REMARKS ON THE GAUḌAPĀDIYA-KĀRIKĀS (GK)

Though the Gaudapādiya-Kārikās (GK) – also known as Āgama-Śāstra and Māṇḍūkya-Kārikās – have been the object of several valuable philosophical and historical studies, there are nevertheless some very important facts that seem to have escaped the notice even of such careful and critical scholars as Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya (Āgamaśāstra, Calcutta 1943) and Tilmann Vetter (“Die Gaudapādiya-Kārikās: Zur Entstehung und zur Bedeutung von (a)dvaita”, WZKS 1978, 95-131 and Studien zur Lehre und Entwicklung Śaṅkaras, Wien 1979, 27–74). Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to call attention to some of these oversights.

(1) We may begin by quoting GK III, 2:

\[
\text{ato vakṣyāmy akarpanyam ajāti samatāṁ gatam }/ \\
*\text{yathā na jāyate kimcī jāyamānāṁ samantataḥ }// *\text{(yathā w. r. for yatra?)}
\]

and III, 38:

\[
\text{graho na tatra nōtsargaṁ cīntā yatra na vidyate }/ \\
\text{ātmasaṁśthaṁ tadā jñānam ajāti samatāṁ gatam }//
\]

What interests us here is the phrase \text{akarpanyam/yājñanam ajāti samatāṁ gatam.}

All the modern translations that I have come across follow the Bhāṣya ascribed to Śaṅkara in taking ajāti and samatāṁ gatam as two independent attributes of akarpanyam/yājñanam, cf. Bhāṣya ad III, 2: \text{tad ajāti, avidyamānā jātir asya; samatāṁ gatam sarvasāmnyam gatam}, and ad III, 38: \text{ajāti jāṭīvajjantam; samatāṁ gatam: param samyam āpannam bhavati.}

But, as I hope to show, it is not advisable to take \text{ajāti and samatāṁ gatam} as an instance of asyndeton. On the contrary there is good reason to believe that what the author of GK actually had in mind and what he wrote was akarpanyam/yājñanam ajātisamatāṁ gatam.

In the eighth chapter of Bhāvyā’s Madhyamakahrdaya-Kārikās (MHK) (dealing with the philosophy of Vedānta, cf. \text{IIJ} 1958, 165–180) we find the following verses (provisionally numbered 78–80 and quoted from Hajime Nakamura, A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy, Delhi 1983, 200):
There can hardly be any doubt that Bhavya here in 80cd: \textit{naivātmasamatā tasya yuktā nāpi na tatsthatā} (nāpi na: "and certainly also not") is referring either directly to GK 38cd: \textit{atmasamsthām tadā jñānam}, etc., or, to be sure, to some passage virtually identical with this in word and thought. What is more interesting, however, is that Bhavya (see 78 and 79) takes \textit{ajātī} and \textit{samatā} as a compound: \textit{ajātisamatā}. And not only as a compound, but almost as a catchword, or technical term, describing the philosophical system he is criticizing in a characteristic manner.

What remains to be settled is, of course: Who is right, Bhavya who definitely takes \textit{ajātī} and \textit{samatā} together as a \textit{Karmadhdraya}, or the modern interpreters who, following the \textit{Bhāṣya}, here see an asyndeton?

The only one who could really settle this question would of course be the author of the GK. As good luck would have it I think he does settle the question. In the fourth chapter of GK we meet an expression quite equivalent to \textit{ajātisamatā}, viz. \textit{ajām. sāmyam} (93d), \textit{aje sāmye} (95a) and \textit{ajām. sāmyam} (100b). Here \textit{sāmya} is, needless to say, a substantive predicated by the adjective \textit{aja}. This shows that the author of GK did not take \textit{ajātī} and \textit{samatā(m gatam)} in III, 2 and III, 38 as two co-ordinate, asyndetic terms but intended \textit{ajātī} as an attribute to \textit{samatā}. In other words, Bhavya is right whereas the author of the \textit{Bhāṣya} (followed by modern editors, etc.) is wrong: the author of the GK wrote \textit{ajātisamatām gatam}, not \textit{ajātī samatām gatam}. As far as I am aware this compound is not to be met with in philosophical literature prior to (or even posterior to?) the GK. It is thus a term almost showing the "fingerprint" of Gauḍapāda – let us call him by that name (in the same sense as the term \textit{vijñānaparīṇāma} shows the fingerprint of the author of the \textit{Trimśikā}). The Buddhist background of this term, as of so many others in GK, is, of course, quite obvious.

Here we shall not enter upon a further discussion about the \textit{*ajātisamatāvāda} or Gauḍapāda but instead turn our attention to another interesting case where, incidentally, "Śaṅkara", the alleged author of the \textit{Bhāṣya}, again displays a remarkable ignorance of the actual intention of the author of the GK.

(2) The \textit{textus receptus} of GK IV, 24 runs:

\begin{verbatim}
prajñapteh sanimittatvam anyathā dvayanāśatah /
samkleśasyopalabdheś ca paratantrāśtitā matā //
\end{verbatim}