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Narrating Sāṃkhya Philosophy: Bhīṣma, Janaka and Pañcaśikha at *Mahābhārata* 12.211–12

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Abstract The account of the conversation between King Janaka and the Ṛṣi Pañcaśikha on the fate of the individual after death is one of the philosophical texts that are included in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. There are different scholarly views on the history and composition of the text as well as the philosophical teachings propagated by Pañcaśikha. In contrast to earlier studies this paper not only analyzes the whole text, but also pays attention to the narrative framework in which the philosophical discourse is embedded. In the text Bhīṣma functions as an external narrator, who relates and interprets the conversation as well as characterizes the protagonists and thereby influences the ways in which text is received by the audience. It is argued that it is important to deal with the interplay between the narrative and the philosophical discourse that is narrated, when analysing the philosophical positions that are either refuted or accepted in the text. 12.211–12 is not only a philosophical text, but also a tale about philosophical discourse in general and about how Sāṃkhya philosophy is taught to a non-expert audience. Seen from this perspective the text is significant for the way in which philosophical terms and issues are dealt with in the epic and adjacent non-expert texts, such as the Purāṇas.

Keywords Philosophy in the *Mahābhārata* · Mokṣadharmaparvan · Sāṃkhya philosophy · Mortality · Individual self

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In the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh*) philosophical doctrines, terms and teachers are not only subjects of instruction, they are at times also presented in a peculiar blending of narrative setting, inquiry and style of reasoning that needs to be specifically examined as we study these texts. The rapprochement of narrative, argumentative and didactic levels in these particular epic texts can be seen as a characteristic feature of the presentation of philosophy in the epic. This makes the epic not only an important source for the reconstruction of the history of Indian philosophy, but also for the reception of philosophical teachings. In the following, I shall analyze the interplay between these levels of discourse in Bhīṣma's account of the encounter between King Janaka and the Sāṃkhya teacher Pañcaśikha in *MBh* 12.211–12.[1] These two chapters of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (*MDh*) pose numerous philological and interpretive problems that have been repeatedly taken up by scholars. The major issues discussed in those studies have been: what kind of Sāṃkhya philosophy is taught; is Pañcaśikha actually a teacher of Sāṃkhya; and is the text made up of different textual layers.[2] A comprehensive analysis of the whole text has never been undertaken, nor has much attention been given to the relationship in it between narration and instruction. In his study of the manner in which philosophy is presented in the epic, Strauss (1908, p. 669) has, on the one hand, lauded the text as a "Unikum" ("rarity") in the *MBh* for its presentation of different philosophical positions, but, on the other hand, regarded it as testifying to the "limitations of the capacity of epic thought," since the presentation is unclear and confused (*ibid.*). Apart from the fact that the text contains passages that are difficult to understand precisely and the translation of which remains tentative, the peculiarity of this text can indeed be seen in its presentation of a philosophical discourse not only as an affirmative instruction (*upadeśa*) of a doctrine, but also as a debate in which arguments and means of proof are put forward and rejected. It is thus an instance in the epic in which a philosophical issue is given a "philosophical"[3] treatment; that is, one that echoes the expert discourse documented in the technical philosophical

[1] The colophons call the text *Pañcaśikhavākya* (Discourse of Pañcaśikha) or *Janakapañcaśikhasaṃvāda* (Dialogue between Janaka and Pañcaśikha). A shorter version of the text is also part of the *Nārada-* or *Nāradīya-Purāṇa* (I.45).

[2] See Garbe (1917), Strauss (1908), Hopkins (1902), Frauwallner (1925), Dasgupta (1922, p. 216ff.), Bedekar (1958a, b), Chakravarti (1975, pp. 113–116), Brockington (1999), Motegi (1999), and Bronkhorst (2007). The older publications are not based on the critical edition of the epic [Sukthankar, Belvalkar and Vaidya: 1933–1966, in particular, (Belvalkar 1954)], and thus deal, in parts, with a different text [in particular the Bombay edition, for instance, Hopkins (1902) and the German translation of the *MDh* by Deussen and Strauss (1906)]. Nonetheless, they contain some important observations that shall be included in the following analysis. Hopkins places the two chapters in the larger spectrum of Sāṃkhya teachings in the epic (as do Frauwallner and Brockington) pointing to various types of enumerations and doctrinal variations. Bedekar (1958a) brings together doctrines ascribed to Pañcaśikha in different texts of the epic; Bedekar (1958b) criticizes Dasgupta's identification of Pañcaśikha's teachings in 12.212 with doctrines in the *Carakasaṃhitā*. Motegi (1999) deals with selected terms with the aim of tracing the "progress" from Pañcaśikha's teachings to the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (*ibid*., p. 519) and concludes that there are not many commonalities between the two texts. Bronkhorst (2007, pp. 309–328) criticizes Motegi's selective and de-contextualized approach when he suggests that Pañcaśikha as depicted in 12.211 is a materialist (Cārvāka) and chapter 212 a later interpolation.

[3] Here, and in the rest of this paper, "philosophical" does not refer to specific contents or definitions of philosophy, but to philosophy as a field of knowledge constituted in the authoritative texts of Indian philosophical schools. Many of these emphasize the reflection on and the use of *pramāṇa*s ("means of

treatises. In this regard, *MBh* 12.211–12 can be compared with some other epic texts where controversial issues are addressed in a similar way. We have, for instance, the dialogue between Queen Draupadī and her husband Yudhiṣṭhira in *MBh* 3.32 regarding the value of following the accustomed laws when this produces disaster instead of the rewards promised.[4] Another text resembling 12.211–12 in its reference to philosophical reasoning is 12.252, where Yudhiṣṭhira voices serious doubts about the nature of *dharma* and how it is ascertained. There Yudhiṣṭhira uses logical inference (*anumāna*) and detects contradictions, circular reasoning and other flaws in the traditional validation of *dharma*. A third example is the dialogue between the mendicant woman Sulabhā and King Janaka (12.308), in which the latter is criticized for his claiming to be liberated already, though he still functions as a king.[5] In its reference to arguments and means of knowledge, Pañcaśikha's speeches in 12.211 and 212 go much further than the texts just mentioned, as they not only focus on a philosophical question, but also refer to philosophical debate and argument as a specialist's discourse. All this is embedded in a narrative in which Pañcaśikha and Janaka are narrated figures and Bhīṣma functions as the external narrator.[6] In the following, I shall analyze the narrative structure[7] as well as the philosophical contents of the whole text. In focusing on the interplay between narration and instruction it will be demonstrated that 12.211–12 is not only a philosophical text, but also a tale about philosophical discourse.

Before proceeding with the analysis a brief overview of the two chapters may be helpful:

Overview of *MBh* 12.211 and 212 together

Chapter 12.211

1–2	Dialogue frame: Yudhiṣṭhira asks how King Janaka obtained liberation, and Bhīṣma states that there is a story about this.
3–20	Bhīṣma relates Janaka's doubts with regard to a person's state after death; Pañcaśikha's provenance, his arrival at the king's court and his talk about liberation "according to Sāṃkhya."
21–47	Pañcaśikha's first speech.
48	Bhīṣma relates the reaction of Janaka to Pañcaśikha's discourse.

Footnote 3 continued
knowledge") as a characteristic feature of philosophy. On the relationship between the epic texts and the philosophical schools, see Malinar (2017).

[4] See Malinar (2007a) for an analysis of the dialogue.

[5] See Fitzgerald (2002) for an analysis and translation of the whole dialogue.

[6] Garbe (1893, p. 75, 1917, pp. 66–67) suggests that the dialogue situation is a remodelling of the dialogues between Janaka and Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in order to demonstrate the superiority of the Sāṃkhya teacher; this is supported by Bedekar (1958a, p. 243) in his analysis of the references to Pañcaśikha in the *MBh*. In his reconstruction of the history of Frauwallner (1953, pp. 298–319) stresses the close connection between the teachings of Yājñavalkya in the Upaniṣads and Sāṃkhya in the epic.

[7] In doing so, I follow a narratological approach used in literary studies. My use of narratological terminology, such as focalizor etc., is based on Bal (2009); other narratological studies of the epic are Mangels (1994), Malinar (2005) and Malinar (2015).

Chapter 12.212

1–5 Bhīṣma narrates that Janaka raised further questions about "existence and non-existence" (*bhavābhavau*) and comments on the king's mood before he introduces Pañcaśikha's reply.

6–50 Pañcaśikha's second speech.

51–52 Bhīṣma concludes the narrative and comments that Janaka became extremely happy.

This overview shows that about one third of the text consists of Bhīṣma's narrative, which thus constitutes a considerable part of the text. This fact has not yet received much attention, though it is clearly more than just "superficial" framing.[8] While the narrative parts cannot simply be used as if they were sources for extra-diegetic, for instance "historical," information on the protagonists, they provide important clues for the way in which the composer of the text represents the purpose of Pañcaśikha's teaching. Seen from the angle of narration, the philosophical teachings acquire a narrative function in that they are central elements of a story that relates Janaka's transformation from a state of intellectual dissatisfaction to a state of enchantment with Pañcaśikha (chap. 211). Upon the conclusion of Pañcaśikha's first discourse, we are told that Janaka returned to a state of gloominess and confusion; but at the end of 12.212 we are told that Pañcaśikha's second discourse to Janaka dispelled that state of mind. The story ends with the statement that Janaka lived on as a very happy man. The narrated figures of Janaka and Pañcaśikha are characters in a story that intertwines narrative structures with philosophical purposes. Thus, we are dealing with a narrative depiction of the philosopher and his teachings and of the effects of debating philosophical positions on the audience. In this narrative, Bhīṣma functions as an external narrator who does not neutrally relate a tale he has heard; rather he gives the account from a certain perspective and by voicing comments that influence the ways in which the audience receives it. This amounts to what is called in narratology "focalization," namely, that the vision of the events is determined not only by the angle of narration taken by the narrator, but also by his or her view(s) on what is narrated. The convergence of the voice of the narrator telling the events, the angle from which this is done (including the narrative frameworks of place, time etc.) and the interpretations he offers put him in the position of a "focalizor."[9] These features of the text should be taken into account when trying to read it as a document on Sāṃkhya or to extract "historical" information on the teacher called Pañcaśikha, who was widely recognized in authoritative texts of Sāṃkhya.[10] In the

[8] The framing and the narrative dimensions of the *MDh* texts have often been neglected, and this is also true for the text under discussion. Strauss (1908), although in many instances skeptical with regard to its relevance [as is Frauwallner (1925, p. 182)], has called for paying more attention to the narrative frame.

[9] In narratology, the term "focalization" is preferred over the older term "narrative perspective" as it allows analyzing "the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen" [Bal (2009, p. 146ff.)] as something in which narration and interpretation converge.

[10] Seen from this perspective, it comes as no surprise that none of the statements of Pañcaśikha in the *MDh* have been quoted as "words" of the teacher in texts of the Sāṃkhya school, as has been pointed out by Garbe (1893). This fact is also stressed by Motegi (1999), who seems nevertheless to look for Pañcaśikha's "own words" in the text. However, there is no special utterance connected with Pañcaśikha in the text, but rather a certain method of teaching. It is worth noting that only the "King of Mithilā" is

following I shall take the two chapters as a single narrative unit[11] and discuss in detail the narrative structure as well as the philosophical contents of the text.

The Narrative Frame: Bhīṣma as Narrator and Interpreter

The opening exchange between Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira establishes the extra-diegetic narrative frame, in which the depiction of Pañcaśikha and his teachings is embedded. Chapter 211 starts as follows: "Yudhiṣṭhira said: 'Through what way of acting (*vṛtta*) did King Janaka, the overlord of Mithilā—who was familiar with the ways of acting and who also knew *dharma* (righteousness, correct practice)—obtain liberation (*mokṣa*) when he gave up the enjoyments that belong to men?'" Bhīṣma replied: 'They tell an account of old (*itihāsa purātana*) about the way of acting by which he, who was familiar with the ways of acting, gained great happiness (*mahat sukham*).'"[12] It is worth noticing that Yudhiṣṭhira does not ask for a doctrine or a teacher that caused Janaka to obtain liberation; rather, he asks about the *vṛtta*, the code of conduct or way of acting, employed by the king. Janaka's reputation as "one familiar with ways of acting" is confirmed by Bhīṣma. Secondly, *mokṣa* (implying relinquishment of enjoyments) is interpreted by Bhīṣma as a state of "great happiness." According to Bhīṣma, who functions here as interlocutor and focalizor, the topic of the *itihāsa purātana* is Janaka's achievement of "great happiness" and this is reaffirmed at the very end of the narrative, when Bhīṣma emphasizes that Janaka was "immensely happy" (*paramasukhī*) and free from worries (212.51).

With the extra-diegetic narrative framework established at a thematic level (the interlocutory level with Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira as dialogue partners needs no explanation at this point of the *MDh*), Bhīṣma starts the narrative at 12.211.3 and directs the attention of his audience straightaway to the problem King Janaka was tackling: "King Janaka, the ruler in Mithilā, was preoccupied with thinking about the doctrines concerning [or: qualities of][13] the state of a deceased person."[14] His

Footnote 10 continued
credited—at the very end of 12.212—with having uttered a *gītā* ("song") that expresses his indifference toward the world (see below).

[11] Frauwallner (1925) suggests that the doctrinal parts of 212 contain interpolations, and Bronkhorst (2007) speculates on whether 212 is a later interpolation. At a narrative level, the intrinsic connection of the two chapters is established in remarkable detail.

[12] *kena vṛttena vṛttajño janako mithilādhipaḥ / jagāma mokṣaṃ dharmajño bhogān utsṛjya mānuṣān* // 12.211.1 // *atrāpy udāharantīmam itihāsaṃ purātanam / yena vṛttena vṛttajñaḥ sa jagāma mahat sukham* // 12.211.2.

[13] The word *dharma* can also be translated as "duty" or "right conduct" (as is done by Deussen and Strauss: "Pflichten") or "characteristic feature." The former is certainly an option since practical repercussions are addressed at the beginning of the next chapter, the latter would make sense as well, since 211 also discusses features of the state after death. Since the emphasis in the following is more on doctrinal aspects, I have chosen the more abstract translation. It may also be noticed that verses 211.3–4 are one of the few instances in which the word *dharma* is used in the epic in the sense of "teaching" or "doctrine" [for this usage in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, see Malinar (1997)].

[14] *janako janadevas tu mithilāyāṃ janādhipaḥ / aurdhvadehikadharmāṇām āsīd yukto vicintane* // 12.211.3. In his commentary to this verse Nīlakaṇṭha interprets "*janadeva*" as a proper name: Janaka Janadeva.

preoccupation occasioned Janaka's summoning all kinds of teachers (*ācārya*) to his court, as Bhīṣma points out: "Verily, hundreds of teachers lived regularly in his house, teaching different doctrines, debating various heretical views."[15] Yet, Janaka found no satisfaction in what these teachers debated. Says Bhīṣma: "He, abiding in authoritative tradition (*āgamastha*), was not satisfied with [their] opinion about the state after death and [one's] birth after death, and especially not with that about the true nature of the self (*ātmatattve*)."[16]

The interpretation of Janaka's dissatisfaction depends on how the word *āgama* and the statement about the "heretics" are understood. If *āgama* is taken to refer to a particular textual canon, specifically the Vedas, then Janaka is dissatisfied because he is hearing doctrines that are contradicted, or not supported, by Vedic texts.[17] But the word *āgama* can also be understood in the plural and as referring to a variety of "authoritative traditions" (different Vedic ones as well as those of philosophers teaching non-Vedic doctrines).[18] In that case, the king's dissatisfaction can be seen to be caused by the disagreement of the scriptural authorities the teachers draw on in order to validate their teachings. This interpretation suits the skepticism towards *āgama*s expressed later at 211.44, where it is said that they drive unhappy people to all kinds of things (see below). Taking *āgama* in the plural would imply that a variety of teachers, Vedic and non-Vedic, were at Janaka's court trying to remove a doubt that made Janaka call them in the first place. Furthermore, *āgama* here can also be understood as referring to "authoritative tradition" more generally, as the means of knowledge or guideline Janaka is using as the basis for his decisions and opinions. This understanding of the term is attested in the sequel when (exclusive) reliance on *āgama* is criticized as well (211.22; 26; 212.38).

