Tradition and argumentation: tensions among some early thinkers and their backgrounds

Abstract

I will consider evidence from earliest Pāṇinian grammarians, Bhartṛhari, Nyāya and literary commentary. This evidence supports the thesis that there is an ongoing tension between tradition accepted as authoritative and reasoning used to support as well as to attack such tradition. At no time in early and medieval India was there an absolute, thoughtless acceptance of tradition, even by different followers of a single tradition. The main points discussed are as follows.

(1) Patañjali says on several occasions with respect to statements of Kātyāyana that once teachers formulate sūtras they do not retract them, but they formulate statements that complement the earlier ones. That is, authorities are willing not only to state rules but also to consider additions and amendments to them. This is a general Indian attitude, reflected also in other spheres.

(2) Modern scholars are familiar with the polemical style of Indian scholars arguing for views maintained in one school of thought and in the course of such argumentation refuting vigorously views held by others. Early scholars like Patañjali, on the other hand, do not, at least superficially, argue in so overt a manner. Nevertheless, they too make clear what they consider positions to be accepted. Thus, after noting that the question whether speech is nitya or anitya was thrashed out in the Saṅgraha, Patañjali remarks that whatever view one takes, the grammar is to be put into play. On another occasion, he remarks with regard to the use of present verbal forms that one should use them considering the semantics that speakers have in mind and not worry about specious arguments against the possibility of a present time. Such statements reflect the willingness to consider particular claims both inapplicable and irrelevant in particular contexts. In this context, Kaiyaṭa speaks of bad reasoning on the part of some opponents.

(3) Jayantabhaṭṭa too attacks opponents for their bad reasoning that had deleterious effects on Vedic tradition.

(4) Even so apparently mild a critic as Bhartṛhari, who in effect carries on Patañjali modes of presentation, not only upholds tradition but also can be quite firm in rejecting certain positions, not merely in the context of the Pāṇinian system but also more generally. Moreover, even when he stresses the need for considering various traditions, he also brings this into the context of such knowledge serving as an aid in upholding the conclusions of one particular system and severely criticizes what he calls 'dry logic'.

(5) Mallinātha, who embarks on commentaries whose aim is apparently to recapitulate slavishly what original authors say, also remarks that his Sañjīvanī serves to revive what has been put to near death by the poison of bad commentaries.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I consider evidence from earliest Pāṇinian grammarians, from the work of Bhartṛhari, as well as from Nyāya and literary commentary which supports the thesis that there is an ongoing tension in early and mediaeval India between tradition accepted as authoritative and reasoning used to support as well as to attack such tradition. There was not an absolute, thoughtless acceptance of tradition, even by different followers of a single tradition.

Let me begin by citing the final two kārikās of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya (VP 2.489-490), which might be interpreted as supporting the position that various traditions (*āgama*) are unquestioningly held in equal esteem:

prajñā vivekaṁ labhate bhinnair āgamadarśanaiḥ |
kiyad vā śakyam unnetuṁ svatarkam anudhāvatā ||
tat tad utprekṣamāṇānāṁ purāṇair āgamair vinā |
anupāsitavṛddhānāṁ vidyā nātiprasīdati |

Bhartṛhari here states unequivocally that the insight (*vidyā*) of those who do not pay reverence to elders (*anupāsitavṛddhānām*), who instead come up with this or that idea (*tat tad utprekṣamāṇānām*) without benefit of earlier traditions (*purāṇair āgamair vinā*), is not very felicitous (*nātiprasīdati*). Hari also unambiguously says that insight (*prajñā*) gains discriminatory power (*vivekaṁ labhate*) through the various views established is different traditions (*bhinnair āgamadarśanaiḥ*). Further, he asks what (*kiyat* 'how much?', on the other hand, one can conclude who simply follows his own reasoning (*svatarkam anudhāvatā*). Here Bhartṛhari uses the term *unnetum* the interpretation of which will determine the tenor of these final verses: whether he speaks of gaining insight in general or using the insight gained from considering conclusions reached in various traditions in order better to uphold particular views maintained in one's own tradition. To this point I will revert in the final section of my paper (section 6), after considering first evidence for a background within which these verses should be located.

