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THE QUALITIES OF SĀM̐KHYA¹(Published in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 38 (Orbis Indicus, Festschrift G. Oberhammer), 1994, 309-322.)

1. Bhartṛhari's commentary on the Mahābhāṣya contains, in the first Āhnika, the following remark concerning the Sāṃkhya philosophy (CE I p. 23 l. 21-23, AL p. 28 l. 11-13, Sw p. 33 l. 22-24, Ms 9c5-7):

*na hīdaṃ śāstram kasyacid ekasya sahāyabhūtaṃ sarvasādhāraṇam/
sāṃkhyādīnāṃ dravyād eva pratipattiḥ rūpādisamavāyo ghaṭo 'rthāntarabhūto
veti yasya yo ghaṭas tasmīn ghaṭasabdāṃ prayunkte*

For this science [of grammar] is common to all and does not side with anyone. For example, according to the Sāṃkhyas and others the understanding derived from a substance is that a vase is a collection of colour(s) and so on, or something else; [the grammarian] uses the word 'vase' with regard to that which constitutes a vase for the [person with whom he is in discussion].

What interests us in this passage is the passing reference to the Sāṃkhya position, according to which a vase is a collection of colour(s) and so on.

A similar statement occurs in the Vākyapadīya (ed. Rau, 3.13.14):

*sarvamūrtyātmabhūtānāṃ śabdādīnāṃ guṇe guṇe/
trayaḥ sattvādīdharmās te sarvatra samavasthitāḥ//*

Those three characteristics, sattva etc., which are found in each quality from among sound etc. which constitute all corporeal objects, are present everywhere.

The mention of 'the three characteristics, sattva etc.' — i.e., sattva, rajas, and tamas — leaves no doubt that the system of thought referred to is, again, Sāṃkhya.²

Bhartṛhari does not stand alone in attributing to Sāṃkhya the position that material objects are collections of the qualities colour, sound, etc. Puṅyarāja's commentary on the second Kāṇḍa of the Vākyapadīya may refer to the same view in the following passage (ed. Iyer p. 63 l. 16; on VP 2.135):

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*vaiśeṣikenāvayavinaṃ pratipādayitūṃ ghaṭasabdāḥ prayuktaḥ sāṃkhyair
guṇasamāhāramātram abhimanyate jainasaugataiḥ paramāṇusaṃcayamātram iti*

...
The Vaiśeṣika uses the word 'vase' to designate the whole; the Sāṃkhyas think that it is used to designate the collection of *guṇas* and nothing else; the Jainas and Buddhists, only a heap of atoms.

¹ I thank E. Franco and A. Wezler for useful suggestions.

² The commentator Helārāja, interestingly, tries to show that sound etc. only seem to constitute corporeal objects (pt. ii p. 138 l. 21-22): *vyatireke 'pi dravyasya samavāyavaśāt tadātmakatvam iva*.

There is some ambiguity in this statement in as far as the Sāṁkhyas are concerned: the term *guṇa* does not only mean quality in this system of thought, it can also refer to the three constituents (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) of primary matter.

No such ambiguity attaches to Dharmapāla's introductory remarks to Āryadeva's *Catuṣṣataka* verse 301 (tr. Tillemans, 1990: 135): "[The Sāṁkhya philosopher] Kapila asserts [the following]: Things such as vases and cloths are established simply as colours (*rūpa*)³ and other such [properties]; the natures (*svabhāva*; *dravya* ?), which are the objects of the sense organs, do really exist." Siṁhasūri, similarly, ascribes to Sāṁkhya the view that vases etc. (*ghaṭādi*) are collections of colours etc. (*rūpādisamūha*).⁴

All these statements — as well as others from Mallavādin's *Dvādaśāra* *Nayacakra* and Kaiyaṭa's commentary on the *Mahābhāṣya*, to be considered below — support Bhartrhari's claims according to which the Sāṁkhyas looked upon material objects as being constituted of 'colour(s) etc.' (*rūpādi*), or of 'sound etc.' (*śabdādi*). It seems moreover clear that 'colour(s) etc.' and 'sound etc.' in these statements refer to the five qualities colour, taste, smell, touch and sound.

