A. A Note on the Naiṣadha-carita

The Naiṣadha-carita occupies a prominent place amongst the five epics (Pañca-Mahākāvyā) of Sanskrit Literature. This Mahākāvyā has twenty-two cantos containing 2827 verses in total. Of the two great epics of olden times, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the Mahābhārata is famous for inclusion of more and more stories in case of illustration to its theme. Such stories were being the sources of many poetic creations of the latter ages. Amongst those, the name of the Naiṣadha-caritam comes to our mind easily. For Śrīharsa, the celebrated poet, composed the Naiṣadha-carita taking the subject matter from the Mahābhārata. This is a famous story described in as many as 27 Adhyāyas ranging from Adhyāya No. 53 up to Adhāya no. 79 of the Vanaparva of the Mahābhārata popularly known as the Nalopākhyāna or the story of Nala. This story has been narrated in verses numbering 237-424 in the 6th Taraṅga, Lambaka IX of the Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva too. But poet Śrīharṣa has mainly used the Mahābhārata-story for the theme of his epic, the Naiṣadha-carita. Then, he has not used the story as it is in the original while composing his own Mahākāvyā. He has rewritten the story with
elaboration in many stages and after making innovations to the same so as to feed fat his power of imagination as well as to make the same all the more acceptable to the readers.

With all such purpose in mind, the poet has used only the former half of the Mahābhārata-story for his epic. The Mahābhārata describes the story of Nala and Damayantī with an attractive beginning and happy ending. It introduces the character of Nala as the most efficient king of the kingdom of Niṣadha, his physical beauty, his love for Damayantī, the princess of Vidarbha, his communications with Damayantī through a swan, Damayantī’s reciprocity of love, their marriage, their love-dalliances, appearance of Kali, Nala’s defeat in the game of dice, his separation from Damayantī as a result of conspiracy of Kali, the indescribable sufferings of both the king and the queen and lastly, the long waited reunion of the royal pair with an enjoyable and serene language.

But, the great poet Śrīharṣa has taken only the former part of Nala’s life for the subject-matter of his epic. He has, no doubt, described Nala as the able king of Niṣadha with all profiles of his character pertaining to the former part of the king’s life ending in his marriage and dalliances with Damayantī. Thus the poet has very worthily given the name of his epic, the Naiṣadha-carita or the biography of the king of Niṣadha – country i.e. Nala which he has completed in 2827 verses.
spreaded in twenty-two cantos. The *Naiṣadha* is the longest *Mahākāvyya* of the classical period with the exception of Ratnākara’s *Haravijaya* and Abhinanda’s *Rāmacarita*. It has been assigned to the twelfth century and is the last great poem of Sanskrit literature.¹

Now, before we strive to evaluate the *Naiṣadha-carita* as an epic where philosophical reflections are found elaborately, we find it necessary to describe the story in a nutshell which will help us in illustrating our attempts at its different states as in the following:

The epic begins with the description of Nala, the famous king of *Niṣadha* with his greatness, his prowess and the physical beauty by which the damsels of all the three worlds including Damayantī, the princess of *Vidarbhā*, are attracted to him. Nala has also heard of the matchless beauty and unparalleled feminine qualities of Damayantī and has fallen in love with the princess even though he has not seen her with his eyes. So, with a view to assuage his love-lorn condition, he goes to a garden where he captures a golden swan easily with his bare hands. Then the terrified swan requests the king to let him free saying that he has his wife waiting for him in their nest and he will describe king’s beauty before Damayantī, the princess of *Vidarbha*, if the king lets him free. The swan gives a vivid description of the exquisite beauty of Damayantī which makes the king all the more love-sick. Thereafter, the king sets the swan free. The swan
retires with a promise that he will go to *Kundinapura*, the capital of Damayanṭi’s father, Bhīma, and will return to the king with news from her.

In this way, the opening two cantos have set the stage free from an attractive story of Nala and Damayanṭi.