2. Early Pāṇinīyas on sūtras not being withdrawn once they are stated.
2.1.

In the introductory section of the Mahābhāṣya, Patañjali cites and discusses vārttikas of Kātyāyana concerning what the term *vyākaraṇa* should be considered to refer to. One of the suggestions entertained is that by *vyākaraṇa* is meant the speech units (*śabda*) that are the object of description. Against this possibility, Kātyāyana states two major objections:

(a) *Vyākaraṇa* is a derivate formed with the kṛt suffix *ana* (‑ *lyuṭ*), which serves to form derivates signifying instruments relative to actions.[1] It refers to that by means of which are explained speech units which are the object of description, and these are described by means of a

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[1] A_ṭādhyāyī 3.3.117: *karaṇādhikaraṇayoś ca*.

set of sūtras, not by means of the same units that are the object of description. Consequently, the meaning of the suffix *ana* is not properly accounted for under this position.[2]

(b) Taddhita affixes with particular meanings also fail to be accounted for:

(b1) One should be able to use *vaiyākaraṇa* appropriately to refer to a rule (*yoga*) which occurs in a vyākaraṇa.[3] A rule occurs in a set of sūtras, not in the speech units that constitute the object of description.[4]

(b2) Derivates such as *pāṇinīya*, *āpiśala*, *kāśakṛtsna* should refer to sets of sūtras propounded by Pāṇini, Āpiśali, and Kāśakṛtsna.[5] But Pāṇini has not propounded the actual speech forms he describes; he has instead propounded a corpus of rules that accounts for these forms.[6]

After citing the vārttikas and explaining them with appropriate examples, Patañjali brings up an objection to the way in which Kātyāyana has formulated (b), asking why he says *bhave proktādayaś ca taddhitāḥ* instead of simply saying *śabde lyuḍarthaḥ proktādayaś ca tadditāḥ*.[7] For under the second and briefer formulation, *proktādayaś taddhitāḥ* 'and taddhitas (meaning) "propounded ..." and so on' would include an objection as under (b1). Patañjali's answer to this is that the teacher Kātyāyana first thought of objection (b1) and only later did (b2) occur to him, so that he formulated (b1) separately.

Moreover, notes Patañjali, once teachers have formulated sūtras (*sūtrāṇi kṛtvā* 'after making sūtras'), they do not withdraw them. That is, although (b2) would suffice to cover the objections

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[2] Paspaśā vārttika 12: *śabde lyuḍarthaḥ*. Mahābhāṣya I.11.26-27: *yadi śabdo vyākaraṇaṁ lyuḍartho nopapadyate* : *vyākriyante' neneti vyākaraṇam | na hi śabdena kiñcid vyākriyate | kena tarhi | sūtreṇa*. Mahābhāṣya references are to volume, page, and lines of K. V. Abhyankar's revision of F. Kielhorn's edition. References for Kaiyaṭa's Pradīpa and Nāgeśa's Uddyota are to volumes and pages of the Rohatak edition of the Mahābhāṣya with these commentaries. The Vākyapadīya is cited according to Rau's now standard edition, while citations from the Vākyapadīyavṛtti and the Paddhatī are according to the editions of K. A. Subramania Iyer, with the kārikās numbered as in both Rau's and Subramania Iyer's editions.

[3] *vaiyākaraṇa* is thus derived from *vyākaraṇa-i* , with the locative ending *ṅi*, through introducing the affix *aṇ* by A_ṭādhyāyī 4.3.53: *tatra bhavaḥ*, to signify something that occurs in a vyākaraṇa.

[4] Paspaśā vārttika 13: *bhave ...* Mahābhāṣya I.12.2-3: *bhave ca taddhito nopapadyate* : *vyākaraṇe bhavo yogo vaiyākaraṇa iti | na hi śabde bhavo yogaḥ | kva tarhi | sūtre*.

