The “prehistory”, “early history” or “formation” of Śāmkhya is a highly controversial topic. When going through the works of earlier scholars who have dealt with it, one cannot but gather the impression that it is in fact a veritable mine-field: it is hence absolutely necessary to move with utter care. Several lessons, in my view, have to be learned first, viz. the following ones:

1. a The term ‘system’ should be avoided, i.e. not applied to any of the pre-Kārikā stages of Śāmkhya, unless they can be shown to have indeed been a whole organized somehow systematically, or it should at least be indicated that the term is used in a figurative sense only;

1. b The above holds good for the term ‘school’, too;

2. It is advisable to use neutral terms instead, such as ‘aggregate of (philosophical) thoughts or doctrines’, even though this may sound a bit long-winded;

3. Even if we grant Van Buitenen’s (1956, 1957a and b) speculative reconstruction of the history of early Śāmkhya a certain plausibility, and even if we basically agree with his appeal (1957b: 102) “to allow for the greatest diversity, rather than the greatest uniformity of doctrine”, it has to be emphasized that we cannot avoid addressing the questions as to a) which of the pre-Kārikā stages attested in our sources should be regarded as the earliest form or forms of Śāmkhya – regardless whether the expression Śāmkhya was used with reference to it, no matter what the meaning of sāmkhya is in its first occurrences – and b) whether this form, or these forms, should also be considered as the very beginning of Śāmkhya as such and hence c) which doctrines should be regarded as constituting Śāmkhya in its beginning, as being typical for it.
4. The difference between and the significance assigned to agreement of
terms, on the one hand, and similarity of doctrines, on the other, in the
reconstruction of the history of Sāmkhya have to be noted and to be
examined as to their relative, and absolute, historical value – as do the
theoretical premises they involve respectively, of course, in the situation as
it is, i.e. in the absence of explicit references, allusions, or reliable
historical reports.

This latter point is conveniently illustrated by FRAUWALLNER’s (1953)
ideas, both thoughtful and provoking, about the origin of the evolution-
theory, in effect also the guna-theory. In the framework of his exposition
of what he calls “the basic form of Sāmkhya as found in the epic” – an
exposition which can be regarded as a summary, but equally also as the
summa of his earlier studies on the Mokṣadharma (1925a, b and 1926) – he
states, among other things, when discussing the “connections”
(“Zusammenhänge”) between the Sāmkhya doctrine preserved in three
versions in this parvan and “the system of classical Sāmkhya”: “But above
all, there are undeniable connections between the doctrine of the three
states of cognition (buddhih), as contained in our text, and one of the most
characteristic doctrines of the Sāmkhya-system, namely, the doctrine of the
three qualities (guna) of primary matter (prakṛti). It is true, pleasure,
pain and dullness of our text belong as qualities only to cognition, it is true
that they are primarily states (bhāvāh) of the cognition here, and that the
expression ‘quality’ (guna) is used for them only after the description of their
different qualities has been given. But the same peculiar designations
of these states of cognition and of the qualities of primary matter as
goodness (sattvam), passion (rajah) and darkness (tamaḥ), and the
outstanding role they play in the theory of liberation, are too conspicuous
for a connection to be disputed.”

As can be seen, a connection, of course, a historical one, is asserted
here on the basis of an agreement of expressions from two different strata
of the textual tradition of Sāmkhya, in spite of a certain semantic, or
terminological, development which is admitted, but not elaborated by
FRAUWALLNER, yet in combination with the indeed noteworthy tripcity
common to both.3

When FRAUWALLNER, a little later, comes to speak of the
“introduction of the doctrine of evolution”, “the basic transformation which
made the Sāmkhya system proper grow out of the old doctrine” of the
Mokṣadharma,4 his reconstruction of this period in the history of Sāmkhya
philosophy includes the following passage: “Pañcaśīkhā” – whom
FRAUWALLNER for the sake of simplicity, designates as “the man who
carried out this recasting of Sāmkhya philosophy”, a convention which I
myself want to follow here – “did not content himself with teaching the
emerging of the whole world from one primary matter, but he also put to
himself the question of how it might be possible that the whole
manifoldness of the phenomenal world springs from this one primary
matter”. And he came to the following solution:

In the age of the Upaniṣads an attempt was made in the instruction of Śvetaketu5
to derive the manifoldness of things from the most simple conditions by assuming
three ur-elements through the uniting of which all things arise. And as Sāmkhya
originated in Brahmanical circles in which the thoughts of the Upaniṣadic times
were still in force, this doctrine was known to Pañcaśīkhā, too, and inspired him to
his solution to the question posed. In the instruction of Śvetaketu it had been said
that all things are made up of the three ur-elements, and that the differences between
things depend on how these elements are mixed with one another and which of
them preponderates. Pañcaśīkhā now assumed that primary matter possesses three

1 This phrase was completely misunderstood by BEDEKAR (1973: 234 f.). As his
translation is in general not faithful to the original I always give my own English
rendering here.

2 The German original reads as follows: “vor allem aber bestehen unerlehbare
Beziehungen zwischen der Lehre von den drei Zuständen des Erkennens, wie sie
unser Text enthält, und einer der charakteristischsten Lehren des Sāmkhya-Systems,
nämlich der Lehre von den drei Eigenschaften (guna) der Urmaterie (prakṛti). Zwar
gehören Lust, Leid und Dummheit in unserem Text als Eigenschaften nur dem
Erkennen an, zwar heissen sie hier in erster Linie Zustände (bhāvāh) des Erkennens
und erst nach der Schilderung ihrer verschiedenen Eigenschaften (guna) wird dieser
Ausdruck für sie selbst gebraucht. Aber die gleiche eigentümliche Benennung dieser
Zustände des Erkennens und der Eigenschaften der Urmaterie als Güte (sattvam),
Leidenschaft (rajah) und Finsternis (tamaḥ), und die hervorragende Rolle, die sie vor
allem in der Erklärung der Dinge spielen, ist zu auffällig, als dass sich ein Zusammenhang
in Abrede stellen ließe.” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 297 f.).

3 Cf. HARA 1974 and LIENHARD 1996.

4 “Einführung der Evolutionslehre”, “... kommen wir bereits zur grundlegenden
Umgestaltung, welche aus der alten Lehre das eigentliche Sāmkhya-System machte”
(FRAUWALLNER 1953: 299 f.).

5 I.e. ChU 6.1 ff.; FRAUWALLNER refers here (1953: 305) to “S. 88f.” of his
Geschichte der indischen Philosophie, Bd. 1.
different qualities (\textit{gunāḥ}) which combine with each other in most different ways. Now this quality preponderates, now that. And the unending manifoldness of the mixture of these qualities renders possible the infinite variety of things which nevertheless arise out of the one primary matter.\footnote{6}

Quite clearly this tentative reconstruction has little, if anything at all, to do with terms or other elements of linguistic expression, but is based on the internal, doctrinal similarity of two sets of ideas, and the derivability of one of them from the other in terms of a plausible, or at least understandable historical development of a particular strand of early Indian philosophy. \textbf{Frauwallner} provides additional evidence: He adds the remark that "the influence of the prototype", i.e. "the instruction of Śvetaketu", "finds particular expression in a detail", viz. the association of the three urelements, in the Upaniṣad, with specific colours, white, red, and black, which "are attributed to the qualities of primary matter in some layers of the Sāmkhya tradition."\footnote{7}

Indeed in both cases, namely the comparison of the Epic material with what \textbf{Frauwallner} calls "classical Sāmkhya" and of the evolution-theory with ChU 6.1 ff., no one will doubt that the conclusion of a historical connection is in fact irresistible, and that the difference in nature of the evidence - certain terms in the first case, and certain elements of doctrinal