At this point, paying attention to the progression of the narrative may be helpful in dealing with the ambiguity of the passage. If one connects the statement on Janaka's abiding by *āgama* to the original problem—Janaka's uncertainty with

[15] *tasya sma śatam ācāryā vasanti satataṃ gṛhe / darśayantaḥ pṛthagdharmān nānāpāṣaṇḍavādinaḥ //* 12.211.4. The compound *nānāpāṣaṇḍavādinaḥ* can also be translated as "debating with different heretics" or "expounding different heretical views." Both translations would imply that there were also "heretical" teachers in Janaka's house, arguing their positions. If one understands the compound referring to the doctrinal positions of the teachers dwelling in Janaka's house, it could also mean that there were only heretics [so Bronkhorst (2007, p. 319)]. This latter interpretation narrows the spectrum of teachers down considerably and implies that non-heretical teachers would have no views on the issue of the afterlife. The translation chosen here is more neutral in that it allows for disputation about heretical views whether *pāṣaṇḍa*s were present or not.

[16] *sa teṣāṃ pretyabhāve* ca *pretyajātau viniścaye / āgamasthaḥ sa bhūyiṣṭham ātmatattve na tuṣyati //* 12.211.5.

[17] This is the position taken by Bronkhorst, who interprets the setting in light of his thesis that Pañcaśikha is not an Sāṃkhya teacher, but, rather, a staunch brahman following the "materialist" view of the Brahmanical Cārvāka school who here rescues Janaka from all the heretics he has assembled at his court (2007, p. 319). Janaka is dissatisfied with those teachers because they are heretics who expound doctrines such as an afterlife, future rebirth and the principle of the self. According to Bronkhorst these doctrines are not part of the Vedic tradition and are, therefore, ultimately rejected by Pañcaśikha. This interpretation does not explain why Janaka, being a follower of the Veda, might have summoned the teachers in the first place.

[18] For this understanding of *āgama* see, for instance, *MBh* 12.261.40. The plurality of the Vedas (in contrast with the original "One Veda") and the contradictions between the texts is made an issue in the epic as well, see, for instance, *MBh* 3.148.19, 27–29, 5.43.25 and 12.252.7–8.

regard to his fate after death—then Janaka obviously did not find convincing answers in the *āgama* he was following. This problem made him summon these teachers, but they, in turn, deepened his dissatisfaction, for their views (and their *āgama*s) were as inconclusive as those Janaka was following before. This dilemma has developed a dynamic of its own, in that teachers dwelling in Janaka's house only increase the dissatisfaction they are supposed to remove. It seems to me that Janaka's abiding by *āgama* as the primary means of knowledge about the state of a person in the afterlife can also be understood to be one of the reasons for Janaka's uncertainty. Moreover, this is the very situation into which Pañcaśikha makes his *entrée* in the narrative, and the king's dissatisfaction explains why he was so captivated by the new teacher so quickly, when the latter easily ended the recurrent disputes at the court. The first aspect of the "liberation" brought about by Pañcaśikha was that Janaka let all the other teachers go (211.18).

The peripatetic quality of Pañcaśikha's arrival is made quite clear in the comparatively long passage dealing with the newcomer (12.211.6–17). Bhīṣma describes Pañcaśikha, who reaches Mithilā while touring the earth, as being free from duality (*nirdvandva*) and doubt as well as determined in his explanation of the knowledge of the essence (*tattvajñāna*) of all the rules of, or teachings about, renunciation (*sarvasaṃnyāsadharma*). Says Bhīṣma: "They say that he is the only one among the sages who has turned away from desire among men [or: on his own accord dwells among men] while seeking eternal, immeasurable happiness that is hard to obtain. I think that he, whom the followers of Sāṃkhya call Kapila, highest sage [and] Prajāpati, created a miracle in [appearing] himself in this form [as Pañcaśikha]."[19] This passage is remarkable in several respects. Firstly, Pañcaśikha is presented as an expert in matters of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) and as someone whose understanding of that is regarded as exceptional. The interpretation of the passage depends on how one translates the verse. If one renders the participle *avasita* as "giving up" desire, then the point of his idea of renunciation is that it does not primarily imply leaving material goods or ritual duties, but the desire for the pleasures connected to them. If one renders the participle as "dwelling," then the claim that renunciation is possible without "social death" is emphasized. Both interpretations converge in teaching a form of *saṃnyāsa* that does not require giving up worldly life, an idea that is also launched elsewhere in the epic in connection with Sāṃkhya.[20] Secondly, Pañcaśikha is embedded in a genealogy of teachers

[19] *ṛṣīṇām āhur ekaṃ yaṃ kāmād avasitaṃ nṛṣu / śāśvataṃ sukham atyantam anvicchan sa sudurlabham* // 12.211.8 // *yam āhuḥ kapilaṃ sāṃkhyāḥ paramarṣiṃ prajāpatim / sa manye tena rūpeṇa vismāpayati hi svayam* // 12.211.9. The translation of 211.8ab, "He is the only one of the sages who has given up desire among men…" leaves the locative "among men" slightly redundant since the difference between his uniqueness among the sages and men in general remains unexplained. However, both translations converge in presenting renunciation as something that does not entail leaving the social world (vide infra). Verse 211.9 is open to *double-entendre*: it can be read either as Kapila appearing as Pañcaśikha (Hopkins 1902, p. 144), or as Pañcaśikha being Kapila re-embodied, and thus: "I think that he caused amazement in his [appearing in the] form of that one whom the followers of Sāṃkhya call Kapila, highest sage and Prajāpati." See Deussen and Strauss (1906).

[20] This depiction resembles important doctrines in the *Bhagavadgītā* (*BhG*), when renunciation of desire is propagated by drawing on Sāṃkhya terms and doctrines (see Malinar 2007b), as well as the further course of Bhīṣma's account (211.11ff.), in that Sāṃkhya practice is not particularly connected with an

when Bhīṣma presents him as an embodiment of Kapila, the first teacher of Sāṃkhya philosophy. The latter is here identified with the Vedic creator god Prajāpati, thus lending him the status of a divinity.[21] Thirdly, this interpretation is presented by Bhīṣma using the first person form of the verb (*manye*), which occurs only rarely in the case of speakers functioning as external narrators in the epic. It makes clear that Bhīṣma voices his own opinion as authoritative, which has extra force because in the previous verses he was reporting what others said (*āhur*). Bhīṣma here exhibits a knowledge he has learned from his teacher, as is pointed out at 211.16 after his account of how Pañcaśikha became part of a teacher-disciple kinship group of Kapila, the first teacher of Sāṃkhya (211.10–16).

Bhīṣma's account of Pañcaśikha's attainment of *kāpileyatva* (belonging to the kinship group of Kapila/ā, being [a] Kapila) starts with the statement that Pañcaśikha, the first disciple of Āsuri[22] and called "the long-lived"(*cirajīvin*), attended a thousand-year long sacrificial session (*sattra*) in the "five-stream-region" (211.10). At that time, a "circle of followers of Kapila, which was large" (*maṇḍalaṃ kāpilaṃ mahat*; 211.11) came to him and made him aware of "the highest reality" (*paramārtha*), which is described as "*puruṣāvastham avyaktam.*"[23] As Bedekar (1958a, p. 141) has pointed out, the meaning of the latter phrase is "problematical." In his discussion of the passage he refutes the interpretation "Avyakta in the state of Puruṣa" given by Dasgupta (1922, Vol. 1, p. 216) because it would not match any of the doctrines expounded by Pañcaśikha later in the text. Instead, Bedekar follows the commentator Arjunamiśra (as does Brockington 1999, p. 481) and explains that "the great doctrine of Kapila" appeared to Pañcaśikha "in an aura of human form" (*maṇḍalaṃ puruṣāvastham*) and "imparted to him (the knowledge of) Avyakta—the highest truth" (Bedekar 1958a, p. 145).[24] In this view the verse does not include a definition of the highest reality apart from being called *avyakta*, and the problematic of its definition is circumvented. Yet, the rendering of *maṇḍala* as aura is not convincing enough to rule out other interpretations—in particular, when it is not connected to the occurrence of the word in 211.13 and thus to the larger context of the passage. While it is true, as is pointed out by Bedekar, that in the speeches of

Footnote 20 continued
ascetic life or "social death." This notion is corroborated by Janaka's attaining happiness while remaining king (an idea that is central to his debate with the mendicant Sulabhā, who challenged it strongly, in *MBh* 12.308). It also matches the emphasis in classical Sāṃkhya on knowledge (*jñāna*) as the only means for obtaining liberation, which is also attested amply in the epic.

[21] See Chakravarti (1975, pp. 111–113), Brockington (1999, p. 475ff), and Bronkhorst (1983) for depictions of Kapila in later Sāṃkhya texts; see Olivelle (1993, pp. 98–99) on Kapila as an advocate, if not the founder, of renunciation at *MBh* 12.260–62.

[22] This genealogy (*paramparā*) of teachers is also given in *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 70.

[23] *taṃ samāsīnam āgamya maṇḍalaṃ kāpilaṃ mahat / puruṣāvastham avyaktaṃ paramārthaṃ nibodhayat* // 211.11.

[24] Bronkhorst (2007, p. 328, nt. 17) proposes, without further explanation, a translation that matches his view that the text is not about Sāṃkhya: "He taught the highest matter to be something that resides non-distinct in the person."

Pañcaśikha neither *avyakta* nor *puruṣa* is mentioned, one should also keep in mind that the passage is part of Bhīṣma's account of the doctrine of Kapila. Dasgupta also does not acknowledge this difference when he suggests that the account of Sāṃkhya given in the two chapters is closely connected to the account of Sāṃkhya in the *Carakasaṃhitā*, "where the avyakta part of prakṛti is regarded as the kṣetrajña" (Dasgupta 1922, p. 214).[25] While Bedekar's criticism of Dasgupta's conclusions regarding the identity of Pañcaśikha's Sāṃkhya with that in the *Carakasaṃhitā* is appropriate, a broader contextualization of the definition of the unmanifest as a state or realm of existence equated with *puruṣa* (as the conscious entity) is called for.

A considerable spectrum of meanings is accorded to the word *avyakta* in epic texts which includes its being used as an attribute of a supreme being, a term for the supreme state of existence or the cause of creation as well as a synonym of *prakṛti*.[26] The different accounts of Sāṃkhya included in the epic point to the ambiguity of the unmanifest as being connected to *puruṣa* as well as *prakṛti*. Thus, the unmanifest is, on the one hand, accorded to *puruṣa* and *kṣetrajña* as an essential feature (for instance, 12.199.28 and 14.48.1, which refer to those who teach "*puruṣaṃ avyaktam*"), and, on the other hand, *avyakta* is the designation of a realm that is subordinated to a "higher" realm (either conscious entity or a "highest" god[27]) or juxtaposed to *puruṣa* and distinguished from the manifest realm (*vyakta*) in classical Sāṃkhya.[28] In other epic texts this idea is connected to the twin-terms *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, the distinction between which Pañcaśikha is said to have realized (12.211.12).[29] The rendering of *puruṣāvastham ayvaktam* as "the unmanifest whose state, or condition, is *puruṣa*" or as "that abides in *puruṣa*" resonates with the larger context of presentations of Sāṃkhya in the epic in which the unmanifest as the

[25] Dasgupta is citing *Śarīrasthāna* 1.65cd. In order to support this argument he refers to different enumerations of the *tattva*s of Sāṃkhya in the *MDh* and concludes without discussing any of the passages in greater detail that the accounts of Sāṃkhya given in *Carakasaṃhitā* and in *MBh* 12. 211–212 represent the idea that each *puruṣa* has his own *prakṛti* (Dasgupta 1922, p. 217).

[26] For a discussion of these meanings in the *MDh* and the Upaniṣads, see Kano (2000) whose otherwise quite comprehensive account seems to exempt from the analysis passages that equate, or closely connect, *puruṣa* and *avyakta*. 12.211.11 is bracketed in a chart of passages (*ibid*., p. 66) and in a note it is stated without further explanation that 211.11 and 12.199.28 reflect "an early stage of thought […], namely, *avyakta* as merely a significant character of *puruṣa*. […] We can interpret these passages to mean that the principle *puruṣa* as a masculine has the character 'unmanifest' (*avyakta*) as a neuter" (*ibid*., p. 75, note 44).

[27] This subordination is typical for theistic interpretations of Sāṃkhya, in which the "Unmanifest" is made a realm subordinated to the highest *puruṣa* (interpreted as the highest god, who rules over a cosmic realm that brings about the creation of the manifest world and is called variously *brahman*, *avyakta* or *prakṛti*). Such interpretations are available in other parts of the epic, in particular in the *BhG* [cf. BhG 7, 13, 15, see Malinar (2007b)], and in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section. Such interpretations should not be taken as "deviations" from classical Sāṃkhya, but should be seen, rather, as alternative forms of the doctrine. These were—probably from very early on—part of the spectrum of interpretations of Sāṃkhya and stood side by side with the version that became dominant in the Sāṃkhya tradition in the wake of the SK.

[28] This distinction also occurs elsewhere in the epic; see, for instance 12.294.49, 12.228.28–31. It also plays a prominent role in Arāḍa's teaching in *Buddhacarita* 12.22.40.

[29] At 12.294.35–40, for instance, the *puruṣa / kṣetrajña* (both terms are used) is said to know the "field" that is unmanifest and to lie in the "fortress that stems from the unmanifest" (12.294.37, which echoes the explanation of the word *puruṣa* given by Yāska in *Nirukta* 2.1.3).

highest state or realm of existence is ascribed to the conscious entity. But the phrase could also be understood as "the unmanifest whose state, or condition, is for *puruṣa*;" this interpretation stresses the situation that the unmanifest cause of the world (*prakṛti*) produces bodies for the *puruṣa* and is thus a realm in which the *puruṣa* dwells under the laws of *karman* until the liberating insight of the difference between the two entities is obtained (see for instance 12.295–296). Both of these interpretations are plausible summaries of a central tenet of what could be understood as Sāṃkhya in the epic. But since the phrase specifies the "highest reality," it seems more plausible to see it referring to the first interpretation and so serving as a statement highlighting the *puruṣa*. Furthermore, the difference between body and consciousness is explicitly dealt with in the next verse (211.12).

Bhīṣma relates that the sage,[30] perfected through rituals, and even more by way of ascetic practices, recognized for himself the difference between the "body" and "the knower of the body" (*kṣetrakṣetrajñayor vyaktim*; 211.12). In 211.13 it is stated that in this circle of followers" (*maṇḍale tasmin*) Āsuri had obtained or put forward (*pratipede*) the single, eternal *brahman* that appears in different forms. The term *brahman* can be interpreted as an equivalent for *prakṛti*, a usage attested also in other sources in which Sāṃkhya doctrines are depicted, both epic and commentarial (for instance, *BhG* 13.3 and *Gauḍāpādabhaṣya* and *Māṭharavṛtti* on *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (in the following: SK) 22). The singularity of the cosmic principle—variously called *prakṛti*, *avyakta*, or *brahman*—from which all manifest beings are produced as its effects seems to have been a controversial issue among Sāṃkhya teachers. Some texts mention a doctrine of multiple *prakṛti*s, others the thesis that each *puruṣa* (conscious principle) has his own *prakṛti*, which contrasts with what became the authoritative doctrine of classical Sāṃkhya[31]—that teaches an asymmetry between a single productive cosmic principle (*prakṛti*) unfolding in many forms for a multitude of *puruṣa*s.

Next, it is said that Pañcaśikha became Āsuri's disciple (*śiṣya*). His discipleship is connected to his drinking milk from the breast of Kapilā, a Brahman woman of the household (*kuṭumbinī*). By doing so he became her son (*tasyāḥ putratvam āgamya*; 211.15) and thus obtained *kāpileyatva*, the status of a being (a) Kapila (member of Kapila's clan of followers). Furthermore, he gained an "insight [or: faculty of discrimination] that is perfect" (*buddhi naiṣṭhikī*; 211.16), a state for which followers of Sāṃkhya strive. At this point the account ends and Bhīṣma stresses that this is what his teacher has told him, adding that Pañcaśikha's *kāpileyatva* implies omniscience (*sarvavittvam*; 211.16).

