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STUDIES ON BHARTṚHARI, 5: BHARTṚHARI AND VAIŚEṢIKA[1]

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There are reasons to think that Bhartṛhari's writings may shed light on the early history of Vaiśeṣika. One of these is that he obviously knew the Vaiśeṣika system. Almost all of its categories play a role in his work. Separate sections (*samuddeśa*) of the Vākyapadīya are dedicated to the categories *jāti*, *dravya*, *guṇa* and *kriyā*. The relationship called *samavāya* — a special feature of Vaiśeṣika — is mentioned and used repeatedly. Vaiśeṣika substances appear as 'powers' (*śakti*), most notably *kāla* (time) and *diś* (space).

A second reason is Bhartṛhari's chronological position. I have argued in another publication that Praśastapāda's Padārthadharmasaṃgraha, as well as Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti before it, were heavily indebted to the Kaṭandī, a work written not long before Dignāga. This Kaṭandī, I further argued, exerted a dominating influence on all Vaiśeṣika literature that came after it, including perhaps the versions of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra itself, not to speak of the surviving commentaries on this Sūtra work.[2] Bhartṛhari, on the other hand, lived long enough before Dignāga that someone different from Bhartṛhari could write a commentary on the first two kāṇḍas of his Vākyapadīya still before Dignāga. Bhartṛhari, therefore, lived and worked most probably before the Kaṭandī! If his work provides information on Vaiśeṣika, it would then be one of the very few sources of information dating from the pre-Kaṭandī period of this system.

In what follows we shall consider some possible links between Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya and the Vaiśeṣika of his days.

[76]

1. The variegated colour (citrarūpa)

Karl H. Potter explains the variegated colour in his Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies vol. II, which deals with the tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa, in the following terms (1977: 118): "Consider a substance with a mottled surface of more than one shade. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika insists on treating this substance as a single entity with one color or its own, but

[1] I thank A. Wezler and J. Houben for critical comments. The earlier articles in this series have appeared in the following periodicals: no. 1, Bulletin d'Études Indiennes 6 (1988), 105-143; no. 2, Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik 15 (1989), 101-117; no. 3, Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques 45 (1991), 5-18; no. 4, Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques 46, 1 (1992), 56-80.

[2] See Bronkhorst, 1993.

surely it is evident that it has several colors. Does this mean that one thing can be both, say, red and green all over at once? Uddyotakara seems to have originated one sort of answer to this, which is that in the list of shades one has to count as one kind of color that called 'variegated color' (*citrarūpa*)."

The problem which the variegated colour is meant to solve is clear. An object is, in Vaiśeṣika ontology, different from its parts; it is a completely different entity, which has, necessarily, a colour of its own, different from the colours of its parts. What is the colour of a whole whose parts do not all have the same colour?

The problem is inherent in the most fundamental assumption of Vaiśeṣika, and is likely to be as old as the system itself. Why then do we not find this particular answer until Uddyotakara, a Nyāya author who may have been a contemporary of Praśastapāda?

The reason why we don't find the variegated colour mentioned in our earliest Vaiśeṣika texts appears to be that we have so few of them. There is reason to believe that the variegated colour played a role in the system already before Praśastapāda.

Otto Grohma (1975: 151 f.) has drawn attention to the passage in Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya which polemicizes against the existence of a whole cloth as different from its parts. Vasubandhu mentions here the variegated colour in the following lines (p. 189 l. 24-26): "In case the threads have different colours … the cloth could not have a colour .. If [you accept] 'variegated' as its colour … there would be production of [a colour] belonging to a different universal (from the colours in the threads)." (*bhinnarūpajātikriyeṣu tantuṣu paṭasya rūpādyasaṃbhavāt/ citrarūpāditve vijātīyārambho 'pi syāt*).

It must be admitted that the variegated colour in this passage from the Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya is rather hypothetical, and does not prove beyond doubt that anyone known to Vasubandhu believed in it.

Vyomaśiva's commentary on the Padārthadharmasaṃgraha, called Vyomavatī, cites a sūtra in its discussion of the variegated colour. The [77] sūtra reads:[3] "Because there cannot be, in one non-omnipresent substance, [several] specific qualities (*viśeṣaguṇa*) that are perceived by the same sense-organ." It is not impossible that this sūtra was indeed meant to justify variegated colour as a quality. Unfortunately it is only known through this passage of the Vyomavatī; it does not occur in the different versions of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra that have been preserved, nor does it appear to be cited by any other commentator.

For the most certain attestation of the variegated colour in early Vaiśeṣika we have to turn to the following verses of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya:[4]

> Just as the single variegated colour is described by way of different [colours] such as blue etc., which point to divisions [in the one and indivisible variegated colour]; in the same way the single sentence, which is completely self-sufficient, is described by way of other linguistic units (viz. words) which require one another.

[3] Vy vol. 1, p. 63 l. 20: *avibhuni dravye samānendriyagrāhyāṇāṃ viśeṣaguṇānāṃ asambhavāt.*
[4] VP 2.8-9: *citrasyaikasya rūpasya yathā bhedanidarśanaiḥ/ nīlādibhiḥ samākhyānaṃ kriyate bhinnalakṣaṇaiḥ// tathaivaikasya vākyasya nirākāṅkṣasya sarvataḥ/ śabdāntaraiḥ samākhyānaṃ sākāṅkṣair anugamyate//*

It is not necessary to recall here that for Bhartṛhari the sentence is the real unit of language, the individual words being the result of an artificial analysis. The comparison with the variegated colour is therefore particularly appropriate, for that colour too cannot be looked upon as a collection of constituent colours. The comparison further reminds us of the fact that Bhartṛhari's observations on the sentence as an indivisible unite are of an ontological rather than linguistic or psychological nature.

