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Śaṅkara and Bhāskara on Vaiśeṣika

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I

Vaiśeṣika philosophy is characterised by its belief in atoms. It distinguishes three kinds of small particles, called *paramāṇu* or *aṇu* (“atom”), *dvyāṇuka* (“double-atom”), and *tryāṇuka* (“triple-atom”) or *trasareṇu* (“moving particle”) respectively. The last of these is the smallest visible particle (cf. VS(C) 4.1.6: *mahaty anekadravyavattvād rūpāc copalabdhiḥ*), *paramāṇus* and *dvyāṇukas* being invisible. About the relationship between these particles Praśasta's Padārthadharmasaṅgraha, also known as Praśastapādabhāṣya, teaches us the following. A *dvyāṇuka* clearly consists of two *aṇus*, for the size of the *dvyāṇuka*, which is called *aṇutva* (“smallness”), is produced by the number two that resides in the two constituent atoms (WI p. 27, § 157: *dvitvasaṅkhyā cāṇvor vartamānā dvyāṇuke ṅutvam ārabhate*). The precise nature of the *tryāṇuka* is harder to determine on the basis of the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha. The size of a *tryāṇuka*, contrary to that of a *dvyāṇuka*, is *mahad* (“big”), not *aṇu* (“small”). This bigness is “made” by the number higher than two that resides in the constituent elements of the *tryāṇuka*. This is stated in the following sentence (WI p. 26, § 156):

*tatreśvarabuddhim apekṣyotpannā paramāṇudvyāṇukeṣu bahutvasaṅkhyā tair
ārabdhe kāryadravye tryāṇukādīlakṣaṇe rūpādyutpattisamakālaṃ mahattvaṃ
dīrghatvaṃ ca karoti /*

“The higher number (*bahutvasaṅkhyā*) that has arisen in the atoms and the double-atoms (*paramāṇudvyāṇukeṣu*), depending on the mental process of God, creates, at the same time as the arising of colour etc., bigness and longness in the substance produced by those [atoms and double-atoms], i.e. in the triple-atom and other produced substances.”

This statement is not as clear as one might wish. Given the name *tryāṇuka* (“triple-atom”) it seems reasonable to assume that this entity has three constituent parts. But which are these constituent parts? The number three, according to this passage, has arisen

paramāṇudvyaṅukeṣu, which may mean “in the atoms and the double-atoms” but even if we accept this interpretation it remains ambiguous. It might cover numerous cases: three atoms, or three double-atoms, or one atom and two double-atoms, etc. Are all these cases intended? If so, the number of atoms in a *tryaṅuka* may vary from three to six. Was this indeed Praśasta's point of view?

Another early Vaiśeṣika treatise, Candramati's *Daśapadārthī*, which has only survived in Chinese translation, is equally ambiguous with regard to the number of atoms in a *tryaṅuka*. Miyamoto (1996: 169, § 20) translates an important passage as follows:

“That which is produced by plurality, largeness and a particular combination, is inherent in a triad and so on, has one substance [as its locus], and which is the cause of the expression and cognition, namely, ‘[This is] large’ is called largeness.”

Miyamoto further offers the following Sanskrit reconstruction (p. 170):

*mahattvam iti yad bahutvamahattvapracayaviśeṣajanyaṃ tryaṅukādisamavetaṃ
ekadravyaṃ yo mahadabhidhānaprayayahetus tad eva mahattvam ity ucyate.*

This formulation, too, leaves open the possibility that a *tryaṅuka* consists of three atoms, or of three double-atoms, or perhaps of other combinations.

If the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* does not contain passages which provide us with a clear and unambiguous answer to our question, the early commentaries on this text do. They all take the position that a *tryaṅuka* consists of three *dvyāṅukas*, and therefore of six atoms. The following passages support this claim.

Vyomaśiva's *Vyomavātī* (Vy II p. 53 l. 22-23) paraphrases the most important part of the above cited sentence as follows:

*rūpādyutpattisamakālaṃ dvyaṅukeṣu vartamānaṃ tritvaṃ mahattvaṃ dīrghatvañ ca
karot[i]*

“The three-ness that is present in the double-atoms creates, at the same time as the arising of colour etc., bigness and longness.”

