CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL STUDY OF VAIŚEŠIKA SYSTEM

The term 'vaiśešika' has been interpreted in two different ways. According to Chinese tradition, "the origin of the name is in the fact that the system is distinguished from, and superior to, the Sākhyā." The second interpretation of the term 'vaiśešika' is that the Vaiśešika, the name of the school, is due to the atomic theory based mainly on the category of 'Viśesa' (particularity) conceived first by Kanāda.

The second interpretation seems to be more accurate, because amongst the types things, the system admitted in its metaphysical scheme, there was an entity called 'Viśesa', literally meaning a 'particularizing', or 'individualizing' thing. This sort of entity was admitted only by this particular school, and hence the school's name is associated with the term 'Vaiśešika'. Vaiśešika system is also known by the name of 'Aulūkya'—derived from the founder's name, i.e., 'Ulūka' (owl). This name was given to him because he behaved like an owl.

as Hsüi has remarked that "in the day-time he meditated in a dense forest, .... and at night, when people went to rest, he wandered about for food."

Rājaśekhara, a Jaina commentator of the Nyāya-Kandli records another tradition. He points out that God Himself, being pleased with the penances of the founder, appeared before him in the form of an owl and taught him the six categories. Hence the system is called 'Aṅgūkya-darśana'.

Now, we would try to trace the origin and existence of Vaiśeṣika system from different sources.

The Origin of Vaiśeṣika System

The origin of the Vaiśeṣika system can be traced from a RK, ascribed to the seer Dirghātamas. The RK, in a question says—"two birds, intimate friends, take shelter in the same tree. One of them eats the sweet berries, the other without eating perches, looking on." The first bird represents the 'individual soul' whereas the other one represents the 'supreme soul'. This RK is the authority on Dualism. Dualistic philosophers have all taken recourse to this verse to distinguish the individual

2. V. P. B. Jivade, Sanskrit Introduction to Nyāya-Kandli, Page 11.
3. Rgveda, 1.164.20.
soul from the supreme entity.

A still more clear reference to the genesis of the Vaiśeṣika system of thought is found in another Rk, which says, "I saw at a distance smoke coming from burning cowdung. Yonder by means of this I inferred the nether-lying, and spreading āgni (fire) by which afterwards I cooked sacrificial food, etc." Here, in this verse, it is indirectly said that wherever there is smoke there is fire, showing that there is an invariable concomitance between the two. In the Vaiśeṣika system (as also, in other Indian logical systems) a syllogistic argument is generally advanced with the proposition "the mountain is fiery, because it smokes." Now, there is a marked similarity between this Vaiśeṣika argument and the tone of argument advanced in the R̄gvedic hymn referred to above. Thus, it is obvious that the Vaiśeṣika system of philosophy has its roots in R̄veda.

In the Chinese collection of the Buddhist Tri-piṭaka, only two works of the orthodox systems of philosophy are included. One is the Sāṁkhya-Kārikā of Iśavakrīṣṇa, and the other is a Vaiśeṣika treatise, Vāspadārtha-sāstra. Although none of these works is of a very early date, the fact of their inclusion indicates that the two schools represented by these works, viz., the Sāṁkhya and the
Vaiśeṣika, were held in great esteem by the Buddhists, and that they were, in all probability, pre-Buddhistic. Some of the Vaiśeṣika doctrines, more notably the theory of the non-existence of an effect before its production (asatkārya-Vāda), appear to be pre-Buddhistic. The latter might have suggested the Buddhist theory of 'dependent origination' (pratītyasamutpāda) which is, in a way, only a fuller and more rational corollary of the former. It is also noteworthy that the Vaiśeṣika, like the Buddhists, accepts only two pramāṇas, perception and inference, and it seems to be less orthodox and more rational than its ally, the Nyāya system.

Buddhist tradition itself regards the Vaiśeṣika school as very old. Citsan's commentary on the Sata-Śāstra of Deva, states in reference to the Vaiśeṣika: "(the founder's name) Ulūka means an 'owl'. The time when he lived was 800 years before the Buddhas. By day he composed a work, and by night he wandered about for alms..... The Sūtra composed by him is called the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra and consists of 100,000 ślokas."