This account depicts the circulation and transmission of Sāṃkhya doctrines as being embedded in a circle of followers that seems to share some kind of kinship structure. In its over-all concern to present Pañcaśikha as a descendant of a group of

[30] It is not clear whether this verse refers to Pañcaśikha or to Āsuri. Many mss. identify the sage as Āsuri, who is also the subject of the next verse. At 211.12 no name is mentioned, which usually suggests that the reference is to the preceding verse, thus, here, to Pañcaśikha. This interpretation is supported by the use of the Ātmanepada in the verb describing the sage's gaining insight and also by the mention of the *sattra*, something in which Pañcaśikha was engaged when he was met by the group of the followers of Kapila. Therefore, I regard this verse as describing Pañcaśikha, as does Brockington (1999, 482).

[31] See Frauwallner (1925) and Johnston (1937) for early Sāṃkhya, and Malinar (2007a, b) for these models in the *BhG*.

Kapila followers, the account assimilates the transmission of doctrines to ideas of continuation of the father in the son in older Vedic literature. By drawing on this familiar model, Bhīṣma's view that Pañcaśikha embodies Kapila and thus shares the latter's status as the omniscient, supreme Ṛṣi of the Sāṃkhya school is explained. The account also depicts a well-established structure of transmission in "circles" (*maṇḍala*) of disciples who live together in a household-style setting characterized by the presence of women, philosophical instructions, ritual activities as well as ascetic practices. It represents a form of renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) that does not require giving up social life completely. Discipleship means being part of such a "circle" and is, in the case of Pañcaśikha, extended to some kind of adoption by a woman called Kapilā who functions here as a kind of foster-mother. By drinking from her breast, Pañcaśikha becomes her son and thus a member of the clan of Kapila-followers. This breast-feeding is referred to twice in connection with becoming a disciple and member of the group (211.14, 15). Rather than taking this as some literary embellishment, the passage could point to an acknowledged (ritual) practice of initiation along the lines of establishing a kinship relationship for the newly initiated member. Breast-feeding as a central element of initiation and adoption practices is well-known in the Ancient Orient (see Chapham 2012), but is not—to my knowledge—mentioned in Dharmaśāstra regulations of adoption. It is, however, mentioned in the context of the tantric initiation of a *putraka* (lit.: "little son") in the *Brahmayāmalatantra*,[32] which demonstrates that this form of initiation and the knowledge conferred by it (omniscience as is the case with Pañcaśikha; 211.16) is not an oddity.

In Bhīṣma's account there is more or less clear reference to three fundamental doctrines that seem to have been taught to the circle of followers by using technical terms characteristic of Sāṃkhya. Firstly, *puruṣa* and *avyaktam* are connected to each other in a way that can be interpreted in different ways that touch upon central positions of Sāṃkhya. The second doctrine referred to is the "distinction between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*," the "field," i.e. the body, and the "knower of the field," the conscious entity (*kṣetrakṣetrajñayor vyaktim*; 211.12). While the distinction between "body" and "self" is not uniquely characteristic of Sāṃkhya—it is shared by other schools as well—the terminology is. The third doctrine is ascribed to Āsuri, who is connected to knowledge about a single, indestructible cause of all beings (*brahman*) and its appearance in different forms.

[32] Various tantric traditions describe initiations for adepts striving for liberation who are called *putraka*. In most cases this does not include breast-feeding. Yet, in the *Brahmayāmalatantra* breast-feeding is described as a favor granted by the Goddess for an adept who is addressed by her as *putraka* when she offers him her breast: "The Sādhaka spoke: 'If you are pleased with me, O mother, give me your breast.' Hearing the *sādhaka*'s resplendent words, the Goddess [says]: 'Come, come, you of great spirit; drink at my breast, O *putraka*. Who other than you is worthy to be my child (*putratvam arhati*)…?'" Then she embraces the hero, [saying]: "I offer my breast, O *sādhaka*" (*Brahmayāmala* 46.114–116; tr. [Hatley forthcoming]). Similar to Pañcaśikha, who obtains perfect insight or the faculty of discrimination after having drunk from Kapilā's breast and who is said to be omniscient and a Kapila, the *putraka* becomes omniscient (*sarvajña*) after he is breast-fed by the goddess. I am grateful to Olga Serbaeva for providing me with this reference and to Shaman Hatley for sending me the pre-print version of the text edited and translated by him.

When taking all three doctrines together, one gets a set of fundamental doctrines of Sāṃkhya: namely, the relation between *puruṣa* and the unmanifest, the distinction between the conscious entity and the body, and the notion of a single eternal realm (referred to as *brahman*) and its different manifest forms.[33] Since all of this is related by Bhīṣma without further explanation we may infer that these doctrines are presumed to be common knowledge on the part of the audience. By all counts, Bhīṣma's narrative strongly embeds Pañcaśikha into the line of Sāṃkhya teachers, both genealogically and doctrinally. At the narrative level it is made clear that Pañcaśikha is exceptional not only among sages, but also among the teachers of Sāṃkhya, by virtue of his being Kapila embodied and endowed with omniscience.

After establishing Pañcaśikha's provenance and philosophical education Bhīṣma returns our attention to Janaka's house and narrates and interprets ("focalizes") Pañcaśikha's actions. Pañcaśikha is depicted as having an easy job with the other teachers: He (referred to by Bhīṣma as Kapila[34]) "went to the hundred teachers and confused them with his arguments. Janaka, deeply impressed by the Kāpileya's examination of the hundred teachers, dismissed them and then approached him."[35] Bhīṣma now turns to Pañcaśikha's instructions (211.17–48) and recounts a list of items taught to the king, each one being emphasized with an explicit "he said (so)" (*abravīt*): "He taught the highest liberation which is called 'Sāṃkhya'. For after he proclaimed aversion (*nirveda*) to birth, he proclaimed aversion to (ritual) action, and after he proclaimed aversion to (ritual) action he proclaimed aversion to everything."[36]

According to Bhīṣma, the actual instruction about "the highest form of liberation that is known as Sāṃkhya" does not start with doctrines, such as the difference between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, as they are taught among the circles of followers (see above). Rather, the (extra-diegetic) audience learns of the way in which the Sāṃkhya idea of liberation is brought home to a new disciple, namely, through the successive unfolding of a threefold "aversion" (*nirveda*): to birth (*jātinirveda*), (ritual) acts (*karmanirveda*), and, eventually, to everything (*sarvanirveda*). It is important to keep in mind the distinction between the extra-diegetic level and Pañcaśikha's actual instruction, which itself does not contain any reference to "*nirveda*" as a topic of teaching.[37] It is, rather, the paraphrase of Pañcaśikha's discourse by Bhīṣma for Yudhiṣṭhira (who represents the extra-diegetic audience) that contains these terms. Bhīṣma's interpretation echoes other passages in the epic

[33] These three tenets taken together also form the foundation of Sāṃkhya as it is presented in its systematized form in the SK. This structure has been less recognized than the so-called "dualism." SK 2, however, declares that the end of suffering is possible through the "discriminating knowledge of the manifest, the unmanifest and the knower" (*vyaktāvyaktajñajñānāt*).

[34] This is how Bhīṣma refers to Pañcaśikha here (and again in 212.52), which mirrors his view as stated in 211.9.

[35] *upetya śatam ācāryān mohayām āsa hetubhiḥ* // 12.211.17cd // *janakas tv abhisaṃraktaḥ kāpileyānudarśanāt / utsṛjya śatam ācāryān pṛṣṭhato 'nujagāma tam* // 12.211.18.

[36] *abravīt paramaṃ mokṣaṃ yat tat sāṃkhyaṃ vidhīyate* // 12.211.19cd // *jātinirvedam uktvā hi karmanirvedam abravīt /karmanirvedam uktvā ca sarvanirvedam abravīt* // 12.211.20.

[37] It is thus not Pañcaśikha himself who talks about aversion as maintained, for instance, by Motegi (1999, p. 519).

that stress the importance of *nirveda* as an incentive or instrument for liberation.[38] Usually "aversion" is not a topic in itself that is explained or defined, but depicted as an effect of certain experiences (as in *MBh* 12.171 in the story of Maṅki) or insights and knowledge processes. The latter is the case at *BhG* 2.52, when Kṛṣṇa announces that Arjuna will develop an aversion to all he has learnt once he has overcome confusion. In a similar way, the aversion brought about by Pañcaśikha is depicted as unfolding through a discussion and refutation of philosophical positions with regard to the afterlife and the ways of proving them. None of these positions is convincing or provides a reason to find comfort in action, birth or anything else. This conclusion is presented as deepening Janaka's intellectual crisis and thus preparing the ground for teaching Sāṃkhya as the solution. The doctrinal content of Pañcaśikha's first speech is thus not only framed, but also interpreted by Bhīṣma's comments, which create certain expectations in the extra-diegetic audience with respect to content and purpose.[39] In this way, the text offers both a philosophical discourse for the sake of causing *nirveda* and a narrative about how to bring *nirveda* about.

Although it is not always possible to reconstruct the argument presented in Pañcaśikha's speech with certainty, one thing is made very clear by Bhīṣma's narration: after the speech Janaka finds himself (again) in a state of "gloominess" and "confusion." Janaka, who was said earlier to have been fascinated by the perplexity Pañcaśikha created among the hundred teachers, is presented at the end of chapter 211 as finding himself in a similar, if not worse, situation. Now he doubts the purpose of everything he is doing and has come to no conclusion with respect to his queries. Since Pañcaśikha's discourse does not include any reference to *nirveda* or other information about how to understand it, only Bhīṣma's audience knows that Janaka shall be talked into an aversion to birth, *karman* and everything. This highlights the function accorded to the following discourse within Bhīṣma's narration.

Pañcaśikha's First Speech (211.21–47)

Again, the text poses numerous difficulties. First of all, the exact understanding of some of the stanzas cannot be established with certainty and their interpretation is thus based on plausibility and heuristic assumptions about the text at large. In some cases, interpretation becomes guess-work due to the obscurity of the text. One reason for this is the condition of the text transmitted in the manuscripts. In his analysis of philosophical texts in the epic Frauwallner (1925, pp. 183–184) states that in interpreting the epic texts we need to be prepared for "Verderbnisse aller Art" (corruptions of all kinds). Therefore, the interpretation cannot be based on the wording of single verses alone, but we need to explain with caution the parts by drawing on the teachings of the whole piece (*ibid.*). This caution needs to be exercised also in the following. Another reason for the difficulties posed in

[38] See Hopkins (1902, p. 144f.) and Motegi (1999, p. 519) for a discussion of such instances.

[39] This is also reflected when chap. 211 is called *nirvedakathana*, "the talk on aversion, or dissatisfaction," in the colophons of some mss.

particular by 12. 211 is that it emulates or evokes philosophical expert discourse by displaying characteristic features such as brevity, refutation of opponents and the use of technical terms. Lastly, there is the general difficulty of distinguishing between what should be taken as Pañcaśikha's critical representation of the views of others and what is presented as Pañcaśikha's own views. With Hopkins (1902) and Motegi (1999), I tend to view 211 as an exposition of a certain spectrum of (unsubstantiated) views on the issue of life after death and 212 as a statement of Pañcaśikha's own position in this matter, while Bronkhorst (2007) assumes that the latter applies to 211 only.

Before discussing the speech a survey of the themes addressed may be useful:

Thematic Presentation of Pancasikha's Discourse in MBh 12.211

211.21	Futility of action (*karman*).
211.22–26	Perception (*pratyakṣa*) demonstrates that everything is perishable. Something beyond that or an immortal self cannot be asserted on the basis of authoritative tradition (*āgama*) or inference (*anumāna*) when this is not based on empirical knowledge.
211.27–30	Refutation of flawed evidence for the existence of a self.
211.31–41	Criticism of positions that claim continuity after death without assuming a "self": (1) "repeated existence" (*punarbhava*) on the basis of *karman* and (2) the idea that beings arise from and return to their constitutive elements (*dhātu*).
211.42–44	Pañcaśikha concludes that all this is inconclusive and precludes true knowledge.
211.45–47	The individual is bound to perish; a materialist position claiming that the elements remain offers no solution.

After Bhīṣma's introduction, the examination of positions about life after death starts rather straightforwardly with a statement about the pointlessness of actions (*karman*): "The mixture of actions and the production of the fruits of actions are for the sake of something that is unreliable, vain, destructible, moveable, non-permanent. Since its destruction is demonstrable and perceptible, witnessed by the world, someone is refuted even if he maintains on the basis of authoritative tradition (*āgama*) that an "other" (or, "higher") (reality) exists" (*param asti*)."[40] Pañcaśikha puts forward the well-known criticism of the futility of all *karman* since it is directed to or appropriated by something that does not last. The latter can be understood referring to the material body or a person identifying himself with the body. The criticism implied in this statement is obviously directed at Vedic doctrines of the purposefulness of action since it provides ritual rewards for the sacrificer both in this life and the afterlife in the heavenly regions. Vedic thinkers would also accept further existence of the producer or consumer of *karman* when they postulate a continuation of existence in a heavenly region based on their

[40] *yadarthaṃ karmasaṃsargaḥ karmaṇāṃ ca phalodayaḥ / tad anāśvāsikaṃ moghaṃ vināśi calam adhruvam* // 12.211.21 // *dṛśyamāne vināśe ca pratyakṣe lokasākṣike / āgamāt param astīti bruvann api parājitaḥ* // 12.211.22.

authoritative tradition (*āgama*). However, their opponents maintain that this claim is based on the fallacious reasoning that argues, on the basis of authoritative tradition alone, that *karman* is for the sake of something that is exempt from *karman*. These critics reject this position by insisting that perception does not support such a claim, and authoritative tradition cannot be used as if it were a means of proof for invisible things on a par with perception.[41] Such criticism is not only voiced by materialists, but is found also in other texts, such as, for instance, those of the Buddhists and Jainas, in Sāṃkhya, and in Upaniṣads. While the impermanence of the bearer of *karman* is common knowledge among those critical of ritualism, the majority of those critics would also postulate that there exists something else, a "beyond" or a "higher" reality exempt from destruction.

From the very start, Pañcaśikha is depicted as using the concise style of argumentation of philosophical discourse and treating the issues with reference to what is in classical Indian philosophy called "means of knowledge" (*pramāṇa*). In what follows, there are mentioned three of these, namely *pratyakṣa* (sensory perception), *āgama* (authoritative tradition, verbal testimony) and *anumāna* (logical inference). The arguments cited in favor of the doctrine that there is nothing exempt from destruction are based exclusively on perception (*pratyakṣa*), which is declared to be the only valid means of knowledge and is used in order to reject opponents who depend upon authoritative tradition (*āgama*) when claiming that something "beyond" (or, "other," *para*) does exist.[42] Those who teach that there is something that escapes the fate of death are held to be refuted by perception. The same also applies to those who teach a "self" (*ātman*) as an immortal entity. Death and old age demonstrate that there is no self, for nothing remains of a person after death: "For one's own death means that there is no self [non-existence of a self]; death is the affliction that abounds in decrepitude. To think, out of delusion (*moha*), that there is a self is the incorrect, opposite doctrine. (23) Thus, if it were still maintained that something exists that is not found in this world, this would be as if one thinks that this very king here (i.e. Janaka) is free from old age and from death. (24)"[43] Again speculations about an immortal self are refuted as being contra-factual, in this instance by taking Janaka as the living proof of someone (already?) affected by the afflictions of his own mortality.

In the next verse, Pañcaśikha seems to adduce still another position, which is, however, difficult to ascertain: "It may also be said [by some] '[maybe] it exists (or) [maybe] it exists not'—because a criterion [for deciding this] is lacking. Can this be

[41] Such acceptance of Vedic *āgama* is indicated at *MBh* 12.28.53, when the Brahman Aśman speaks to King Janaka about "authoritative tradition" as being the "eye of (or, for) the good people" (*āgamas tu satāṃ cakṣur*); see also 12.28.41 on *āgama* as the source of knowledge about the "next world" (*paraloka*) which is relied upon by those abiding in it (that is, the tradition).