[5] The derivates are formed with affixes introduced after padas *pāṇini-ā* and so forth, by rules under the heading A_ṭādhyāyī 4.3.101: *tena proktam*, which provides for affixes meaning 'propounded (*proktam*)' to follow padas of the type X-3 referring to one by whom such and such has been propounded.

[6] Paspaśā vārttika 13: *... proktādayaś ca taddhitāḥ*. Mahābhāṣya I.12.5-6: *proktādayaś ca taddhitā nopapadyante : pāṇinā proktam pāṇinīyam āpiśalam kāśakṛtsnam iti | na hi pāṇinā śabdāḥ proktāḥ kintari sūtram*. Small details concerning the wording of Kātyāyana vārttika, including whether there is one single vārttika or two, are not directly pertinent to the present discussion.

[7] Mahābhāṣya I.12.6-8: *kimartham idam ucyate : bhave proktādayaś ca taddhitā iti na proktādayaś ca taddhitā ity eva bhave' pi taddhitas coditaḥ syāt*.

intended, once Kātyāyana stated (b1) he could not, in conformity with the principle invoked, withdraw this upon stating (b2). He could only state (b2) as a generalization of (b1).
2.2.

    Kātyāyana proceeds in a similar manner on other occasions also, and Patañjali brings up the same issues once again in his discussions. [8] Clearly, he reflects a position accepted in his circle of scholars. I consider it fairly selfevident that this position is assocated with the attitude prevalent in India society concrning verbal transmission and the power of stating a truth overtly.[9] This is well known from the satyakriyā. To cite only a well known example, in the course of her svayaṁvara, Damayantī invokes this procedure in obliging the gods to reveal themselves and thus to show her Nala: Mahābhārata 3.54.18-19: *vācā ca manasā caiva yathā nābhicarāmy aham | tena satyena vibudhās tam eva pradiśantu me || yathā devaiḥ sa me bhartā vihito niṣādhipaḥ | tena satyena me devās tam eva pradiśantu me.* Once a person who can be trusted to say what is true[10] has made such a true statement, moreover, this cannot be withdrawn, it may only be attenuated by an additional statement. In this connection, another well know example, from the beginning of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, will suffice to illustrate. After Puṣpadanta gained secret entry through yogic power into the place where Śiva was telling Pārvatī the story of their earlier life, he told his wife. She then revealed this in the presence of Pārvatī, who was furious. She then cursed Puṣpadanta to becoming a mortal, and also Mālyavat, who interceded on Puṣpadanta's behalf. When these two fell at her feet to entreat her, Pārvatī could of course not retract her curse. She could then only impose a limit on its duration.[11]
2.3.

    In brief, there is a custom according to which authoritative statements are treated as truths which cannot be retracted, but this does not preclude modification of views, with subsequent amendments.

3. Rejection of opposing views.

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[8] 6.3.34 vārttikas 3-4, 8.2.6 vārttikas 9-10; Mahābhāṣya III.151.11-15, 392.24-393.3.

[9] I make this qualification in view of the opposition between *ṛta* and *satya*, as in *ṛtaṁ vadiṣyāmi satyaṁ vadiṣyāmi* (Taittirīyāraṇyaka 7.1.1, Taittirīyopaniṣad 1.1.1), commenting on which both Sāyaṇa and Śaṅkara distinguish between what is conceived as true yet not overtly uttered and what is uttered as true (similarly, Sāyaṇa on Taittirīyāraṇyaka 10.1.1).