2. It is not easy to reconcile the contents of these statements with classical Sāṁkhya doctrine as presented in the *Yuktidīpikā*, the most elaborate commentary on Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṁkhya Kārikā*. There, it may be recalled, the material world is conceived of as having evolved out of *Prakṛti*, through a number of intermediate stages. Material objects are considered to consist of the five elements: earth, water, fire, wind and ether. Qualities are not even mentioned among the 25 *tattvas* which constitute the world. In fact, the elements that do figure among the 25 *tattvas* possess qualities: ether possesses only sound; wind possesses sound and touch; fire possesses sound, touch and colour; water possesses sound, touch, colour and taste; earth, finally, possesses sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. These five elements are believed to have directly evolved out of five *tanmātras*, which carry the names of the five qualities without [311] being qualities themselves. The distinction between *tanmātras* and qualities is clear from the following passage (*Yuktidīpikā* p. 118 l. 14-16):

*śabdaguṇāc chabdatanmātrād ākāśam ekaguṇam/ śabdasparsaguṇāt
sparsatanmātrād dviguṇo vāyuḥ/ śabdasparsārūpaguṇād rūpatanmātrāt triguṇam
tejaḥ/ śabdasparsārūparasaguṇād rasatanmātrāc caturguṇā āpah/
śabdasparsārūparasagandhaguṇād gandhatanmātrāt pañcaguṇā pṛthivī/
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*

³ Tillemans translates "[visual] forms", which is another possible rendering of Skt. *rūpa*.

⁴ DNC I p. 266 l. 9. For Siṁhasūri's interpretation of this statement, see section 3, below.

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.⁵

Interestingly, it is not certain that the Yuktidīpikā correctly represents the position of the Sāṁkhya Kārikā in this respect. The Sāṁkhya Kārikā leaves us in doubt whether it distinguishes between the *tanmātras* and the qualities ‘colour’, ‘sound’, ‘smell’, ‘taste’, and ‘touch’. This can be seen as follows.

Recall first that several early texts, such as Aśvaghoṣa’s Buddhacarita (12.18-19) and some portions of the Mahābhārata (cr. ed. 12.203.25-29; 294.27-29; 298.10-21; 14.49.34 f.), knew a form of Sāṁkhya in which the five qualities figure among the *tattvas*; they are here among the final evolutes, and derive from the five elements.⁶ Here, then, the qualities do figure among the fundamental *tattvas*. It is true that they did not occupy the same position as the *tanmātras* in classical Sāṁkhya.⁷ It is yet conceivable (though not provable, as far as I can see) that the five *tanmātras*, at one phase of the development of Sāṁ-[312]khya, were the five qualities.

This possibility is not contradicted by the Sāṁkhya Kārikā. That is to say, this text allows, besides the ‘orthodox’ interpretation, of an interpretation in which the *tanmātras* are the five qualities. Consider first verse 28a:

rūpādiṣu (v.l. *śabdādiṣu*) *pañcānām ālocanamātram iṣyate vṛttiḥ*
The function of the five [sense organs] with regard to colour (v.l. sound) etc., is deemed to be mere perception.

Here it is possible to take "colour (or sound) etc." to be the five qualities of those names. Verse 34a, on the other hand, has:

buddhīndriyāṇi teṣāṁ pañca viśeṣāviśeṣaviśayāṇi
Of the [tenfold external organ] the five sense organs have the *viśeṣas* and the *aviśeṣas* as objects.

⁵ A similar passage occurs in the Mātharavṛtti (on SK 22; p. 37 l. 5-9). The Gauḍapādabhāṣya and the commentary translated into Chinese by Paramārtha simply derive the elements from one *tanmātra* each, without mentioning qualities. See further note 8, below.