2. Sound (1)[5]

Sound (*śabda*), in classical Vaiśeṣika, is a quality of ether (*ākāśa*). It is already described as such in the Padārthadharmasaṃgraha of Praśastapāda, in Candramati's *Daśapadārthī, and in some of the Vaiśeṣika sūtras. The Padārthadharmasaṃgraha gives the following description:[6]

> *śabdo 'mbaraguṇaḥ śrotragrāhyaḥ kṣaṇikaḥ …/ sa dvividho varṇalakṣaṇo dhvani-* (v.l. *'varṇa*) *lakṣaṇaś ca/ tatra akārādir varṇalakṣaṇaḥ śaṅkhādinimitto dhvanilakṣaṇaś* [78] *ca* (v.l. *'varṇalakṣaṇaḥ*)*/ tatra varṇalakṣaṇasyotpattir ātmamanasoḥ saṃyogāt smṛtyapekṣād varṇoccāraṇecchā/ tadanantaraṃ prayatnaḥ/ tam apekṣamāṇād ātmavāyusaṃyogād vāyau karma jāyate/ sa cordhvaṃ gacchan kaṇṭhādīn* (v.l. *uraḥkaṇṭhādīn*) *abhihanti/ tataḥ sthānavāyusaṃyogāpekṣamāṇāt* (v.l. *-āpekṣāt*) *sthānākāśasaṃyogād varṇotpattiḥ/*
> Sound is a property of ether. It is perceptible by the ear. It is momentary. … It is of two kinds — (1) in the form of speech sounds and (2) in the form of noise in general. [Sound] in the form of speech sounds is [the sounds] *a* etc. [Sound] in the form of noise in general is produced by the blowing of a conch and such things. Sound of the former kind proceeds from the contact of the mind and soul as influenced by remembrance: — First of all there is desire for pronouncing the sound; this is followed by an effort on the part of the speaker; and when this effort brings about the conjunction of the soul with wind, there is produced in this wind a certain motion; this wind moving upwards strikes such places as the throat and the like; this contact of the places of articulation and the wind brings about contact of the places of articulation with *ākāśa*; and this contact produces the speech sounds. (tr. Gaṅgānātha Jhā, modified)

This passage is quite clear that speech sounds are the sounds of the alphabet (*a* etc.) and are momentary. Words and phrases, on the other hand, are combinations, or rather sequences, of speech sounds. They present, therefore, a problem which resembles to some extent that of the variegated colour, discussed above. There are, however, important differences. Words and phrases are sequences of speech sounds, and cannot in any way be looked upon as collections of simultaneously existing sounds. Moreover, words and phrases do not, unlike the variegated colour, have a different substrate from their constituent sounds. It is further of some interest to note that the sūtra cited in the Vyomavatī and discussed above, which was supposedly meant

[5] I thank W. Halbfass for some useful observations.
[6] N p. 287-88, Ki p. 262, Vy vol. 2 p. 237.

to justify the existence of the variegated colour, confines itself explicitly to non-omnipresent substances. It may here be recalled that ether, the substrate of sounds, is omnipresent.

How, then, did the Vaiśeṣikas look upon words and phrases?

No statements from early Vaiśeṣika texts are known to me that attribute or deny ontological status to words and phrases. But some passages discuss the link between words and the things they denote. VS 7.2.19/19/19 *śabdārthāv asambaddhau* claims that "words and designated objects have no connection", and VS 7.2.24/20/20 *sāmayikaḥ śabdād arthapratyayaḥ* adds that "the understanding of an object from a word is based on convention". It seems clear that the presence of an 'existent' link between words and things is here rejected. This, however, would seem to imply that the 'existence' of words is not in doubt.

A similar position appears to be taken in Vyomaśiva's Vyomavatī. This commentary raises the problem that the definition of *samavāya* risks to [79] cover the relation between a word and its designated object as well, as happens in the case of the word 'ether' and its designated object.[7] The solution to the problem presented by Vyomaśiva has no relevance to our question. The fact that he does not point out that the word *ākāśa* ('ether') does not 'exist' creates however the impression that Vyomaśiva, too, accepts the existence of whole words. Yet in another passage he points out that we understand the meaning 'cow' when we hear the sequence *g-au-ḥ*.[8]

Candrānanda's commentary on Vaiśeṣika Sūtra 7.2.23 (which has not parallel in the other versions of this text) discusses the link that exists between sound and ether, and the one between ether and objects. The combined link which thus exists between a word and the object it denotes is not accepted, because it leaves a doubt as to which object is denoted by which word. But Candrāndanda, too, fails to point out that the designating words do not exist in the first place. He seems to have no difficulty accepting the existence of whole words.

Turning now to the Vākyapadīya, we notice that Bhartṛhari knows the conception of sound as a quality of ether. This we must conclude from a number of stanzas in the Sambandhasamuddeśa, which discuss the relation, in Vaiśeṣika terms, between words and objects. We find here, for example, the following statement (VP 3.3.16ab):

> *svāśrayeṇa tu saṃyuktaiḥ saṃyuktaṃ vibhu gamyate*
> What is 'omnipresent' is known, being in contact with [objects] that are in contact with its own substrate.

