CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

It is well known that the science of logic in its early beginnings was referred to by terms like Ānviksiki, Netusāstra or Tarkavidyā and that only in a subsequent stage that it acquired its most popular designation as Nyāyasāstra as we find in the Nyāyasūtra of Gautama. Since the word Nyāya signifies 'right' or 'justice', the term Nyāyasāstra acquires the meaning of the science of judgement or true reasoning.

Nothing definite can be said about the early teachers of the Nyāyasāstra. The sages who assembled in the hermitage of Kāśyapa were often considered as the early exponents of the system.¹ But in older literature that definitely goes back to a pre-christian era, there is complete absence of reference to a Nyāya system as such, though the word Nyāya often occurs in the general sense of a decision or conclusion or in the sense of Mīmāṃsā principles.²

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¹ Satischandra Vidyabhusana, A History of Indian Logic, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978, p.43
The Nyāyasūtra or the aphorisms on true reasoning appears to be the first regular treatise on the subject. It is divided into five sections, each containing two chapters called āhnikas. It is often postulated that the work in its present form might have been enlarged from time to time by interpolations and thus it may possibly be the production of a school of thought rather than the composition of a single person. However in the early commentaries on the text the authorship of the sūtra is assigned to Aksapāda (about 150 A.D.). Vātsyāyana (400 A.D.) in his Nyāyabhāṣya states that Nyāya philosophy manifested itself before Aksapāda. Uddotakara (600 A.D.) asserts that it was Aksapāda who enumerated the Nyāyasūtras in a systematic way. Following them several other commentators also are inclined to accept the view. Padmapurāṇa and several other Purāṇas and treatises mention Gotama or Gautama as the promulgator of Nyāyasūtras. Thus there is a confusion as to who was the real author of the sūtras. Some authorities postulate the identity between Aksapāda and Gautama. But several other scholars point out that both are different persons. In fact it is not easy to determine the real author of the Nyāyasūtra. What one may conclude is that both Aksapāda and Gautama have contributed to the production of the work in its present form.3 Of

3 S.C. Vidyabhusana, op.cit., p.49
these Akṣapāda is credited with the systematization of the science. He drew a sizable part of the material from Ānvīksikīvidyā of Gautama and produced a treatise which in its final form appeared as the Nyāyasūtra. Hence Nyāya is rightly called Gautamīvidyā as well as Aksapādadarśana. The Nyāyasūtra treats of a variety of subjects connected with the science.  

This fundamental work on Nyāya philosophy remained without a parallel. During the several succeeding centuries no effort was made to compose any original treatise on the line. Instead Brahmanic writers brought out numerous commentaries on it. These not only tried to elucidate the sūtras but also to review them critically in the light of the sūtras the various theories of contemporary philosophical schools, and as such form a rich store house of valuable information on the science of logic.

Vātsyāyana (about 400 A.D.) the author of the Nyāyabhāṣya was the first known writer to compose a detailed commentary, though he himself has referred to the views of several earlier logicians in the course of his treatise. The next important writer to compose a commentary on Nyāyasūtra was Uddyotakara (about 635 A.D.) the author of Nyāyavārtika. His aim was to oppose the views of Dignāga,
Nāgārjuna and other Buddhist logicians and hence his work not only explains the sutras but also answers the criticism levelled against them.

Vācaspatimīśra (about 841 A.D.), the author of Nyāyavyārtikatātparyātiṣṭhikā tries to justify the explanations of Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara. This Brahmanic writer was prompted to write the gloss since Dharmakīrti and several other Buddhist logicians wrote treatises questioning the validity of the explanation of Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara.

Udayanācārya (984 A.D.) the author of treatises like Nyāyavyārtikatātparyātiṣṭhikāparipāsuddhi, Lakṣaṇāvalī, Ātmatattvaviveka and Kusumaṇḍali was yet another Brahmanic writer to criticise the Buddhists to vindicate the position of the earlier authorities. His Ātmatattvaviveka is also known as Bauddha-dhikkara - a title suggestive of his bias against the Buddhists.

He is followed by Jayanta (about 10th century) the author of Nyāyamaṇjayā, an independent commentary on the Nyāyasūtra. This invincible logician is often known as Vṛttikāra. A Brahmanic writer, he has criticized the doctrines of Kalyāṇa Rāksita and Dharmottara.