⁶ This has been known at least since Otto Strauss (1913); see also Frauwallner, 1927.

⁷ Occasionally one gets the impression that the idea of qualities as constituting the very end of the evolutionary list of *tattvas* is not completely unknown to classical Sāṁkhya. An example is the following line, quoted in the Yuktidīpikā (p. 117 l. 13-14): *upabhogasya śabdādyupalabdhir ādīḥ guṇapurūṣopalabdhir antaḥ*. Interestingly, YD p. 64 l. 19 f. states that the qualities sound etc. are pervaded (*anu-gam*) by, or have the same nature as (*-svarūpa*), the three constituents (here called *sukha*, *duḥkha*, and *moha*), as does Mallavādin’s Dvādaśāra Nayacakra I p. 265; SK 38, on the other hand, makes a similar observation regarding the elements (*bhūta*), using the terms *sānta*, *ghora* and *mūḍha* (YD p. 119 l. 20-21 adds that the *tanmātras* are not *sānta*, *ghora* and *mūḍha*).

The meanings of *viśeṣa* and *aviśeṣa* are explained in verse 38:

tanmātrāṇy aviśeṣās tebhyo bhūtāni pañca pañcabhyaḥ/ ete smṛtā viśeṣāḥ
The *tanmātras* are the *aviśeṣas*. From those five [arise] the five elements; these are known as the *viśeṣas*.

According to Sāṁkhya Kārikā 34a, then, the sense organs have as objects the five elements and the five *tanmātras*.⁸ If it is true that five qualities are the objects (verse 28a, as interpreted above), one might think that the five *tanmātras* are the five qualities. Nothing in the Sāṁkhya Kārikā militates against this view, as far as I can see.⁹

It would be premature to draw far-reaching consequences from the lack of clarity of the Sāṁkhya Kārikā. It is not at all certain that it looked upon the *tanmātras* as qualities. But if it did, this would not be without interest in connection with the various quotations maintaining that in Sāṁkhya material objects are collections of qualities.

3. We must now consider a passage in Mallavādin's Dvādaśāra Nayacakra which criticizes the Sāṁkhyas. This passage reads, in the reconstruction of Muni Jambuvijaya (I p. 268 l. 1-2):

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*atha katham ekakāraṇatvapratiṣedhānantaram śabdaikaguṇappravṛtti viyad
abhyupagamyate/ na pravartetaivam, asandruteḥ, puruṣavad vandhyāputravad
vā/*

But how [can the Sāṁkhyas] accept that ether is produced from the single quality sound, immediately after rejecting [the possibility] that something has one single cause? It cannot be produced in this way, because [ether] is not a collection, just as a soul (*puruṣa*) or the son of a barren woman [is not a collection].

The commentator Siṁhasūri cites in connection with the term *asandruteḥ* "because [ether] is not a collection", the following phrase from the Mahābhāṣya: *guṇasandrāvo dravyam* "a material object is a collection of qualities". We shall pay further attention to this phrase below. Here it is sufficient to note that Siṁhasūri is most probably correct in

⁸ Most of the commentaries hasten to add that the *tanmātras* are not grasped by the sense-organs of ordinary mortals (often: *asmadādi*). It is here further to be noted that the Sāṁkhya Kārikā does not appear to justify the translation 'subtle elements' or the like for *tanmātra*. Verse 39 rather speaks of a subvariety of the *viśeṣas* that are *sūkṣma* 'subtle'; these *sūkṣma viśeṣas* 'subtle elements' are clearly not *aviśeṣas*, i.e., *tanmātras*.