There can only be three-ness in double-atoms if there are three double-atoms. Vyomaśiva clearly believes that a *tryaṅuka* is constituted of three *dvyāṅukas*. This means that he interprets the mysterious expression “in the atoms and the double-atoms”

(*paramāṇudvyaṅukeṣu*) as if it only meant “in the double-atoms” (*dvyāṅukeṣu*). He does indeed dedicate some words to this expression, which he explains as follows (Vy II p. 53 l. 16-18):

*paramāṇudvyaṅukeṣv iti dvyaṅukavyavacchedārtham / paramāṇubhyām eva
dvyaṅukam ārabhyate, na dvyaṅukābhyām, vyarthārambhaprasaṅgād ... /*
“The expression *paramāṇudvyaṅukeṣu* [is used] to specify the double-atom. A double-atom is built up of two atoms only, not of two double-atoms, because [in the latter case] it there would be a sense-less building up.”

In other words, the part *paramāṇu*^o in *paramāṇudvyaṅukeṣu* serves no real purpose according to Vyomaśiva.

Śrīdhara's Nyāyakandalī agrees with Vyomaśiva. It paraphrases Praśasta's sentence in the following words (Ny p. 335 l. 1-3):

*... īśvarabuddhim apekṣyotpannā yā tritvasaṃkhyā sā tais tribhir dvyaṅukair
ārabdhe kāryadravye tryaṅukalakṣaṇe rūpādyutpattikālam eva mahattvaṃ
dīrghatvaṃ ca karoti*

“The number three that has arisen depending on the mental process of God, creates, at the same time as the arising of colour etc., bigness and longness in the substance produced by those three double-atoms.”

Udayana's Kiraṇāvalī (Ki p. 138 l. 23-24) expresses its agreement as follows:

*tair dvyaṅukair ārabdhe kāryadravye trasareṇau rūpādyutpattisamakālam ...
mahattvaṃ dīrghatvaṃ ca karoti*

“[The number three] creates, at the same time as the arising of colour etc., bigness and longness in the substance, i.e. in the moving particle (*trasareṇu*) that has been produced by those double-atoms.”

There is therefore unanimity among the early commentators, and it seems no more than reasonable that the ambiguous formulation of the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha has to be interpreted in accordance with their views: the smallest “big” particle is the *tryaṅuka* or *trasareṇu*, which consists of three *dvyaṅukas*, that is to say of six atoms.

There is however a difficulty. This difficulty consists in a presentation of the Vaiśeṣika position in Śāṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya on sūtra 2.2.11. This presentation is remarkable in that it distinguishes between *paramāṇus* (“atoms”), *dvyāṇukas* (“double-atoms”), *tryāṇukas* (“triple-atoms”) and *caturaṇukas* (“quadruple-atoms”). It is clear from Śāṅkara's remarks that two *dvyāṇukas* make one *caturaṇuka* (p. 431 l. 5-6: *dve dvyāṇuke caturaṇukam ārabhete*), which means that a *caturaṇuka* consists of four atoms. This suggests that, in Śāṅkara's understanding of Vaiśeṣika, a *tryāṇuka* consists of three atoms. How is this possible? It turns out that in Śāṅkara's understanding larger entities (“effects”, *kārya*) can be formed by many (i.e., three or more) atoms, or by many *dvyāṇukas*, or finally by an atom in combination with a *dvyāṇuka* (p. 431 l. 8: *bahavaḥ paramāṇavo bahūni vā dvyāṇukāni dvyāṇukasaḥito vā paramāṇuḥ kāryam ārabhate*). A *tryāṇuka*, seen in this way, consists of either three “loose” atoms or of an atom along with a *dvyāṇuka*. The number of atoms in a *tryāṇuka*, either way, is three. The *tryāṇuka*, moreover, is “big” and “long” (p. 432 l. 1-2: *mahad dīrghaṃ ca tryāṇukādi*), not “small” and “short” (p. 432 l. 2-3: *mahad dīrghaṃ ca tryāṇukaṃ jāyate nāṇu no hrasvam*).

