhari distinguishes between (1) the *sphoṭa* of an expression, which denotes the expression as a single unit conveying a meaning; (2) the *prākṛta-dhvani* of an expression, i.e. the phonological structure assigned to the type it represents; and (3) the *vaikṛta-dhvani*, i.e. the phonetic realization in its particular utterance-token." This interpretation goes back to John Brough (1951). K. Kunjuni Raja (1969: 14-15) gives a somewhat different explanation: "First, we have the actual sounds of the words uttered; this is the *vaikṛta-dhvani*. These sounds reveal the permanent *prākṛta-dhvani* which is an abstraction from the various *vaikṛta-dhvani*-s, or which may be considered as the linguistically normal form devoid of the personal variations which are linguistically relevant." Elsewhere in the same book he describes the *prākṛta dhvani* as an "abstract sound-pattern with the time-sequence still attached to it" (p. 117), as "the phonological structure, the sound-pattern of the norm" (p. 120). Jan E. M. Houben (1990: 125 with n. 17) criticises Brough's view to the extent that the *vaikṛta-dhvani* represents "the individual instance, noted in purely phonetic terms" and observes: "The *prākṛta-dhvani* refers to those phonetic features of the audible sound that are differential in the system of language. The *vaikṛta-dhvani* is not differential in the system of language." He further points out that the verses of the *Vākyapadīya* only use these terms, without defining them, so that for an interpretation we have to rely on the ancient commentaries. The following interpretation, which obviously tries to do justice to the commentaries, is

¹Preceding articles of this series have been published in the following periodicals and books: *Bulletin d'Études Indiennes* 6 (1988), 105-143 (no. 1: "L'auteur et la date de la *Vṛtti*"); *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 15 (1989), 101-117 (no. 2: "Bhartrhari and *Mīmāṃsā*"); *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 45 (1991), 5-18 (no. 3: "Bhartrhari on *sphoṭa* and universals"); id. 46.1 (1992), 56-80 (no. 4: "L'absolu dans le *Vākyapadīya* et son lien avec le *Mādhyamaka*"); id. 47.1 (1993), 75-94 (no. 5: "Bhartrhari and *Vaiśeṣika*"); *Vācaspatyam: Pt. Vamanshastri Bhagwat Felicitation Volume* (Pune, 1994, pp. 32-41; no. 6: "The author of the Three Centuries"); *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 76 (1995 [1996]), 97-106 (no. 7: "Grammar as the door to liberation"). I thank Klaus Butzenberger, Harry Falk and Jan Houben for useful comments.

due to Ashok Aklujkar (1990: 132): "*Sphoṭa*, though without temporal distinctions, appears to have temporal divisions of two kinds: difference in the form of short vowel or long vowel, and so on; and difference in the form of a quick (*drutā*), medium (*madhyamā*), or slow (*vilambita*) pace of utterance, due to division in [24] the manifesting sound (*dhvani*). A part of the sound is the minimum needed for the manifestation of the linguistic units (*prākṛta dhvani*); the remainder, if any, simply keeps the manifestation in effect for a longer time (*vaikṛta dhvani*). The former is related to the distinction conveyed by 'short', and so on, the latter to the distinction conveyed by 'fast', and so on." Madhav M. Deshpande (1997: 46-47), similarly, observes: "The *sphoṭa* level is said to be beyond temporality, while the primary manifesting sounds [(*prākṛta-dhvani*)] have the feature of duration or length. The secondary manifesting sounds [(*vaikṛta-dhvani*)], which are further reverberations of the primary manifesting sounds, reveal the feature of tempo. Thus, in general, we get concentric circles representing different features." He then comments: "As a production model, I do not think Bhartṛhari's ideas will rank very high in the evaluation of modern phoneticians. On the other hand, the diagrammatic perception of the various phonetic features as concentric circles moving out from more distinctive to less distinctive offers an interesting view of these features and deserves to be explored further."