[42] A similar line of argument is cited and refuted in the *Carakasaṃhitā*, *Sūtrasthāna* 11.6–8 (by drawing on the four *pramāṇa*s accepted in this passage; cf. 11.27–33).

[43] *anātmā hy ātmano mṛtyuḥ kleśo mṛtyur jarāmayaḥ / ātmānaṃ manyate mohāt tad asaṃyak paraṃ matam* // 12.211.23 // *atha ced evam apy asti yal loke nopapadyate / ajaro 'yam amṛtyuś ca rājāsau manyate tathā* // 12.211.24.

of any use when one shall decide [or: pass a judgment] on worldly affairs?"[44] It seems that the verse refers to the pointlessness of suspending judgment about the issue as is done by agnostic teachers.[45] It is pointed out that an agnostic attitude is useless when one needs to function in worldly life and furthermore raises doubts about the usefulness of dealing at all with this question.

Primacy is given here to *pratyakṣa*, perception, as a means of knowledge: it is asserted against those who simply insist on authoritative texts, against those who claim the existence of a self "out of confusion," and against those who would like to leave the issue agnostically open. This primacy of *pratyakṣa* is maintained in 211.26 as follows: "For perception is the foundation of both (logical) conclusions as well as of traditional knowledge.[46] For authoritative tradition (*āgama*) is perceived,[47] and an established conclusion[48] also does not differ [from perception] in any way."[49] This way of launching the foundational character of perception for the two other *pramāṇa*s that many philosophical schools accept along with perception, points to the presence of some scholastic context for this kind of argumentation. The idea that the contents of authoritative texts have been perceived may very well refer to the notion that verbal testimony is valid because of its being based on a "direct perception" by sages and other reliable persons, as is claimed, for instance, in early Nyāya.[50] The thesis that a logical conclusion is based on perception apparently refers to philosophical schools which accept inference as a means of knowing non-perceivable things by establishing certain connections between visible and invisible things. They do so on the basis of features that can be exemplified empirically.[51] What is suggested here is that both inference and received knowledge are invalid when either is not connected to facts or structures of the empirical world.

[44] *asti nāstīti cāpy etat tasminn asati lakṣaṇe / kim adhiṣṭhāya tad brūyāl lokayātrāviniścayam* // 12.211.25.

[45] In the Buddhist *Brahmajālasutta* (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1947–49, I, p. 24) they are called *amarāvikkhepika*, "those that wriggle like slippery fish, the "eel wrigglers" (Rhys Davids 1957, I, p. 37ff.). The phrase "*asti nāsti*" can also be understood as referring to those who would claim that "it exists [and] it exists not," positions such as mentioned in the *Brahmajālasutta* claiming that the self is eternal as well as non-eternal; see also *MBh* 14.48.16, a passage listing different teachings including "*nāstyastīti.*"

[46] *Aitihya* is a term for traditional or transmitted knowledge or reliable instruction, which is used together with other forms of valid knowledge already in *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* 1.2, see Oberhammer et al. (1996, sub voce).

[47] The use of *pratyakṣa* as "perception" as well as the object of perception (the perceived) or an attribute of objects—as is the case here—is well attested in other (philosophical) texts of the period; see Schmithausen (1972, p. 160f).

[48] *kṛtānta* lit. "conclusion," "established doctrine," can be taken to refer to logical inference (*anumāna*) as the means to establish this knowledge.

[49] *pratyakṣaṃ hy etayor mūlaṃ kṛtāntaitihyayor api / pratyakṣo hy āgamo'bhinnaḥ kṛtānto vā na kiṃcana* // 12.211.26.

[50] On "direct perception" of *dharma* as the foundation of verbal testimony or authoritative tradition see *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.7 and Yāska's *Nirukta* 1.20. The statement could also be taken as referring to the Mīmāṃsā distinction between "perceivable," available authoritative texts, in particular Vedic texts (*pratyakṣaśruti*), and inferred ones (*anumitaśruti*) (see Olivelle 1993, pp. 84–85). Such internal distinctions seem not to be have been central to the argument here.

[51] See, for instance, the definition of *anumāna* in *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* 2.2.2 (*pratyakṣe apratyakṣasya sambaddhasya pratipattir anumānam*).

The emphasis on perception continues in 211.27, a difficult verse, which seems to contain a rejection of *anumāna*, inference, as a means for proving that something permanent exists: "In any inference whatsoever [the thesis] "it exists" is fabricated or else maintained. [Thus,] a living principle (or, individual self, *jīva*) different from the body is taught in the doctrine (*mata*) of non-believers (*nāstika*)."[52] This depiction of the position of non-believers seems to credit them with a doctrine one may think they would deny, in particular when they are identified as being materialist or Buddhist teachers.[53] However, the spectrum of doctrines which can be ascribed to *nāstika*s may also include those who oppose or criticize the Vedic tradition—or who do not base their doctrines (solely) on the authority of the Vedas[54]—but without rejecting an immortal self, such as Jaina, Sāṃkhya and other teachers who would propagate such an entity.[55] An important commonality among them would be that they allow logical inference as a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), which materialists would deny.

In the next verses (211.28–30) some of the evidence adduced by those advocating the existence of an immortal self is listed briefly, and then rejected. The particular arguments are not spelled out; rather, observable phenomena and comparisons are listed which these teachers use for arguing either that things exist although they are invisible or that there are phenomena that can only be explained by postulating a self. The abbreviated style of the arguments made points to an expert-discourse that has unfolded with respect to the issue, and which seems to be familiar not only to the teacher, but also to his disciple Janaka (who represents the intra-diegetic audience and was depicted by Bhīṣma as being frustrated by the philosophical position of the other teachers). At the extra-diegetic level, this abbreviated style also raises no questions, a situation which suggests that the epic composer presents this discourse as "philosophical expert discourse." Says Pañcaśikha (211.28–29): "'The germ in the grain of a fig tree, the application of medical ghee (?), memory at birth

[52] *yatra tatrānumāne 'sti kṛtaṃ bhāvayate 'pi vā / anyo jīvaḥ śarīrasya nāstikānāṃ mate smṛtaḥ* // 12.211.27.

[53] Bronkhorst (2007, p. 310f.) suggests we understand 211.27cd as a doctrine ascribed to *āstika*s ("in the doctrine of the *āstika*s a self as being different from the body is not taught"), namely, Vedic brahmans who deny the existence of a self and hold the same materialist position as Pañcaśikha. As an alternative to that, Bronkhorst proposes to read *asmṛtaḥ* instead of *smṛtaḥ*: "not taught in the opinion of the *nāstika*s." According to Bronkhorst, both readings "mean that Pañcaśikha did not accept the existence of a soul different from the body" (*ibid*). Since it is not explained whether this position is the "orthodox" (*āstika*) or "non-orthodox" (*nāstika*) one, the distinction between the two groups and Pañcaśikha's relationship with them remain unclear.

[54] This is the criterion adduced in the definition of *nāstika* in *Manusmṛti* 2.11. It implies a rejection of the two sources of *dharma* advocated at MS 2.10 (*śruti* and *smṛti*), by relying on the authority of reason (*hetuśāstra*). Denial or criticism of the Veda is what makes one a *nāstika* (cf. also *MBh* 12.15.33, 12.162.81), not whether one accepts or rejects a self. For a definition of a *nāstika* as person denying any regulating principles (causality, *karman* doctrine), a self, gods etc. because of the idea that everything happens by chance, see *Carakasaṃhitā, Sūtrasthāna* 11.14–15.

[55] The idea of *jīva* as an individual self or something distinct from the body is also a topic in the dialogue between Bhṛgu and Bharadvāja at 12.180, see Frauwallner (1953, pp. 129–130), and it is a central concept in Jainism. The term also occurs in epic Sāṃkhya texts referring to the transmigrating self, sometimes in contradistinction to *kṣetrajña* as the principle exempt from corporeality; see also below on the two terms in 212.40 and 43.

[or: of previous births], the magnet, the sun-crystal, the evaporation of water, [the fact] that when someone has passed away and the elements of the body perish the deities are worshipped, and [the situation that] for a dead person *karman* ceases to function: [all] this is evidence [for the existence of a self]'—thus is [their] fixed opinion."[56]

Some of the arguments enumerated here are indeed used as reasons or proofs (*hetu*) in philosophical debate.[57] For instance, *jātismṛti*, memory at birth, is adduced in the *Nyāyasūtra* as evidence for rebirth of the self as the carrier of memory,[58] and memory of previous existences is a topic in Jaina and Yoga texts. Such phenomena —these teachers argue—can be explained only when assuming the existence of a self. This is also the case with the ritual invocations upon death, which would be pointless if there were no self.[59] Other items are adduced to prove the existence of a self as they provide evidence for the fact that things exist even when they are not perceived directly, because they are hidden or too subtle, as is the case with the germ hidden in the grain of a tree.[60] Three other items, the magnet,[61] the sun-crystal that can be used to produce fire, and application of a medical substance prepared with clarified butter (? *ghṛtapāka*)[62] apparently demonstrate the existence of invisible powers in visible things as something that can be detected through their effects.[63]

But Pañcaśikha is not convinced by this evidence and rejects it as follows: "However, those reasons which have their basis in visible objects are not valid [are not (reasons)], since there is no common characteristic (*sāmānya*) that connects the immortal with the mortal [and could therefore serve as proof]."[64] Refuted here are both those who argue that the "immortal self" is a reality hidden in or behind visible

[56] *reto vaṭakaṇīkāyāṃ ghṛtapākādhivāsanam / jātismṛtir ayaskāntaḥ sūryakānto'mbubhakṣaṇam* // 12.211.28 // *pretya bhūtātyayaś caiva devatābhyupayācanam / mṛte karmanivṛttiś ca pramāṇam iti niścayaḥ* // 12.211.29.

[57] See Hopkins (1902, pp. 146–147) for a discussion of the passage.

[58] See *Nyāyasūtra* 3.1.17–24 discussing inter alia the fact that the newly born seek their mother's breast (*stanyabhilāṣa*) as a sign of their previous existences; see Oetke (1988, p. 275ff.). In *Carakasaṃhitā Sūtrasthāna* 11.30 *jātismaraṇa* is listed as *pratyakṣa*, perceivable, evidence for *punarbhava* (repeated existence).

[59] *Nyāyasūtra* 3.1.4 adduces the fact that cremation of a dead body is not considered sinful; see Oetke (1988, pp. 269–271).

[60] This comparison or example is also used at *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.12, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.28 and at *MBh* 12.204.2.

[61] See also *MBh* 12.204.3 and Hopkins (1902, p. 147, note 1), and the discussion of the magnet in connection with proofs of the self in *Nyāyasūtra* 3.1.21–23.

[62] On texts dealing with *pāka* as a specific way to prepare medical substances, see Meulenbeld (2000, pp. 415–420). I am thankful to Dagmar Wujastyk for providing this reference. The compound *ghṛtapāka* occurs also in Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* 3.14.446, and in Kṣemendra's *Avadānakalpalatā* 64.26. I am grateful to Oliver Hellwig for providing these references.

[63] The evidence implied in *ambubhakṣaṇa* (evaporation of water) is explained in the commentaries as referring to fire consuming water. Hopkins (1902, p. 147) gives this expanded translation and paraphrase of 211.28d: "'(The fire's) devouring of water (is typical of the so-called appetite or desire of the soul),' or, in other words: Desire and enjoyment are no proof of a superphysical entity, any more than in the case of fire gratifying its thirst for water.".

[64] *na tv ete hetavaḥ santi ye ke cin mūrtisaṃsthitāḥ / amartyasya hi martyena sāmānyaṃ nopapadyate* // 12.211.30.

objects, and those who attempt to prove the existence of imperceptible things by pointing to their effects. Here demonstrated is what happens to the advocates of the existence of a "self" when they adduce individual perceptions or characteristics as evidence for eternal entities without being able to demonstrate their generality. This is indeed a very important objection, one that can be raised not only by "non-believers" in a self, but also by philosophers who think that they advocate the existence of a self with better methods—Sāṃkhya philosophers, for instance. The latter base their tenets on a type of inference that operates with general characteristic features that connect visible and invisible things (the *sāmānyato dṛṣṭa anumāna*).[65] Pañcaśikha seems here not only to report, but also to support the criticism against the unsubstantiated opinions of "naive" exponents of a self.[66] He rejects not the idea of the self, but the flawed arguments and fallacious reasons adduced by others. Rejecting insufficient arguments for a self does not turn Pañcaśikha into a materialist or disqualify him from being a Sāṃkhya teacher.[67] Moreover, neither in the epic nor in the SK is the existence of the *puruṣa* demonstrated by means of any of the *hetu*s mentioned here; instead, as mentioned before, it is done by means of the above-mentioned type inference. Pañcaśikha's criticism of unconvincing arguments and proofs on the part of those championing a self agrees in part with similar materialist and Buddhist criticisms and is also found in chap. 212, where Pañcaśikha proclaims an alternative to the views espoused in chap. 211 (see below).

Pañcaśikha's speech continues as he deals with interpretations that suggest some continuation after death—but which do not champion the notion of an immortal "self"—by reporting yet another view, one that agrees with strict materialism with respect to the denial of an immortal self, but which differs from it in that it allows for "re-appearance," and, thus, for some continuation of individual existence. In 211.31–32, Pañcaśikha reports that "some say" (*kecid āhur*) that there is a "re-appearance" (or, "repeated existence," *punarbhava*) of earlier ignorance (*avidyā*), *karman* and corporal activity (*ceṣṭa*) as being caused by an individual's "greed" and "delusion." Ignorance is given a pivotal role in this process as it produces the "field" (*kṣetra*, the body), in which *karman* becomes the seed of existence that unfolds because of "thirst" (*tṛṣṇā*). Both doctrine and terminology point to Buddhist

[65] The central doctrine of Sāṃkhya, the distinction between three realms of existence (*vyakta*, *avyakta*, *jña* according to SK 2), as well as the two invisible entities taught in this philosophy (*avyakta* and *jña*) are deduced by means of the so-called *sāmānyato dṛṣṭa anumāna* (in its positive and negative versions). This type of inference is based on a common feature (*sāmānya*) establishing the connection (*sambandha*) between a perceivable characteristic mark (*liṅga*) and a non-perceivable entity that is qualified by it (*liṅgin*) (or *vice versa*) (see for instance, *Nyāyabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.5 and 1.1.10); see Frauwallner (1958) for its early Sāṃkhya definition, and Malinar (1999) for *sāmānya* in the SK tradition.

[66] It can be viewed as a critique of the kind of comparisons and reasons that are, for instance, put forward in the Manu-Bṛhaspati dialogue, when Manu explains the existence of the invisible, transmigrating self by pointing to instances of temporary invisibility of otherwise visible entities, such as the existence of the other side of the moon etc. (12.195.23).

[67] Bronkhorst (2007, p. 311) takes the verse as proof for Pañcaśikha being a materialist, while Motegi (1999, p. 529) removes it from its context and thus misrepresents it as a statement of Pañcaśikha's "simple concept of the self."

teachings.[68] Verse 211.33 reports how "they" define the "destruction of a living being" (*sattvasaṃkṣaya*[69]): "When the mind (*citta*), being marked by the process of dying, is deranged and in distress, [and] another body is produced from the former, they call it "destruction of a living being."[70] This definition and together with it the idea of continuation is criticized in 211.34–35 by asking how one might understand the connection (*sambandha*) to the former existence. If everything is different in the new body (form, status, learning, wealth) there is for the individual no link with his previous life. This line of reasoning leads to the following conclusion: "And when it is like this, can one be happy with gift-giving, knowledge, the powers [obtained by] ascetic practice when some other person appropriates [after death and in rebirth] everything one has achieved [in this life]?" (211.35).[71] The critique of this understanding of continuation as re-appearance of a being based on a doctrine of *karman* makes the point that it fails to provide an answer to the questions of what connects the present existence with the former and what exactly happens to the individual after death. It seems that the critique continues in the next stanza, which is, as noted by Bronkhorst (2007, p. 312), difficult to understand precisely, although the general point made seems to be that one would suffer from other people's *karman* if it was simply transferred to, or reappeared in, another body (what is here referred to as *anyair prakṛtair*, which possibly means another person's natural capacities or corporeal elements one is inevitably afflicted by—be they pleasant or unpleasant). It is then pointed out that the idea of a reappearance amounts to arguing that a body beaten to death with clubs would reappear, but with a separate, and thus different, consciousness taking hold of that body (211.37).[72]

Next, Pañcaśikha puts forward yet another interpretation of *sattvasaṃkṣaya*: "They view the destruction of a living being like they view a season, a year, the lunar days, heat and cold, pleasant and unpleasant things that have passed away. For someone seized by old age or by death—the destroyer—passes away, becoming weaker and weaker like a [decaying] house. Senses, mind, breath, blood and bones pass away in due order and return to their own constitutive element (*dhātu*)."[73] This

[68] See Hopkins (1902, p. 147) and Motegi (1999, p. 515).