[10] Cf. Nyāyasūtra 1.1.7: *āptopadeśaḥ śabdaḥ.*

[11] Kathāsaritsāgara 1.1.55-61: *praṇidhānād atha jñātvā jagādaivam umāpatiḥ | yogī bhūtvā praviśyedaṁ puṣpadantas tadāśṛṇot || jayāyai varṇitaṁ tena ko'nyo jānāti hi priye | śrutvety ānāyayad devī puṣpadantam atikrudhā || martyo bhavānīto vihvalaṁ śaśāpa sā | mālyavantaṁ ca vijñaptiṁ kurvantaṁ tatkṛte gaṇam || nipatya pādayos tābhyāṁ jayayā saha bodhitā | śāpāntaṁ prati śarvāṇī śanair vacanam abravīt || vindhyāṭavyāṁ kuberasya śāpāt prāptaḥ piśācatām | supratīkabhidho yakṣaḥ kāṇabhūtyākhyayā sthitaḥ || taṁ dṛṣṭvā saṁsmarañ jātiṁ yadā tasmai kathām imām | puṣpadanta pravaktāsi tadā śāpād vimokṣyase || kāṇabhūteḥ kathaṁ tāṁ tu yadā śroṣyati mālyavān | kāṇabhūtau tadā mukte kathaṁ prakhyāpya mokṣyate*

3.1.

Modern scholars are familiar with the polemical style of Indian scholars arguing for views maintained in one school of thought and in the course of such argumentation refuting vigorously views held by others. Early scholars like Patañjali, on the other hand, do not, at least superficially, argue in so overt a manner. Instead, Patañjali is given to presenting several possibilities, showing how they may or should be refuted, then coming back to show how one can rescue such positions. He rarely states explicitly that one particular position represent his siddhānta. On the other hand, he makes this known through the manner in which he shows how certain positions can be maintained: only at the cost of invoking numerous devices, which involve what commentators call *pratipattigaurava*.

3.2.

There are also occasions where Patañjali makes clear his preferences. Two instances will serve to illustrate. I select these because they also show that Patañjali is capable of declaring some issues of dispute to be irrelevant from a particular point of view.

3.2.1

In the Paspaśā section of the Mahābhāṣya, Patañjali brings up the question whether a speech unit is to be considered eternal (*nitya*) or subject to production (*kārya*). He notes that this issue was the object of the main investigation in the *Saṅgraha*, where the faults of these views were stated, as were the reasons for adopting one or the other. The conclusion reached there, however, is that, whatever view one might entertatin, either way a set of rules describing the correct speech units has to be set into play.[12] That is, as Nāgeśa notes, the discussion is fruitless from the point of view of grammar:[13] one may argue about whether sounds, words, and utterances are to be considered permanent things or products, but regardless of what position may be supported theoretically and onotologically, the fact remains that a community of speakers communicates by means of a language and grammatical statements deal with such usage.

3.2.2.

Part of the Mahābhāṣya discussion of A_ṭādhyāyī 3.2.123: *vartamāne laṭ* deals with the question whether one can justify the existence of a present time, and in this connection Patañjali cites verses which are stated in support of the view that there is no present time.[14] Immediately

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[12] Mahābhāṣya I.6.12-14: *kim punar nityaḥ śabda āhosvit kāryaḥ | saṅgraha eta prādhānyena parīkṣitaṁ nityo vā syāt kāryo veti | tatroktā doṣāḥ prayojanāny apy uktāni | tatra tv eṣa nirṇayo yady eva nityo'thāpi kārya ubhayathāpi lakṣaṇaṁ pravartyam iti.*

[13] Uddyota I.27: *evañ ca niṣphalo'yaṁ vicāra iti bhāvaḥ.*

[14] Mahābhāṣya II.123.23-124.7: *apara āhur nāsti vartamānaḥ kāla iti | api cātra ślokān udāharanti : na vartate cakram iṣur na pātyate na syandante saritaḥ sāgarāya | kūṭastho'yaṁ loko na viceṣṭitāsti yo hy evaṁ paśyati so'py anandhaḥ || mīmāṁsako manyamāno yuvā medhāvisammataḥ | kākaṁ smehānupṛcchati kiṁ te patitalakṣaṇam | anāgate na patasi atikrānte ca kāka na | yadi samprati patasi sarvo lokaḥ pataty ayam || himavān api gacchati || anāgatam atikrāntaṁ vartamānam iti trayam | sarvatra ca gatir nāsti gacchatīti kim ucyate ||*

thereafter, however, Patañjali cites a single verse[15] which, according to Nāgeśa,[16] gives the finally accepted position: there is a result—reaching some place—which is a cause relative sometone's being active; considering such activities, one should use a present form *gacchati* without deliberating. Patañjali here says *avicārayan* 'without deliberating', and Kaiyaṭa notes that by this he means without bringing in worthless viewpoints.[17] Thus, it is possible to argue about whether in any absolute terms one may justify the existence of a true present action that can be perceived. The fact remains, however, that one does witness someone being in a place where that person was not previously, that this has to have a cause, and that in such situations people use contrasting terms like *agacchat* 'went', *gacchati* 'is going', and *gamiṣyati* 'will go'. Grammar concerns itself with such usage.