It is of course well known that it is not without risk to interpret old Indian texts only in the light of modern notions of linguistics, especially where there is no explicit evidence to support such an interpretation. Texts have to be interpreted first of all in the light of notions familiar to their own author(s). It is not obvious that all the interpretations mentioned above fulfil this requirement. Aklujkar's interpretation does try to remain close to the texts. It is, however, strange in that it suggests two succeeding parts of sound with altogether different functions. If Bhartṛhari entertained such notions about sound, where did he get it from?

Instead of — or rather before — following Houben's advice to rely on the ancient commentaries, I propose to explore a different path: to reflect upon the question what *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta dhvani* could be.

Consider the expressions *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta*. Why did Bhartṛhari use these? *Prākṛta* is an adjective derived from *prakṛti*; *vaikṛta* is similarly derived, or can be derived, from *vikṛti*.² The terms *prakṛti* and *vikṛti* are particularly popular in classical Sāṃkhya, which divides its twenty-five principles (*tattva*) under these two headings. Sāṃkhya Kārikā 3 puts it as follows:³ "The root-*prakṛti* is no *vikṛti*; the seven beginning with *mahad* are both *prakṛti* and *vikṛti*; sixteen are [only] *vikṛti* (here the synonym

² Cp. note 23, below.

³ SK 3: *mūlaprakṛtir avikṛtir mahadādyāḥ prakṛtīvikṛtayāḥ sapta/ ṣoḍaśakas tu vikāro na prakṛtir na vikṛtiḥ puruṣaḥ//*

vikāra is used); the *puruṣa* is neither *prakṛti* nor *vikṛti*." In our quest for the meaning of *prākṛta dhvani* it is not necessary to enumerate all the twenty-five principles of Sāṃkhya and show their mutual relationship. It is sufficient to recall that among those principles [25] there are five, called the *tanmātras*, that are both *prakṛti* and *vikṛti*, because they give rise to five other principles (the five elements), and are themselves derived from the principle *ahaṃkāra*. The five *tanmātras* carry the names of the five qualities, but are not identical with them. The Sāṃkhya distinguishes therefore a *śabdatanmātra* ('sound'), a *sparsātanmātra* ('touch'), a *rūpatanmātra* ('colour'), a *rasatanmātra* ('taste'), and a *gandhatanmātra* ('smell'). What can be said about them?

Sāṃkhya Kārikā 38 begins with the words *tanmātrāṇy aviśeṣāḥ* "The 'ones without specific features' (*aviśeṣa*) are the *tanmātras*". The Yuktidīpikā comments:⁴

Those indeed are the ones without specific features. Which are the *tanmātras*? They are *śabdatanmātra*, *sparsātanmātra*, *rūpatanmātra*, *rasatanmātra*, and *gandhatanmātra*. Why are they [called] *tanmātras*? Because specific features of the same kind are not possible [in them]. When there is no difference of kind, e.g. sound, no other specific features — such as the accents called *udātta*, *anudātta*, *svarita*, or the being nasal — are found in it, and that is why it is [called] *śabdatanmātra* (approx. 'sound and nothing but that'). In the same way [there are no specific features] such as 'soft', 'hard' etc. in the *tanmātra* of touch; [no specific features] such as 'white', 'black' etc. in the *tanmātra* of colour; [no specific features] such as 'sweet', 'sour' etc. in the *tanmātra* of taste; [and no specific features] such as 'fragrant' etc. in the *tanmātra* of smell. For this reason only the general feature of each quality is present in the [*tanmātras*], no specific feature; and this is why those 'ones without specific features' are the *tanmātras*.

We are primarily interested in the *śabdatanmātra*. It is here presented as sound without the specific features that may accompany sound. It is, moreover, different from the quality sound. The quality sound, we may assume, possesses all the specific features which the *śabdatanmātra* is here stated not to possess. But the quality sound, unlike the *śabdatanmātra*, does not evolve into other principles. The fact that the *śabdatanmātra* does do so, justifies it being *prakṛti*, or *prākṛta śabda*.