[69] The word *sattva* is here used in the sense of materiality or corporeal existence of a living being and not as the name of one of the three *guṇa*s of Sāṃkhya. The compound occurs also at 211.38, and at 12.212.42 "the destruction of *sattva*" is contrasted with an immortal, immaterial entity, the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*; 212.40); for the meanings of *sattva* in the *MDh*, see van Buitenen (1956).

[70] *tasmin vyūḍhe ca dagdhe ca citte maraṇadharmiṇi / anyo'nyāj jāyate dehas tam āhuḥ sattvasaṃkṣayam* // 12.211.33.

[71] *evaṃ sati ca kā prītir dānavidyātapobalaiḥ / yad anyācaritaṃ karma sarvam anyaḥ prapadyate* // 12.211.35.

[72] This passage shows some similarities with the *Carakasaṃhitā* where we find a discussion of *punarbhava* in *Sūtrasthāna* 11.26–33, and *Śarīrasthāna* 1.46–48 mentioning the (Buddhist) idea that a being (*sattva*) is a conglomerate of parts that arises in a similar form anew (resembles 211.33) and that the fruits of *karman* are enjoyed by another (which resembles the criticism at 211.35). These ideas are rejected by postulating a self. Furthermore, it is denied that things that were destroyed exist anew (*bhagnānāṃ na punarbhāvaḥ* 1.50, which resembles the flaw pointed out at 211.37) and that what has been produced by one person is enjoyed by another (*kṛtaṃ nānyam upaiti ca* 1.50; see 211.35).

[73] *ṛtuḥ saṃvatsaras tithyaḥ śītoṣṇe ca priyāpriye / yathātītāni paśyanti tādṛśaḥ sattvasaṃkṣayaḥ* // 12.211.38 // *jarayā hi parītasya mṛtyunā vā vināśinā / durbalaṃ durbalaṃ pūrvaṃ gṛhasyeva vinaśyati* //

view corresponds in several respects to notions of dying in passages in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads that describe it as a process in which the parts that make up the body return to the elements from which they originated.[74] This view does not imply any idea of *karman* attached to ignorance, or of *karman* attached to a self, or of a self free from *karman*. Rather, dying is seen as being part of a cyclical process of the transformation of elements, one which corresponds to the temporal rhythm of the seasons, the years etc. Significant here is the idea of constitutive elements (*dhātu*)[75] that are exempt from destruction. Thus, "destruction of a living being" means that the individual body (*sattva*) vanishes forever at death, while its material parts return to their origin. In 211.41 Pañcaśikha connects this view to that which governs worldly life according to the teachings of the Vedic ritual texts[76]: "The acquisition of fruits and the good results of one's gifts provide the structure of all worldly affairs; the words of the Veda and all ordinary transactions are for this purpose."[77] The continuity maintained here is generic only and does not entail the reappearance of an individual.

With this statement ends the account of views and arguments on existence (*bhava*), birth (*jāti*), destruction, re-appearance, *karman*, and the idea of *dhātu*s in which the individual beings return. No definite, reliable answer has been given, as is pointed out in the concluding remark in 211.42 and indicated by its beginning with *iti*. Says Pañcaśikha: "The many arguments cited before exist in correct thinking (*manas*), [each] claiming 'this exists, that exists'—[but] none [of them] finds acceptance. The insight, [or: faculty of discrimination, *buddhi*] of those who think in this way, hurrying to this or that [argument], settles down somewhere where it rots like a tree. In this way all human beings who are unhappy with valuable and worthless things are driven around by authoritative traditions like elephants by their drivers."[78]

Footnote 73 continued
12.211.39 // *indriyāṇi mano vāyuḥ śoṇitaṃ māṃsam asthi ca / ānupūrvyā vinaśyanti svaṃ dhātum upayānti ca* // 12.211.40.

[74] See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.13, *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 2.11; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 8.28. This view finds an echo in the "wheel of sacrifice" in Vedic texts (and in the *BhG*) as well as in the "five-fire doctrine" in the Upaniṣads.

[75] *Dhātu* is not used in the SK but it is a term for the elemental components of *puruṣa* in *Carakasaṃhitā Śarīrasthāna* 1.3, 16–17 and in other instances in the epic, such as 12.175.16, 12.177 (passim), 12.326.34, 14.36.1, 5, 14.41.2, 14.42.52, 56; see Bedekar (1958a) for further usages of the term in medical texts and, for Buddhist texts, Preisendanz (2010). The term is used again in 12.212.7 and 9 for the elements constituting a person (see below).

[76] A similar depiction of the purpose and the essence of the words of the Veda is given in *BhG* 2.46ff. in the context of launching the Sāṃkhya view which creates an aversion (*nirveda*) to what has been learned (*śruta*) and recommends taking refuge in the *buddhi*; see Malinar (2007b, pp. 74–75).

[77] *lokayātrāvidhānaṃ ca dānadharmaphalāgamaḥ / yadarthaṃ vedaśabdāś ca vyavahārāś ca laukikāḥ* // 12.211.41.

[78] *iti samyaṅmanasy ete bahavaḥ santi hetavaḥ / etad astīdam astīti na kiṃcit pratipadyate* // 12.211.42 // *teṣāṃ vimṛśatām evaṃ tat tat samabhidhāvatām / kva cin niviśate buddhis tatra jīryati vṛkṣavat* // 12.211.43 // *evam arthair anarthaiś ca duḥkhitāḥ sarvajantavaḥ / āgamair apakṛṣyante hastipair hastino yathā* // 12.211.44. Bronkhorst (2007, p. 313) renders *samyaṅmanasi* as "for someone whose mind is right." My translation accentuates the juxtaposition of the two cognitive faculties (*manas* and *buddhi*) here; the expression occurs also at 212.16 (see also note 99).

These verses evoke the difference between *manas* and *buddhi*, mind and faculty of discrimination, characteristic of a number of epic and classical Sāṃkhya texts by depicting a *buddhi* that cannot decide on what is present in the mind and perishes in the end.[79] It can be considered a fair description, from Pañcaśikha's point of view, of the situation in which one finds oneself when confronted with the arguments and counter-arguments in the philosophical debates on the issue of the afterlife of an individual. None of the positions previously adduced by Pañcaśikha has been marked so clearly (with the exception of 211.30 perhaps) as a presentation of his own view as is done now in 211.42–44. Earlier we heard "they say" several times and there were quite a few "*iti*" clauses, all signaling that Pañcaśikha is reporting something. Instances of "I say so," or "this is what one should accept," or "there is no doubt about it," which are familiar from other didactic texts as ways to stress the correct view, have been absent here (but they will occur in 212). Instead, various positions were presented—on *karman*, origination, destruction, re-appearance, persistence of the material elements (*dhātu*)—which were all, in the end, considered unconvincing. The doctrines[80] were depicted as being launched by their followers by drawing on perception, authoritative tradition and logical inference as the means of proof. According to Pañcaśikha, none can be accepted as giving satisfaction; thus, one is left with a mind full of arguments, each proving something different to exist or not exist. In this situation, the *buddhi* has no chance to come to clear judgments and true insight; it settles somewhere, where it eventually perishes. At 211.44 this situation is connected at a more general level to unhappy beings who are led (astray) by "authoritative traditions" (*āgama*), like elephants driven by their keepers. This stanza takes up again the issue of *āgama*, which came up in Bhīṣma's depiction of Janaka (211.5) and in the treatment of the means of proof adduced by some teachers. It is argued that the diversity of *āgama*s and the lack of real arguments are causing all the troubles. This diagnosis can be read as a comment on Janaka's dissatisfaction, which was in 211.5 connected to his "abiding in *āgama*(s)."

The final verses (45–47) of Pañcaśikha's speech are marked by a switch into the *triṣṭubh* meter; a change that underscores their summing up the previous teaching and concluding it. The message voiced in these verses is that there is no reason to rejoice if one takes a closer look at the ways people strive for happiness or for something that might last. Those seeking happiness through wealth obtain even greater pain, and if they manage to overcome this, they face death (45). Moreover, as everything perishes and nothing returns, relatives and friends are of no use (46). Nor does the doctrine that the body returns to persistent elements (alluded to by Pañcaśikha at 211.33), give a person reason to rejoice: "'Indeed, earth, ether, water, fire and wind always keep a body [alive]'——having reflected thus, how could there

[79] Compare the criticism of the "multi-branched" *buddhi*s of the Veda teachers in *BhG* 2.41–42, which is contrasted with the "clear" and "stable" *buddhi* of the one who has left the world of the *guṇa*s behind; see Malinar (2007b, pp. 71–73).

[80] Hopkins (1902, p. 151f.) states that "three sets of philosophers are here refuted,—the materialist, the Buddhist, and the orthodox Vedist"—something which is, in part, also pointed out by Motegi (1999). Jaina positions and "naïve" exponents of the doctrine of a self should be added to the list. Materialist positions are used in order to refute other positions [as pointed out by Bronkhorst (2007)], but they are neither explicitly refuted nor advocated, but rather presented as another unsatisfactory position.

be [any] joy? Since there is no shelter for the perishable one."[81] This concluding rhetorical question sets the tone for the next chapter and again highlights what is at the very center of Janaka's concerns: his fate after death. In this respect, the idea that only the elements from which the individual was formed survive, not the individual himself, gives no reason to rejoice. Materialism is neither praised as the solution to Janaka's concern nor as a philosophy that helps to enjoy life.

The chapter ends by switching back to the narrative frame and thus to Bhīṣma, who offers a concluding comment. This switch is marked by still another change of meter (211.48), this time to *aparavaktra*, confirming Hopkins' observation of the use of *mātrā* and other "fancy" meters as "tags" in both epics.[82] The fact that such switches will be repeated at the end of chap. 212 points to their purposeful use to mark the conclusion of the instructions as well as the transition to Bhīṣma's narrative (see also below). The extra-diegetic narrator Bhīṣma again functions as a focalizor, when he narrates and interprets Pañcaśikha's words and Janaka's reaction as follows: "When the king pondered this concise discourse, which was devoid of argumentative trickery, absolutely flawless, based on evidence [given by the teacher himself],[83] he was perplexed and began to question him anew."[84] This comment provides the direct transition to the next chapter.

Pañcaśikha's Second Speech and Bhīṣma's Comments (12.212)

The narration of Pañcaśikha's second discourse in 12.212 starts with Bhīṣma's interpretive observation that now the king once again asked about existence and non-existence (*bhavābhava*) in the passage from this life to the next (*sāmparāya*). The interpretive impact of this introduction is echoed in the report of Janaka's questions that immediately follow; in it, the possible implications of the two positions—continuation and annihilation—are pointed out: "Esteemed Teacher, if it were the case that anyone has consciousness after death, what then is knowledge and what is ignorance for? What is there to achieve? Should everything find its end in annihilation then look at this, o best of brahmans: What difference will it make if one is careful or negligent? For whether there is non-association or association with beings that are perishing—what should be the purpose of acting according to the ordained rule? What is here the right conclusion, one that is based on how things

[81] *bhūvyomatoyānalavāyavo hi sadā śarīraṃ paripālayanti / itīdam ālakṣya kuto ratir bhaved vināśino hy asya na śarma vidyate* // 12.211.47. Motegi (1999, p. 516) takes these three verses as an expression of Pañcaśikha's view on emancipation.

[82] Hopkins (1902, pp. 336–354, in particular 346–48 and 356–62, on the so-called "fancy meters"), see also Fitzgerald (2009) on what he calls "prosodic interventions" in his study of *triṣṭubh* passages in the epic.

[83] An alternative rendering of *ātmasākṣikam* connects the compound to the king as the audience, the "witness" of the discourse: "whose witness was he himself".

[84] *idam anupadhi vākyam acchalaṃ paramanirāmayam ātmasākṣikam / narapatir abhivīkṣya vismitaḥ punar anuyoktum idaṃ pracakrame* // 12.211.48.

really are?"[85] At this point, Bhīṣma voices the following interpretive comment: "Now once again Kavi Pañcaśikha, soothing him with words, spoke to him who was wrapped with darkness, distressed as if sick."[86]

Obviously and rightfully, Janaka has drawn his conclusions from Pañcaśikha's discourse on the arguments put forward by others about birth, *karman* and afterlife: If continuation awaits the individual at the end anyway—as everyone remains with some form of (identifying) consciousness (*saṃjñā*)[87]—then why should one try to

[85] *bhagavan yad idaṃ pretya saṃjñā bhavati kasyacit / evaṃ sati kim ajñānaṃ jñānaṃ vā kiṃ kariṣyati* // 12.212.2 // *sarvam ucchedaniṣṭhaṃ syāt paśya caitad dvijottama / apramattaḥ pramatto vā kiṃ viśeṣaṃ kariṣyati* // 12.212.3 // *asaṃsargo hi bhūteṣu saṃsargo vā vināśiṣu / kasmai kriyeta kalpena niścayaḥ ko'tra tattvataḥ* // 12.212.4. The text of 12.212.2ab constituted in the critical edition is rejected by Bronkhorst (2007, pp. 321–323) since it "is difficult to interpret." Like Hopkins (1902, p. 149), who used the Bombay edition when discussing this verse, he understands it as echoing *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.12 [also: 4.5.13] and suggests returning to the reading adopted in the Bombay edition as it is attested in a number of Northern mss: *yadi na pretya saṃjñā bhavati kasyacit* ("if there is no consciousness after death for anyone," *ibid*.: 321). While an intertextual connection to the passage in the Upaniṣad can certainly be assumed, such intertextuality can have different forms, not only quotations, but also modifications etc. With regard to a possible confusion between the signs for *da* and *na* suggested by Bronkhorst in support of his view, James L. Fitzgerald (personal communication) points out that "speculations on Kāśmirī orthography are irrelevant, given that the whole Southern tradition reads "*dam*" and not "*na*", as does our eastern (and best) commentator Arjunamiśra." The reasons for abandoning the reading adopted in the critical edition are not compelling enough. The criticism of the critical edition does also not seem to aim at retrieving a "better" reading, but at allowing for what is thought to be an easier interpretation of the passage. However, this simplification means in this case reducing the contents of the passage to its dealing with the position of the annihilationists only and not also with eternalism (a view that is in the Buddhist canon connected to those who teach some conscious state after death, *saññīvāda*, see note 88). It makes verse 212.2 neither a comprehensive summary of ch. 211 (as Bronkhorst suggests [*ibid*.: 320]) nor a matching introduction to ch.212. However, Bhīṣma comments at 212.1 that Janaka had questions about "existence and non-existence" and Pañcaśikha deals exactly with the two alternatives (continuation and annihilation) in his speech (212.6). Furthermore, a part of the question is referred to again at the end of the instruction in 212.43 in wording that matches verse 212.2 as constituted in the critical edition, since the idea that there is *saṃjñā* after death is refuted once more.

[86] *tamasā hi praticchannaṃ vibhrāntam iva cāturam / punaḥ praśamayan vākyaiḥ kaviḥ pañcaśikho 'bravīt* // 12.212.5.