\footnote{6} "In der Zeit der Upaniṣaden war in der Belehrung Śvetaketu's der Versuch gemacht worden, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Dinge aus einfachsten Bedingungen abzuleiten, indem man drei Urelemente annahm, durch deren Mischung alle Dinge entstehen. Und da das Sāmkhya in brahmanischen Kreisen entstand, in denen die Gedanken der Upaniṣaden-Zeit weiterlebten, war diese Lehre auch Pañcāśikā vertraut und gab ihm die Anregung zu der Art, wie er die gestellte Frage zu lösen versuchte. In der Belehrung Śvetaketu's hatte es geheissen, dass alle Dinge aus den drei Urelementen bestehen, und dass ihre verschiedenen Beschaffenheit davon abhängt, wie diese Elemente miteinander gemischt sind und welches von ihnen überwiegt. Pañcāśikā nahm nun an, dass die Urmatere drei verschiedene Eigenschaften (\textit{gunāḥ}) besitzt, welche sich in der verschiedensten Form miteinander verbinden. Bald überwiegt diese, bald jene Eigenschaft. Und die unendliche Mannigfaltigkeit der Mischung dieser Eigenschaften ermöglicht die unendliche Verschiedenheit der Dinge, die trotzdem alle aus der einen Urmatere entspringen." (\textbf{Frauwallner} 1953: 305 f.)


\footnote{8} It is, it seems, necessary to explicitly state that I fully agree with \textbf{Frauwallner} as regards the historical approach in the study not only of Indian philosophy but also of Indian culture in general, and that in my view the allegedly modern "method" of ignoring it a la \textit{Griffiths} is a clear step backwards.

\footnote{9} In my view (philosophical) terms are not only expressions which happen to have been defined in one text or the other; that is to say, I disagree with \textbf{Oberhammer} 1991 as regards the conceptual basis of his dictionary.

\footnote{10} Viz. no. 9 in Nāgojībhātta's \textit{Paribhaṣeṇaśekhara: ubhayagaita iha bhavati.}

\footnote{11} To give just one example: \textbf{Oberhammer} 1987 fails to recognize in dealing with Nyāyabhāṣya on NS 4.2.9 that \textit{asubhasyā} is a Buddhist term, meaning "idea of [things as] impure", that \textit{strīsasāyā} cannot hence but mean "idea of a woman" and that \textit{nimitta}, "characteristics [that are apprehended and become part if an idea/notion]", and \textit{anuvyājana}, "secondary characteristics", are of Buddhist origin, too, i.e. that what we have to do with in this passage is the strand of ascetic, monastic, in any case celibate disgust for women. On this strand of the Indian tradition see now Renate \textit{Syed} 1998. Mention should also be made of Gregory M. \textit{Bailey} 1996. Cf. also \textit{SLAJE} 1995a, b.
studies, to distinguish, on the one hand, between the period of the formation of the terminology of an aggregate of philosophical thoughts, including the first tentative steps, and, on the other, the period of terminologies already formed and fixed to a certain degree. The notion ‘formative period’ implies that the formation of a term, the relation between its technical meaning and the meaning, or one of the meanings, it has in everyday language, should be explained, i.e. its coinage should be made intelligible. Or, turned the other way round, we could say: if an historical theory of the type of FRAUWALLNER’s about the ‘connections’ between the Epic passages at issue here and “classical Śāmkhya” is also able to explain the formation of certain terms, this certainly adds to its verisimilitude, i.e. cannot but be regarded as strongly recommending its correctness.

Now, as for satrva, rajas and tamas, it is not only, as already stated earlier, their triplicity, which arrests attention, but equally also their oddness within the framework of “classical Śāmkhya”. And what FRAUWALLNER most probably wants to intimate, although he significantly does not state this explicitly, is that the use of these terms in “classical Śāmkhya” becomes understandable if it is assumed that they were taken over by Pañcatikha, and that their use in the Moksaḥārma leads us back to their formation in that they denote there, and originally, qualities of cognition (buddhi), viz. “goodness, passion and dullness”. Now this is precisely the point where I start feeling uncomfortable and begin to have doubts about the plausibility of FRAUWALLNER’s theory. The reason is not so much the comparative darkness in which the early semantic development of these expressions, or their derivational base (sat), is still veiled, but rather the fact that even in the context of the epic passage they remain odd, though admittedly less odd than they appear in “classical Śāmkhya”. And it is not so much due to the fact that the author of MBh. (Poona) 12.187 thought it necessary to explain these terms – because this is done in a series of verses (187.18 ff.) in which the function of the sense organs, etc., are described –, but rather due to the way in which this is done, viz. as follows:

\[\text{na sukhena na dukkha na} \]
\[\text{kadācid api vartate} / \]
\[\text{evam narānām manasi} \]
\[\text{triṣu bhāveṣu avasthitā [scil. buddhi]} // 22 \]