All this is of course puzzling. Was Śāṅkara confused? Did he perhaps know the Vaiśeṣika system less well than he pretends? Or did he have access to texts which have not survived and which presented the system in a form that is different, at least in some details, from the one known to us? One thing is sure: Bhāskara, a slightly younger commentator on the Brahmasūtra, accepted the classical position that in Vaiśeṣika three *dvyāṇukas* together make one *tryāṇuka* (p. 113 l. 8-9, on sūtra 2.2.11: *tathā tribhir dvyāṇukais tryāṇukam ārabhyate*).

It must be admitted that the position presented by Śāṅkara as belonging to the Vaiśeṣika is problematic. It maintains that a *caturaṇuka* is made up of two *dvyāṇukas*, as we have seen. It also states that a *caturaṇuka* is “big” and “long” (p. 431 l. 7: *caturaṇukasya mahattvadīrghatvapariṃāyogābhyugamāt*). But how can two “small” *dvyāṇukas* produce one “big” *caturaṇuka*? We have seen that a number higher than two (*bahutvasaṃkhyā*) can turn “small” into “big”. There are however only two “small” *dvyāṇukas* in a *caturaṇuka*, according to Śāṅkara. By this logic the *caturaṇuka* should be “small” rather than “big”.

Vācaspatimiśra's commentary on Śāṅkara's Bhāṣya is aware of these difficulties. It maintains that a *caturaṇuka* must consist of four, rather than two, *dvyāṇukas*. Vācaspati therefore proposes to emend the reading *dve dvyāṇuke caturaṇukam ārabhete* into *dve dve dvyāṇuke caturaṇukam ārabhete*. His logic seems impeccable. Indeed, the notion that something “big” arises either from three or more causes, or from causes that are themselves “big”, or finally from a combination of things, is old in Vaiśeṣika and finds expression in

one of its sūtras (VS(C) 7.1.16: *kāraṇabahutvāt kāraṇamahattvāt pracayaviśeṣāc ca mahat*). Śaṅkara cites this very sūtra, along with two other ones, a few lines further down in his commentary, and is therefore clearly aware of this doctrine. How then could he make the blunder of suggesting that two “small” things will produce a “big” thing?

We might, of course, consider accepting Vācaspati's emendation. This would not, however, solve other difficulties connected with Śaṅkara's presentation. It will not explain how one atom along with one *dvyāṇuka* can form a “big” *tryaṇuka*: the *tryaṇuka* will in this case consist of two “small” entities, which leaves the “bigness” of the *tryaṇuka* unexplained.

Govindānanda's Bhāṣyaratnaprabhā offers another solution (p. 431 l. 15-17):

*prakaṭārthakārās tu yad dvābhyāṃ dvyāṇukābhyāṃ ārabdham kārye mahattvam
dṛśyate tasya hetuḥ pracayo nāma praśītilāvayavasamyoga iti rāvaṇapraṇīte bhāṣye
dṛśyata iti cirantanavaiśeṣikadṛṣṭyedaṃ bhāṣyam ity āhuḥ*

“The author of the Prakaṭārtha states the following: ‘It is seen in the Bhāṣya composed by Rāvaṇa that the bigness that is seen to be produced in an effect by two *dvyāṇukas* has as cause the conjunction of loose parts that is known by the name combination (*pracaya*). This Bhāṣya [by Śaṅkara] is therefore in accordance with an old Vaiśeṣika view.’”