The earliest reference to the Vaiśeṣika school in

---

1. H. Ul, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, Page 3.
Buddhist literature is met with in the "Milinda-panha" where the king Milinda (manander of Bactria, C.150 B.C.) is said to have been versed in Sāmkhya, Yoga, Niti and Vaiśeṣika. The date of Milinda-panha cannot be later than 100 A.D. The next reference to the Vaiśeṣika school as maintaining five kinds of actions, ('throwing upwards', etc.) is made in the Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sūtra which was composed at the Buddhist council held under the patronage of Kanishka. Further, Kalpana-menditika of Kanārlata was wrongly ascribed by Chinese scholars to Āvaghoṣa under the name of "Sūtrālankārā". In this treatise, there is a story related of a discussion between a Buddhist and a follower of the Vaiśeṣika in which the Buddhist compares the Buddha to the sun, and the Vaiśeṣika to an owl, the comparison obviously suggested by the word Ulūka, the name of the originator of the system.

Jaina tradition as preserved in Āvāyika, the second of the four Māle-sūtras of Jainas, attributes certain theories to Rohagutta, which, as given there, are more or less the same as found in the Vaiśeṣika Sūtras. Rohagutta was the teacher of the sixth schism of Jaimism, who lived 544 years after Varhamāṇa. To credit him with

1. Randle, Indian Logic in Early School, Page 12.
4. Ibids, Page 41.
5. Leckie, Indian Logic and Atomism, Page 14;
   Hāfi, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, Page 35.
the origination of the Vaiṣeṣika theories, indicates that these theories must have been time-honoured. We have thus ample evidences to prove the antiquity of the Vaiṣeṣika as a School.

Dr. Dass Gupta suggests that the Vaiṣeṣika as expounded in the Śūtra of Kaṇāda represents an old school of Mīmāṃsā. But Dr. Radha Krishnan does not agree with this view. According to him, the argument that the Vaiṣeṣika Śūtra opens with the declared aim of explaining dharma and closes with the exhortation that Vedic works lead to prosperity through the force of adṛṣṭa, or unseen virtue, is not conclusive, since the discussion of and emphasis on dharma cannot be regarded as the monopoly of any system of thought. The attempt to explain away the points of distinction between the Vaiṣeṣika and the Mīmāṃsā is hardly convincing. Kaṇāda believes that the Vedas are the works of ṛṣis, though not of Iśvāra, while the Mīmāṃsā clings to the eternality of the Vedas, which cannot be said to be a later development. The two doctrines of the eternality of sound and that of the Vedas are closely allied. In spite of the occurrence of identical views and terms in the two systems, it is difficult to say that the Vaiṣeṣika is a branch of the Mīmāṃsā. To

2. Kaṇāda, Vaiṣeṣika Śūtra, Ātsa II-128.
understand the origin and existence of the Vaiśeṣika system in the true perspective it would be worthwhile if we know about the main authors of this system also.

**Main Authors of the Vaiśeṣika System**

(a) Kapāla

The first systematic exposition of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy is found in the 'Vaiśeṣika Sūtra' of Kapāla or Kapabhuj or Kapabhakṣa which all imply the same idea, i.e., the eater of kapas. The word 'kapā', according to Śrīdhara means a grain. The founder was given this name because he was living on grains picked up from the roadside. Dr. Ul interprets it as a nickname devoting an 'atom-eater', due to his theory of atoms. The real name of the author of 'Vaiśeṣika Sūtra' seems to have been Kasyapa.

About the age and personality of this ancient sage, we are, in spite of all researches carried on by modern scholars, still in the dark that needs further probing and investigation. The earliest reference to the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra is found in 'Milinda-panha' of Buddhist literature. The date of Milindapanha, cannot be later than 100 A.D.

1. Śrīdhara, Nyāya Kandī, Page 4.
2. Dr. Ul, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, Page 6.
'Vaiśeṣika Sūtra' is considered to be the older as compared to the Nyāya Sūtra. 1 German scholar, Dr. Jacobi has mentioned the time of Gautama Sūtra between 200 A.D. to 500 A.D., and in his view Vaiśeṣika Sūtra is older than Nyāya Sūtra. 2 According to Dr. U1, Vaiśeṣika Sūtra is quoted by the author of Nyāya Sūtra and such quotations are found in the work of Nāgārjuna, and Deve makes a compliment in Nāgārjuna's quotations. Therefore, Vaiśeṣika Sūtra would appear to have been composed before Nāgārjuna. But the date of Vaiśeṣika Sūtra cannot be earlier than Rohagutta and Áñgāghoṣa. The conclusion is that Vaiśeṣika Sūtra was composed about 50-150 A.D. If Nāgārjuna is not so early as 113-213, the date of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra will be placed at a time later than 50-150 A.D. At any rate, the date is earlier than Nāgārjuna, and the contents of Vaiśeṣika Sūtra do not contradict this supposition. In the view of Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. Kuppu Swāmi, Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, which were in all probability, produced later than the middle of the fourth century B.C. do not controvert any of the Buddhist doctrines, while Buddhist tradition generally recognizes the pre-Buddhist origin of the Vaiśeṣika.