⁹ Frauwallner (1953: 355 f.; also 1927: 2 (141)) claims that in early Sāṁkhya the different *tanmātras* each had only one quality. (Cp. YD p. 91 l. 7: *ekarūpāni tanmātrāṇī anye/ ekottarāṇīti vārsagaṇyah/*; also p. 118 l. 12-13; Vācaspati Miśra's Tattvakaumudī on SK 22: *śabdatanmātrād ākāśam śabdaguṇam/ śabdatanmātrasahitāt sparśatanmātrād vāyuh śabdasparsāguṇah/ śabdasparsatanmātrasahitād rūpatanmātrāt tejah śabdasparsārūpaguṇam/ śabdasparsārūpatanmātrasahitād rasatanmātrād āpaḥ śabdasparsārūparasaguṇāḥ/ śabdasparsārūparasatanmātrasahitād gandhatanmātrāc chabdasparsārūparasagandhaguṇā pṛthivī/ jāyate ity arthah/*. Similar statements in the Candrikā and Jayamaṅgalā.) This position is of course but one step removed from the above tentative suggestion that the five qualities once occupied the place of the *tanmātras*.

attributing to Mallavādin the belief that the Sāṁkhyas looked upon material objects as collections of qualities.

Albrecht Wezler (1986: 3f.) interprets the above passage in the light of the passage from the Yuktidīpikā cited in section 2, above. To quote his own words (p. 5): "The gist of Mallavādin's counterargument is hence that ether cannot originate in the manner asserted by the Sāṁkhyas because it does not correspond to their definition of *dravya*, i.e. because it is not a *dravya* or rather because its cause, the *śabda* *śabdatanmātra*, is not a *dravya* just like the soul or the son of a barren woman."

This interpretation is not, however, free from difficulties. First of all, the words *śabdaikaguṇappravṛtti viyad* in the above passage translate most naturally as "ether is produced from the single quality sound". The alternative translation "ether is produced from [the *śabdatanmātra*] which has sound as its only quality" is decidedly more artificial. Moreover, if the latter interpretation had been intended by Mallavādin, his remark "immediately after rejecting [the possibility] that something may have one single cause" (*ekakāraṇatvapratiṣedhānantaram*) would be besides the point. As can be seen from the Yuktidīpikā passage cited above, each of the elements, not only ether, is there presented as deriving from a single cause, viz., from the corresponding *tanmātra*.

It will hardly be necessary to point out that Mallavādin's passage allows of an interpretation in the light of what we have discussed in section 1, above. The material world is constituted of the qualities sound etc.; these qualities are accordingly the causes of all material objects. Ether has but one quality, sound, and therefore but one cause. This, however, goes against the rule that every product must have more than one single cause.

Wezler's interpretation of Mallavādin's passage can, in view of the above, be replaced by one that does more justice to its precise wording. Interestingly, Wezler's interpretation appears to coincide with the one offered by Mallavādin's commentator Siṃhasūri. This can be deduced from some phrases in the latter's Nyāyāgamānusāriṇī. [314]

Consider first the following line (I p. 268 l. 4-6): *yady anekātmakaikakāraṇatvam iṣyate evam ekakāraṇatvapratiṣedhānantaram ... katham śabdaikaguṇappravṛtti viyad abhyupagamyate*. The difficulty connected with *ekakāraṇatvapratiṣedhānantaram*, pointed out above, is here avoided by superimposing a different interpretation on this term. The "rejection of [the possibility] that something may have a single cause" becomes here the requirement (*iṣ*) that something have a single cause which has a multiple nature. This requirement fits, of course, the different *tanmātras* that are single causes of the corresponding elements, but have several qualities.

Siṃhasūri is equally careful to avoid the difficulty presented by the word *śabdaikaguṇapravṛtti*. He cites an unfindable Dhātupāṭha¹⁰ in order to interpret the problematic word *guṇa* as ‘number’. The aim of this procedure seems, once again, to force the orthodox version of Sāṃkhya upon a recalcitrant text.

It appears, then, possible that Siṃhasūri, unlike Mallavādin, is acquainted with a form of Sāṃkhya in which *tanmātras*, and not qualities (*guṇa*), figure in the list of evolutes; or perhaps: in which *tanmātras* and *guṇas* had come to be differentiated. Be it noted that another passage of his Nyāyāgamānusāriṇī (II p. 470 l. 13) enumerates *mahat*, *ahaṃkāra* and the *tanmātras*, three evolutes which succeed each other in classical Sāṃkhya.