This passage mentions two earlier texts. The Prakaṭārtha(-vivarāṇa) is a commentary on Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya by Anubhūtiśvarūpa, composed in the 12th or 13th century. Anubhūtiśvarūpa still knew, or still knew of, the Vaiśeṣika Bhāṣya which Govindānanda ascribes to Rāvaṇa. Anubhūtiśvarūpa states the following (I p. 490 l. 15-17):

*mahad dīrgham ca tryaṇukam yathā hrasvapariṃḍalābhyāṃ jāyate / hrasvebhyo
dvyāṇukebhyaḥ tryaṇukam jāyate ity ādhunikābhiprāyaḥ / pariṃḍalebhyaḥ
paramāṇubhya ity cirantanābhiprāyaḥ /*

“Just as something big and something long arises out of something short and something infinitely small (*pariṃḍala*). The position of the present-day [Vaiśeṣikas] is that a *tryaṇuka* arises out of [three] short *dvyāṇukas*. The position of the old [Vaiśeṣikas] is that [a *tryaṇuka* arises] out of [three] infinitely small atoms.”

Anubhūtiśvarūpa's remarks tell us nothing about the name or names of the old Vaiśeṣikas, nor do they contain as much information about the old position as does Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya.

They confirm, however, that Śāṅkara got the idea which he attributed to the Vaiśeṣikas from an earlier text of that school. And Govindānanda's statement to the effect that he got them from a Vaiśeṣika Bhāṣya composed by a Rāvaṇa is very probably correct, for we know a few things about this now lost commentary from other sources.

A number of these references to this commentary occur in Mallavādin's Dvādaśāranayacakra, and in Siṃhasūri's commentary on this work. They have been collected and analysed in another study (Bronkhorst, 1993). These collected citations justified the following probable conclusions. Rāvaṇa's commentary on the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra was known by the name Kaṭandī. It was in large part written in the peculiar manner called 'Vārttika style', in which short nominal phrases (*vākya*) alternate with more elaborate explanations in prose (*bhāṣya*). The Kaṭandī was commented upon in a Ṭikā composed by Praśasta (who also wrote the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha). Chronologically the Kaṭandī must probably be situated after Vasubandhu but before Dignāga, and of course before the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha.

A study of some of Śāṅkara's remarks made in his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya (not the ones studied in the present article) has brought to light that Śāṅkara apparently still knew Rāvaṇa's Kaṭandī as well as Praśasta's Ṭikā on it (Bronkhorst, 1996); he eclectically selected passages and points of view from these two texts and subjected them to criticism. This is of course interesting, for it suggests that the author of the Prakāṭārthavivaraṇa may have been right, and that Śāṅkara's presentation of Vaiśeṣika atomism may have corresponded to positions held and defended in the Kaṭandī.

Unfortunately no fragments from the Kaṭandī are known to me that would confirm Śāṅkara's presentation of Vaiśeṣika atomism. However, we do have the Vaiśeṣika sūtra that Rāvaṇa, according to the Prakāṭārthavivaraṇa, implicitly refers to, and which Śāṅkara cites. To quote it once again (VS(C) 7.1.16):

kāraṇabahutvāt kāraṇamahattvāt pracayaviśeṣāc ca mahat.

“[Something is] big (i) because there are many (i.e., three or more) causes, (ii) because the causes are big, and (iii) because of a special combination.”

The third of the reasons here presented is peculiar, but it is clear that according to the testimony of the author of the Prakāṭārthavivaraṇa this third reason was invoked in Rāvaṇa's Kaṭandī to explain that two “small” *dvyāṇuka*s can produce one “big” *caturaṇuka*. The same reasoning explains no doubt that a *tryaṇuka* can be produced out of a single atom along with a *dvyāṇuka*.

Erich Frauwallner, referring to some of the passages dealt with in this paper, made the following observation (1956: 164): “Bilden mehrere Atome ein grösseres Aggregat, so ist es ihre Vielzahl, welche die Grösse (*mahattvam*) verursacht. Dabei liess man ursprünglich grössere Aggregate unmittelbar aus den Atomen entstehen. Später lehrte man, dass sie aus Doppelatomen gebildet sind.” This is true, but it is not the whole truth, as we have seen. “Originally” Vaiśeṣika accepted no doubt that a *tryaṇuka* consisting of three atoms could be produced through the combination of those three atoms. The resulting *tryaṇuka* would be “big” on account of the number of constituent atoms, viz. three. However, a *tryaṇuka* could also result from the combination of one atom and a *dvyāṇuka*; it would then be “big” on account of the “special combination”. Also the *caturaṇuka* is “big” for either of two reasons: either because of the number of its three or four constituents (i.e., four atoms or two atoms and a *dvyāṇuka*), or because of the “special combination” of two *dvyāṇukas*.