⁴ YD p. 117 l. 30 - p. 118 l. 4 (Pandeya) / p. 224 l. 19 - p. 225 l. 2 (Wezler & Motegi): *te khalv aviśeṣāḥ/ kāni punas tanmātrāṇī ucyate śabdatanmātram, sparsātanmātram, rūpatanmātram, rasatanmātram, gandhatanmātram iti/ katham punas tanmātrāṇī? ucyate: tulyajātīyaviśeṣānupapattē/ anye śabdajātyabhede 'pi sati viśeṣā udātānudātāsvaritānūnāsikādayas tatra na santi/ tasmāc chabdatanmātram/ evaṃ sparsātanmātre mṛdukathinādayaḥ/ evaṃ rūpatanmātre śuklakṛṣṇādayaḥ/ evaṃ rasatanmātre madhurāmlādayaḥ/ evaṃ gandhatanmātre surabhyādayaḥ/ tasmāt tasya tasya guṇasya sāmānyam evātra, na viśeṣa iti tanmātrāṇy ete 'viśeṣāḥ/* The end of this passage reads, in Pandeya's edition, *tanmātrāsv ete 'viśeṣāḥ*; I follow Wezler and Motegi.

To avoid confusion, let me point out that the Sāṃkhya texts, as far as I am aware, do not use the expression *prākṛta śabda*. But this would seem to be an insignificant detail. *Prākṛta* means "belonging to the *prakṛti(s)*, original", and obviously the *śabdatanmātra* does belong to the *prakṛtis* of Sāṃkhya.

But if the Sāṃkhyas accept a *prākṛta śabda*, one would expect that they also accept a *vaikṛta śabda* "modified sound". Here however we are confronted with a difficulty that characterises classical Sāṃkhya as it has been handed down to us. None of the usual qualities, and this includes the quality sound, figure among their twenty-five principles. Contrary to what one might expect, the *tanmātras* do not give rise to the corresponding qualities, but to the five elements, in the following [26] manner: the *tanmātra* of sound gives rise to ether, the *tanmātra* of touch to wind, the *tanmātra* of colour to fire, the *tanmātra* of taste to water, and the *tanmātra* of smell to earth. It is even stranger that these five elements are stated to be 'specific features' (*viśeṣa*) in the Sāṃkhya Kārikā.⁵ The Yuktidīpikā seems to take a different position, for it gives a long enumeration of characteristics (*dharma*) for the five elements, and concludes:⁶ "These [here enumerated characteristics] are called 'specific features' (*viśeṣa*)." The position of the qualities is described as follows in the Yuktidīpikā:⁷

From the *tanmātra* [called] 'sound', which has sound as quality, ether [is born,] which has [that] one quality. From the *tanmātra* [called] 'touch', which has sound and touch as qualities, wind [is born,] which has [these] two qualities. From the *tanmātra* [called] 'colour', which has sound, touch and colour as qualities, fire [is born,] which has [these] three qualities. From the *tanmātra* [called] 'taste', which has sound, touch, colour and taste as qualities, water [is born,] which has [these] four qualities. From the *tanmātra* [called] 'smell', which has sound, touch, colour, taste and smell as qualities, earth [is born,] which has [these] five qualities.

We learn from this passage that the qualities are not *derived* from the *tanmātras*, but that they somehow *characterise* both the *tanmātras* and the elements derived from them. In other words, the qualities have no place in the evolutionary scheme of Sāṃkhya. They are not derived from anything at all, but they somehow pop up in the company of both the *tanmātras* and the elements.

⁵ SK 38: ... *tebhyo bhūtāni pañca pañcabhyaḥ/ etc smṛtā viśeṣāḥ śāntā bhorās ca mūdhās ca//*

⁶ YD p. 119 l. 21 (Pandeya) / p. 227 l.15-16 (Wezler & Motegi): *etc viśeṣā ity ucyanta iti.*

⁷ YD p. 118 l. 14-16 (Pandeya) / p. 225 l. 15-19 (Wezler & Motegi): *śabdaguṇac chabdatanmātrād ākāśam ekaguṇam/ śabdasparsaguṇāt sparsatanmātrād dviguṇo vāyuh/ śabdasparsarūpaguṇād rūpatanmātrāt triguṇam tejah/ śabdasparsarūparasaguṇād rasatanmātrac caturguṇā āpah/ śabdasparsarūparasagandhaguṇād gandhatanmātrāt pañcaguṇā pṛthivī/* Cited and translated in Bronkhorst, 1994: 311.