[87] The use of word *saṃjñā* is apparently connected with passages in Upaniṣadic and Buddhist texts dealing with the afterlife. The wording in 211.2ab echoes *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.12 (=4.5.13) wherein Yājñavalkya refers to the idea that there is "no *saṃjñā*" after death (see note 85 for the reading of the Bombay edition of 211.2ab that makes it a parallel of the Upaniṣadic text). The issue whether there is *saṃjñā* or not after death is also discussed in the Buddhist Pali canon. The three views on afterlife as a state in which there is some form of consciousness (*saññā*) are discussed and refuted, namely, *saññīvāda*, *asaññīvāda* and *nevasaññīnāsaññīvāda* are depicted as wrong views in the *Brahmajālasutta* (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1947–1949, I: 1–46) and the *Pañcattayasutta* (Trenckner and Chalmers 1888–1899, II: 229–238). In Buddhist accounts of the five *skandha*s (*khanda*s), *saṃjñā* (*saññā*) is usually listed as the third and is variously translated as "consciousness," "perception" or "idea," the latter two being suggested by Wayman (1976). Gethin (1986, p. 35) points out there are not formal definitions of the *khanda*s in the early Buddhist literature, which is also true for technical terms used in Upaniṣadic and epic literature. Thus the often chosen translation "consciousness" calls for specification as it unfolds in meanings "reaching, in principle, from identifying perception over the formation of concepts to the naming of the objects perceived" (Wezler 1987, p. 113). The meaning of *saṃjñā* as name, designation or sign is widely attested in grammatical literature and also occurs in the epic (for instance *MBh* 6.1.11–12, where Yudhiṣṭhira is said to have distributed *saṃjñās*, the special code names of the warriors which allow their identification during battle (see Malinar 2007b, p. 58). This latter use stresses the content-orientation of the cognitive processes that are associated with *saṃjñā* in the texts dealing with the status of a person after death (cf. *Brahmajālasutta* on gods devoid of *saññā*, perception, or cognition, who obtain a body

achieve anything? If annihilation is all that remains of one's deeds, why should one bother about anything, why at all seek pleasure, why play by the rules? No wonder Janaka has, according to Bhīṣma, entered a state of intellectual dissatisfaction, he radiates gloominess ("darkness") and disturbance. When one connects Janaka's condition to what was presented by Bhīṣma as the method and purpose of Pañcaśikha's speech in 211, it seems that the teacher has done a good job of unfolding *nirveda*, dissatisfaction, for his disciple. The narrative suggests that Pañcaśikha has been quite successful at creating that very aversion toward birth, action (ritual work) and, eventually, everything (*sarvanirveda*) that Bhīṣma, in his function as narrator and focalizor, had announced earlier. Janaka—and Bhīṣma's audience—has been taken through a philosophical exercise, which demonstrates the inconclusiveness of competing metaphysical and materialist doctrines and illustrates the depression that emerges when one is then left with uncertainty with respect to one's fate after death. Having listened to Pañcaśikha's discourse on the available arguments about these issues, one could conclude that there is either some continuity or the inevitable destruction of everything that has been created, including all that constitutes an individual. This situation incites Janaka to raise further questions about existence and non-existence (*bhavābhava*), as pointed out by Bhīṣma: How can one enjoy that there is no meaning, no purpose in what one is doing? How can one avoid concluding that there is no point in following any rule? These doubts are the point of departure for Pañcaśikha's further discourse, which aims at sorting this out and dispelling Janaka's gloominess—so Bhīṣma tells us. Again, Bhīṣma fulfills his narrative function in that he raises expectations with respect to the content and purpose of the following speech, which are quite different from what the audience was told to expect in 211. Thus, a different style of teaching and new tenets should await the audience in the rest of 212.[88]

And indeed, the style of instruction mutates from the earlier expert-style debate (*vivāda*) with refutations of philosophical doctrines without presenting an alternative (*vitaṇḍā*) into the kind of affirmative instruction (*upadeśa*) that is familiar from

Footnote 87 continued
when they become perceptive [Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1947–1949, I: 28]). This is also the case at *MBh* 212.2 when it is referred to as a form of continuation after death in that one remains percipient of oneself and, or, objects (with or without operations such as ideation, designations, reflexivity). Whether this includes reflexivity—perceiving oneself as being percipient and thus having a form of reflexive consciousness or self-awareness—is a matter of speculation. The object- or content-orientation seems to be the characteristic feature of *saṃjñā* as a faculty that allows a being to be percipient or conscious of something (including itself). At 12.212.4–43 the refutation of the claim that there is *saṃjñā* after death is connected to the situation that upon death the individual vanishes; neither his name nor anything that would belong to it remains (see below). This issue is also dealt with in the account of the encounter between the Buddha and the (Sāṃkhya) teacher Arāḍa in *Buddhacarita* 12. At 12.80–82 the question is raised whether the bodiless (*viśarīra*) *kṣetrajña* is a "knower" or not. As the Buddha is unsatisfied with the consequences of both alternatives (if knowing then there is no liberation, if "unknowing" then what is the use of assuming such an entity?), he approaches the teacher Udraka, who understood the flaw implied in postulating one of these states (here referred to as *saṃjñāsaṃjñitvayor*, 12.85) and therefore taught a third state, namely *asaṃjñāsaṃjñātmika* (thus citing the three states mentioned in the above mentioned texts in the Pali Canon among the wrong views).

[88] Motegi (1999) reads this chapter as teaching Sāṃkhya (though not "classical"), while Bronkhorst (2007, p. 320) considers the chapter to be a later interpolation since it does not confirm his interpretation of Pañcaśikha as a Cārvāka.

many other texts in the *MDh*. Accordingly, Pañcaśikha now sets off with a rejection of the two views referred to by Janaka at the beginning of the chapter by way of a teaching about what makes up an individual, "this one here" (*ayam*). Pañcaśikha directly addresses Janaka's questions when he says: "It is neither that the state of total annihilation exists here in this world nor that there is continuation [of the individual]. For this one here [the individual being, i.e., Janaka] is an aggregation of material body, senses and mind."[89] This introduces the following discussion of the constituents of a living being which rejects the extreme views of teachers arguing for either annihilation or continuation of the individual after death.[90] Now, Janaka learns that both are wrong and things are more complicated, since the individual ("this one", i.e. Janaka; cf. 211.24) does not consist only of the material elements, *karman* and movement (as maintained in 211.40, 47), but also of senses and consciousness. A more complex account of what makes up a person is called for when dealing with the issue of the afterlife. In what follows an alternative to the two extreme views is presented, an alternative that is based on an analysis of the individual that includes different sets of elements and relations between them. Many —but not all—belong to the repertoire of Sāṃkhya terms and tenets also referred to elsewhere in the epic and in the SK. Some of the terms used also refer back to Bhīṣma's narrative regarding Pañcaśikha's provenance in 12.211. The teacher's second speech comprises the following thematic units:

Thematic Analysis of Pañcaśikha's Argument in *MBh* 12.212

212.7–13	Account of the individual as an "aggregation" (*samāhāra*) of different constituents.
212.14–15	Criticism of "incorrect philosophies" which do not recognize that this aggregation is the "non-self."
212.16–19	Pañcaśikha asks Janaka to pay heed to the "authoritative instruction about relinquishment" (*tyāgaśāstra*).
212.20–40	Further account of the individual as body (*kṣetra*) and principle of consciousness (*kṣetrajña*).
212.41–43	Concluding rejection of annihilationist (*uccheda*) and eternalist (*śāsvata*) positions.
212.44–49	Description of the principle of consciousness liberated from the body.

The account of the individual starts at 212.7 with the enumeration of the five elements (called *dhātu*s as in 211.40, see above note 75) that exist and become separated according to their "own way of being" (*svabhāva*). The term *svabhāva* is used again at 212.41 and also elsewhere in the epic—often in connection with

[89] *ucchedaniṣṭhā nehāsti bhāvaniṣṭhā na vidyate / ayaṃ hy api samāhāraḥ śarīrendriyacetasām* / 12.212.6a–d.

[90] This resonates with the rejection of the extremist views of annihilationists (*ucchedavāda*) and eternalists (*śāśvatavāda*) that is reported in the Buddhist Pali Canon as well (for instance, *Brahmajālasutta* [Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1947–1949, I: 1–46], *Vacchagottasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* [Trenckner and Chalmers 1888–1899, I: 484–89]).

Sāṃkhya terminology[91]—in order to describe the autonomous functioning of the constituents of the created world (such as their cooperation in forming a body, etc.).[92] 212.8 explains that what is called "body" (*śarīra*) is not a single entity, but the aggregation of these five elements (*pañcasamāhāra*). In the next verse (212.8ef) the two elements heat (*ūṣman*) and wind (*vāyu*) together with knowledge (*jñāna*) are defined as the threefold support of action (*karman*), circumscribing the physical and cognitive elements that incite and control activities. Next, the senses, sense-objects, *svabhāva*, consciousness (*cetanā*), mind (*manas*) and breaths are listed as modifications (*vikāra*), that is, as manifestations of the elements in their "out-poured" (*niḥsṛta*), outward form (212.9). This is one of the few references to causal or cosmological relationships between the elements. According to 212.10, the qualities (*guṇa*) of the five senses (?) precede the mind (*citta*), which probably means that the mind is attracted to the sense-objects via the characteristic properties (*guṇa*) of the senses,[93] since otherwise the mind has no access to the outside world. Sensation or feeling (*vedanā*) arises in connection with distinct cognitions (*vijñāna*) of the sense-objects in three different forms, namely: "what they call 'pleasant and unpleasant,' 'not unpleasant,' and 'not pleasant.'"[94] The next two verses (212.12–13) are difficult to understand with certainty for they contain certain undefined terms.

At 212.14 Pañcaśikha concludes this account of what "they say" about the constituents of the individual with the following warning: "For him who views this aggregation of qualities as being the [immortal] self the endless suffering does not cease, due to his wrong philosophical views [on this]."[95] Next, the wrong interpretation of what constitutes the self by "incorrect philosophical views" (*asamyagdarśanair*) is contrasted with the correct view that this "aggregation of attributes" (*guṇasamāhāra*)[96] is *anātman* ("non-self" or "has no self"). He thinks "it is not mine," (*na mameti*) and thus there is no basis for the "flow of suffering" (*duḥkhasaṃtati*) to occur (12.212.15). The well-known doctrine that all adversities

[91] Motegi (1999, p. 523) views the use of *svabhāva* in this chapter exclusively in the light of Buddhist texts and concludes that it points to the non-Sāṃkhya teachings that were put into Pañcaśikha's mouth.

[92] See Frauwallner (1925, p. 194); *svabhāva* is also used in the sense of the "disposition" of a living being (often explained as being the result of *karman*); might it have this meaning at 212.9?

[93] The sense-objects are also elsewhere in the epic interpreted as the attributes or qualities (*guṇa*) of the elements and the senses, which explains why each sense is attracted to (or, specialized in) one certain sense-object; see, for instance, *MBh* 12.177.27ff, 12.195.19–20 and (Preisendanz 2010, p. 812ff.) for these and other passages in the *MDh*.

[94] *sukhaduḥkheti yām āhur aduḥkhety asukheti ca* // 212.11. This classification matches the modes of experience of the manifest world as explained in commentaries on SK 13–14, that, is "pleasant and painful" (mixed), "not painful," "not pleasant"; see also *MBh* 12.187.21–22. Motegi (1999, p. 526) points to similar notions in Buddhist texts.

[95] *imaṃ guṇasamāhāram ātmabhāvena paśyataḥ / asamyagdarśanair duḥkham anantaṃ nopaśāmyati* // 12.212.14.

[96] The compound could also be understood as referring to the aggregation of (or, brought about by) the *guṇa*s, the three fundamental qualities of corporeal existence taught in Sāṃkhya [see (Bedekar 1958b, p. 146)]. This understanding would match the further exposition of the components of the individual in this chapter and the emphasis on overcoming them. In the context of this passage it seems that the components of the body are viewed as qualities (see also 212.12 referring to *ṣaḍguṇa*).

and all pain arise only because one appropriates the activities of the physical and mental apparatus by appropriating them as "mine" is propagated in contemporary ascetic traditions postulating liberation in some transcendent realm, such as Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Buddhism (the fact that this last tradition can be included in this set demonstrates that this idea does not require the acceptance of an "immortal self"). Although there is no consensus among these schools with respect to what the self is, they do not teach the "incorrect philosophical view" (criticized earlier by Pañcaśikha) because they reject the identification of the "self" with the empirical person.[97]

The admonition not to consider the "aggregation" of material attributes (*guṇa*) as the self is expanded to a teaching on *tyāga* (relinquishment) at 212.16–19. A summary is given of the contents of what is called "correct thinking" (*samyaṅmano*[98] *nāma*), that is, the "authoritative instruction on relinquishment" (*tyāgaśāstra*) and it is stated that it leads to liberation (*mokṣa*) when it implies the relinquishment of everything (*sarvatyāga*). Pañcaśikha is depicted as addressing Janaka directly: "Listen to this for the sake of your liberation!" (*śruṇu yat tava mokṣāya*, 212.16). This appeal is exceptional in its underlining the affirmative and even emphatic nature of this instruction. It entails a thematic shift, a fact that has resulted in regarding the passage as an interpolation.[99] Even were it so, this passage suits the context in pointing to possible practical repercussions of the "right philosophical view," and it expands the topic of non-identification with what is not the self at a practical level. The problem of individuality is removed by discarding the idea of ownership both intellectually as well as practically. Moreover, the criticism of incorrect views is continued when Pañcaśikha states that practicing such relinquishment of all ordained activities is viewed by those "who are wrongly educated" (*mithyāvinīta*) as a flaw or affliction (*kleśa*) that causes suffering (212.17). After this call for *tyāga* and its being praised as a "path that is devoid of uncertainty" (or, contradiction, *mārgo 'yam advaidhaḥ*), verses 212.20–40 continue with what is now clearly marked as Pañcaśikha's own—and so "correct"—philosophical teachings. In them he resumes the account of the individual by making use of the first person (*vakṣyāmi*, 212.20).

In the following section the explanation of the individual is continued and ends at 212.40 with the statement that it represents the opinion of those "who think about what belongs to the self" (*adhyātmacintaka*). The individual is defined as being made up of both perishable and imperishable elements. It comprises the so-called "field" (*kṣetra*), the perishable individual body, as well as the imperishable principle of consciousness, the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*). This section gives detailed information on the senses, and their interplay with the cognitive faculties as well as

[97] The formulation at 212.15 echoes the content of liberating knowledge as described in SK 64 (*nāsmi na me nāham ity*) and can thus be regarded as an appropriate prelude to the exposition of the "correct" philosophical doctrine.

[98] See also 12.211.42, in which for "correct thinking" none of the arguments about the afterlife is convincing enough to settle the issue; in *Buddhacarita* 12.40 Arāḍa teaches the Buddha that a person desiring liberation has the "correct doctrine, or thought" (*samyaṅmati*).

[99] Frauwallner (1925, p. 191) views this passage as an interpolation because it interrupts the explanation of the constituents of beings; Motegi (1999, p. 521) concurs.

on three ways in which things or beings (*bhāva*) are experienced due to the influence of the three *guṇa*s.

The account starts with Pañcaśikha's announcement that—having dealt with the five "senses of knowledge" (at 212.9–10)—he will now talk about *manas* (mind) and the five "faculties of action" (*karmendriya*). Their enumeration (212.21–22) is followed by an explanation of perception (*upalabdhi*) which is based on the mutual cooperation of sense, sense-object and mind[100] (*citta*) and which is exemplified with the case of hearing (23). This explanation of perception is continued in 212.32 after the description (212.24cd–31) of the ways in which the objects of the senses are experienced due to the influence of the three *guṇa*s, the fundamental qualities of corporeal existence (according to Sāṃkhya).[101] They produce three kinds of feelings (*vedanā*), namely *sāttvika* (pleasant), *rājasa* (unpleasant), and *tāmasa* (confused). This also explains why the way in which a thing (*bhāva*)[102] is experienced is subject to change. It is pointed out that whatever is imbued with joy, pain or confusion "in the body" and "in the mind" should be regarded as something or a (way of) being (*bhāva*) that belongs to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.[103]

After this digression,[104] the discussion resumes the earlier explanation (212.23–24ab) of perception as the interplay of senses, mind and object with respect to sound: "The element (*bhūta*, from which sound is produced, i.e. ether) has its seat in the ear; sound is received in the ear. The two (ear and element) are not part of the recognition of sound or of another recognition."[105] Perception is possible when the ten sense faculties, *manas* and *buddhi* perform simultaneously their respective

[100] This topic is discussed intensely in the philosophical schools; for the explanation of this cooperation between senses, objects and mind in commentaries of the SK, see Malinar (2014).