It is perhaps not surprising that the later thinkers of the Vaiśeṣika school opted for a simpler position. Triple-atoms no longer consisted of three atoms, which would give rise to the embarrassing question whether these three atoms were to be viewed as being 1+1+1 or 1+2 (= 2+1); in the former case the *tryaṇuka* would be “big”, in the latter case “small” or at least in need of a special explanation to account for its being “big”. For those later thinkers every *tryaṇuka* has the following structure: 2+2+2, and there can be no doubt about its being “big”. In the process the *tryaṇuka* had however doubled the number of its constituent atoms.

II

Bhāskara the commentator of the Brahmasūtra deals with the Vaiśeṣika philosophy under Brahmasūtra 2.2.12. He first gives here a presentation of the system, which is then followed by a refutation. The two do not however fit together: the position refuted is not the one presented and is even in contradiction with it. This remarkable situation justifies a detailed study, and the difficulty of access of Bhāskara's work, along with the poor quality of the available edition,¹ justifies a full (where possible corrected) reproduction of his words.

Bhāskara starts as follows (p. 114):

atha vaiśeṣikamataṃ parīkṣyate / tac caivam /

“Next the Vaiśeṣika position is examined. It is as follows.”

¹ See Rüping, 1977: 6-11 (“Der Zustand des Bhāskara-Textes”).

The presentation of Vaiśeṣika is:

pārthivāpyataijasavāyavīyās caturvidhāḥ paramāṇavo nityāḥ pralayakāle 'vatiṣṭhanti / sarvatra ca tribhyaḥ kāraṇebhyaḥ kāryaṃ niṣpadyata iti manyante samavāyiasamavāyinimittakāraṇaiḥ / tantavaḥ samavāyikāraṇaṃ teṣāṃ paṭasamyogo 'samavāyikāraṇaṃ turīvemakuvindādi nimittakāraṇaṃ / tathā paramāṇavaḥ samavāyikāraṇaṃ tatsamyogo 'samavāyikāraṇaṃ adṛṣṭam īśvarecchā ca nimittakāraṇaṃ / tatreśvarecchāvaśenādyam karma vāyavīyeṣv aṇuṣūtpadyate / tataḥ samyoge dvābhyāṃ dvyaṇukam utpadyate / tatra dvyaṇukādikrameṇa mahān vāyur utpanno nabhasi dodhūyamānas tiṣṭhati / tathā tajjasebhyo agnir utpanno jājvalyamānas tiṣṭhati / tathāp[ye]bhyo mahāsalilanidhir utpannaḥ poplūyamānas tiṣṭhati / tathā pārthivebhyaḥ pṛthivī niścalā tiṣṭhatī /

“Four kinds of eternal atoms — those of earth, water, fire and wind — remain during the period of universal dissolution. They think that an effect everywhere arises out of three causes, with the help of the *samavāyi-*, *asamavāyi-* and *nimittakāraṇas*. Threads are the *samavāyikāraṇa*; their contact in the cloth the *asamavāyikāraṇa*; the shuttle, the loom, the weaver, etc. are the *nimittakāraṇa*. In the same way atoms are the *samavāyikāraṇa*; their contact the *asamavāyikāraṇa*; the unseen (*adṛṣṭa*) and the desire of God the *nimittakāraṇa*. Here (in the state of universal dissolution) the first movement arises in the atoms of wind by force of the desire of God. As a result of this a double-atom (*dvyaṇuka*) arises out of two [atoms of wind] when contact [between them takes place]. In this [situation] macroscopic wind, having arisen in the order *dvyaṇuka* etc., takes its place shaking intensely in the sky. In the same way fire, having arisen out of [atoms] of fire, takes its place burning with great heat. In the same way the great ocean, having arisen out of [atoms] of water, takes its place flooding heavily. In the same way earth, [having arisen] out of [atoms] of earth, takes its place without moving.”