How is “pleasure” related to “goodness”, and why is it not also a “passion” just like “sorrow/grieving”, etc.? To be untouched by feelings of happiness and its opposite is not automatically tantamount to “dullness”. This could rather pass for a good description of what is called upêkṣâ in later Indian philosophy – while the last two pādas of verse 12 remind one of the notions of upādāna, upādeyatva and hāna, heyatva, – and we are told by scientists-evolutionists, that the origin of consciousness is marked by the feeling of pleasure and pain connected with the capacity to avoid the unpleasant and to strive after the pleasant. Most important, however, is that the triple character of the bhāva becomes intelligible, nay fully convincing only in the light of these explanations of the unknown author of MBh. 12.187. An even more serious reason for doubt could be seen in the statement (12.187.17ab)

\[\text{iti tanmayam eva itat} \]
\[\text{sarvam sthāvārajangamam} / \]

“thus/hence all this which is immobile or mobile is nothing but a product-of-transformation of that”, tad referring to buddhi of the preceding verse. A problem is, however, posed by the fact that verse 17 (attested equally in the Bombay and Calcutta eds.) is not also found in the other two versions of this passage, viz., MBh. 12.239 (Poona ed.) and 12.287 (Calcutta ed.), although it belongs to those taken over by the Brhannāradīya-Purāṇa.

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12 In spite of VAN BUITENEN 1956, 1957a and b.
14 It should, however, be noted that evidently these three emotional states are called trividhā vedāṇa, in verse 12.187.28, and that this expression is explained to mean sāttviki, rājas and tāmasi (vedāṇa); see also verses 29-36. Yet, this fact rather adds to the incongruity pointed out by me.
15 Cf. also VAN BUITENEN 1957b: 97.
16 As for the latter, see MBh. (Poona) Vol. 16, Mokṣadharmaparvan, Appendix II No. 1.
17 For a concordance, in tabular form, see MBh. (Poona), Vol. 16, p. 2113.
This would explain why FRAUWALLNER does not at all refer to it; it is indeed almost impossible to disagree with him especially as verse 17 interrupts the flow of the exposition of the functions of the various sense organs: There is indeed great likelihood that this verse is a later addition and is based on a central element of the evolution theory of "classical Sāṃkhya".

Yet this very short excursion into the Critical Edition of the Mokṣadharma, which was not available when FRAUWALLNER wrote his "Untersuchungen zum Mokṣadharma", nor even when he published his "Geschichte der indischen Philosophie", is nevertheless fully suited to remind us of the - I think: urgent - necessity to critically examine FRAUWALLNER's analysis of the Sāṃkhya material on the basis of the new edition, and, of course, not only with regard to the many and highly intricate text-critical problems. For a statement like this, "we should not hence, without further ado, rely on the wording of individual verses, but we have to try to cautiously explain the individual elements in the teaching of the passage as a whole, if possible constantly comparing it with related doctrines", sounds methodically sensible and almost natural, but is, at least potentially, also dangerous: An interpreter following this principle runs the risk of projecting onto the text an idea he happens to have formed of the meaning of the whole and of brushing aside everything that does not accord with it.

The development of the evolution theory - which FRAUWALLNER emphasizes "is intrinsically connected with a number of ideas which must therefore necessarily have the same origin", viz. the idea of primary matter (praṇāya), the doctrine of the three qualities (guna) of primary matter and the doctrine of the 25 entities - is regarded by him as the creation "of one of the most important thinkers the school of Sāṃkhya has brought forth." This individual was as a Brahmin conversant with "the thoughts of the times of the Upaniṣads", stood in the tradition of "the basic form of Sāṃkhya found in the epic," ("epische Grundform des Sāṃkhyas") and he had also a "model" ("Vorbild"), i.e. "The Question of Śūka" or at least a similar doctrine and was open to "suggestions", i.e. had learnt from "The Instruction of Śvetaketu" how to solve the problem, i.e. how to explain the fact that "the whole manifoldness of the phenomenal world springs out of the primary matter" which he had "assumed - as a novel and bold idea - as the starting point of the series of evolutes and as the source of the world".