The situation is even stranger than it may look at first sight. Recall that the *tanmātra* of smell is free from specific features such as ‘fragrant’ and the like.⁸ But now we learn that this same *tanmātra* has sound, touch, colour, taste and smell as qualities. It looks as if the *tanmātras* are here not looked upon as "pure" qualities, as was the case in the description above, but as some kind of "pure" or "pre-"elements. Indeed, the passage just cited is introduced by the remark:⁹ "From the elements (*bhūta*) which have each one more [quality than the preceding one] arise the specific elements (*bhūtavīśeṣa*) which have each one more [quality than the preceding one]." Here the first word ‘element’ (*bhūta*) clearly refers to the *tanmātras*.

The Sāṃkhya of the Sāṃkhya Kārikā and its commentaries is, as the above passages illustrate, a strange knot of doctrines, which it may take long to disentangle. However, there is reason to believe that Bhartṛhari was acquainted with an earlier form of the system, which may have been, in at least some respects, less obscure. Some passages in his Vākyapadīya and Mahābhāṣyadīpikā indicate that he knew a form of Sāṃkhya in which all material objects were looked upon as constituted of qualities. Citations in the works of other authors [27] — among them Dharmapāla and Mallavādin — confirm that this was at some point a doctrine of Sāṃkhya. There is even reason to think that these qualities once figured among the principles (*tattva*), as final evolutes, and therefore as *vikṛtis* only.¹⁰ They may have been the *viśeṣas* before this term came to be reserved for the five elements. If we assume that at one point in the history of Sāṃkhya *tanmātras* were thought to give rise to the corresponding qualities, as seems likely in view of the way the *tanmātras* are still described in the much later Yuktidīpikā, we may have found our *vaikṛta śabda*. In that case the *prākṛta śabda* is the *śabdatanmātra*, free from adventitious features such as accent, nasalization and the like. The *vaikṛta śabda* is then the quality itself, along with such adventitious features. And the *vaikṛta śabda* would then be looked upon as being derived from, or having evolved out of, the *prākṛta śabda*.

This to some extent hypothetical reconstruction of an earlier phase of the Sāṃkhya system of thought may perhaps help us coming to terms with Bhartṛhari's *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta dhvani*. No importance should be attached, I believe, to Bhartṛhari's use of *dhvani* in the place of *śabda*: he often uses *śabda* as a synonym of *sphoṭa*, so that this term may have been already used in a different sense. This terminological choice may further be explained by the fact that Bhartṛhari uses the expression *prākṛta śabda*

⁸ Elsewhere the Yuktidīpikā (p. 119 l. 25-26 (Pandeya) / p. 227 l. 22 (Wezler & Motegi)) tells us that the *tanmātras* are not "appeased, terrible, or foolish", and therefore free from the characteristics of the three constituents (*guṇa*) of matter.

⁹ YD p. 118 l. 13-14 (Pandeya) / p. 225 l. 14-15 (Wezler & Motegi): *ekottarebhyo bhūtebhya ekottarāṇām bhūtavīśeṣāṇām utpattiḥ*.

¹⁰ Bronkhorst, 1994.

elsewhere in order to refer to something altogether different, viz. the/a Prakrit language.¹¹ It should also not be forgotten that Bhartṛhari often uses ideas which he borrows from other systems for his own purposes. His distinction between *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta dhvani*, supposing that he really borrowed these ideas from Sāṃkhya, does not imply that he accepted their other principles and their entire scheme of evolution. With this in mind let us consider the relevant passages of his Vākyapadīya and its commentaries.