The contents of this presentation agree with Vaiśeṣika as we know it from Praśasta's Padārthadharmasaṅgraha, also known by the name Praśastapādabhāṣya. The final part of Bhāskara's passage is even close to parts of the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha in its choice of words. The following passage is of particular interest (WI § 58):²

² The variants found in different editions of the text are minor and have not been reproduced here.

*tataḥ punaḥ prāṇinām bhogabhūṭaye maheśvarasiṅkṣānantaraṃ
sarvātmagatavṛttilabdhr̥ṣṭāpekṣebhyaḥ tatsaṃyogebhyaḥ pavanaparamāṇuṣu
karmotpattaḥ teṣāṃ parasparaṃyogebhyo dvyaṇukādīprakrameṇa mahān vāyuh
samutpanno nabhasi dodhūyamānas tiṣṭhati / tadanantaraṃ tasminn eva vāyāv
āpyebhyaḥ paramāṇubhyaḥ tenaiva krameṇa mahān salilanidhir utpannaḥ
poplūyamānas tiṣṭhati / tadanantaraṃ tasminn eva jalanidhau pārthivebhyaḥ
paramāṇubhyo mahāpṛthivī saṃhatāvatiṣṭhate / tadanantaraṃ tasminn eva
mahodadhau taijasebhyo 'ṇubhyo dvyaṇukādīprakrameṇotpanno mahāṃs tejorāśiḥ
kenacid anabhibhūtatvād dedīpyamānas tiṣṭhati.*

The similarity, even in the choice of words, between these two passages strikes the eye. Yet there are also differences. The creation as depicted in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha follows the following order: wind, water, earth, fire. In Bhāskara's depiction of Vaiśeṣika the order is: wind, fire, water, earth. It is difficult to determine with certainty whether this difference is significant or not. Bhāskara's presentation is such that no one would notice if a scribe — by mistake, or intentionally — were to change the order of the elements. Moreover, the unsatisfactory nature of the edition of Bhāskara's text does not allow us to know whether all the surviving manuscripts present the elements in this order.³ However, there is reason to believe that Bhāskara's order is not due to a mistake. It seems likely that his order is older than the one proposed by Praśasta, and that Praśasta changed that original order. The reason for thinking so is that Praśasta's description of the destruction of the world presents the elements in the order earth, water, fire, wind, which suggests as order of creation wind, fire, water, earth, i.e., precisely the order presented by Bhāskara. Moreover, Śaṅkara's commentary on Brahmasūtra 2.2.12 presents the creation of the elements in the same order as Bhāskara.⁴

This agreement between Bhāskara and Śaṅkara may be related to the circumstance referred to above that Śaṅkara used as source for his knowledge of the Vaiśeṣika system,

³ J.A.B. van Buitenen stated in 1961 in his article "The relative dates of 'Śaṅkara and Bhāskara'" (reprint in *Studies in Indian Literature and Philosophy* p. 190 n. 1): "A critical edition and annotated translation of the sūtrabhāṣya [of Bhāskara] by the present writer will soon be published in the Harvard Oriental Series". In 1967 Daniel H. H. Ingalls stated ("Bhāskara the Vedāntin", *Philosophy East and West* 17, p. 61): "J.A.B. van Buitenen has prepared a critical edition of the surviving texts [of Bhāskara's commentaries on the Brahmasūtra and on the Bhagavadgītā], which will shortly be published in the Harvard Oriental Series together with an English translation from the same hand". In an obituary included in *Studies in Indian Literature and Philosophy* (1988), Ingalls says various things about the Bhāskara project, among them the following (p. xx): "But then administrative work and family problems drained most of his (i.e. van Buitenen's, JB) energy. There was a divorce. The Bhaskara was shelved, never to be mentioned again to me by word or by letter after 1966." It appears that van Buitenen's work is now with Klaus Rüping. All serious scholars of Vedānta are of course impatiently waiting to see these editions and translations in print.