We know from the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha (Ki p. 148 l. 16; N p. 141 l. 5; Vy vol. 2 p. 72 l. 19) that omnipresent objects have no mutual contact. We may therefore conclude that 'its own substrate' is omnipresent. But it seems certain that 'it' is sound (more precisely, the word

[7] Vy vol. 1 p. 26 l. 13-17: *tathā hy ākāśaśabdenākāśam abhidhīyaa ity anayor ādhāryādhārabhāve sati vācyavācakabhāvaḥ …/ tadvyavacchedārtham avadhāraṇam ādhāryādhārabhūtānām eva yaḥ saṃbandhaḥ sa samavāya iti.*

[8] Vy vol. 2 p. 241 l. 23-25: *yatra yatra gakāraukāravisarjanīyānām itthambhūtānupūrvīm upalabhase, tatra tatra gotvaviśiṣṭo 'rthaḥ pratipattavyaḥ pratipādayitavyaś ceti saṅketagrahe sati tathāvidhaṃ śabdam upalabhamānas tam arthaṃ pratipadyate pratipādayati ceti.* See also the discussion on p. 184 f.

vibhu 'omnipresent [object]'); it would be difficult to make sense of the surrounding stanzas without this assumption. This in its turn means that sound has as substrate an omnipresent substance, which can only be ether. From stanza 3.3.13 we learn, moreover, that the relation with the own substrate is [80] *samavāya* (*samavāyāt sva ādhāraḥ … pratīyate*); that is to say, the relation between the word 'ether' and ether is *samavāya*. Sound is therefore clearly looked upon, in this passage of the Vākyapadīya, as a quality of ether.

But this passage does more than this. Like the passages from Vyomaśiva and Candrānanda discussed above, and like the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra itself, it does not appear to find fault with the idea that whole words (such as *vibhu* 'omnipresent [object]' and *ākāśa* 'ether') are treated as 'existing' entities, about the 'existence' of whose links with the denoted objects one can reasonably discuss.[9]

It may be worthwhile to recall at this point that there were thinkers in the age concerned who did not look upon words as entities in their own right. An example is found in the Śābara Bhāṣya, the classical commentary on the Mīmāṃsā Sūtra which is probably earlier than the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha.[10] According to this text words are nothing but collections of speech sounds, which alone 'exist'. This point of view is introduced in the so-called Vṛttikāragrantha on sūtra 1.1.5, and attributed to someone called Upavarṣa.[11]

3. Sound (2)

There is a further problem with sound in early Vaiśeṣika. The Vaiśeṣika sūtra that enumerates all the qualities, no. 1.1.5, does not mention sound, nor several of the other qualities that figure in the classical list. Instead of the classical number of 24 qualities, it lists 17 of them. This smaller number is confirmed by the Jaina author Jinabhadra, in his Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya.[12] We are entitled to assume that the Vaiśeṣika sūtras that do mention or treat sound as a quality are later additions to the text. Their removal offers valuable insights into the earlier construction of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra.
[81]

These sūtras occur in two groups, in Āhnika 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. The first group follows sūtra 2.1.20/19/20 which presents leaving and entering a place as the inferential mark of ether (*niṣkramaṇaṃ praveśanam ity ākāśasya liṅgam*).[13] This inferential mark is rejected in the then following group of sūtras, and replaced by another inferential mark, sound, which is proved to be a quality of ether. This whole discussion — which covers sūtras 21-26 in

[9] Bhartṛhari does not even hesitate to speak about the universals residing in (whole) words; see Bronkhorst, 1991: 9 f.
[10] There are reasons to think that Bhartṛhari did not yet know the Śābara Bhāṣya; see Bronkhorst, 1986, 1989.
[11] Frauwallner, 1968: 38: *atha 'gaur ity atra kaḥ śabdaḥ? gakāraukāravisarjanīyā iti bhagavān upavarṣaḥ/.* Compare this passage with the one from the Vyomavatī cited above.
[12] See Halbfass, 1980: 285 n. 55; Wezler, 1983: 36 n. 5.
[13] Compare this with "giving room" (*avakāśadāna*), mentioned as mark of ether in the (according to Ruben, spurious) Nyāya sūtra *gandhakledapākavyūhāvakāśadānebhyaḥ pāñcabhautikam*; see Ruben, 1928: 64.

Jambuvijaya's edition, 20-30 in Thakur's, and 21-27 and 30-31 in Sinha's — is therefore added onto another, older inferential mark meant to prove the existence of ether. Since ether is enumerated as one of the substances in sūtra 1.1.4, we may safely assume that in earliest — or at any rate, earlier — Vaiśeṣika the motion of leaving and entering a place were deemed to prove the existence of the substance ether. This conclusion also teaches us to regard with suspicion any discussions that may occur within the body of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra.

Sound is again discussed in Āhnika 2.2. The context is, again, peculiar. Sūtra 2.2.19/17/17 introduces the topic, which is doubt (*saṃśaya*); this topic continues until 2.2.23/21/20. Then the topic sound is introduced, in 2.2.24/22/21, and the following sūtra 25 (it occurs only in Candrānanda's version) makes clear that this topic is meant to illustrate a particular case of doubt: is sound a substance, an action, or a quality (*tasmin dravyaṃ karma guṇa iti saṃśayaḥ*)? This illustration now steals the show completely, and is the sole topic of discussion — according to the commentators — until the end of the Āhnika. It seems clear that this long excursus on sound is an intrusion into the text, and that Adhyāya 2 originally ended with a discussion of 'doubt'.

Vaiśeṣika, then, underwent a change in its conception of sound. The new conception, according to which sound is a quality of ether, is already known to Nyāya Sūtra 1.1.12-14. Caraka Saṃhitā, Sūtrasthāna I.49, moreover, enumerates the Vaiśeṣika qualities in such a manner that it is clear that its author knew the expanded list: mention is made of *guru*, etc., and we may conclude that sound, too, was considered a quality.[14] All this suggests that the change took place at a rather early date.