The terms are used in verses 76-79 of the first Kāṇḍa:¹²

They declare that the difference of condition (*vṛtti*) of the *sphoṭa*, which has no difference of duration and which follows the duration of the *dhvani*, is due to the difference in accidental features of the grasping.¹³ (76)

Because there is — [the *sphoṭa*] being eternal — a difference in nature in the case of short, long, protracted [vowels] and other [sounds], it is figuratively stated that the duration of the *prākṛta dhvani* belongs to the *śabda*. (77)

The *prākṛta dhvani* is accepted as being the cause of grasping the *śabda*. The *vaikṛta [dhvani]* becomes the cause of difference of its state. (78)

But after the manifestation of the *śabda* the *vaikṛta dhvanis* bring about a difference of condition; the essence of the *sphoṭa* is not differentiated by them. (79)

This translation is kept rather literal in an attempt not to impose too much of an interpretation. It should further be kept in mind that verse [28] 78 may not really belong to the Vṛtti: it disturbs the transition from 77 to 79 (so Rau), and the Vṛtti ascribes it to a/the Saṃgrahakāra. It seems however clear that all these verses use the word *śabda* as a synonym of *sphoṭa*. The *sphoṭa* is eternal. One *sphoṭa* can have a different nature from another one (e.g., *u* is different from *ū*), but the features (such as length) that allow us to distinguish between them do not really belong to them; they belong to the *prākṛta dhvani*. Once the *prākṛta dhvani* has manifested "its" *sphoṭa*, the *vaikṛta dhvani* may bring about further differentiations, which do not however affect the nature of the *sphoṭa*. Note that nothing in these verses states that the *vaikṛta dhvani* itself is subsequent to the *prākṛta dhvani*, as are their effects.

Recall now what the Yuktidīpikā had to say about the *śabdatanmātra*:¹⁴ "When there is no difference of kind, e.g. sound, no other specific features — such as the

¹¹ See Houben, 1994: 3 f., along with note 7.

¹² Vkp 1.76-79: *sphoṭasyābhinnakālasya dhvanikālānupātinaḥ/ grahaṇopādhibhedena vṛttibhedam pracakṣate// svabhāvabhedān nityatve hrasvadīrghaplutādiṣu/ prākṛtasya dhvaner kālāḥ śabdasyety upacaryate// śabdasya grahaṇe hetuḥ prākṛto dhvanir īsyate/ sthītibhedanimittatvaṃ vaikṛtaḥ pratipadyate// śabdasyordhvaṃ abhivyaṅkter vṛttibhedam tu vaikṛtaḥ/ dhvanayaḥ samupohante sphoṭātmā tair na bhidyate//*

¹³ Or: "due to the specific accidental feature which is the grasping".

accents called *udāta*, *anudāta*, *svarita*, or the being nasal — are found in it, and that is why it is [called] *śabdatanmātra*." Moreover, "specific features of the same kind are not possible [in them]"¹⁵ In other words, the *śabdatanmātra* may be different for different sounds, but it does not contain features that do not differentiate sounds. This, of course, agrees in all details with Bharṭṛhari's *prākṛta dhvani*.

The Vṛtti adds some observations to the above verses of the Vākyapadīya:¹⁶

Dhvani here is of two kinds: *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta*. *Prākṛta* [*dhvani*] is that without which the non-manifested form of the *sphoṭa* is not distinguished. *Vaikṛta* [*dhvani*] on the other hand is that by which the manifested form of the *sphoṭa* is perceived, again and again without interruption, for an extended period of time.

And again,¹⁷

Just as a light, immediately after coming into being, is the cause of grasping a jar etc., but when established (*avatiṣṭhamāna*) becomes the cause of the continuation of grasping, in the same way the *dhvani* that continues once the *śabda* has been manifested brings about a continuation of the notion that has the *śabda* as object by adding strength to the manifestation of the object. Therefore, though associated with the *vaikṛta dhvani* the difference of which is clearly perceived, the essence of the *sphoṭa*, because no identity is superimposed, does not lead to any usage of difference in duration in the science [of grammar] as do [the features] 'short' etc.