1. Garbe, The Philosophy of Ancient Indians, Page 20;
2. Randle, Indian Logic in Early Schools, Page 177;
4. HaU1, Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, Page 65.

Dr. Kuppu Swāmi, Primer of Indian Logic, Page 12 (Introduction).
Thus, about the date of Kapāda, external evidences being nil, we are left entirely to internal evidences furnished by the Sūtras themselves. The Sūtras of Kapāda were known to Vātsyāyana and the conception of negation was also known to him. Therefore, it may be safely asserted that Kapāda taught his Vaiśeṣika Sūtras before Vātsyāyana, the commentator of Nyāya Sūtra, came into being. Now, Vātsyāyana lived before Dignāga, the author of Pramāṇaśāsana, containing criticism of Vātsyāyana Bhāṣya on Nyāya Sūtra. Dignāga, as has been proved by scholars, lived about the fifth century A.D. Therefore, Vātsyāyana must have flourished before that period and consequently the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra still earlier. Hence Kapāda must have been flourished in the third or the fourth century before the Christian era.

Like other schools of Indian philosophy, the ultimate end of Vaiśeṣika philosophy is self-realization—the only means of attaining mokṣa. The fundamental teaching of Kapāda, therefore, is that we can achieve the supreme good results from the knowledge of the truth about the soul (tattve-jñānāt nihāreṇyasam). The knowledge of the soul is, therefore, of fundamental importance. Kapāda shows the way how it is to be known. Kapāda did

---
not consider it necessary to call attention to the nature of the soul in itself, the pure soul as it was in the beginning and as it will be in the end. It was enough for his purpose to demonstrate the nature of the soul revolving on the wheel of births and deaths and re-births under the law of karma. The universal experience of suffering (dukhā) compels an enquiry as to the means of its removal, namely, realization of the truth about the soul. And Kaṇāda's view is that the soul can be known by means of the Not-soul (objective world). The soul and the not-soul constitute Reality. The Real is that which is knowable, nameable or predicable. Reality, therefore, consists of Pādārthas which are the highest classes into which all nameable things may be arranged for philosophical purposes. They are classes of entities which have an existence antecedent to, and independent of our thought. Philosophy seeks to know all things and it is not possible to know them individually. Every thinker, therefore, in every age and in every country, has attempted at a classification of things suited to the nature of his thought. In the history of philosophy the categories have been successively universal classification of things, of words, of ideas, or of forms of thought. And a complete theory of classification, or a complete system of

1. Kaṇāda, Mahāśāstra Sūtra, 1.1.50
categories, is still a desideratum. Kaṇḍāda's enumeration of the predicables, however, appears to us to be eminently satisfactory. He divides all nameable things into six categories, viz., dravya, guṇa, kārma, sāmānya, viśeṣa and samavēya (the seventh, i.e., aṭhāva was added later on) which embrace all the reality. The Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra of Kaṇḍāda is divided into ten chapters. Chapter I discusses the categories of substance, quality, action, generality and particularity. Chapter II deals with the substances of earth, water, light, air, ether, time and space. Chapter III deals with the objects of senses, establishes the existence of the soul and the mind, and treats of the theory of inference. Chapter IV deals with the theory of atoms, discusses the visibility of quality and examines the character of the body. Chapter V deals with kārma. Chapter VI deals with the merits of gifts and discusses the duties of the four stages of life. Chapter VII deals with the quality, the atomic theory, the soul and the category of inference. The last three chapters are mainly logical and deal with the problems of perception, inference and causality.