However, Jinabhadra's Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya states in so many words that the number of Vaiśeṣika qualities is 17, as we have seen. This text [82] may have been composed in the year 609 C.E.,[15] i.e., much later than Bhartṛhari. It appears, therefore, that the earlier conception of sound existed for a long time side by side with the one that came to replace it. It is, for this reason, not impossible that it was still known to Bhartṛhari.

Before we deal with this question, we must address another one: what conception did early Vaiśeṣika have of sound?

Note first that it is not possible to assume that the author of sūtra 1.1.5, which enumerates the qualities, simply overlooked sound. Such an argument may be possible in the case of 'heaviness' (*gurutva*), 'fluidity' (*dravatva*), 'viscidity' (*sneha*), and the other qualities (*saṃskāra*, *dharma*, *adharma*) that do not figure in the original list. Sound it too obviously a 'thing' — besides colour, taste, smell, and touch, all of them accepted as qualities in early Vaiśeṣika — not to be given a place in the Vaiśeṣika scheme of what there is.

What then was sound? Given the Vaiśeṣika ontological scheme, it must have been a substance, a quality, and action, a universal, a particular, or the special type of relationship which is called *samavāya*. It seems clear that, out of this list, sound can only belong to the

[14] Cf. Adachi, 1990: 909 (35); Narain, 1976: 108 f.
[15] Chatterjee, 1978: 109. Unfortunately I have had no access to the Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya.

categories substance or quality. Since quality is excluded, sound must then have been looked upon as a kind of substance. Which substance? Vaiśeṣika enumerates nine substances, among them the five elements earth, water, fire, wind and ether. If we are forced to make a choice, wind (*vāyu*) seems most appropriate. It seems therefore a priori not unlikely that for the early Vaiśeṣikas sound was a form of wind.

The link between sound and wind is obvious where speech sounds are concerned. The Padārthadharmasaṃgraha explains how the movement of wind plays a crucial role in the production of speech sounds in the passage which we studied in the preceding section. A verse cited in the Vṛtti on Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya describes the same process in almost the same terms, with this difference that here wind itself is stated to become sound:[16]
[83]

> *labdhakriyaḥ prayatnena vaktur icchānuvartinā/*
> *sthāneṣv abhihato vāyuḥ śabdatvaṃ pratipadyate//*
> The wind set in motion by the effort corresponding to the desire of the speaker, strikes at the different places of articulation and is transformed into sounds. (tr. Iyer, modified)

The parallelism between these two passages, combined with the fact that *icchā* (desire) and *prayatna* (effort) are qualities of the soul in the Vaiśeṣika scheme of things, suggests that the quoted stanza in the Vṛtti draws upon Vaiśeṣika ontology, and may even express a Vaiśeṣika point of view. This point of view, however, is that wind becomes sound, in other words, that sound is wind.

Consider now the following passage of the Padārthadharmasaṃgraha. It reads, in the translation of Gaṅgānātha Jhā (p. 129):[17]

> Sound cannot be the property of those substances that can be touched — (1) because, being perceptible, its production is not preceded by any quality in the material cause of the substance (to which it belongs); (2) because it does not pervade over, and is not coeval with, the substance to which it belongs; (3) because it is perceived elsewhere than in the substratum wherein it is produced. It cannot be regarded as belonging to the soul, (1) because it is perceptible by an external sense-organ; (2) because it is perceived by other souls; (3) because it is not found to inhere in the soul; and (4) because it is perceived as apart from all idea of 'I'. It cannot be the quality of space (*diś*), time and mind, (1) because it is perceptible by the ear, and (2) because it is a *viśeṣaguṇa* (a special quality). And thus the only substance to which it could belong as a quality, and be a distinguishing feature of, is *ākāśa*. As the distinguishing feature of sound is common to all *ākāśa*, this is regarded as one only. From this unity follows its

[16] Ed. Iyer, Kāṇḍa 1, p. 173; included in Rau's edition as 1.111. Śabara's Bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā sūtra 1.1.22 ascribes to the Śikṣākāras the words: *vāyur āpadyate śabdatām.* (D'Sa, 1980: 79 n. 8, surprisingly, ascribes this position to the Vaiśeṣikas; see however further below.) Śabara makes a further remark which may explain how sound could be conceived of as wind: *vāyavīyaś cec chabdo bhaved vāyoḥ saṃniveśaviśeṣaḥ syāt* "If sound were made of wind, it would be a special configuration of wind". The idea that sound is wind occurs elsewhere, too; cp. Somānanda's Śivadṛṣṭi 2.36: *vāco vāyvātmatā na kim?*

[17] Pdhs Ki p. 71-74, N p. 58, Vy vol. 1 p. 108: *śabdaḥ pratyakṣatve saty akāraṇaguṇapūrvakatvād ayāvaddravyabhāvitvād āśrayād anyatropalabdheś ca na sparśavadviśeṣaguṇaḥ/ bāhyendriyapratyakṣatvād ātmāntaragrāhyatvād ātmany asamavāyād ahaṅkāreṇa vibhaktagrahaṇāc ca nātmaguṇaḥ/ [śrotragrāhyatvād vaiśeṣikaguṇabhāvāc ca na dikkālamanasaṃ/ pariśeṣād guṇo bhūtvā ākāśasyādhigame liṅgam/] śabdaliṅgāviśeṣād ekatvaṃ siddham/ tadanuvidhānād ekapṛthaktvam/ vibhavavacanāt paramamahat parimāṇam/ śabdakāraṇatvavacanāt saṃyogavibhāgāv iti/.* The part in brackets has been omitted in Ki, no doubt by mistake.