4. Tradition and unjusfied arguments.

As Kaiyaṭa speaks of bad reasoning (*kuvikalpa*-, see note 17), so do others speak of bad reasoning (*kutarka*) or dry reasoning (*śuṣkatarka*) in connection with established traditons. 4.1.

At the beginning of his Nyāyamañjarī, Jayantabhaṭṭa stresses that his work serves to buttress the Veda, and in the course of his presentation he remarks: the Vedas had their authoritative status reduced to a semblance of this through the false reasoning of tārkikas, so that noble persons who would otherwise perform the acts conveyed therein might not have respect for such performance—which required great expense and effort to be carried out—because they had lost faith in the Vedas reduced to such a state. Nor with the authoritative Veda (*svāmini* 'master') thus weakened, can one see what is to be done by one who follows it and adheres to the basic sources of knowledge, Mīmāṁsā and so on. Therefore, Jayanta goes on, this śāstra called *nyāyavistara* taught by Akṣapāda is the foremost base of knowledge, since it is the basis for establishing śāstras in that it is capable of imparting logical reasoning that restores a firm faith in the authoritativeness of the Vedas by destroying all such followers of false reasoning.[18]

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[15] Mahābhāṣya II.124.8-9: *kriyāpravṛttau yo hetus tadarthaṁ yad viceṣṭitam | tat samīkṣya prayuñjīta gacchatīty avicārayan.*

[16] Uddyota III.284: *idānīṁ siddhāntam āha kriyāpravṛttāv iti bhāṣye.*

[17] Pradīpa III.284: *avicārayann iti* : *kuvikalpakalaṅkarahitam ity arthaḥ.*

[18] Nyāyamañjarī (Mysore edition) I.7: *vedeṣu hi (dus)tārkikaracitakutarkaviplāvitaprāmāṇyeṣu śithilāsthāḥ katham iva bahuvittavyayāyāsādisādhyaṁ vedārthānuṣṭhānam ādriyeran sādhavaḥ kiṁ vā svāmini parimlāne tadanuyāyinā mīmāṁsādividyāsthānaparijanena kṛtyam iti | tasmād aśeṣaduṣṭārkikopamardanadvārakadṛdhataravedaprāmāṇyapratyayādhāyinyāyopadeśakṣamam akṣapādopadiṣṭam idaṁ nyāyavistarākhyaṁ śāstraṁ śāstrapratiṣṭhānanibandhanam iti dhuryaṁ vidyāsthānam.* The edition cited has *dustārkikaracita-* and *dhuryaṁ vidyāsthānam*; other editions have instead *tārkikaracita-* and *paraṁ vidyāsthānam.* These points are not crucial to the present discussion. Nor does it make a crucial difference to our discussion whether *dṛḍhatara* 'very firm' qualifies *vedaprāmāṇya* or *pratyaya*, though I consider the latter more felicitous in the general context.

4.1.