If our interpretations of Mallavādin and Siṃhasūri are correct, we have stumbled upon an interesting difference between these two authors. Mallavādin, it appears, was not yet acquainted with Sāṃkhya in its ‘classical’ form. Siṃhasūri, on the other hand, was no longer aware of the earlier form of Sāṃkhya known to Mallavādin, and felt obliged to reinterpret the latter’s words so as to arrive at an understanding that was in agreement with the form of Sāṃkhya that he knew.

4. The conclusion we have to draw from the preceding sections is that a number of classical authors appear to have known the Sāṃkhya system of thought in a form which was in at least some points different from the classical system as it has been handed down to us. The Sāṃkhya known to Bhartṛhari, Mallavādin and others had, we have been led to believe, the qualities sound, colour, taste, touch and smell among its evolutes. Interestingly, this position is primarily known to us through texts that were no school-texts of the Sāṃkhyas, most notably a number of passages in the Mahābhārata. We have seen, however, that the Sāṃkhya Kārikā itself may have held a similar position.

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It seems probable that Bhartṛhari and the other authors we have discussed found the position they attributed to the Sāṃkhyas in one or more texts belonging to that school. And there can hardly be any doubt that that text — or one of those texts — is the one called *vārṣagaṇa tantra* by Siṃhasūri, and which Frauwallner (1958: 13 (233)) identifies as the Śaṣṭitantra of Vṛṣagaṇa.¹¹ This text was known to Dignāga and Mallavādin, as Frauwallner has shown. If indeed Bhartṛhari was acquainted with it, its date of composition must precede him, too.

¹⁰ See editor’s note 3 to p. 268 of Mallavādin’s Dvādaśāra Nayacakra, and Wezler, 1986: 27 n. 14.

¹¹ Or rather Vārṣagaṇa; see Larson in Larson and Bhattacharya, 1987: 624 n. 21; Wezler, 1985: 14 n. 6; Chakravari, 1951: 137-38.

How is it possible that Siṃhasūri who, like Mallavādin, knew the Śaṣṭitantra, gives evidence of being acquainted with a different version of Sāṃkhya? Frauwallner's article "Die Erkenntnislehre des klassischen Sāṃkhya-Systems" (1958) may provide the elements for an answer. Already Dignāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi, Frauwallner argues (p. 28 (248), 32 (252)), knew at least two, possibly three commentaries on the Śaṣṭitantra. It is not impossible that one of these commentators was, or was close to, the author of the Yoga Bhāṣya (p. 33-34 (253-54)).

It is not our task at present to take position with regard to Frauwallner's conclusions, which contain inevitably a speculative element. Be it however noted that Siṃhasūri's deviation from Mallavādin in the interpretation of Sāṃkhya doctrine fits in very well with the assumption that Sāṃkhya philosophy evolved, and therefore changed, through the reinterpretation(s) by its commentators of its classical text, which may have been called Śaṣṭitantra. This assumption would, of course, agree very well with the hypothesis presented in section 2, above, according to which the Sāṃkhya Kārikā would still precede the modification which finds expression in its commentaries.

5. The above reflections suggest that a major change took place in Sāṃkhya doctrine, perhaps some time in the 5th century of our era. What could possibly have been the reason of this change? Why should Sāṃkhya abandon the idea that material objects are nothing but collections of qualities?