Quite clearly, FRAUWALLNER identified certain older texts, or parts of texts, as "connected" with the evolution theory, i.e. as having played a role in the mental process of developing it, because of certain doctrinal agreements and similarities. In addition, however, what he again tacitly bases his reconstruction of this "basic transformation" on is, apart from the simple fact of the existence of these texts or parts of texts, i.e. the contingency of their transmission, the possibility of explaining the creation of the evolution theory together with its various integral parts as being "modelled after", "suggested by", i.e. as being ultimately doctrinally indebted to them in a particular manner. And the picture FRAUWALLNER draws is most colourful, highly impressive, likely to make everybody nod approvingly, and the process which unfolds itself before the eyes of the readers does not lack a dramatic element - after all we are invited to take part in the thinking process of persons not at all afraid of "consistency or
boldness”, who “do not shy away from any conclusions”\textsuperscript{31} – there is even a certain tension, but above all a high degree of persuasiveness, and finally, also on the part of the readers, the aesthetic satisfaction of having solved a rather complicated equation.\textsuperscript{32} And the readers are warned that if they do not agree with him they will be classed among those “who are not accustomed to think historically”\textsuperscript{33} – although this remark of FRAUWALLNER’s most probably only refers to his observation that many of the theories, which can in fact be demonstrated to have been held at this period, are “queer” (“wunderlich”), “odd” (“absonderlich”) and “far-fetched” (“fermliegend”),\textsuperscript{34} i.e. although his remark has ultimately little, if anything at all, to do with his ideas about the process of the creation of the theories. In spite of all this I, as one among his readers, cannot help getting the feeling that what I am in is a kind of cyber-space, a world remarkably similar to reality, but in fact nothing but imaginary, at best intuitive.\textsuperscript{35}

Regarding the creation of the idea of the three gunas of primary matter – on which my attention is focussed for obvious reasons – FRAUWALLNER’s assumptions are, as already mentioned in part, these: under the influence of “The Instruction of Švetaketu”, according to which “all phenomena consist of three ur-elements” and “their different constitution depends on how these elements are mixed with one another and which of them preponderates”,\textsuperscript{36} “Pañcaśikha assumed that primary matter possesses three qualities which are connected with one another in different ways. Now this quality preponderates, now that”;\textsuperscript{37} one of the important differences between “The Instruction of Švetaketu” and Pañcaśikha’s theory, i.e. the concept of qualities which replaces that of the ur-elements, is explained by FRAUWALLNER by stating that “this difference had not that importance” for Pañcaśikha, as “the idea of quality as a separate category of being had not yet been developed in his time”.\textsuperscript{38} The answer Pañcaśikha gave to the question of which kind the three qualities are “appears strange at first”:\textsuperscript{39} for he determines them as goodness (sattva), passion (rajas) and darkness (tamas). “But”, says FRAUWALLNER, “this answer is intelligible too if we consider the circumstances which brought it into being.”\textsuperscript{40} And these he sees in the great importance the theory of deliverance had in the “basic form of Sāmkhya found in the Epic” on the one hand, and, on the other “in the philosophical school of Sāmkhya”. “When Pañcaśikha tried to substantiate the origin of the feelings” – which cause the fettering of the Soul – he fell back, so to say, on the Epic doctrine of the states (bhāvāḥ) of cognition, and “he therefore assumed that goodness, passion and darkness dwell in the things of the outer world as qualities. And as they occur in all things and can emerge everywhere, Pañcaśikha came to see in them the qualities (gunāḥ) inherent in primary matter (prakṛtiḥ).”\textsuperscript{41}

The problem is indeed neatly resolved, and one feels a bit uneasy if one hesitates to applaud and rather thinks of revealing oneself to be a doubter, nay an unbeliever. One of the many objections I have to make is that FRAUWALLNER in fact gives two entirely different and ultimately alternative explanations for the idea of the three gunas, viz. that it is due to a particular kind of chrēsis – to use GNILKA’s term\textsuperscript{42} – of “The Instruction of Švetaketu” and that it developed out of a reflection on the cause of feelings in connection with the older theory of the states of cognition. The

\textsuperscript{31} “Und er wird die Kühnheit und Konsequenz ihrer Schöpfer bewundern, die vor keinen Folgerungen zurückscheuern...” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 302).