In these passages from the Vṛtti one does get the impression that *vaikṛta dhvani* extends in time beyond *prākṛta dhvani*, that the *vaikṛta dhvani* still resounds when the *prākṛta dhvani* has disappeared. The first passage, to be sure, is not explicit about this. The second passage, on the other hand, speaks of "the *dhvani* that continues once the *śabda* has been manifested". Of course, this passage does not state that the [29] *prākṛta dhvani* disappears once the *sphoṭa* has been manifested. Indeed, in this line it uses the mere word *dhvani*, leaving us guessing what exactly is meant.

¹⁴ YD p. 117 l. 32 - p. 118 l. 1 (Pandeya) / p. 224 l. 25-27 (Wezler & Motegi): *anye śabdajātyabhede 'pi sati viśeṣā udātānūdātasvaritānunāsikādayas tatra na santi/ tasmāc śabdatanmātram/*

¹⁵ YD p. 117 l. 32 (Pandeya) / p. 224 l. 25 (Wezler & Motegi): *tulyajātīyaviśeṣānupapatteḥ.*

¹⁶ VP I p. 142 l. 1-3: *iha dvividho dhvaniḥ prākṛto vaikṛtas ca/ tatra prākṛto nāma yena vinā sphoṭarūpam anabhivyaktam na paricchidyate/ vaikṛtas tu yenābhivyaktam sphoṭarūpam punaḥ punar avicchedena praitataram kālam upalabhyate/*

¹⁷ VP I p. 144 l. 1-5: *tad yathā prakāśo janmānantaram eva ghaṭādīnām grahaṇe hetuḥ, avatiṣṭhamānas tu grahaṇaprabandhahetur bhavati, evam abhivyakte śabde dhvanir uttarakālam anuvartamāno buddhyanuvrttiṃ śabdaviśayām viśayābhivyaktibalādhānād upasamharati/ tasmād upalakṣitavyatirekeṇa vaikṛtena dhvaninā saṃsṛjyamāno 'pi sphoṭātmā tādrūpyasyānadhāropāt śāstre hrasvādivat kālabhedavyavahāram nāvatarati/. Cp. Iyer, 1965: 80.*

If we assume — and I repeat that the passage leaves room for doubt — that the *vaikṛta dhvani* comes after the *prākṛta dhvani*, we are confronted with a difficulty in the Vṛtti on Vkp 76 (75 in Iyer's edition). This verse, translated above, appears to speak of the *vaikṛta dhvani* (without mentioning this expression) because it deals with the *vṛttibheda* (difference of condition) of the *sphoṭa*, exactly the same expression used in verse 79 to indicate what the *vaikṛta dhvanis* bring about. The Vṛtti on verse 76 (75) contains the following line:¹⁸ "The conditions of the *sphoṭa* in which we imagine differences — viz. [the features] 'quick', 'medium', and 'slow', each faster than the following one by one third¹⁹ — are reported to be connected with that grasping that has the *sphoṭa* as object, and which is an accidental feature of variable duration." If this means that the *vaikṛta dhvanis* bring about the features 'quick', 'medium', and 'slow', we are forced to believe that we are informed about the speed in which a phoneme is uttered by sound that follows the sound that makes us know whether the phoneme concerned is short, long or protracted. This sounds odd, and we would expect the *prākṛta dhvani* and the *vaikṛta dhvani* to act simultaneously.

What would be the Sāṃkhya position in this regard? Do the *tanmātras* come into being before the evolutes that derive from them? In one important sense, yes. In the evolution out of original nature (*mūlaprakṛti*, *pradhāna*) each next evolute comes into being after the preceding one. But can the same be said about an individual utterance? Does it first produce the *śabdatanmātra*, and only subsequently its evolute, the quality sound?