These questions do not, at present, allow of a certain and indubitable answer. There are simply no texts from the period that might provide such an answer. It is yet very tempting to suspect a connection with the *satkāryavāda*, the doctrine according to which effects (or products) pre-exist in their causes. This doctrine of classical Sāṃkhya [316] is already known to Āryadeva¹² and Mallavādin (DNC I p. 271).¹³ It must therefore have co-existed with the view that material objects are nothing but collections of qualities for at least some time. Yet the two are strange bedfellows. In order to accommodate the doctrine of *satkāryavāda*, classical Sāṃkhya views the world as an continuous series of modifications (*pariṇāma*) of substrates which do not lose their essence. (The ultimate substrate is, of course, known by the name *prakṛti* or *pradhāna*.) The Yuktidīpikā defines *pariṇāma* in the following verse:¹⁴ "When the substrate (*dharmīn*), without abandoning its essence, drops the earlier property (*dharma*) and accepts the next one, that is called modification (*pariṇāma*)." Essential in this definition

¹² E.g., Catuḥśataka ch. 11 (Lang, 1986: esp. p. 106 f.). See further Honda, 1974.

¹³ Several authors (Franco, 1991: 127; Larson, 1979: 165; Johnston, 1937: 25; Liebhenthal, 1933: 9 n. 11) have drawn attention to the fact that *satkāryavāda* is without clear precedents in the earlier literature, and must be a relatively late development in Sāṃkhya. Regarding the origin of this doctrine we may recall Liebhenthal's (1933: 4) question: "[Wir] dürfen ... fragen, ob nicht vielleicht *satkārya* ... nur ein Aspekt einer Diskussion mit Mādhyamika-Buddhisten ist".

¹⁴ YD p. 75 l. 6-7: *jahad dharmāntaram pūrvam upādatte yadā param/ tattvād apracyuto dharmī pariṇāmaḥ sa ucyatc//*.

is that the substrate remains in each modification, without abandoning its essence. That is to say, material objects are more than mere collections of properties, there is necessarily something more to them, viz., the all-important substrate.¹⁵

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The Yoga Bhāṣya offers a similar definition of *pariṇāma*:¹⁶ "The production of a new property in a substance which remains the same, while the earlier property is destroyed." It is true that the Yuktidīpikā finds fault with this definition, but its criticism concerns the use of the terms 'production' and 'destruction',¹⁷ certainly not the part which states that the substance remains the same.

Is it conceivable that Sāṁkhya changed its view about the nature of material objects under pressure from the satkāryavāda?

6. To conclude this article we have to consider two statements that occur in the Mahābhāṣya. This text, whose author is called Patañjali, is one of the very few texts of early India that can rather precisely be dated: the Mahābhāṣya belongs almost certainly to the middle of the second century B.C.E. The first statement that interests us is the following (on P. 5.1.119 vt. 5; Mbh (ed. Kielhorn) II p. 366 l. 26):

guṇasaṃdrāvo dravyam

The second one reads (on P. 4.1.3 vt. 7; Mbh (ed. Kielhorn) II p. 200 l. 13-14):

¹⁵ This is how we must read Yuktidīpikā p. 51 l. 17-18: *asmākan tu kāraṇamātrasyaiva saṃghātād ākāraṅtarapariṅrahād vā kriyāguṇānām pracitir vyaktiviśeṣo bhavatīti bruvatām adōṣah*. "But [this] reproach is not valid for us because what we teach is that a particular manifest thing originates as the accumulation of movements and qualities on account of the cause and nothing but the cause having coagulated or having assumed another shape." (tr. Wezler, 1986: 22). This passage occurs in a discussion about the question whether the effect pre-exists in its cause, the famous satkāryavāda. The opponent argues that if the effect were there, it should be observable, which it isn't. And if it is not observable, one should be able to infer it on the basis of its movements and qualities, which, again, is not the case. Here the author of the Yuktidīpikā responds that one can only search for the movements and qualities of an effect as distinct from those of the cause, if one assumes that cause and effect themselves are distinct, which the Sāṁkhya denies. Here the Yuktidīpikā observes (p. 51 l. 15-17): *kāryakāraṇaprthaktvavādināḥ tat kriyāguṇānām prthaktvam anumātuṃ yuktam ity atas tantvavasthāne paṭakriyāguṇagrahaṇād anumānābhāva ity ayam upālambhaḥ sāvakāśaḥ syāt*. "For him who holds that effect and cause are separate, it is appropriate to infer that their movements and qualities are separate. For this reason the reproach can be made that, in the state of a [mere] thread (and no cloth), no [cloth can] be inferred on the basis of the observation of the movements and qualities of [that] cloth (precisely because these latter are not observed)." (Or, reading with Wezler (1986: 21) *paṭakriyāguṇāgrahaṇād*, "no [cloth can] be inferred because no movements and qualities of [that] cloth are observed".) Our phrase follows immediately after this remark.