The third and the fourth cantos describe Damayanṭi in a love-lorn state after hearing of the physical charms and the covetable traits of the hero. The swan, as promised to the hero, approaches the princess and confides the king’s love to her. Damayanṭi also expresses that she will not live without the king’s favour for her. Latter, she falls unconscious being unable to bear the separation from the king. This creates a hue and cry in the midst of Damayanṭi’s female friends. On hearing the sound, Bhīma the father of Damayanṭi, appears there. He considers the case as a reaction to Damayanṭi’s maturity and declares that he will soon arrange for the ‘*svayamvara*’ of Damayanṭi in the royal house.

Getting the news from the heavenly sage, Nārada, that a ‘*svayambhara-sabhā*’ will be instituted wherein Damayanṭi will choose her husband, four gods, namely, Indra, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa become aspirants to be the suitors; but they want to have themselves introduced to Damayanṭi through some agents before the actual period of the *svayamvara*. Accidentally, they meet Nala and ask him to act as an emissary who will advocate for them before Damayanṭi. They say that as
Damayanti resides in the harem where entrance for a male person is restricted. So, Nala will remain invisible during his mission. Nala finds no alternative to act accordingly. He has a few romantic experiences of dashing against the beautiful girls of the harem remaining invisible. Ultimately, he arrives near Damayanti. Here Nala performs his duty as a faithful messenger of the gods. Damayanti confides to him that she finds it difficult to hear from him, because she has already confiscated herself before king Nala and it is impossible for her to accept any other as her husband. At this, Nala becomes very much sentimental and he discloses his own identity. Under the circumstances, Damayanti falls unconscious being unable to bear that the very person on whom she has placed all her longings has come as a messenger for others. With this, the cantos from the fifth up to the ninth are complete.

The cantos from ten to fourteen describe the svayamvara proper. King Bhīmasen makes all sorts of arrangement to receive all persons including gods, semi-gods, serpent-kings, mortal kings, warriors and princes. All of them are happy with proper receptions from the royal family. But they are not satisfied until and unless they are not chosen by Damayanti.

The four gods come to know that Damayanti is overwhelmed with love for Nala. But they cannot give up their longings for Damayanti.
Nor they desire to remain as idle spectators in the great gathering of the suitors from the three worlds. So they take the form of Nala and remain waiting for the bridal garland from Damayanti. Now, Damayanti is at a loss to see five Nalas in the ceremony. Being unable to ascertain her duty, she prays to gods to help her in finding out the original Nala. The gods are propitiated. Damayanti hears a verse having five meanings and chanted by some unknown person. The propitiated gods grant her a power by which she understands the meanings of the verse applied to the four gods and Nala individually. Now there is no problem before Damayanti. She throws the wedding garland around the neck of Nala proper amidst clappings and rejoicings by the gathering.

Cantos fifteen and sixteen delineate the marriage ceremony between Nala and Damayanti in the royal home of Kundinapura.

After having heard of the marriage of Damayanti with Nala, Kali, one of the suitor gods to Damayanti, declares his stern resolution to ruin Nala separating Damayanti and his kingdom. The canto numbering seventeen is completely describing Kali's resolute in a befitting manner.

The last five cantos, from the eighteen to twenty-two, describe Nala's amorous dalliances with Damayanti as well as the daily duties of the king making the epic-story more and more palatable.
Śrīharṣa while composing his *Naiṣadha-carita* employed his erudition in such a way that his work reached a higher stage in the domain of Sanskrit *Kāvyā* literature. In ordinary eyes, the story described therein, is an ordinary love-story between Nala, the king of *Niṣadha* and Damayanti, the princess of *Vidarbha*. But the poet has reproduced it in such a lucid style that the scholars have heaped up epithets on him along with other poets when some of them comment --

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“upamā kālidāsasya bhāraīverarthagaouravam,
naiṣadhe padalālityam ām gāhe santi trayo guṇah.”
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Thus the sweetness of the words of Śrīharṣa best expressed in his *Naiṣadha-carita* was only because of the fact that the poet used selective words while depicting different portions of the story accepted for the theme of his *Kāvyā*. Moreover, different literary maxims have been found intent in the body of the great epic that have raised the same up to the standard of an ornate poem. So, the learned scholars have often considered the *Mahākāvyya* as a medicine that can fulfil their wants as has been well expressed in the saying – “*naiṣadham vidvadausadham*” which forms a philosophical profile.