[101] While the three *guṇa*s are not mentioned at 212.24, the qualities belonging to them are described in 212.25–31 and *rajas* and *tamas* are mentioned as well.

[102] The word *bhāva* is used here, and again in 212.29, 34, in the singular to refer to a being or thing that is experienced in a threefold way. At 212.40 the term is used for the *kṣetrajña*. In other epic texts, *bhāva* is an older term for *guṇa*, see van Buitenen (1956).

[103] The description of these characteristics matches the taxonomy of the "*guṇa*-texts" in other parts of the epic (for instance, *BhG* 14.5–18, 17.7–13, 17–22, and 18.7–10, 19–44; *MBh* 14.31.1–3, 36.4–25; 39 [entire]): that is, *sattva* is pleasure, happiness, calmness; *rajas* means dissatisfaction, grief, greed; and *tamas* is delusion, sleepiness and laziness.

[104] This section contains many parallels with 12.187.30–35 and 12.239.20–25 (see Frauwallner 1925, p. 181). They are listed by Motegi (1999, pp. 527–529), who suggests that the passage is a later interpolation in 212 aiming to reinterpret the originally Buddhist teachings in this chapter and thus agrees with Frauwallner (1925, p. 191), who views the section as an interpolation that interrupts the explanation of the cooperation between senses and consciousness.

[105] *tad dhi śrotrāśrayaṃ bhūtaṃ śabdaḥ śrotraṃ samāśritaḥ / nobhayaṃ śabdavijñāne vijñānasyetarasya vā* // 12.212.32. This statement points to theories about the cosmological place of the senses and sense-objects. In classical Sāṃkhya, the sense-objects in their general form (*tanmātra*) are regarded as being the cause of the elements, whereas in Nyāya the senses are viewed as being produced by the elements. The latter position seems to be referred to in this verse. This does not necessarily mean that Nyāya tenets are advocated here, but could rather (or, also) point to a situation before the *tanmātra*s and the corresponding cosmology were adopted (see Frauwallner 1927). In early forms of Sāṃkhya the elements were considered as productive material causes (*prakṛti*), as for instance in *BhG* 7.4. Moreover, the material seats of the senses, like the ear, are also considered to be products of the elements in classical Sāṃkhya. The fact that the perception of the sense-objects does not include the sense organs themselves is a theme discussed in the *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.12–14.

functions. The next, tentatively rendered stanza addresses the situation when this simultaneity is disturbed: "In case these [twelve] do not function simultaneously it is not a disruption (of their functioning), [but] characteristic of [their being imbued with the quality] of darkness; practice that is based on [their] functioning simultaneously is the ordinary one."[106] The next verse is also difficult to interpret precisely. It seems to continue the theme of the influence of the *guṇa*s as something that is difficult to overcome, as the following tentative translation would suggest: "Even when someone has dismissed the sense-faculties, and having understood the authoritative tradition of the Veda [or: the authoritative tradition he has learned, *śrutāgama*], thinks 'I will no longer [longer] wander around,' he is [still] endowed with these three *guṇa*s."[107] This seems to refer to the situation where someone thinks on the basis of an authoritative tradition (*āgama*) that asceticism exercised by giving up the attachment to the sense-faculties and their objects is the major instrument for being released from "wandering around" (perhaps in rebirth?). This is a misunderstanding since the most important insight is to understand that everything that is experienced is produced by the *guṇa*s and one needs to overcome them. Therefore, giving up the senses is not enough.[108] Again it is suggested that relying on *āgama*, or Vedic *āgama* (?) is not helpful or only yields limited results. The critique of *āgama* is continued in 212.37–39 which deal with the effects of *tamas*: a mind (*citta*) affected by darkness (*tamopahata*) is quickly set in motion, unstable and tends to stop working at any time; when it (the mind[109]) is fixed on this or that *āgama*, it finds no peace and it perceives what is evident or discernible (*vyakta*) as an illusion or error (*tamas*), as if it were untrue (*anṛta*). Such is this quality (*guṇa*, i.

[106] *teṣām ayugapadbhāva ucchedo nāsti tāmasaḥ / āsthito yugapadbhāve vyavahāraḥ sa laukikaḥ //* 12.212.35. The tentative translation of the first two *pāda*s is based on the assumption that the absence of the simultaneous functioning of the group of twelve implies non-perception, or absence of any (clear) cognition of objects which is elsewhere seen as being characteristic of *tamas* (for instance, 212.28 mentions absence of cognition, sleep etc. as indicative of *tamas*). This can be taken as a refutation of the idea that situations of non-perception such as absent-mindedness, fainting, or sleep imply *uccheda*, an actual "destruction" or "interruption" of the functioning of the faculties. Mind or senses have not stopped functioning when their usual cooperation is suspended. See for instance, the definition of sleep as an activity of the mind in *Yogasūtra* 1.10; this is explained in Vācaspatimiśra's commentary as resulting from the influence of *tamas*. The alternative, and perhaps more obvious translation of 212.35ab is: "In case these [twelve] do not function simultaneously, it is not a disruption that belongs to [the quality of] darkness." Understood in this way, it could be taken to imply that the situation in which the faculties do not function simultaneously does not mean that the individual faculties have ceased functioning; but this leaves open what non-simultaneous functioning actually means (some commentators suggest the state of liberation). Still another rendering would connect "*na*" with *tamas* ("not belonging to the quality of darkness") and interpret the absence of a coordinated, simultaneous functioning as a "disruption" (? of perception? of the *laukika vyavahāra* mentioned in 35d?).

[107] *indriyāṇy avasṛjyāpi dṛṣṭvā pūrvaṃ śrutāgamam / cintayan nānuparyeti tribhir evānvito guṇaiḥ //* 12.212.36.

[108] See, for instance, the description of the one who has truly conquered the senses at *BhG* 5.7–9, and the characterization of the mere withdrawal of the senses as a "wrong practice" at *BhG* 3.25; see Malinar (2007b).

[109] The summary of these verses is based on the assumption that the mind (*citta*) continues to be the subject. As 212.36 had already done, this stanza continues the theme of the detrimental effects of "authoritative traditions" (*āgama*) that prevent people from obtaining true knowledge (see too the discussion of 211 above).

e. darkness) which is based on one's own *karman* (*svakarmapratyayī*); it prevails in some, in others it does not exist.

The account concludes at 212.40 as follows: "In this way those who think about what pertains to the self (*adhyātmacintaka*)[110] explain the aggregation [of the elements which form the individual] as the 'field' (*kṣetra*). The entity [or: being] (*bhāva*) that dwells in the mind is called 'the knower of the field' (*kṣetrajña*)."[111] This concluding statement echoes the terminology used in 211.12 for describing a distinction important for teaching Sāṃkhya, namely, that between the elements of the material world (*kṣetra*) and the principle of consciousness (*kṣetrajña*). Bhīṣma accorded the knowledge about this distinction to Pañcaśikha in his genealogical account (see above).

This exposition of the constituents of the individual can in many respects be identified as or connected to Sāṃkhya philosophy as represented both in the epic as well as in the SK and it shows terminological and structural similarities with passages in the *Carakasaṃhitā* [though not identical teachings as has been pointed out by Bedekar (1958b)] and it resonates with the teachings ascribed to Arāḍa and Udraka in the *Buddhacarita*. What we do have as "typically" Sāṃkhya is the group of eleven faculties with a distinction between two groups (*jñānendriya, karmendriya*), to which *manas* (used interchangeably with *citta*) is added as the eleventh and *buddhi* as the twelfth. The only cognitive faculty that is not mentioned is *ahaṃkāra*, ego-consciousness.[112] The text emphasizes the cooperation of these constituents, especially in regard to sensory perception. The *guṇa*s and their effects are classified and described as in other epic texts. The focus on the structure of the individual is also emphasized by using the terms *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*, two terms that are presented as characteristic for Pañcaśikha's view in both chapters and which play an important role in other epic texts as well as in the *Carakasaṃhitā* and the *Buddhacarita*. The account thus aims at providing the answer to Janaka's central problem, the afterlife of an individual, by offering the Sāṃkhya point of view. The aim is not to offer a comprehensive account of the philosophical doctrine. This may explain why cosmology and causal relations play no significant role and are only referred to once, in passing, at 212.9 (a reference to modifications, *vikāra*).

[110] The compound *adhyātmacintaka* can be understood to refer to a reflection on "what pertains to the self," that is the person or individual being, as I have taken it here, because the overall concern of this passage is with the topic of the individual, or more specifically the person Janaka (cf. *ayam*, "this one here"; 211.24; 212.6). However, the compound can also be interpreted as "those who reflect on the supreme self (*adhyātman*)," that is, as referring to the "higher" immortal self. This compound occurs in quite a few instances in the epic and often in connection with Sāṃkhya terms and doctrines.

[111] *evam āhuḥ samāhāraṃ kṣetram adhyātmacintakāḥ / sthito manasi yo bhāvaḥ sa vai kṣetrajña ucyate //* 12. 212.40.

[112] Frauwallner (1925, p. 184) views the absence of the *ahaṃkāra* as indicative of an "old" form of Sāṃkhya close to the Upaniṣads. While it is certainly true that in the SK a form of Sāṃkhya became authoritative to those who followed this text, we have the testimony in the commentaries on SK and on the *Yogasūtra* that the doctrine of the "threefold" cognitive apparatus was not accepted in all circles of experts, which points to a plurality of teaching-traditions whose historical relationships are difficult to establish.

The purpose of this explanation of the individual as an aggregation of material elements and of the presence of an entity separate from this aggregated body is brought home in the manner of a conclusion in the next three verses. On the one hand, they repeat the conclusion drawn from the earlier account of the structure of the individual as a perishable aggregation of elements that should not be appropriated with an idea of ownership. On the other hand, they explain Pañcaśikha's initial rejection of the two opposing views on the afterlife of the individual (annihilation or continuation) by maintaining that a being (*bhāva*) indeed lives on after death, which is, however, radically different from any corporality and individuality. While the argument of those who teach the doctrine of annihilation is confirmed with regard to the body, it is, at the same time, qualified by this introduction of a distinction between the perishable parts of the person and a principle of consciousness that continues to exist without a body or any characteristic mark. So, the materialists are—to a certain extent—right[113] when they argue that the individual will not survive, that nothing that ever belonged to it can be kept or will reappear. However, an entity exists that appears once it is "set free" from a painful, individualized corporeal existence. This being (*bhāva*) is, according to Pañcaśikha, the *kṣetrajña* residing in the individual body, precisely in the mind (*sthito manasi*). Before Pañcaśikha deals with this entity he once again refers to what he views as the wrong alternative between annihilation (*uccheda*) and permanence (*śāsvata*) as the condition after death (212.41–43):

> "When it is like this [that the "knower of the field" is separate from the body], who will meet destruction, and who will be eternal, when all elements function according to their own way of being? (41) Like rivers ending in the ocean, the individual comes to an end as does his name; they do not keep anything of their own—this is the destruction of a living being.[114] (42) When it is like this, how could consciousness (*saṃjñā*) come again to existence in a state after death when the mixed up individual self [i.e. mixed with the elements of the body] is being grasped in (or, from) [their] midst. (43)"[115]

This passage recalls the beginning of 212 in denying that a consciousness (*saṃjñā*) can appear again after death, and it does so in a way that echoes the somewhat different debate about the continuation of individual existence in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (see also notes 85 and 87). The vanishing of all that characterized an individual (e.g. the name) and belonged to him is nicely emphasized by drawing

[113] While Bronkhorst (2007) has a point in detecting that materialism is taught by Pañcaśikha, it does not make him a Cārvāka. Rather, Pañcaśikha highlights an element of "materialism" (roughly: the "ashes to ashes" element) which many metaphysical doctrines (be they philosophical or religious) imply and even acknowledge when they argue their views of another, immaterial dimension of existence.

[114] This seems to take up the topic of *sattvasaṃkṣaya*, the destruction of a being, interpretations of which were criticized in Pañcaśikha's first speech (see 211.33, 38).

[115] *evaṃ sati ka ucchedaḥ śāśvato vā kathaṃ bhavet / svabhāvād vartamāneṣu sarvabhūteṣu hetutaḥ* // 12.212.41 // *yathārṇavagatā nadyo vyaktīr jahati nāma ca / na ca svatāṃ niyacchanti tādṛśaḥ sattvasaṃkṣayaḥ* // 12.212.42 // *evaṃ sati kutaḥ saṃjñā pretyabhāve punar bhavet / pratisaṃmiśrite jīve gṛhyamāṇe ca madhyataḥ* // 12.212. 43.

on the famous comparison with the individual rivers that vanish in the ocean.[116] Therefore, there is also no basis for the reappearance of an identifying consciousness (*saṃjñā*) after death that would accompany the continuation of the deceased. It seems that this argument entails a distinction between *jīva*, the individual self, and the "self" that exists without a body. A critical view regarding the *jīva* was already voiced at 211.27, where it was ascribed to the *nāstika*s (perhaps Jainas or others championing the idea of *jīva* as the self; see above). In this passage the *jīva* is apparently distinguished from the *kṣetrajña* in that it is said to be "mixed up" with the elements of the body when it is being grasped or perceived amidst them.[117] The argument implied in the rhetorical question at 212.43 seems to be that *saṃjñā* cannot reappear since the principle that allowed individualized existence and consciousness, the *jīva*, exists only in relation to that body. Even in case of transmigration the individual does not survive as the *jīva* becomes connected to another (*karman*-determined) body. The connection of the *jīva* with *karman* is suggested when in the next verse (212.44) the (true) "self" is described as untouched by *karman* and "without a body" or "without a mark" (*aliṅga*) that makes it possible to perceive or trace it. In contrast to this, the mixed up *jīva* "is being grasped" (*gṛhyamāṇa*) amidst the elements of the body. Such a distinction between *jīva* (bound to body and *karman*) and *kṣetrajña* (free from body and *karman*) is also made in other parts of the epic.[118]

Against the background of this final refutation of wrong alternatives Pañcaśikha concludes with a description of his view of the true state of being after death and the true self, the *kṣetrajña*. It comes to exist all by itself once it is liberated from all connection with the material world. This fact is emphasized in the final part of the speech in which again, as before in 211, the meter changes to *triṣṭubh* in order to lend the speech an additional emphasis that will be followed by further meter switches at the very end of the chapter. The symmetrical arrangement of the two

[116] Cf. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.10.2 (see also *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.8; *Praśna Upanisad* 6.5).

[117] The translation "grasped" can be understood, on the one hand, as referring to the situation that the *jīva* is only perceivable when connected ("mixed up", "mingled") with the body. On the other hand, "grasped" can also be understood as pointing to death as the situation when the *jīva* is "removed from" the body in order to enter another (this would not support the continuation of or reappearance of *saṃjñā*). The participle occurs also in the account of Sāṃkhya at MBh 12.296. Vasiṣṭha describes to King Janaka the process in which the conscious entity recognizes its difference from body-producing, unmanifest *prakṛti* and points out that *puruṣa* dwells in a body that belongs to the unmanifest. Being free from all *tattva*s (*nistattva*; 12.296.15), he lets them off (*muñcati*). At 296.16 it is stated that when the wise one, "the one free from old age and death," is grasped (that is, "understood," *gṛhyamāna* 296.16b) [with the thought], "I am the "twenty-sixth" (296.16), he obtains impartiality or identity (*samatā*). Deussen and Strauss (1906, p. 635) suggest the wise one "wird […] durch diese Erkenntnis ergriffen," stressing the epistemic character of the process.