Deprecation of such false reasoning also appears in the context of Vyākaraṇa. Moreover, Jayanta's wording—in particular *tārkikaracitakutarkaviplāvitaprāmāṇyeṣu*—recalls a famous verse from the end of the vākyakāṇḍa of the Vākyapadīya, where Bhartṛhari speaks of Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya as a work of a ṛṣi that was reduced to a semblance of such a work (*ārṣe viplāvite granthe*) by Vaiji, Saubhava and Haryakṣa, who followed 'dry reasoning' (*śuṣkatarkānusāribhiḥ*).[19] Such śuṣkatarka amounts to inferential reasoning used by persons without regard to textual tradition, in particular the tradition of the Veda. Bhartṛhari brings this out clearly in several kārikās of the Brahmakāṇḍa.[20] In the present context, it will suffice to consider what Hari says in one kārika and the Vṛtti thereon. He contrasts valid tarka with a type of reasoning (*nyāyaḥ*) that is found in persons who do not take tradition into consideration.[21] This reasoning lacks a source (*anibandhanaḥ*), a domain in which it could apply appropriately, since it is not used with respect to a traditionally accepted textual tradition. The Vṛtti[22] remarks that such reasoning is called *śuṣkas tarkaḥ* ('dry tarka') in that it merely follows common properties and differences, without being determined by the tarka that is the capacity residing in terms of textual traditions, so that it lacks a proper textual domain, and because it serves to destroy all traditions. The commentary ends with two examples of such dry reasoning, one of which is taken from the Mahābhāṣya.[23]

After citing and discussing a verse extolling one who knows the correct formation of speech forms in support of why grammar should be studied, the Bhāṣya remarks that if this verse serves as an authoritative means of knowing, then another verse also should serve in this manner. The verse in question is meant to denigrate Vedic practice, in particular the practice of having liquor drunk in the Sautrāmaṇī rite: if a great array of copper colored jugs of liquor does not cause one to reach heaven when drunk, how could the liquor drunk at the rite lead one to heaven? The assumption is that if some X is a cause of a result Y, then a greater amount of X should cause a

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[19] Vākyapadīya 2.484: *vaijisaubhavaharyakṣibhiḥ śuṣkatarkānusāribhiḥ | ārṣe viplāvite granthe saṅgrahapratikañcuke*. Puṇyarāja (ad Vākyapadīya c 479 [190]) glosses *viplāvita* as *ābhāsīkṛta*, which interpretation I follow.

[20] I discuss these in 'On the position of vyākaraṇa and Pāṇini', appearing in a volume in memory of Wilhelm Halbfass to be published in Vienna.

[21] Vākyapadīya 1.153cd: *sa śabdānugato nyāyo' nāgameṣv anibandhanaḥ anāgameṣu*, Vākyapadīyapaddhati 1.153/129 (209.11): *āgamanirapekṣeṣu puruṣeṣu*.

[22] Vākyapadīyavṛtti 1.153/129 (209.3-5): *śabdaśaktirūpāparigṛhītas tu sādharmyavaidharmymātrānusārī sarvāgamopaghātahetutvād anibandhanaḥ śuṣkas tarka ity ucyate*.

[23] Vākyapadīyavṛtti 1.153/129 (209.6-7): *tad yathā: yad udumbaravarṇānāṁ ghaṭīnāṁ maṇḍalaṁ mahat | pītaṁ na gamayet svargaṁ kiṁ tat kratugataṁ nayet*. Mahābhāṣya I.3.1-5: *yadi pramāṇam ayam api ślokaḥ pramāṇam bhavitum arhati : yad udumbaravarṇānāṁ ghaṭīnāṁ maṇḍalaṁ mahat | pītaṁ na gamayet svargaṁ kiṁ tat kratugataṁ nayet | pramattagīta eṣa tatrabhavato yas tv apramattagītas tat pramāṇam*.

greater result Y; conversely, if Y does not result from a large amount of X, then it should also not result from a smaller amount of X. Accordingly, one reasons that the liquor drunk at the Sautrāmaṇī cannot serve any purpose, and this is contrary to tradition. Patañjali counters that the verse cited is one recited erroneously by one who is confused and contrary, so that it is not authoritative. On the contrary, the earlier verse is authoritative since it is recited in full control of one's senses and knowledge of tradition. Such inferential reasoning is considered perverse in that it is applied with respect to a claim made in a particular context, ritual and the results expected therefrom. For it is traditionally accepted that the Veda is an instrument whereby one gains knowledge of certain means, which cannot be learned through direct perception or inference, of attaining extramundane results.