> individual separateness or isolation. *ākāśa* being spoken of as *vibhu* (omnipresent or all-pervading), it points to its dimension being the largest or highest. In as much as *ākāśa* is spoken of as the cause of sound, it follows that it has conjunction and disjunction.

Every sentence in this passage reflects a Vaiśeṣika sūtra;[18] this is not [84] however indicated. Yet it is Praśastapāda's habit to give an indication to that effect when he refers to a sūtra. The final portion of our passage illustrates this. Consider the sentence "*ākāśa* being spoken of as *vibhu*, it points to its dimension being the largest or highest". This refers to sūtra 7.1.28/24/22: *vibhavān mahān ākāśaḥ* "because of its omnipresence ether (*ākāśa*) is large". The sūtra contains an argument (if perhaps a bad one), which Praśastapāda could have simply repeated. Instead he invokes the authority of the sūtra. This only makes sense on the assumption that Praśastapāda prefers referring to a sūtra to repeating its contents on his own authority.

This assumption, if correct, has far-reaching consequences. It implies that all the other sūtras whose contents are repeated in this passage, were not yet recognized as such by Praśastapāda. In other words, some of the sūtras which describe sound as a quality were not yet considered sūtras by Praśastapāda. Others, to be sure, were. The Padārthadharmasaṅgraha (Ki p. 235 l. 1-3; N p. 239 l. 14-16; Vy vol. 2 p. 200 l. 14-15) cites VX 2.2.26/x/ 22 from a 'śāstra', most probably from the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra. Moreover, Praśastapāda expresses in no uncertain terms that he looks upon sound as a quality.

Our passage refers explicitly to two sūtras. The first one has already been discussed. The second one cannot but be 2.2.36/30/31: *saṃyogād vibhāgāc chabdāc ca śabdaniṣpatteḥ / -niṣpattiḥ* "sound originates from conjunction, from disjunction, and from (other) sound". We may assume that this second sūtra was accepted as such by Praśastapāda, and may therefore be older than at least some of the sūtras which describe sound as a quality. With this in mind we turn to Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya.

Consider Vākyapadīya 1.105:

> *yaḥ saṃyogavibhāgābhyāṃ karaṇair upajanyate/*
> *sa sphoṭaḥ śabdajāḥ śabdā dhvanayo 'nyair udāhṛtāḥ//*
> Others declare that the *sphoṭa* is what is produced by the organs [of speech] by means of contact and separation; the sounds born from [this initial] sound are the *dhvani*s

Note the similarity of this verse, at least of certain parts of it, with the Vaiśeṣika sūtra (2.2.36/30/31) which appears to be old. It seems likely that [85] Bhartṛhari had this sūtra in mind when he wrote the verse. Our next question must be: how is this verse to be understood?[19]

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[18] Compare with the preceding note the following sūtras (2.1.24-26) found in Jambuvijaya's edition: *kāraṇaguṇapūrvaḥ kārye guṇo dṛṣṭaḥ, kāryāntarāprādurbhāvāc ca śabdaḥ sparśavatām aguṇaḥ/ paratra samavāyāt pratyakṣatvāc ca nātmaguṇo na manoguṇaḥ/ liṅgam ākāśasya.* Corresponding sūtras are found in the other two versions of the text. The version edited by Sinha contains some additional elements in the sūtras 2.1.27, 30-31: *pariśeṣāl liṅgam ākāśasya/ śabdaliṅgāviśeṣād viśeṣaliṅgābhāvāc ca/ tadanuvidhānād ekapṛthaktvaṃ ceti/.* Sūtra 28 refers back to 1.2.18 *salliṅgāviśeṣād viśeṣaliṅgābhāvāc caiko bhāva iti.*

[19] See in this connection also Bronkhorst, 1991: 14 f.

To begin with, note that this verse describes the opinion of 'others'. It offers, by doing so, an alternative to the opinion of 'some', which is presented in the preceding verses. The first of these preceding verses is nr. 1.96, which reads:[20]

> Some consider that the *sphoṭa* is the universal revealed by the various individual instances, and they consider that the individuals belonging to this [universal] are the *dhvani*s.

We see that two alternatives are placed side by side. According to the first alternative, the *sphoṭa* — that is the real, eternal word — is a universal; according to the second one the *sphoṭa* is produced by the speech organs. But what is produced by the speech organs? Several factors combine to show that the *sphoṭa*, on the second alternative, is some form of substance (*dravya*).

Recall, to begin with, that for Bhartṛhari the world has two sides: the one called real and eternal, the other unreal and non-eternal. Regarding the real, eternal side, Bhartṛhari does not care much what we call it. Some consider the eternal aspect of an object to be its universal, others its substance. We are free to choose, as long as we agree that every object has an eternal aspect. The second verse of the Jātisamuddeśa (3.2) states therefore:[21]

> In the analysis of objects denoted by words, the eternal objects denoted by all words have been described as 'universal' or as 'substance'.

The remainder of the Jātisamuddeśa occupies itself with the alternative that the eternal part of all objects is its universal; the then following Dravyasamuddeśa takes up the alternative view that *substance* constitutes their eternal part.

What is true for all 'things', is true for words, too. The real, eternal part of words is either a universal or a substance; both views are acceptable. The conclusion cannot but be that the verse (1.105), which appears [86] to draw its inspiration from the Vaiśeṣika sūtra, concerns the *sphoṭa* as substance.