\textsuperscript{32} The metaphor is perhaps not well chosen as FRAUWALLNER’s reconstruction does not seem to include any unknowns.

\textsuperscript{33} “... besonders für den, der nicht gewöhnt ist, historisch zu denken” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 302).

\textsuperscript{34} Quoted from FRAUWALLNER 1953: 301.

\textsuperscript{35} I am aware of the not by any means favourable conditions under which FRAUWALLNER wrote his Geschichte der indischen Philosophie, and that he was denied publishing the materials, reflections and deliberations on which it is based.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibidem 305 f.; see above n. 6.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibidem 306; see above n. 6.

\textsuperscript{38} “Aber dieser Unterschied hatte zu seiner Zeit nicht diese Bedeutung. Der Begriff der Eigenschaft als eigener Kategorie des Seins war zu seiner Zeit noch nicht entwickelt.” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 306.).

\textsuperscript{39} “Die Antwort, die Pañcaśikha auf diese Frage gibt, erscheint zunächst sonderbar.” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 307).

\textsuperscript{40} “Aber auch diese Antwort wird verständlich, wenn wir die Umstände berücksichtigen, die sie herbeiführten.” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 307).

\textsuperscript{41} “Als nun Pañcaśikha das Entstehen der Empfindungen zu begründen suchte und auf die besprochene Weise dazu geführt wurde, objektive Entsprechungen in der Aussenwelt dafür anzunehmen, war es für ihn das Gegebene, diese den erwähnten drei Gruppen von psychischen Zuständen entsprechend anzusetzen. Er nahm also an, dass Güte, Leidenschaft und Finsternis den Dingen der Aussenwelt als Eigenschaften innewohnten.” (FRAUWALLNER 1953: 308).

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. GNILKA 1972, his later works and the series of monographs edited by him under the title Chrēsis.
impression which I cannot help but gather is that FRAUWALLNER brings up the Upanisadic passage mainly because of the in fact highly significant, viz. specific agreement between it and classical Sāmkhya regarding the association with the three colours. But as for this agreement, it is not, within the framework of FRAUWALLNER’s reconstruction, extraordinarily amazing that this association was also taken over by Pañcaśikha, or preserved by him, for that matter?43

Coming to the end of my very modest contribution I should like to state, with no little emphasis, that a thorough revision of FRAUWALLNER’s reconstruction of this most important phase in the development of Sāmkhya is unavoidable, and that any new attempt at tackling the problems involved, which are admittedly of a very intricate nature, should by all means be carried out in a decidedly more explicit and transparent manner, i.e. in such a manner that the implicit assumptions, etc., and the methodological assumptions are stated in clear terms at every step. And it remains, of course, also to be seen whether those who have studied the relevant parts of the Mokṣadharma after FRAUWALLNER, i.e. VAN BUITEMEN44, BEDEKAR45 and BAKKER46, BISSCHOP and MOTEKI47 and last but not least ARAKAMI48 have not already achieved substantial and convincing progress, and what their criticism of FRAUWALLNER explicit or implicit, and VAN BUITEMEN precisely consists in. Last but not least, it has to be noted that the observations of RÜPING49 on “the direct line” that “can be traced from the Taittirīya-Upaniṣad and the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa to the evolution-doctrine of Sāmkhya” would among other things suggest the working hypothesis that the role played by Chū 6.1 ff. in the development of Sāmkhya was one other than that conceived by FRAUWALLNER. The existence of what HACKER50 has called “mechanistic cosmogenies” in the Vedas may well be of greater significance for the development of the

evolution theory than FRAUWALLNER would seem to admit. Only when we have firm ground under our feet in regard to the origin(s) of the evolution theory shall we be in a position to address the problem of the historical relation between its cosmological and psychological aspects, a problem which we have been reminded of by FRANCO51 and more recently by our kind and bright host, Johannes BRONKHORST.52

SECONDARY LITERATURE


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51 See FRANCO 1991.
52 Cf. his second circular for this workshop.