In this context one could not underestimate the contributions of the writers of Jaina logic and Buddhists
logic. Both these schools vehemently opposed the theories of Brahmanic writers on numerous topics. Unlike the Jainas, the Buddhists in establishing the superiority of their logical tenets offered a bold challenge to the Brahmanic writers. While Akṣapāda the orthodox logician put forward the theory of a five member syllogism in the second century A.D., the Buddhist logician Nāgārjuna in the next century affirmed that a syllogism consisted only of three members. Though Vātsyāyana tried to defend the position of Akṣapāda, the Buddhist writer Dignāga stoutly opposed him. Dignāga even reduced the sixteen categories of Nyāyasūtra to one, viz., Pramāṇa and the four means of valid knowledge to two, viz. Pratyakṣa and Anumāṇa. Now Uddyotakara tried to oppose the Buddhist composing his Nyāyavārtika about 635 A.D. and was in turn assailed by the Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti who effectively defended Dignāga. Before the appearance of Vācaspatimisra a long gap in the succession of Brahmanic writers can be noticed. By that time the Buddhists gained superiority and achieved a great triumph over the orthodox Brahmanic writers. In fact the Buddhists built up a long tradition for nearly 800 years from 700 A.D. to 1100 A.D. fighting valiantly against the Brahmanas. Logicians like Devendra Bodhi, Śākya Bodhi, Vīṇīta Deva, Ravi Gupta, Jinendra Bodhi, Śānta Raksita, Kamala Śīla, Kalyāṇa
Raksita and others spearheaded a system built up and nurtured by early writers like Nāgārjuna, Dignāga, Śīlabhadra and Dharmakirti. They received liberal encouragement and patronage from rulers for several centuries. Thus Brahmanic system of logic was in total peril. It had to accept some popular views that gained acceptance by all and could not survive without absorbing into its fold some of the important tenets of Buddhist and Jaina logic. This the Brahmanic writers did admirably in course of time. In fact they did better. Most of the principles of thought of the opponents were almost entirely absorbed into the system of Brahmanic logic leaving no room for a separate existence of the Buddhist logic.

In this momentous situation, a new class of writers known generally as Neo-Brahmanic writers emerged. They received back into their fold some of their members who have embraced Buddhism or Jainism because of the superiority of those systems in certain respects. It was a necessity of self preservation. They introduced strict rules and regulation and codes of conduct to effect a renaissance of Brahmanic thought which was by then facing the threat of the advent of Muhammadans.

5 See S.C. Vidyabhusana, History of the Medieaval School of Indian Logic, Orient Books Reprint Corporation, Delhi, 1977, for details.
It is against this new found enthusiasm that Brahmanic writers applied themselves to the task of reviving the teachings of orthodox Hindu logic. They did not hesitate to borrow the external form from other schools though they were particular to trace back their tenets to the works of the ancient school. It was in this period that a class of books known as Prakaraṇas or manuals of logic came to be composed. These manuals were conceived with an open and unbiased mind. They did not try to incorporate all those ideas and conventions that existed in the ancient period. Many a subject that received a detailed treatment in the older texts were thrown away unceremoniously or modified to suit the contemporary trends of thinking. The treatment of topics such as cchala (quibble), jāti (analogue) and Nigrahasthāna (points of defeat) may be cited as instance, while the earlier works made much fuss over these, the modern manuals ignored them altogether or reduced their prominence considerably. These manuals are remarkable for their accuracy and lucidity and the order of treatment. Most of the authors of these manuals tried to incorporate the salient features of the Vaiśeṣika system also so as to give a complete account of the theory of valid knowledge as well as of the objects which would give rise to that knowledge.
Bhāsarvajñā - the celebrated author of Nyāyasāra made his appearance against this background. He was the first Brahmanic writer to reduce the sixteen categories to one. He successfully attempted to reconstruct Brahmanic logic on the plan of the Buddhist logic. He appeared on the scene when both Brahmanism and Buddhism flourished side by side in Kashmir and was best suited to effect the task of reconciliation to the benefit of Brahmanic logic. The fact that he succeeded to a large extent is supported by the number of commentaries that were composed on his manual. A host of writers welcomed his bold approach which was broad and sympathetic.

A detailed study of his manual is a most rewarding experience to a student of logic. In the following pages a modest and brief attempt is made to evaluate the contribution of Nyāyasāra to the system of logic.