This conclusion is confirmed by verse 1.110, which is one of the verses that elaborate the notions introduced in 1.105. This verse states how different schools of thought conceive of sound:[22]

> Some accept that sound is wind, [others] that it is atoms, [others again] that it is knowledge; for in the presentations the different points of view are endless.

The identification sound = knowledge looks puzzling at first. But obviously any idealistic school of thought will maintain that substance derives its reality from, is nothing but, thought or knowledge. In fact, Bhartṛhari himself says so in a passage of his commentary on the

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[20] VP 1.96: *anekavyaktyabhivyaṅgyā jātiḥ sphoṭa iti smṛtā/ kaiścid vyaktaya evāsyā dhvanitvena prakalpitāḥ//*
[21] VP 3.1.2: *padārthānām apoddhāre jātir vā dravyam eva vā/ padārthau sarvaśabdānāṃ nityāv evpavarṇitau//*
[22] VP 1.110: *vāyor aṇūnāṃ jñānasya śabdatvāpattir iṣyate/ kaiścid darśanabhedo hi pravādeṣv anavasthitaḥ//*

Mahābhāṣya.[23] We may conclude that the three points of view according to which sound is wind, atoms, and knowledge respectively, share in common that sound is substance.

We have seen that the view in which sound it knowledge must belong to an idealistic school of thought. The view that sound is atoms is part of the world-view of the Sarvāstivādins and the Jainas.[24] Remains the view according to which sound is wind. The fact that Bhartṛhari appears to refer to a Vaiśeṣika sūtra in this very passage, suggests that this view belonged to the early Vaiśeṣikas.

It would seem, then, that Bhartṛhari knew indeed both the positions of Vaiśeṣika with regard to sound: the more recent one according to which it is a quality of ether, and the older one according to which it is wind.

One final observation. Bhartṛhari may not yet have known Śabara's Bhāṣya on the Mīmāṃsā Sūtra.[25] He may therefore be earlier than Śabara, or roughly contemporaneous with him. For Śabara, sound is eternal and resides in the omnipresent ether. The fleeting sounds we hear are *manifested*, and not *produced* by the speaker who utters them. In this context Śabara adds the following intriguing remark:[26] "But for him who [87] believes that [contacts and separations] produce [sounds rather than manifest them], contacts and separations, which occur in wind, will produce [sounds] nowhere else than in wind, because they subsist in wind; just as yarns produce a cloth in the yarns themselves." Śabara's ideas are frequently close to those of the Vaiśeṣikas, so that it is possible to believe that he had the Vaiśeṣikas in mind while writing this passage. For the Vaiśeṣikas do indeed believe that sounds are produced, not manifested. It is therefore possible that Śabara, too, still know of Vaiśeṣikas who believed that sound is wind.

4. The omnipresent soul[27]

VS 5.2.18-20 read, in Candrānanda's version:

5.2.18: *kāyakarmaṇātmakarma vyākhyātam*
5.2.19: *apasarpaṇam upasarpaṇam aśitapītasaṃyogaḥ kāryāntarasaṃyogāś cety adṛṣṭakāritāni*
5.2.20: *tadabhāve saṃyogābhāvo 'prādurbhāvaḥ sa mokṣaḥ*

[23] CE I p. 22 l. 19-20, AL p. 27 l. 4-5. Sw p. 32 l. 11-13: *'dravyaṃ hi nityam'/ nityaḥ pṛthivīdhātuḥ/ pṛthivīdhātau kiṃ satyam/ vikalpaḥ/ vikalpe kiṃ satyam/ jñānam/ …*
[24] For a description of the way in which, according to the Sarvāstivādins, sound joins other atoms in order to form a molecule, see La Vallée Poussin, 1980: I: 144-145. For the position of the Jainas, see Jaini, 1920: 118 (Tattvārtha Sūtra 5.24).
[25] See note 10, above.
[26] Śabara on sūtra 1.1.13 (p. 93 l. 5-6): *yasya punaḥ kurvanti tasya vāyavīyāḥ saṃyogavibhāgā vāyvāśritatvād vāyuṣv eva kariṣyanti, yathā tantavas tantuṣv eva paṭam.*
[27] Some of the questions here discussed have also been dealt with in a paper called "Mysticisme et rationalité en Inde: le cas du Vaiśeṣika" (Bronkhorst, 1993a).

The first of these sūtras has a different form in the Vyākhyā edited by Thakur: *kāyakarmaṇātmakarmadharmayor anupapattiḥ* (5.2.16); as observed by A. Wezler (1982: 659), it is difficult to make satisfactory sense of this reading. Nothing corresponding to this sūtra is found in the version known to Śaṅkara Miśra. The remaining two sūtras, on the other hand, occur in the other versions with only insignificant variations.[28]

Candrānanda's explanation of these sūtras contains some suspect features, most notably the following: 1) Candrānanda interprets *ātman* in 5.2.18 to mean wind (*vāyu*). 2) In his interpretation 5.2.19 is about the *manas*. A straightforward interpretation of the sūtras would rather suggest that 5.2.18 talks about the activity of the soul (*ātmakarman*), and that 5.2.19 continues this topic and therefore talks about the soul too.[29] Regarding 5.2.19 we know that already Praśastapāda interpreted it like Candrānanda: his Padārthadharmasaṅgraha refers to this sūtra in the [88] context of the description of the *manas*, in order to show that the *manas* can have *saṃyoga* and *vibhāga*.[30] Note in passing that Praśastapāda's remark shows that he looked upon VS 5.2.19 as a sūtra. Elsewhere in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha it is pointed out that the two activities of the *manas* called *apasarpaṇa* and *upasarpaṇa* are the result of contact between the soul and the *manas*, which depends on *adṛṣṭa*;[31] again the sūtra is interpreted as referring to the *manas*.