Although the *Naiṣadha-carita* is famous as a poetic composition with all the qualities needed for being a Great Epic, it has a philosophical side too. To speak the truth, both Indian literature and philosophy are
found to have interestingly interwoven in the *Naiṣadha-carita*. Because, it is seen that different philosophical notions are compressed and communed with the literary matter of the epic.

The poet, Śrīharṣa, has construed all the philosophical ideas in his *Naiṣadha-carita* in such a way that a person with philosophical insight can very easily find out different philosophical thoughts side by side with is enjoying the literary merits of the epic. So, the epic has been found to be a most interesting creation in the domain of Sanskrit literature. Therefore, a critical study of the *Naiṣadha-carita* is felt necessary within the attempt of which different philosophical doctrines will be found out with different stages of the epic-story mingled together and as such it is proposed to make a study on the six Hindu *Darśanas* as reflected in the *Naiṣadha-carita*.

**B. Outline of the Six Hindu Darśanas**

(i) **Nyāya Darśana**

The *Nyāya* system is the propounded by great sage Gotama. This system is a realistic philosophy which is based mainly on logical grounds. It admits four sources of valid knowledge namely, Perception (Pratyakṣa), Inference (Anumāna), Comparison (Upamāna) and Verbal Testimony (Śabda). (pratyakṣānumānapamānasabdah pramāṇāni. NS.1.1.4). The direct knowledge of objects produced by their relation to our sense is
called Perception. It may be external (bāhya) or internal (antara). Inference is the knowledge of objects, not through perception, but through the apprehension of some mark (liṅga) which is invariably related to the inferred objects (Sādhya). The invariable relation between the two is called Vyāpti. In inference, there are at least three prepositions and at most three terms, viz., minor term (Pakṣa) about which we infer something, the major term (Sādhyā) which is the inferred object, and the middle term (Liṅga or Sādhana) which is invariably related to the major and is present in the minor. For example, "The hill is fiery, because there is smoke; and where there is smoke, there is fire. Comparison is the knowledge of the relation between a name and things so named on the basis of a given description of their similarity to some familiar object. A man is told that a gavaya is like a cow. Than he finds an animal in the forest, which strikingly resembles the cow, and concludes that this animal must be a gavaya. Such knowledge is derived from upamāna or comparison. Śabda or testimony is the knowledge about unperceived objects derived from the statements of authoritative persons. According to a scientist, water is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen in a certain proportion. Although we have not ourselves demonstrated the truth we know it is on the authority of the scientist. Here our knowledge is derived from Śabda or testimony. All
other sources of knowledge have been reduced by the *Naiyāyikas* to these four.

According to *Nyāya*, the objects of knowledge are, the self, the body, the senses and their objects, cognition (Buddhi), mind (Manas), activity (Pravṛtti), mental defects (Doṣa), rebirth (Pretyābhāva), the feelings of pleasure and pain, happy (sukha), suffering (dukha), and freedom from suffering (Apavarga). Like any other system of Indian philosophy, the *Nyāya* seeks to deliver the self from its bondage to the body, the senses and other objects. According to it, the self is distinct from the body and the mind. The body is only a composite substance made of matter. The mind (Manas) is a subtle, individual and eternal substance (aṇu). It serves the soul as an instrument for the perception of psychic qualities like pleasure, pain etc. Therefore, it is called an internal sense. The self (Ātman) is another substance which is quite distinct from the mind and the body. It acquires the attribute of consciousness when it is related to any object through the senses.

Liberation (Apavarga) means the absolute cessation of all pains and sufferings brought about by the right knowledge of reality (tattva-jñāna). According to some thinkers, it is a state of happiness. But it is entirely wrong, for there is no pleasure without pain, just as there is no
light without shade. So, liberation is only release from pain and not pleasure or happiness.