[118] For a definition of *jīva* in connection with *karman* and the body, see *MBh* 12.206.13 and 244.11; as characterized by the three *guṇa*s (in contrast to *kṣetrajña*), see 12.180-24–25 and 233.18–20. For a description of the transmigrating *jīva*, see *MBh* 14.13ff. and for a description of it in contradistinction to the "self," see 14.19.45. The distinction between *kṣetrajña* and *jīva* is also prominent in the account of the so-called *vyūha* doctrine in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section and is connected with placing *jīva* at a lower cosmological level; see 12.326.28 and 332.14–18.

chapters, indicated also by the parallel changes of meter, suggests that they were conceived of as forming a single narrative, once the narrative framework was composed. A series of comparisons also heightens the level of emphasis given in connection with one who is "devoid of the body" (or, devoid of characteristic marks, *aliṅga*). The beginning of this teaching is highlighted in the change of meter at 211.44. Says Pañcaśikha:

> But he who has this knowledge about letting off (the body) seeks the self attentively; he is not stained by the undesirable fruits of his deeds, like the leaf of a lotus sprinkled with water (is not soaked). (44) He is released from the strong fetters, which are many, and even from those caused by creatures and by divinities, when he abandons both pleasure and pain; he, being free, reaches the topmost state as the one without a body (or: distinct mark, *aliṅga*). (45) He who has overcome the fear of old age and death takes his rest with the blessings of the Veda, proofs and authoritative texts. With merit perished and evil gone and the fruit caused from that destroyed, those free from attachment thus reach the unstained space that is devoid of a body (has no distinct mark, *aliṅga*), and behold the "great" (*mahat*). (46) Like a spider that moved to and fro [when spinning its web],[119] lives on when the web is torn and it has to fall down, the liberated one leaves the pain behind when he falls apart like a lump of clay hitting a stone. (47) Like an antelope sheds a horn that is old, or a serpent sheds its skin and moves on without paying any attention to it, the liberated one sheds pain. (48) Like a bird abandons a tree that is falling into the water and flies away, being unattached, the liberated one abandons pleasure and pain and reaches the most exalted place, as the one who is without a body (or: distinct mark; *aliṅga*). (49)[120]

This concluding statement responds not only to Janaka's dissatisfaction and gloominess, but also to the doctrines of annihilation and continuation, respectively, with regard to the afterlife of the individual. The passage explains the difference between the passing away of the body and the onward movement of an entity which is released from the body and moves on to a "highest place" in a series of mostly well-known comparisons. Pañcaśikha is here teaching an immortal entity that is present amidst the perishable elements of existence, but remains distinct from them. This entity is here not called *puruṣa* as is the case in the SK (in which this word is the common designation, apart from *jña*), but *ātman* and *kṣetrajña* and is characterized as *aliṅga*. The word and its opposite, *liṅga*, are used elsewhere in

[119] See *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.3.7; 2.1.20.

[120] *imāṃ tu yo veda vimokṣabuddhim ātmānam anvicchati cāpramattaḥ / na lipyate karmaphalair aniṣṭaiḥ patraṃ bisasyeva jalena siktam* // 12.212.44 // *dṛḍhaiś ca pāśair bahubhir vimuktaḥ prajānimittair api daivataiś ca / yadā hy asau sukhaduḥkhe jahāti muktas tadāgryāṃ gatim ety aliṅgaḥ / śrutipramāṇāgamamaṅgalaiś ca śete jarāmṛtyubhayād atītaḥ* // 12.212.45 // *kṣīṇe ca puṇye vigate ca pāpe tato nimitte ca phale vinaṣṭe / alepam ākāśam aliṅgam evam āsthāya paśyanti mahad dhy asaktāḥ* // 12.212.46 // *yathorṇanābhiḥ parivartamānas tantukṣaye tiṣṭhati pātyamānaḥ / tathā vimuktaḥ prajahāti duḥkhaṃ vidhvaṃsate loṣṭa ivādrim arcchan* // 12.212.47 // *yathā ruruḥ śṛṅgam atho purāṇaṃ hitvā tvacaṃ vāpy urago yathāvat / vihāya gacchaty anavekṣamāṇas tathā vimukto vijahāti duḥkham* // 12.212.48 // *drumaṃ yathā vāpy udake patantam utsṛjya pakṣī prapataty asaktaḥ / tathā hy asau sukhaduḥkhe vihāya muktaḥ parārdhyāṃ gatim ety aliṅgaḥ* // 12.212.49.

the epic and in other Sāṃkhya texts as well. In most cases *liṅga* is used in the sense of "individual, transmigrating body," while *aliṅga* refers to a state of being without such a transmigrating, "dying," body.[121] This use of the word can be connected to the other meaning of *liṅga* as a characteristic feature or mark that allows identification.[122] That both meanings could be at play here can be seen when *aliṅga* is at 212.46 used in connection with the "unstained space" (*ākāśa*), that is without any distinct physical features or individual bodies which those liberated from *karman* reach and then behold the "*mahat*," the great.[123] *Ākāśa*, ether or space, is accorded here a special position which sets it off from its being the member of the group of the five elements as it is often referred to as the last and thus highest element before entering the realm of liberation.[124] Whether it could be equated here with the *avyakta*, the unmanifest realm of or for the self, is a matter of speculation.[125]

The designation *aliṅga* for the entity that is distinguished from the vanishing body parts allows—in the larger context of the arguments made in 211 and 212—the issue of what happens to the individual being after death to be addressed. Pañcaśikha's "soothing" speech started out with a rejection of annihilation and continuation and then moved on to a more complex position, which endorsed annihilation in some respects and continuation in others. Thus one conclusion reached by materialists and Upaniṣadic teachers alike (in contrast perhaps to notions of re-embodiment in heavenly realms in earlier Vedic texts[126]) is also shared by Sāṃkhya philosophers, namely, that the individual being, "this one here," neither remains nor reappears. It is for this reason that the idea that some (identifying) consciousness (*saṃjñā*) remains after death is rejected as well. Once one has gone, there is no *saṃjñā* left, no consciousness of the individual, as is pointed out by Pancaśikha in 212.43, referring to Janaka's initial question (212.3). Yet, this result is

[121] SK 10, 20, 40–42, 52 and 55; most of the *kārikā*s deal with the *liṅgaśarīra*, the transmigrating, subtle body which vanishes when the liberating knowledge has set in. While there is no reference for *aliṅga* as a characteristic feature of *avyakta* in 12.212, the use of *aliṅga* (masc.) corresponds to descriptions of *puruṣa* shedding the *liṅga* in SK 55. In the epic, the term *liṅga* in the sense of transmigrating body is used at 12.195.14–15, but not in 12.212. The use of *aliṅga* at 12.212.45, 49 matches the characterization of the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*) as *aliṅga* at *MBh* 14.43.34.

[122] The word *liṅga* is used in this sense in the description of *kṣetrajña* in the *Carakasaṃhitā, Śarīrasthāna* 1.61–62: Although it is *avyakta* (unmanifest) and beyond the senses, it can be detected through "signs" (*liṅga*) when connected with the body (which are listed at 1.70–72). When freed from the mortal body it has no mark (*cihna*) or characteristic feature (*lakṣaṇa*) (*Śarīrasthāna* 1.155; 1.85).

[123] Frauwallner (1925, p. 201) points out that the passage matches the equation of *mahat* and *brahman* (*avyakta*) of older Sāṃkhya texts that are still close to the Upaniṣads.

[124] See Halbfass (1999) and Preisendanz (2010).

[125] SK 10 applies the attribute *liṅga* to the realm of *vyakta* and states that opposite features characterize the *avyakta* (*viparītam avyaktam*), which means that *avyakta* is to be considered to be *aliṅga*, without characteristic features as well as not dissolving into something else (see Welden 1910, p. 446ff).

[126] The idea that the individual continues in some heavenly re-embodiment is depicted in the passing of the deceased to the heavenly worlds of the ancestors in some Vedic hymns; see also the description of the re-arrangements of the bones at *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.8.9ff. and the "re-collection" of the body parts of the deceased person in the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* 3.20–28. Such ideas of continuation are rejected as "eternalist" doctrines in the Buddhist Canon as well (see above note 87).

turned into something positive by postulating the existence of "one without a body." It is a form of existence which is only possible when the individual body—which is nothing more than an "aggregation (*samāhāra*) of elements—has "fallen apart" like a lump of clay, "fallen off" like the worn-out horn of an antelope, like the skin of a snake. This non-embodied entity is free from pain because it has left all signs of its connection with the body behind, like a bird flying off a falling tree. It has reached a state of existence in which such characteristic features, and any particular form of materiality, play no role. The word *aliṅga* highlights the difference between *kṣetrajña* as existing without a body from the *jīva* that is mixed with body.

The last three stanzas of the chapter mark the return to the narrative. As at the end of chapter 212 this is emphasized by yet another change of meter, first to *puṣpitāgra*, and then, in Bhīṣma's final, concluding stanza to *rucirā*.[127] The transition to the narrative frame is prepared by Pañcaśikha who—at the end of his speech—quotes a "song" (*gītā*) composed by the King of Mithilā. Pañcaśikha said: "There is also this song by the King of Mithilā when he saw the city go up in flames: 'The chaff of grain burned here is not mine at all'—this is what the king himself said."[128] This stanza highlights the gist of Pañcaśikha's teaching, namely that mortality is only a problem when one appropriates the corporeal world with the (wrong) idea of individual ownership. Nothing in the world is truly one's own and the "self" is free in its owning nothing; it is devoid of body, devoid of any characteristic feature. The quotation connects Pañcaśikha's discourse to other texts in the epic in which King Janaka is made the representative of this philosophical view and its practical application (in particular 12.308).

In leaving the final word to a former king of Mithilā, the transition to the narrative frame with Bhīṣma as narrator and commentator is smooth, as it aligns with the narrative situation: "The King of Videha was told this immortal line by Pañcaśikha himself here on earth. As he (Janaka) thought the matter to have been settled completely, he spent his time as an immensely happy man, with all his worries gone. He, who studies this discourse on liberation, who does not disregard it and attends to it continuously, will not experience any mishaps and will live unharmed—he will be liberated like the King of Mithilā when he turned to Kapila."[129] At the very end, the narrative framework is as closely connected to the doctrinal portion as it was at the beginning of 12.211, and in the transition between the two chapters. Again, the main emphasis is on the effect the teachings of Pañcaśikha had on King Janaka, who afterwards lives happily ever after.

[127] See above and note 82.

[128] *api ca bhavati maithilena gītaṃ nagaram upāhitam agninābhivīkṣya / na khalu mama tuṣo'pi dahyate'tra svayam idam āha kila sma bhūmipālaḥ* // 12.212.50. Such a song is also referred to at *MBh* 12.17.18, 171.56 and 268.4, in which, however, there are some variations of wording and meter compared to 212.50 here.

[129] *idam amṛtapadaṃ videharājaḥ svayam iha pañcaśikhena bhāṣyamāṇaḥ / nikhilam abhisamīkṣya niścitārthaṃ paramasukhī vijahāra vītaśokaḥ* // 12.212.51 // *imaṃ hi yaḥ paṭhati vimokṣaniścayaṃ na hīyate satatam avekṣate tathā / upadravān nānubhavaty aduḥkhitaḥ pramucyate kapilam ivaitya maithilaḥ* // 12.212.52. The text here echoes Bhīṣma's opinion that Pañcaśikha was actually an embodiment of Kapila (211.9).

Conclusion

When taking the narrative structure of the text into account, the two chapters do not only contain a discourse on philosophical views on the individual and the afterlife. Bhīṣma's narration of Janaka's instruction by Pañcaśikha also tells a story about teaching philosophical doctrines that unfolds its own dynamic that may be called cathartic. Dissatisfied with the philosophical arguments concerning the fate of the individual after death presented by hundreds of teachers at his court, Janaka became enthusiastic about Pañcaśikha very quickly, as he differed from the other teachers in several respects. When actually listening to Pañcaśikha's first speech, Janaka was driven into an even more fundamental dissatisfaction (*nirveda*), which, according to the narrator, Bhīṣma, was the point of Pañcaśikha's teaching "liberation according to Sāṃkhya." This fact is expressed in the way in which Bhīṣma depicts Janaka at the end of chap. 211. Janaka is said to have been perturbed by the inconclusiveness of what he has heard and to have asked questions while "wrapped in gloominess." At this point, apparently having prepared the ground for taking the instruction to the next level, Pañcaśikha takes on the role of the soothing teacher and offers Janaka not a decision on the binary opposition between continuation and annihilation of the individual, but a more complex view, which includes perishable and imperishable levels of existence and therefore is able to reject both of the earlier views. While there is indeed an entity exempt from annihilation, this gain comes at a price: the loss of individual characteristics, no *liṅga* (individual, transmigrating body or distinct mark) and no *saṃjñā* (consciousness) will remain or return. However, what remains is an entity that is not characterized by those features and therefore dwells in a state of existence not subject to change. This makes the loss of individuality negligible, since following Sāṃkhya philosophy means that the view of the body changes from "mine" to "not mine," from ownership to relinquishment, making insistence on individuality an attitude of those who follow "incorrect philosophical views" that identify the body with the self. True happiness is brought about by correct knowledge presented by the philosopher who got it right. Furthermore, it entails developing an attitude of detachment towards one's corporeal existence and one's personal possessions and a willingness to relinquish them, but it does not call for renunciation of the social world. This teaching corresponds to the Sāṃkhya emphasis on knowledge as the only instrument of and form of liberation. As a consequence, at the very end of the text, King Janaka is still a king, but a happy one.

The narrative thus demonstrates that *nirveda*, as a major focus for teaching liberation (according to Sāṃkhya), has a cathartic dimension, in that it provokes a deepening of the crisis in order to create the incentive to recover and be released. It begins as a form of argumentation and reasoning targeting a variety of competing authorities in order to create an aversion to all of them and thereby prepare the ground for further teaching—a presentation by Pañcaśikha that Bhīṣma described as "soothing." The message of this text is considered important enough to make the narrator Bhīṣma emphasize at the very end of his account that its study has a wholesome effect, in that one will not encounter any mishaps or suffering—an effect echoing what Janaka has been said to experience when he made Pañcaśikha

his teacher. Studying, thinking, being attentive to the doctrines—this is a description of how to follow Sāṃkhya philosophy, which corresponds very well to its emphasis on right knowledge as the supreme method of liberation. In this way, the text as a whole is turned into a privileged object of study. One might even think of it as being the kind of text that served as an *ākhyayikā*, a little tale illustrating Sāṃkhya philosophy and philosophers, mentioned at SK 72 as something that was included in the lost *Ṣaṣṭitantra*. It is also a text, which may have been used to explain, by way of a narrative, why Pañcaśikha is said to have been the one in the line of teachers who "popularized" Kapila's doctrine.[130] Although these are matters of speculation, these two chapters are an important document presenting philosophy in a text genre which does not belong to the philosophical "specialists," but which, rather, presents philosophical debate, argument and doctrine by means of a purposefully crafted narrative.

This episode demonstrates that the epic is not only an important source for the reconstruction of the history of Indian philosophy, but is also important documentation of the ways in which philosophical discourse and teachings were received and viewed by epic composers and audiences.[131] The motives and intentions of such reception may vary, so it is important to study attentively the ways these texts are embedded in the epic as well. While I cannot claim to have addressed, let alone solved, all the difficulties *MBh* 211–212 poses, I hope to have demonstrated that the understanding of the text can be advanced significantly if it is analyzed as a whole, and if attention is given first to the distinction between the narrative and doctrinal parts and then to the interplay between them. The text can then be seen to be both a narrative about teaching Sāṃkhya philosophy and a presentation of the latter's position on "individual existence" in a contested, pluriform field of philosophical reasoning.

Abbreviations

BhG *Bhagavadgītā*
MBh *Mahābhārata*
MDh *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (*adhyāya*s 12.168–353 of *MBh*).
SK *Sāṃkhyakārikā*

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[130] In his commentary on SK 70 the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* reports that Pañcaśikha has popularized Sāṃkhya by instructing Janaka, Vasiṣṭha and others.

[131] For a more detailed discussion of these points, see Malinar (2017).

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