It is difficult to find a satisfactory answer to this question. However, one thing seems clear. Both the *tanmātras* and their derivatives are objects of the senses. This we learn from Sāṃkhya Kārikā 34a, which states:²⁰ "Of the [tenfold external organ] the five sense organs have the *viśeṣas* and the *aviśeṣas* as objects." The *aviśeṣas*, it may be recalled, are the *tanmātras*. The *viśeṣas* are the five elements in the classical system, but we have seen that in the system known to Bhartṛhari they may have been the five qualities. The important thing is that the *tanmātras* are perceivable. Each perception, according to the Sāṃkhya system presumably known to Bhartṛhari, must have primarily consisted of two constituents: "pure" qualities (the *tanmātras*) and "ordinary" qualities (warts and all). I am not aware of any statement in Sāṃkhya literature to the extent that the *tanmātras* have some kind of priority in perception, [30] but cannot exclude that some such position was adhered to by at least some Sāṃkhyas. However this may be, it

¹⁸ VP I p. 141 l. 3-5: *tena ca sphoṭaviśayeṇa grahaṇenopādhinā bhinnakālena prakalpitabhedāḥ sphoṭasya drutamadhyamavilambitā vṛttayas tribhāgotkarṣeṇa yuktāḥ samākhyāyante/*

¹⁹ Cp. Iyer, 1965: 78-79.

²⁰ SK 34a: *buddhindriyāni teṣāṃ pañca viśeṣāviśeṣaviśayāni*. Note that the commentaries limit this ability to see the *tanmātras* to the gods and accomplished yogis. This may find its explanation in the changes the system had undergone.

is possible or even likely that the Sāṃkhya scheme of things as known to Bhartṛhari did distinguish two elements in sound, one of them perhaps called *prākṛta śabda*, the other one *vaikṛta śabda*.²¹ Unlike the latter of these two, the former was free from non-differential features.

It is time to turn to the Paddhati of Vṛṣabhadeva. This commentary is clearly not aware of the possible link of the two kinds of sound with Sāṃkhya. This is clear from the way it explains the terms *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta*, without reference to the Sāṃkhya use of these terms. Since the passage concerned is corrupt in all mss, I will only translate the part more or less plausibly reconstructed by its editor:²²

Regarding the word *prākṛta*: On account of the fact that *dhvani* and *sphoṭa* are not perceived separately, the *sphoṭa* concerned is thought to be the origin of that *dhvani*. [The *dhvani* is called] *prākṛta* because it is born in that.²³ [The *dhvani*] that comes after that and is perceived to be different from that is called *vaikṛta*, because it is like a modification of the *sphoṭa*. Or the striking of the organs [of sound] is the origin of the collection of sounds (*dhvani*). What comes first into being from that, is *prākṛta*, what comes next is *vaikṛta*.

* * *

To conclude. For a correct understanding of Bhartṛhari's *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta dhvani*, his intellectual context must first be taken into consideration. Comparison with theories of modern linguistics is delicate, and should not be made until Bhartṛhari's own intellectual background has been properly explored.

It seems likely that the notions of *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta* forms of sound come from Sāṃkhya, where these notions appear to have been current until the revision of that philosophy during which the qualities as final evolutes were replaced by the five elements. This hypothesis explains both Bhartṛhari's terminology and the ideas it covers: both Sāṃkhya and Bhartṛhari distinguish between two perceptible forms of sound, the one "pure", the other one "impure". Questions remain as to their temporal relationship: does the *vaikṛta dhvani* come into being after the *prākṛta dhvani*? Neither Bhartṛhari's text

²¹ Note that Raghunātha Śarmā (1988: 131 l. 28-29), who does not mention the link with Sāṃkhya, feels obliged to explain the term *vaikṛta* as synonymous with *vikṛta*: *vikṛta eva vaikṛta iti prajñādītvāt svārthe 'nprayayaḥ*.