Each chapter of the Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra contains two sections called 'āhnika'. Each āhnika contains many sūtras. The total number of the sūtras of the whole treatise is 370, the details of which are as follows:-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Āhīka</th>
<th>Number of Sūtras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 370
From the above mentioned analysis of the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra, we learn that Vaiśeṣika system is mainly a system of physics and metaphysics. Its doctrine of the seven categories is the chief characteristic of the system. Nyāya also came along with Vaiśeṣika as a sister system from a very ancient time. Both the systems have the same end in view, namely, liberation of the individual soul. Both agree with their principles, such as the nature and qualities of the self and the atomic theory of the universe. We can say that the difference between the arguments of the topics in the system of Gautama and that of Kapāla, is not considered to amount to a discrepancy as they are reconciliable: the one more ample, the other more succinct, both leading to like results. Yet the classification and characterization of the categories and the development of the atomic theory give to the Vaiśeṣika its distinctive interest and value.

(b) Praśastapāda

Importance of Praśastapāda for the Vaiśeṣika School is even greater than that of Vātsyāyana for the Nyāya School. While Vātsyāyana is the most authoritative on the Nyāya-Sūtras, Praśastapāda is a reformer of the Vaiśeṣika School, who almost rivals Kapāla, the founder. The Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kapāla were practically superseded by the work of Praśastapāda called 'Padārtha-dharma-samgraha'.
This treatise has not the character of a Bhāṣya. It is not a running commentary on the Sūtras but an independent treatise based on their main contents, introducing many things new about the qualities, the doctrine of creation, the theory of fallacies and the supreme lord of the universe. Mr. Bodes has well pointed out as "The doctrines about dvitva, pakjotpatti, vibhāga vibhāga and several others, which are regarded as peculiarities of the Vaiṣeṣika system, are not even touched upon in Kapāla's aphorisms, although they are pretty fairly discussed in Praśastapāda Bhāṣya."

Though it is very difficult to establish a definite period of Praśastapāda, as he has not given any idea of his time in his Padārthadharme Saṅgraha, yet scholars have mentioned their views based on different principles. Bodes has placed Praśastapāda before Vatsyāyana, the commentator of Nyāya Sūtra. But opposite to this view, Faddgan is of the idea that Vatsyāyan is earlier than Praśastapāda. Praśastapāda is placed in fifth century A.D. by A.E. Keith as there are marked evidences of his indebtedness to Dignāga, the author of the Pramāṇasamuccaya.

---

who was a Buddhist logician most probably flourishing about the fourth century A.D. In the words of Professor 1 Dass Gupta, "it is very difficult to ascertain his date definitely, he is the earlier writer on Vaiśeṣika available to us after Kṣaṇāda and it is not improbable that he lived in the 5th or 6th century A.D."

Having a thorough study of these views, Āśva-Dhruva 2 writes: "In view of the evidence which has been collected and discussed above, I am of the opinion that the balance of probability is in favour of Praśastapāda's priority to Dignāga—a view which Stecherbsky has urged against his own theory of an earlier date." We must agree with the views of Āśva-Dhruva that Praśastapāda can be placed in the fifth century A.D. as there are marked evidences of his indebtedness to Dignāga.

Padārthadharma Samgraha of Praśastapāda has the same importance rather more, in the Vaiśeṣika system as the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana in Nyāya System. At present, whatever is the nature and principles of Vaiśeṣika system and its place amongst the other Indian philosophical systems, the whole of the credit goes to Praśastapāda. His treatise has

---

2. Āśva-Dhruva, Introduction to the Nyāyapravesa, Page 21.
been an ideal one for the later works on this system.

The main contributions of Padārthadharma Saṁgraha are as follows:

1. Kanāda recognizes only seventeen qualities while Prasāstapāda added seven more to the list mentioned by Kanāda.

2. Generality, particularity and inherence, these three categories are mental according to Kanāda, but Prasāstapāda proved them to be external in their existence.

3. Prasāstapāda has given a vivid description of inference.

4. Particularity has been widely described in Prasāstapāda Bhashya.

5. Kanāda does not directly mention God, but Prasāstapāda has removed this defect of Kanāda and established God as the supreme authority in creating and destroying the world.

6. Kanāda mentions only three fallacies: asat (asadha), aprasiddha (virudha) and sandigdha, but Prasāstapāda has four with anadavesita. He has clearly given the statement of these four fallacies.