It will be clear that there is no question anywhere in this discussion of objects being nothing but accumulations of movements and qualities. Movements and qualities come in because they distinguish the effect from its cause, not because they constitute either or both of the two. Essentially effect and cause are not distinct, precisely because they are not made up of movements and qualities. Note, to conclude, that the Yuktidīpikā cites a verse which describes bodies, as well as vases etc., as nothing but collections of sattva etc. (p. 133 l. 1-2): *tasmāt saṃghātamātratvāt sattvādīnām ghaṭādivat/ ā brahmaṇaḥ parijñāya dchānām anavasthitim//*.

¹⁶ YBh 3.13: *avasthitasya dravyasya pūrvadharmanivṛtau dharmāntarotpattih*.

¹⁷ See Halbfass, 1992: 200-201 n. 72.

guṇasamudāyo dravyam

Both phrases are practically synonymous, and state that material objects are collections of qualities. There is no reason to believe that they express the opinion of the author of the Mahābhāṣya, yet they prove that this view existed in his days. The Mahābhāṣya specifies what is meant by *guṇas* two pages before one of these two phrases; the *guṇas* are sound (*śabda*), touch (*sparsā*), colour (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), and smell (*gandha*) (Mbh (ed. Kielhorn) II p. 198 l. 5). There is no reason to think that the *guṇas* that constitute material objects are different from these five.

Can we conclude from these two phrases that some form of Sāṁkhya was known to the author of the Mahābhāṣya? This would not be without danger, the more so since the Mahābhāṣya contains, to my knowledge, no clear indications to that effect. What is more, the view of matter as a collection of qualities was not the exclusive property of [318] the Sāṁkhyas: the Sarvāstivādins held similar views, as has been correctly pointed out by Wezler (1986: 32 n. 82). And whereas the Mahābhāṣya contains no clear indication that its author knew the Sāṁkhya doctrine, there is reason to believe that he was acquainted with the teachings of the early Sarvāstivādins (Bronkhorst, 1987: 56 ff.). This is not, however, the place to discuss this question in further detail.

Appendix

A solution to our problem of early Sāṁkhya has been suggested by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, author of the Uddyota, a subcommentary on the (Vyākaraṇa-)Mahābhāṣya. It occurs in his comments on Kaiyaṭa's Pradīpa on the Mahābhāṣya on P. 4.1.3. Kaiyaṭa states (vol. III p. 447):

sattvarajastamāṁsi guṇāḥ, tatpariṇāmarūpās ca tadātmakā eva śabdādayaḥ pañca guṇāḥ/ tatsaṅghātarūpaṁ ca ghaṭādi, na tu tadvyatiriktam avayavidravyam astīti sām̐khyānām siddhāntaḥ/

The doctrine of the Sāṁkhyas is [as follows:] The *guṇas* are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; the [so-called] five *guṇas*, [viz.] sound etc., are modifications of those [three *guṇas*] and [therefore] identical with these. And vases etc. are collections of those [five *guṇas*], not material wholes different from those [five *guṇas*].

This statement repeats the position also expressed by Bhartṛhari and the other authors studied above. Nāgeśa comments as follows on the word *sām̐khyānām* (vol. III, p. 447):

*sāṁkhyānām iti/ seśvarasāṁkhyānām ācāryasya patañjaler ity arthaḥ/
guṇasamūho dravyam iti patañjaliḥ iti yogabhāṣye spaṣṭam/
'Of the Sāṁkhyas' means: of Patañjali, a teacher belonging to the Sāṁkhyas
with God (seśvara sāṁkhyā). It is clear in the Yoga Bhāṣya that according to
Patañjali a material object is a collection of guṇas.*

The reference is to the Yoga Bhāṣya on YS 3.44, which reads:

ayutasiddhāvayavabhedānugataḥ samūho dravyam iti patañjaliḥ.
According to Patañjali,¹⁸ a material object is an aggregate of different
component parts which do not exist separately.