5. Mallinātha as a representative of literary exegesis.

     Mallinātha is famous as a major commentator, principally on Kālidāsa's kāvyas but also on other works, including Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* and Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha* as well as Vidyādhara's work on poetics, the *Ekavalī*. It is also well known that he neither exhibits nor claims great originality. Indeed, common to the introductory sections of his commentaries on kāvyas is the verse in which he says that he merely explains everything with emphasis only on the syntactic construction of the original and that he neither writes anything that is not based on the original nor say anything that is not required by this.[24] Yet even so modest a commentator makes a telling remark in the final introductory verse to his commentary on the first part of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, where he says that Kālidāsa's language has been rendered faint by the poison of bad commentary and that this commentary of his, the *Sañjīvanī*, will revive it.[25]

6. Conclusion.

     Let us come back now to the Vākyapadīya verses with which I began this discussion. In particular, let us consider Puṇyarāja's explanation of key terms. He begins his commentary on Vākyapadīya 2.489[26] glossing *āgamadarśanaiḥ* with *āgamasiddhāntaiḥ* 'established views of traditions' and *vivekaṁ labhate* with *vaiśāradyam āpnoti* 'obtains skill'. Tellingly, he immediately goes on to say that from this arises the capacity to perfect a conclusion established in one's own tradition (*svasiddhāntam*), this now being established without any doubts (*niḥsandigdham*) through consideration of other traditions' conclusions.[27] Moreover, Puṇyarāja

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[24] *ihānvayamukhenaiva sarvaṁ vyākhyāyate mayā | nāmūlaṁ likhyate kiñcin nānapekṣitaṁ ucyate ||*

[25] *bhāratī kālidāsasya durvyākhyāviṣamūrcchitā | eṣā sañjīvanī vyākhyā tām adyojjīvayiṣyati ||*

[26] Vākyapadīyaṭīkā 2.489/484: *nānāvidhair āgamadarśanair āgamasiddhāntaiḥ khalu prajñā vivekaṁ labhate vaiśāradyam āpnoti.*

[27] Vākyapadīyaṭīkā 2.489/484: *tataś ca niḥsandigdhaṁ svasiddāntam eva sampariṣkartur bhinnāgamadarśanaiḥ śaktir jāyate.*

interprets *unnetum* in the second half of the verse in accordance with the above, saying this term is equivalent to *pratividhātum* 'counteract'.[28] That is, the conclusions established in traditions other than one's own are not considered for their sake alone; one learns what others maintain in order effectively to counter issues that might arise within one's system in a manner that leaves no doubt concerning the validity of one's conclusions.

In sum, if one considers early and mediaeval Indian works in major intellectual spheres, one must conclude that there was a continuous tension between tradition accepted as authoritative and reasoning used to support as well as to attack such tradition. There was not any absolute, thoughtless acceptance of tradition, even by different followers of a single tradition. Nor are grammatical, exegetical or logical systems made solely maidervants to Vedic tradition. To be sure, Vyākaraṇa is viewed as a vedāṅga, one of its chief purposes being to protect the textual integrity of the Vedas; Mīmāṁsā aims to examine brāhmaṇa passages to determine how they are related with respect to ritual performance; and one of the aims of Nyāya is also to defend the authoritative status of the Vedas. But Vyākaraṇa also deals with laukika usage—indeed this is its chief domain; the principles of Mīmāṁsā are avowedly intended also to apply to language in general, and the pramāṇas with which Nyāya operates have to do with knowledge in general, not solely with Vedic lore.

What does, I think, set Indian systems of thought apart is that their ultimate aim is soteriological, the attainment of mokṣa. In addition, there is a general way of structuring arguments which is regularly followed in Indian debates: a final conclusion is not simply stated and justified; instead, possible pūrvapakṣas are first considered, reasons for rejecting them are given, and only then is a siddhānta formulated. In the course of investigating their particular domains, thinkers in these systems exhibit critical acumen and intellectual independence.

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[28] Vākyapadīyaṭīkā 2.489/484: *anyathādṛṣṭaparakīyāgamasvarūpeṇa pratipatrā svotprekṣām eva teṣu teṣu cāvasthāneṣv anusaratā kiyac chakyam unnetuṁ pratividhātum.*