11th these main points of Padārthadharma Saṁgraha, the Vaiśeṣika Sūtra of Kanāda lost its importance. Later on, all the works like Kandali, Kirpaṇel and Vyomavati are on the Padārthadharma Saṁgraha and not on the Sūtra. Only the Upśāra of Śankar Madra is available written on Vaiśeṣika Sūtra. In the last, we can say undoubtedly that to understand the principles of Vaiśeṣika system in a systematic manner, Padārthadharma Saṁgraha is the most
important than any other treatise on the Vaiśeṣika system.

(c) Udayana

Then, in the Vaiśeṣika literature, we have the well-known "Kırnāvalī" which is a running commentary on the Padārthadharma Samgraha of Praśastapāda. It has been written by Udayanācārya, the reputed author of Kosumānjali, Ātmatattva Viveka, Nyāya Vārtika-tātpyapari Śūddhi. For more details, we have taken him while treating of Nyāya system.

(d) Śrīdhara

Śrīdharaśārya (about 991 A.D.) wrote his Nyāya Kandli, a commentary on the Praśastapāda-Bhāṣya. He belonged to Bengal and was the first Bengali writer on philosophy. His extra-ordinary production in the Nyāya Kandli shows what enthusiasm did Bengal take for philosophical discipline.

(e) Vyomaśīva

Then Vyomaśīvācārya (1100 A.D.) wrote an extensive commentary on the Praśastapāda-Bhāṣya called the Vyomaśīvārtti, who appears to have recognised three pramāṇas. Of these three pramāṇas, Sabda is one and it has been included by Kapāla in anumāna.

(f) Vardhamāna

Both Kırnāvalī and Nyāya Kandli were extensively
commented upon by scholars of genius in later periods.
Thus we have the Kirṇāvalī Prakāśa of Vardhamāna Upādhyāya
1280 A.D., son of Gaṅgāśa, author of Tattvacintāmani and
founder of modern Indian logic of world-wide reputation.
'Kirṇāvalī Prakāśa' was further commented upon by
Pāddanaṅtha Misra of 17th century in his treatise known as
Kirṇāvalī Bhāskara.

(g) Šāṅkar Miśra

The only running commentary that we have on the
Vaiṣeṣika Sūtra of Kaṇāda comes rather late. It is
Upāskāra of Śāṅkar Miśra who might have flourished before
1482 A.D. His style is quite in keeping with Nyāya Nyāya
and the expressions used by eminent Nyāya Nyāya writers
such as Gaṅgāśa and Vardhamāna, are remarkably traceable
in his Upāskāra. This Upāskāra is a verbose commentary
and it is very difficult to go through it without an
adequate knowledge of Nyāya Nyāya.

(h) Śivāditya

Śivāditya's Saṃta-saṃdārthī has, for the first time,
hit upon the conception of negation and added abhāva or
non-entity as the seventh category in the list of
categories, originally enumerated by Kaṇāda to be six in
number. Of course, the necessity of abhāva had been
recognized by Gauḍāma, Kaṇāda and their commentators but
until the time of Śivāditya and Udayana it did not receive
any independent treatment as a category. Sivâditya is perhaps the first man to recognize seven categories and thus his treatise is aptly named 'Saptapadarthi' (a book dealing with seven categories) to mark it out from other treatises dealing with six positive categories.

Sivâditya's Saptapadarthi follows the Vaiśeṣika Sûtra, in the treatment of categories and the arrangement of subjects. The category of bhâva and the sub-divisions of the quality of cognition (buddhi) are, of course, new. The work proceeds with the enumeration of the seven categories, their sub-divisions and definitions explaining in detail in simple style the purpose of the enumeration and the nature of the Highest Bliss constituting the end of all these seven categories.

Sivâditya's Saptapadarthi, though practically amalgamating the two systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, is mainly a manual of the Vaiśeṣika system. The work deals with only two pramāṇas like the Vaiśeṣika instead of four of the Naiyāyikas and the chapter on sammāna is here treated in a brief and comparatively lucid way as in the Vaiśeṣika and not in the extensive and clumsy manner as in the Nyāya.

After Sivâditya there arose many treatises on the Nyāya Vaiśeṣika system amalgamating the two different
systems into one syncretic school. All these treatises of the joint school of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika have been dealt with full explanation while treating of the history of Nyāya System in Chapter I.