The *Naiyāyikas* prove the existence of God by several arguments. God is the ultimate cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world. He did not create the world out of nothing, but out of eternal atoms, space, time, ether, minds and souls. This world has been created in order that individual souls (jīvas) might enjoy pleasure or suffer from pain according to the merit or demerit of their actions in other lives and in other worlds. For God’s existence, the most popular argument is: “All things of the world like mountains and seas, the sun and the moon, are effects, because they are made up of parts. Therefore, they must have an agent (kartā).”

(ii) *Vaiśeṣika Darśana*

Sage Kanāda, who is also named *Ulūka*, is the founder of the *Vaiśeṣika* system. This system is allied to the *Nyāya* system and has the same end in view, namely, liberation of the individual self. It brings all objects of knowledge, i.e. the whole world under the seven categories of substance (Dravya), quality (Guṇa), action (Karma), generality (Sāmāṇya), particularity (Viṣeṣa), inherence (Samavāya) and non-existence (Abhāva).
A substance is the substratum of qualities and actions, but is different from both. Substances are of nine kinds, viz. earth (Kṣetra), water (AP), fire (Teja), air (Marat), ether (Vyoma), time (Kāla), Space (Dik), soul (Atmā) and mind (Manaḥ). Of these, the first five are called the physical elements (Bhūtas) and have respectively the specific qualities of smell, taste, colour, touch and sound. The first four are composed of the four kinds of atoms (of earth, water, fire and air) which are invisible and indestructible particles of matter. The atoms are uncreated and eternal entities which we get by resolving any material object into smaller and smaller parts till we come to such as cannot be further divided. Akasa, space and time are imperceptible substance, each of which is one, eternal and all-pervading. The mind (Manaḥ) is an eternal substance which is not all-pervading, but infinity small like an atom.

God or the supreme soul is inferred as the creator of the world of effects. The world has been created by God out of eternal atoms. The composition and decomposition of atoms explain the origin and destruction of the composite objects of the world. But the atom cannot move and act by themselves. The ultimate source of their actions is to be found in the will of God, who directs their operations according to the law of karma. To compose a world that befits the unseen moral deserts (adrṣṭa) of individual souls and serves the purpose of moral dispensation,
the atoms are made. This is the atomic theory of the *Vaiśeṣikas*. It is rather teleological than mechanistic and materialistic like other atomic theories.

Particularity (*Viśeṣa*) is the ground of the ultimate differences of things. Ordinarily, we distinguish one thing from another, by the peculiarities of its parts and other qualities. But how are we to distinguish two ultimate simple and eternal substances of the world, like two atoms of earth? There must be some ultimate difference or peculiarity in each of them, otherwise they would not be different, both having all the qualities of earth. Particularity stands for the peculiarity or the individuality of the eternal entities of the world. It is the special treatment of this category of *Viśeṣa* that explains the name ‘*Vaiśeṣika*’ given to this system of philosophy.

The *Vaiśeṣika* theory, with regard to God and liberation of the individual soul, is substantially the same as that of the *Nyāya*.

In this system, seven *Padārthas* and two *pramāṇas* viz. *pratyakṣa* and *śabda*, are there.

(iii) *Sāṅkhya Darśana*

The *Sāṅkhya* system is founded by sage Kapila. This is a philosophy of dualistic realism. It admits two ultimate realities, namely, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, which are independent of each other in respect of their existence. *Puruṣa* is an intelligent principle of which consciousness
( Caitanya ) is not an attribute, but the very essence. It is the self which is quite distinct from the body, the senses and the mind ( Manas ). Puruṣa is beyond the whole world of objects, and is the eternal consciousness which witnesses the changes and activities going on in the world, but does not itself act and change in anyway. Chairs, beds etc. type of physical things exist for the enjoyment of beings other than themselves. Therefore, there must be the Puruṣa or the self which is distinct from prakṛti or primary matter, but is the enjoyer ( bhoktā ) of the products of prakṛti. Different bodies are related to different selves, for when some men are happy, others are unhappy, some die but others live.