⁴ Bronkhorst, 1996: 282.

not the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha, but two texts that are now lost: Rāvaṇa's Kaṭandī and Praśasta's Ṭikā thereon.

Beside this feature which distinguishes the Vaiśeṣika as depicted by both Bhāskara and Śāṅkara from the Vaiśeṣika of the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha, there is another one which opposes both Praśasta and Bhāskara to Śāṅkara. In both Praśasta's and Bhāskara's presentation of this philosophy God (*īśvara*) plays a central role in the creation of the world. Atoms of wind start moving as a result of the desire / desire to create (*icchā / sisṛkṣā*) of God. Elsewhere in his commentary Bhāskara specifies that God is *nimittakāraṇa* and nothing else.⁵ In Śāṅkara's commentary on Brahmasūtra 2.2.12, on the other hand, the creation of the world is described without mention of God. The moving force behind the creation of the world is here the 'unseen' (*adr̥ṣṭa*). Śāṅkara criticises this vision of creation because, as he puts it, something unconscious which is not directed by something conscious does not act on its own, nor does it move something else (*na hy acetanaṃ cetanenānadhiṣṭhitam svatantram pravartate pravartayati vā*). Śāṅkara here clearly discusses a form of Vaiśeṣika which does not acknowledge the role of a creator God, whereas the Vaiśeṣika depicted by Bhāskara does recognise such a God.⁶

Having presented the Vaiśeṣika version of creation in which God plays a central role, Bhāskara then criticises their account of creation in essentially the same way as Śāṅkara. That is to say, he criticises an account of creation in which God plays no role at all! Among his arguments, too, we find that the 'unseen' cannot be responsible for the creation, because it is unconscious, and because a chariot undertakes action only when directed by a conscious being (*acetanatvāc ca nādr̥ṣṭam kriyāhetuḥ, cetanādhiṣṭhitam hi rathādi kriyāṃ pratipadyate*).

To add to the confusion it must here be recalled that elsewhere in his commentary on the Brahmasūtra (on sūtra 2.2.37) Śāṅkara shows awareness of the existence of some Vaiśeṣikas who do consider God the efficient cause of the world. The conclusion drawn from this in another publication (Bronkhorst, 1996: 285) is that Śāṅkara, though aware of different forms of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, singled out for criticism those forms which seemed to him particularly vulnerable. He knew the creation account without creator God most probably from Rāvaṇa's Kaṭandī, and the one with creator God from Praśasta's Ṭikā. Śāṅkara knew both forms of Vaiśeṣika, but did not confuse the two.

⁵ Bhāskara on Brahmasūtra 1.1.2 (p. 8 l. 17-18): *vaiśeṣikāḥ punar anumānena kevalam nimittakāraṇam īśvaram sādhyanti*.

⁶ See on these issues the chapter "Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika on karmic retribution" (Bronkhorst, 2000: 33-47).

Bhāskara was less careful. He, too, knew an account of creation without creator God, and one with creator God. Or rather, he presents an account of creation with creator God, but criticises it for not having one.

A relatively easy explanation for this bizarre state of affairs would be the following. It has repeatedly been claimed that both Śaṅkara and Bhāskara often draw upon an earlier commentator, whom Ingalls (1952: 10; 1954: 293) calls the ‘Proto-commentator’.⁷ Both Śaṅkara's and Bhāskara's criticisms of Vaiśeṣika under Brahmasūtra 2.2.12, being very similar to each other, might then derive from this Proto-commentator. The Proto-commentator presumably was not yet acquainted with the new appearance which Praśasta gave to this philosophy by adding the notion of a creator God. Śaṅkara and Bhāskara, on the other hand, did know about this new development, and reveal this in their commentary. Śaṅkara refers to it more or less in passing under sūtra 2.2.37. Bhāskara draws upon it in his initial presentation of Vaiśeṣika under sūtra 2.2.12. Bhāskara appears to have based this presentation without reflection on a text in which a creator God had found its place; most probably, in view of the similarity with the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha, he drew his presentation without much change from Praśasta's Ṭikā. However, his critique of Vaiśeṣika may then have largely followed the Proto-commentator, with the result that presentation and critique do not fit together.