There is evidence to show that the above sūtras at one time concerned the *ātman* and its activities. Consider first VS 6.2.19/18/16: *ātmakarmasu mokṣo vyākhyātaḥ*. Wezler (1982: 654) observed already that this sūtra "obviously refers back to VS 5.2.20". It does, however, more than just this: it suggests strongly that 5.2.20, and therefore 5.2.19 as well, concern *ātmakarman* "the activity of the soul".

With this in mind we turn to Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya. The Sambandhasamuddeśa of this work explores the question what connection exists — to be described in Vaiśeṣika terms, i.e., combinations of *saṃyoga* and *samavāya* — between a word and the object it designates. This leads to no satisfactory results. Indeed, VP 3.3.17 points out that this approach would not limit the designation of a word to its appropriate object. Here VP 3.3.18 counters:

> *adṛṣṭavṛttilābhena yathā saṃyoga ātmanaḥ/*
> *kvacit svasvāmiyogākhyo 'bhede 'nyatrāpi sa kramaḥ//*
> Just as the *saṃyoga* of the soul is [only] called 'connection of owner and owned' with regard to certain objects, because *adṛṣṭa* operates [in these cases], even though there is no difference [between this special kind of *saṃyoga* and *saṃyoga* in general], just so is the situation in the case of other [relations], too.

This verse cannot but mean that a virtually limitless number of *saṃyoga*s of the soul is limited by the operation of *adṛṣṭa* to those few which link the soul to 'its' body, etc. This in its turn

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[28] *°pītasaṃyogāḥ* instead of *°pītasaṃyogaḥ*; *'prādubhāvaś ca* instead of *'prādubhāvaḥ*.
[29] See Wezler, 1982: 654 f.
[30] Ki p. 101 l. 16-17; N p. 89 l. 15-16; Vy vol. 1 p. 156 l. 14-15: *apasarpaṇopasarpaṇavacanāt saṃyogavibhāgau*.
[31] Ki p. 270 l. 12; N p. 308 l. 22-23; Vy vol. 2 p. 266 l. 6: *apasarpaṇakarmopasarpaṇakarma cātmamanaḥsaṃyogād adṛṣṭāpekṣāt*.

implies that, in Bhartṛhari's opinion, the soul of the Vaiśeṣikas is in contact with far more objects than just its 'own' body etc., and therefore most probably infinitely large, as it is in classical Vaiśeṣika.
[89]

The explicit mention of *adṛṣṭa* in this verse leaves little doubt that Bhartṛhari paraphrases here VS 5.2.19, which he apparently considered to concern the soul. If we now try to translate VS 5.2.18-20 in agreement with the interpretation which Bhartṛhari to all appearances accorded them, we get:

5.2.18: The activity of the soul is explained by the activity of the body.
5.2.19: Retreating, approaching, contact with what is eaten and drunk, contacts with other effects, [these functions of the soul] are caused by *adṛṣṭa*.
5.2.20: When there is no [activity of the soul], there is no contact [with objects that belong to it], no manifestation [of the soul in a body]; that is *mokṣa*.

In view of VP 3.3.18, the contacts of the soul referred to in VS 5.2.19-20 pertain to the subgroup of *saṃyoga*s called 'contact between owner and owned'. Contacts in general exist between each soul and every finite object, the soul being omnipresent; but these general contacts are no relevant in the context of 'activity of the soul'. This 'activity of the soul', too, must be interpreted to bring about the special contacts called 'contacts between owner and owned'. These special contacts are confined to the body, and so is therefore this 'activity of the soul'.

It goes without saying that this limitation of the contacts of an infinitely large soul to a restricted number of objects is hard to explain in terms of the Vaiśeṣika categories. *Adṛṣṭa* is meant to explain, or cover up, this mystery, and would not seem to have much to do with *dharma* and *adharma*, which constitute *adṛṣṭa* in the classical system. Indeed, if *adṛṣṭa* in VP 3.3.18 meant *dharma* and *adharma*, also the connection between words and their meanings should be determined by *dharma* and *adharma*, a point of view which Helārāja rejects as impossible.

At this point we must pay attention to a passage of the Nyāya Sūtra, along with Pakṣilasvāmin's Bhāṣya (3.2.61-73 (Ānanda Āśrama ed.) / 60-72 (tr. Jhā) / 59-71 (ed. Ruben)).[32] This passage deals with the formation of the body and with the factors that play a role in it. Sūtra 61/60/59 gives the opinion of the author: "Its formation is due to the persistence of previous acts" (*pūrvakṛtaphalānubandhāt tadutpattiḥ*). Sūtra 67/66/65 explains further: "Just as *karman* is the cause of the formation of the body, so is it also of the connection [of the body with a particular soul]" (*śarīrotpattinimittavat saṃyogotpattinimittaṃ karma*; tr. Jhā). Sūtras 69-73/68-72/67-71 now reject an alternative opinion regarding the formation [90] of the body and its connection with its soul (?). The first two of these sūtras are of most interest to us:

[32] My attention was drawn to this passage by J. E. M. Houben.