On the other hand, the ultimate cause of the world is called prakṛti. It is an eternal unconscious principle ( jada ) which is always changing and has no other end than the satisfaction of the selves. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are three constituents of prakṛti which holds them together in a state of rest or equilibrium ( sāmyāvasthā ) [ sattvarajas-tamasāṁ sāmyāvasthā prakṛtiḥ, STK ]. This three are called guṇas. But they are not qualities or attributes in any sense. Rather, they are three substantial elements which constitute prakṛti like three cords making up a rope. The existence of the guṇas is inferred from the qualities of pleasure, pain and indifference which we find in all things of the world. The same sweet is liked or disliked or treated with indifference by the same man in
different conditions. The same salad is tasteful to some person, distasteful to another and insipid to a third. Now the cause and the effect are essentially identical. The effect is the manifested condition of the cause, e.g. oil as an effect manifests what is already contained in the seeds. The things of the world are effects which have the qualities of pleasure, pain and indifference. Therefore, \textit{prakṛti} or \textit{pradēna} which is their ultimate cause must have the three elements of \textit{Sattva}, \textit{Rajas} and \textit{Tamas} which respectively possess the natures of pleasure, pain and indifference, and cause manifestation, activity and passivity.

\textbf{(iv) Yoga Darśana}

The \textit{Yoga} philosophy is the system of the great sage Patañjali. The \textit{yoga} is closely allied to the \textit{Sānkhya}. It mostly accepts the epistemology and the metaphysics of the \textit{Sānkhya} with its twenty-five principles, but admits also the existence of God. The practise of \textit{Yoga} as the means to the attainment of \textit{vivekajñāna} or discriminative knowledge, which is held in the \textit{Sānkhya}, to be the essential condition of liberation. According to it, Yoga consists in the cessation of all mental functions (cittavṛttinirodha). There are five levels of mental functions (cittabhūmi). The first is called \textit{kṣipta} or the dissipated condition in which the mind flirts among objects. The second is \textit{mūḍha} or the stupefied condition as the sleep. The third is called \textit{vikṣipta} or the relatively pacified condition.
Yoga is not possible in any of these conditions. The fourth and the fifth levels are called *ekāgra* and *nirddha*. The one is a state of concentration of the mind on some object of contemplation. The last two levels of the mind (cittabhūmi) are conducive to Yoga. There are two kinds of Yoga or *Samādhi*, viz. *Samprajñāta* and *Asamprajñāta*. In the first we have Yoga in the form of the minds perfect concentration on the object of contemplation, and, therefore, involving a clear apprehension of that object. In the second, there is the complete cessation of all mental modifications and, consequently, the entire absence of all knowledge including that of the contemplated object.

The practice of Yoga (yogāṇga) has these are: *Yama* (restraint), *Niyama* (moral culture), *Āsana* (posture), *Prāṇāyāma* (breath-control), *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *Dhāranā* (attention), *Dhyāna* (meditation) and *Samādhi* (concentration). *Yama* (restraint) consists in abstaining from injury to any life, from falsehood, theft, incontinence and avarice. *Niyama* (moral culture) is the cultivation of good habits like purification, contentment, penance, study of the Vedas and contemplation of God. *Āsana* is the adoption of steady and comfortable postures. *Prāṇāyāma* or breath-control is regulated inhalation, exhalation and retention of breadth. *Pratyāhāra* or sense-control consists in withdrawing the senses from their objects. *Dhāranā* or attention is fixing the mind on
some intra-organic or extra-organic objects like the nose-tip or the moon. 

*Dhyāna* or meditation is the steady contemplation is that state in which the contemplative consciousness is lost in the contemplated object and has no awareness of it.