²² VP I p. 142 l. 16-21: *prākṛtasya iti/ dhvanisphoṭayoh pṛthaktvenānupalambhāt taṃ sphoṭaṃ tasya dhvanēḥ prakṛtim iva manyante/ tatra bhavaḥ prākṛtaḥ/ taduttarakālabhāvī tasmād vilakṣaṇa evopalabhya ita vikārapattir iva sphoṭasyeti vaikṛta ucyaṭe/ dhvanisaṃghātasya vā prakṛtiḥ karaṇābhigātaḥ/ tataḥ prathamato bhavaḥ prākṛtaḥ, tatas tu vaikṛtaḥ/*

²³ Implicit reference to P. 4.3.53: *tatra bhavaḥ*.

nor our limited knowledge about the Sāṃkhya known to him allow us to reach a clear and certain answer to this question.

The revision of Sāṃkhya referred to above did away with both *prākṛta* and *vaikṛta dhvani*. Not surprisingly, the commentator Vṛṣabhadeva no longer understood Bhartṛhari's short and enigmatic passage, and gave it a different interpretation.

[32]

References:

- Aklujkar, Ashok (1990): "Bhartṛhari." EIP 5, 121-172
 Bronkhorst, Johannes (1994): "The qualities of Sāṃkhya." WZKS 38 (Orbis Indicus, Festschrift G. Oberhammer), 309-322.
 Brough, John (1951): "Theories of general linguistics in the Sanskrit grammarians." TPS (1951), pp. 27-46. Reprint: Staal, 1972: 402-414.
 Deshpande, Madhav M. (1997): *Śaunakīya Caturādhyāyikā. A Prātiśākhya of the Śaunakīya Atharvaveda, with the commentaries Caturādhyāyībhāṣya, Bhārgava-Bhāskara-Vṛtti and Pañcasandhi; critically edited, translated & annotated.* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press. (HOS, 52.)
 Houben, Jan E. M. (1990): "The sequencelessness of the signifier in Bhartṛhari's theory of language." IT 15-16 (1989-90), 119-129.
 Houben, Jan E.M. (1994): "Bhartṛhari's familiarity with Jainism." ABORI 75, 1-24 & 255-256.
 Iyer, K.A. Subramania (tr.)(1965): *The Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari with the Vṛtti, chapter I. English translation.* Poona: Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute.
 Parret, Herman (ed.)(1976): *History of Linguistic Thought and Contemporary Linguistics.* Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.
 Raja, K. Kunjunni (1969): *Indian Theories of Meaning.* Second edition. Adyar, Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre. 1977.

[33]

- Śarmā, Raghunātha (1988): *Vākyapadīyam part I (Brahma-kāṇḍam).* With the commentaries Svopajñavṛtti by Hariṣabha & Ambākartrī by ... Raghunātha Śarmā. Varanasi: Sampurnanand Sanskrit University. (Sarvasvatībhavana-Granthamālā, 91.)
 Staal, J. F. (1969): "Sanskrit philosophy of language." CTL 5, 499-531. = Parret, 1976: 102-136.
 Staal, J.F. (ed.)(1972): *A Reader on the Sanskrit Grammarians.* Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: MIT Press.

Abbreviations:

| | |
|-------|--|
| ABORI | Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona |
| ANISt | Alt- und Neuindische Studien, Hamburg |
| CTL | Current Trends of Linguistics, ed. Th. A. Sebeok, The Hague |
| EIP | The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, ed. Karl H. Potter et al., Delhi 1970 ff. |
| HOS | Harvard Oriental Series, Cambridge Mass. |
| IT | Indologica Taurinensia, Torino |
| SK | Sāṃkhya Kārikā |
| TPS | Transactions of the Philological Society, Oxford |
| Vkp | Bhartṛhari, Vākyapadīya, ed. W. Rau, Wiesbaden 1977 |

- VP I Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari with the Vṛtti and the Paddhati of
Vṛṣabhadeva, ed. K.A. Subramania Iyer, Poona: Deccan College, 1966
- YD Yuktidīpikā. 1) Edited by Ram Chandra Pandeya, Delhi: Motilal
Banarsidass, 1967. 2) Critically edited by Albrecht Wezler and Shujun
Moteji, Vol I, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998. (ANISt 44.)
- WZKS Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens, Wien