69/68/67: *tad adṛṣṭakāritam iti cet punas tatprasaṅgo 'pavarge*
If [it be asserted] that the [formation of the body] is due to *adṛṣṭa*, then [our answer is that in that case] even after final release there would be likelihood of [a body being produced]. (tr. Jhā)

70/69/68: *manaḥ* (v.l. *manasaḥ*) *karmanimittatvāc ca saṃyogānucchedaḥ*
There would be no severance of connection — this being due to the action of mind (tr. Jhā)

The then following sūtras go on to show absurd consequences of the rejected opinion, but the above two are most important, for they allow us to identify the rejected opinion as that of VS 5.2.19-20, studied above. The link with VS 5.2.19 is again emphasized by the Nyāya Bhāṣya on NS 3.2.70/69/68, which raises questions regarding the *apasarpaṇa* and *upasarpaṇa* of the *manas*, using exactly the terms also found in VS 5.2.19.

Two observations must be made here. The first concerns the interpretation of VS 5.2.19 offered in these Nyāya sūtras. NS 3.2.70/69/68 speaks of the activity of the mind (*manaḥkarman*), and this is apparently how it interpreted the Vaiśeṣika sūtra — just like Praśastapāda and Candrānanda, as we have seen. The second observation pertains to the meaning of *adṛṣṭa* in NS 3.2.69/68/67. *Adṛṣṭa* cannot here be identical with *karman*, nor even be the fruit of previous acts (*pūrvakṛtaphala*), because these are presented as the true causes of the formation of the body in sūtras 61/60/59 and 67/66/65 (see above). The author of the Nyāya Bhāṣya understood this very well: he offers two interpretations of *adṛṣṭa*, neither of which appears to have much to do with *karman* and its effects.

It appears, then, that NS 3.2.69-70/68-69/67-68 directly criticize VS 5.2.18-20, which they interpret in a way that deviates from the original interpretation. The meaning assigned to *adṛṣṭa*, on the other hand, is still pre-classical. The criticism centres in a way on VS 5.2.20, which describes *mokṣa*, liberation. According to these Nyāya sūtras, liberation would not be possible if VS 5.2.19 were correct.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Nyāya sūtras just considered must be later than VS 5.2.18-20, so much later that the original interpretation of VS 5.2.19 was no longer known, or used. This is all the more surprising since Bhartṛhari, as we have seen, still knew the original interpretation of VS 5.2.19. Is it possible that the section NS 3.2.61-73/60-72/59-71 was added later?

[91]

This is indeed likely, for this group of sūtras constitutes an excursion which interrupts the regular order of topics, as was already noted by Ruben (1928: 209 n. 237). It may here further be observed that *tad-* in *tadutpattiḥ* (NS 3.2.61/60/59) supposedly refers to the body; but the body is not mentioned in the preceding sūtras! We may safely conclude that the whole group of sūtras constitutes a later addition to the text.

The results of the above investigation can be presented as follows. A verse of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya allows us to catch a glimpse of the earliest interpretation of VS 5.2.18-20. It shows us that then already the Vaiśeṣikas looked upon the soul as infinitely large. This did not prevent them from speaking about the activity or movement of the soul (*ātmakarman*). The soul can be active because besides the general contact (*saṃyoga*) which it has with every finite object, it can have a specific contact — described as 'contact of owner and owned' — with a restricted number of objects, primarily the 'own' body and all that is contained in it. The 'activity' of the soul that brings about, or maintains, these special contacts, coincides therefore normally with the movement of the body. In terms of the Vaiśeṣika system there is something very mysterious about these special contacts; this is why they are stated to be occasioned by *adṛṣṭa*, the unseen. These special contacts, as well as the 'activity' ascribed in this way to the soul, can come to an end; the soul does then no longer manifest itself in a body. This state of the soul is called 'liberation' (*mokṣa*).

The implausibility of this way of speaking about the 'activity' of the none-the-less omnipresent soul is obvious. It does not surprise that the idea was discarded. But discarding an idea proved easier than discarding the sūtras which expressed it. This led to a reinterpretation of the sūtras concerned. We find the first evidence of this in a set of sūtras inserted at an unknown date into the Nyāya Sūtra. This set criticizes VS 5.2.18-20, but while doing so it shows that the idea of an activity of the self had been given up. Contact between the soul and 'its' body are now ascribed to the activity of the mind (*manas*), which corresponds to the later, classical doctrine. But the interpretation of the term *adṛṣṭa* had not yet reached its classical form. *Adṛṣṭa* is not yet short-hand for *dharma* and *adharma*, which are the effects of *karman*; *adṛṣṭa* is, on the contrary, contrasted with *karman* and its effects. It will be clear that with the interposition of a *manas* between a soul and its body, the mystery of the special relationship between the soul and its body disappears, and that, consequently, pre-classical *adṛṣṭa* has no more role to play in it. No wonder that our set of Nyāya sūtras attacks this notion.

[92]

With Praśastapāda we arrive at the classical exposition of the Vaiśeṣika system, and apparently also at the classical interpretation of VS 5.2.18-20. It is clear that Praśastapāda knows at least VS 5.2.19 and considers it a sūtra. He believes, furthermore, that it concerns the *manas*. But also *adṛṣṭa* has with Praśastapāda reached its classical meaning; it has become more or less identical with the effect of karman (*pūrvakṛtaphala*). Praśastapāda does no longer have to attack the notion of *adṛṣṭa*; the new interpretation of this term allows him to agree with the author of the above set of Nyāya sūtras, while yet accepting the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra as authoritative.

Abbreviations

AL Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartṛhari, ed. Abhyankar-Limaye
CE 'Critical edition' of Bhartṛhari's Mahābhāṣyadīpikā
Ki Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda, ed. Jetly
N Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda, ed. Dvivedin
Sw Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartṛhari, ed. Swaminathan
VP Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari, ed. Rau
Vy Padārthadharmasaṅgraha of Praśastapāda, ed. Gaurinath Sastri

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