The *Yoga* system is called the theistic (sāvāra). *Sānkhya* as distinguished from the Kapila, *Sānkhya* which is generally regarded as atheistic (Nirṛśvara). It holds that God is the highest object of contemplation for concentration and self-realization. He is the perfect Being who is eternal, all-pervading, omniscient and completely free from all defects. The *Yoga* argues for the existence of God on the following grounds: Whatever has degrees must have a maximum. There are degrees of knowledge; therefore, there must be such a thing as perfect knowledge or omniscience. He who has omniscience is God. The association of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti* is what initiates the evolution of the world, and the cessation of this leads to dissolution. Neither the association nor the dissociation is natural to *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. Therefore, there must be a supreme being who is able to bring about these relations between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* according to the moral deserts of individual souls.

**(v) Mīmāṁsā Darśana**

The system of *Mīmāṁsā* is concerned with a clarification of liturgical aspect of the Vedas. Indeed, the term ‘Mīmāṁsā’ literary means
deep thought, reflection, consideration and exposition and when applied to philosophy, it means reflection on or exposition of the Vedas. The Purvamīmāṃsā or Karmamīmāṃsā or simply Mīmāṃsā is a kind of scholastic, priestly science. The system of Purvamīmāṃsā stands to close relationship to Indian Law since its main object is to determine injunctions which are distinct from those of civil law mainly in the fact that they deal with the sacrificial rather than civil obligations. Dr. C.K. Raja says: "It is in the Mīmāṃsā that I find a full and balanced philosophy. The fact is that in all the systems, in the Sāñkhya-Yoga, in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and in the Vedānta, the appeal is essential to those who are dissatisfied with their experience in this world, but in the Mīmāṃsā is to those who desire to know man and his life, according to the moral law of the world". This comment of Dr. Raja seems to be a logical and correct one.

The Mīmāṃsā system is ascribed to the great sage Jaimini who composes the Mīmāṃsā sutras. Śabaravāmi is the commentator of the Sūtras called Śabarabhāsyā. He is followed by a long line of commentators and independent writers of whom Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Prabhākara Miśra deserve special mention. These two philosophers founded the two chief branches rather sister schools of the Mīmāṃsā known after their names viz. the Bhaṭṭa and the Prabhākara school.
Of the two chief schools of the \textit{Pūrvamīmāṃsā}, the \textit{Bhaṭṭa} school was largely taught and studied all over India and numerous works were written on the system. But the \textit{Prabhākara} school which is as important as \textit{Bhaṭṭa} and whose founder is held in higher esteem even by the followers of \textit{Bhaṭṭa}, fell back probably owing to the severe attacks upon it by the \textit{Naiyāyikas} and the followers of the rival school. \textit{Darśana} is the principal topic of the \textit{Mīmāṃsā} system.\footnote{1}

It may be pointed out here that besides the two schools of \textit{Mīmāṃsā} already stated, one more school is found to exist, known as the \textit{Miśramata} initiated by one Murāri Miśra. This school, however, is not known except through some references in other works Murāri appears to have given birth to a new school within the \textit{Mīmāṃsā} system, which had led to the saying – ‘\textit{murāreṣṭṛtiyāḥ panthāḥ}’ (the third path i.e., school initiated by Murāri). But materials for preparing a full account of this ‘\textit{Miśramata}’ are not yet available to the scholars.\footnote{2}

Both the \textit{Bhaṭṭa} and \textit{Prabhākara} schools of \textit{Mīmāṃsā} differ in certain points. Some of the important points of difference between the two systems may be mentioned here:

(i) The \textit{Prabhākara} school recognizes only five \textit{Pramāṇas} namely, Perception (Pratyakṣa), Inference (Anumāna), Verbal Testimony (Śāstra), Comparison (Upamāna) and Postulation (Arthāpatti). But the
Bhaṭṭas admit six Pramanās by adding Non-apprehension (Anupalabdhi) to the above five.

(ii) While the Prabhākaras admit eight Padārthas, viz., substance (Dravya), quality (Guṇa), action (Karma), generality (Sāmānya), potency (Sakti), similarity (Sāḍṛṣya), inherence (Samavāya) and number (Sāṅkhya), the Bhaṭṭas recognize only five Padārthas by adding non-existence (Abhāva) to the first four of the Padārthas.