Unfortunately this explanation does not seem to be correct. Rüping (1977) has cogently argued that Bhāskara's commentary — in spite of the difference of opinion which it manifests — strongly depends on Śaṅkara's commentary on the Brahmasūtra. It seems even likely that Bhāskara had no access to any other Brahmasūtra commentaries but Śaṅkara's.⁸ He has also shown that Bhāskara sometimes confused issues where Śaṅkara didn't (e.g. Rüping, 1977: 30).⁹ This suggests that Bhāskara's refutation of Vaiśeṣika is based on Śaṅkara's refutation. However, his presentation of this school was taken directly from a Vaiśeṣika work, most probably — in view of the close, but not perfect, parallelism with the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha — Praśasta's Ṭikā.

⁷ See further Hacker, 1953: 210 [= (26)].

⁸ Satchidanandendra Sarasvatī's (1989: 24) reasons for supposing that in Śaṅkara's time no dualistic Vedāntins yet existed may be relevant in this context.

⁹ It is not impossible that Bhāskara also made a blunder in the following description of the Vaiśeṣika relation called *samavāya* (on Brahmasūtra 2.2.13, p. 114 l. 26-28): *kāryakāraṇayoḥ s[ā]mānyavi[śe]ṣayor guṇaguṇīnoś ca sambandhas triṣv api samavāyalakṣaṇaḥ sa caiko nityaḥ sarvagato vyomavad īsyate*. *Samavāya* does not, of course, connect a *sāmānya* with one or more *viśeṣas*; both *sāmānyas* and *viśeṣas* inhere (through *samavāya*) in substances (*dravya*). Moreover, under Brahmasūtra 2.2.15 (p. 116 l. 1-2) he ascribes to Diñnāga the line *ṣaṭkena yugapad yogāt paramāṇoḥ ṣaḍaṁśatā*, which is in reality verse 12ab of Vasubandhu's *Viṃśikā* (Anacker, 1984: 417).

III

The facts described in this article justify the conclusion that the Vaiśeṣika presented and criticised by Śaṅkara was primarily the early form of this philosophy which appears to have been the subject-matter of Rāvaṇa's Kaṇḍī. Śaṅkara took from it the idea that the world had been created without the help or intervention of a creator God, but also the notion of a *tryaṇuka* consisting of just three atoms. Bhāskara, on the other hand, knew Vaiśeṣika primarily as modified by Praśasta. He borrowed from him the account of creation instigated by a creator God, but also his ideas about the nature of *tryaṇukas*. Where Bhāskara's commentary still preserves a feature of the earlier system — as in the case dealt with here — he appears to have borrowed from Śaṅkara.

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Abbreviations:

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| GOS | Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda |
| Ki | Praśastapādabhāṣyam with the commentary Kiraṇāvalī of Udayanācārya. Ed. Jitendra S. Jetly. Baroda: Oriental Institute. 1971. (GOS 154.) |
| Ny | Nyāyakandalī [of Śrīdhara], with three subcommentaries, ed. J.S. Jetly and Vasant G. Parikh, Vadodara: Oriental Institute, 1991 |
| VS(C) | Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda, with the Commentary of Candrānanda, critically edited by Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji, second edition, Baroda: Oriental Research Institute, 1982 (GOS 136) |
| Vy | Vyomavatī of Vyomaśivācārya, ed. Gaurinath Sastri (2 vols.), Varanasi: Sampūrṇānanda-saṃskṛta-viśvavidyālaya, 1983-84 |
| WI | Word Index to the Praśastapādabhāṣya: A complete word index to the printed editions of the Praśastapādabhāṣya, by Johannes Bronkhorst & Yves Ramseier, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994 |