Nāgeśa interprets this to mean, that a material object is a collection of *guṇas*. Is this correct? And what does he mean by '*guṇa*'?

The statement from the Yoga Bhāṣya must be read in context. It is preceded by a discussion, the most important points of which (for our present purposes) are: [319] A material object is a collection of *sāmānya*(s) and *viśeṣa*(s) (*sāmānyaviśeṣasamudāyo 'tra dravyam*). What are *sāmānyas* and *viśeṣas*? The *viśeṣas* are sound etc. — belonging to earth etc. — together with their properties, shape etc. (*pārthivādyāḥ śabdādāyo viśeṣāḥ saḥkārādibhir dharmaiḥ*). The *sāmānyas* are corporeality (which is earth), viscosity (which is water), heat (which is fire), moving forward (wind),¹⁹ going everywhere (which is ether) (*svasāmānyaṃ mūrtir bhūmiḥ sneho jalaṃ vahnir uṣṇatā vāyuḥ praṇāmī sarvatogatir ākāśaḥ*).²⁰ The text adds that sound etc. are the *viśeṣas* of a *sāmānya*.

There can be little doubt that both *sāmānyas* and *viśeṣas* are qualities of some sort;²¹ we may speak, with Dasgupta (1924: 168), of generic and specific qualities. Material objects are, therefore, aggregates or collections of qualities, which are, moreover, inseparable. We may assume that we have to do here with a development of the pre-classical form of Sāṁkhyā outlined above.²²

Does this mean that we have to believe, following the lead of Nāgeśa, that Bhartṛhari and the other authors cited at the beginning of this article referred to the Yoga Bhāṣya, or perhaps to a work by the mysterious Patañjali mentioned there? It

¹⁸ According to Halbfass (1992: 106 n. 8), the reference is to the grammarian Patañjali. This seems doubtful, and is indeed not the opinion of Nāgeśa, as we have seen.

¹⁹ Frauwallner (1953: 357, 404) translates *praṇāmītā*: Vorwärtsbewegung.

²⁰ The Yoga Bhāṣya on YS 4.14 enumerates the same *sāmānyas* as: *mūrti, sneha, auṣṇya, praṇāmītva, avakāśādāna*.

²¹ Some of the *sāmānyas* of the Yoga Bhāṣya figure among the dharmas of the elements enumerated at YD p. 118 l. 21 f.

²² Buddhist influence cannot be ruled out either. Cf. Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya 1.12 (p. 8 l. 21-22): *kharāḥ pṛthivīdhātuḥ/ sneho 'bdhātuḥ/ uṣṇatā tejodhātuḥ/ iraṇā vāyudhātuḥ*; the similarity with the Yoga Bhāṣya is undeniable.

seems doubtful. The *sāmānyas* in the Yoga Bhāṣya are never referred to as *guṇas*;²³ yet Bhartṛhari uses this term in connection with ‘sound etc.’

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²³ Except, of course, by Nāgeśa in the passage cited above.

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Abbreviations

AL	Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartrhari, ed. Abhyankar and Limaye
CE	Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartrhari, 'critical edition'
DNC	Dvādaśāra Nayacakra of Mallavādin, ed. Jamubuvijaya

Mbh	Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali
MMK	Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna
Ms	Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartṛhari, manuscript reproduced
NS	Nyāya Sūtra
P.	Pāṇinian sūtra
SK	Sāṁkhya Kārikā
Sw	Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartṛhari, ed. Swaminathan
VP	Vākyapadīya
YD	Yuktidīpikā