(iii) The school of Prabhākara advocated the theory of Anvitābhidhāna while that of Kumārila advances the theory of Abhihitānvaya.

(iv) While the Bhaṭṭa school accepts the theory of Anyathākhyāti, the Prabhākara advocates the theory of Akhyāti.

(v) The Prabhākara admits the theory of Niyogavākyārtha. The Bhaṭṭas, on the other hand, accept the theory of Bhāvanāvākyārtha.

(vi) While the Bhaṭṭa school admits importation of words (Śabdādhyāhāra), the Prabhākara school recognizes the importation of ideas (Arthādhyāhāra).

These are the most important points of difference between the two sister schools of Pūrvamīmāṁsā.
(vi) Vedānta Darśana

This system aries out of the Upaniṣads which mark the culmination of the Vedic speculation and are fittingly called Vedānta or the end of the Vedas. As we have seen previously, it develops through the Upaniṣads in which its basic truths are first grasped, the Brahma-sūtra of Bādarāyana which systematizes the Upaniṣadic teachings and the commentaries written on these sūtras by many subsequent writers among whom Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are well-known. Of all the systems, the Vedānta, especially as interpreted by Śaṅkara, has exerted the greatest influence on Indian life and it still persists in some form or other in different parts of India.

Śaṅkara interprets the Upaniṣads and the Brahma-sūtra to show that pure and unqualified monism is taught therein. God is the only Reality, not simply in the sense that there is no multiplicity even within God. The denial of plurality, the multiplicity even within God. The denial of plurality, the unity of the soul and God, the assertion that when God is known, all in known, and similar views found in the Upaniṣads, in fact the general tone that pervades their teachings, cannot be explained consistently if we believe even in the existence of many realities within God. Creation of the many things of God (Brahman) or the soul (Ātman) is, of course, related in some Upaniṣads. But in others, and even in the Vedas, creation is compared to magic or jugglery; God is spoken of as the Juggler who
creates the world by the magical power called Māyā. Brahman is the main topic of the Vedanta system.

Śaṅkara, therefore, holds that, in consistency with the emphatic teaching that there is only one Reality, we have to explain the world not as a real creation, but as an appearance which God conjures up with his inscrutable power, Māyā. To make the conception of Māyā more intelligible to ordinary experience, he interprets it in the light of ordinary illusions that we have in daily life, when a rope appears, for example, as a snake or a glittering shell appears as silver. In all such cases of illusion there is a substratum or a reality (e.g. rope, shell) on which something else (e.g. snake, silver) is imagined or superimposed owing to the ignorance of the substratum. This ignorance not only conceals the underlying reality or substratum, but also makes it appear as something else. Our perception of the world’s objects can be similarly explained. We perceive the many objects in the One Brahman on account of our ignorance (avidyā or ajñāna) which conceals the real Brahman from us and make it appear as the many objects.

Māyā is the creative principle of the world and all the world is permeated by the Supreme Reality, the Brahman.

Thus there are six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy which are found reflected in the Naiṣadha-carita of Śrīharṣa.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Vide, Introduction (p. xvii) to the NC (K).

2. There is also a variant reading of the word “naiṣadhe” in the third line of the verse where the word “daṇḍinaḥ” is found. However, the word “Naiṣadhe” is a better reading.

3. antyonyadravyavṛttirvisēṣaḥ parikṛtītaḥ, BP.

4. dravyaṁ guṇaṣṭathā karma sāmānyam saviveṣasavam / samavāyastathābhāvaḥ padārthaḥ sapta kṛtītaḥ // ibid, 1.1.

5. IDM, p. 27.

6. athāto dharmaṁjñāsā-sūtramādepemidam kṛtam / dharmakhyāṁ viṣayaṁ vaktum mīmāṁsayāḥ prayojanaṁ // SV, 1.3.

7. EPSM, p. 4.

8. athāto brhmaṁjñāsa. BS. 1.1.1.