It is against this background that the passage to be discussed in what follows deserves especial attention.

2. It is found in the Pātañjalayogasāstravivaraṇa, viz. on the Yogabhāṣya on YS 2.28: yogāṇānuṣṭhānād asuddhiḥśayā jñānādiptiḥ ā vivekahavyāteḥ. The problem of the authorship and consequently of the probable date of the Vivaraṇa can by no means be regarded as settled. This was not only shown by me on an earlier occasion, but emphasized by Halbfass also who has recently called attention to additional material which I had failed to notice and which is indeed apt to render the chronological problem still more puzzling. I do not want to enter here again into a discussion of this question, but in passing I should like to make just one remark. Halbfass concludes his “Notes…” by stating: “Hacker’s challenging and intriguing hypothesis” that Śaṅkara, the author of the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya, wrote this text as a Yogin and before ‘converting’ to Advaita Vedānta is just this: a hypothesis, one possibility among others”. However, I on my part am not any longer convinced that this can for the time being be regarded even as a serious possibility, and I should think that we are not at all in a position to maintain with Halbfass that “there is nothing in the form or contents of the Vivaraṇa that would exclude the possibility that it is a work by the author of the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya.” For, the more I get acquainted with this text, the larger grows the number of quotations of which I notice that they were not yet identified or even recognized as such by the editor, and some of them seem to stem from texts quite conceivably later than Śaṅkara. So long as not all of them have been systematically collected and traced to their (original) sources, I should, otherwise than Halbfass, prefer to regard the argument “that Kumārila is the latest author explicitly referred to” in the Vivaraṇa as extremely weak, especially since I am unable to persuade myself to believe that for solving problems of relative chronology we should concentrate on explicit references only.

Yet in spite of the continuing uncertainty about the date of the Vivaraṇa and in spite of the fact that “basic questions concerning
its philological status, its historical role and its philosophical teachings are still open”, as aptly remarked by Halbfass; the text as it stands does not give grounds for the suspicion that its author was not remarkably well acquainted with the tradition of Pātañjala Yoga and quite at home in this ‘ambiance’, although it is for the time being not possible to answer the question whether and, if at all, to which extent the explanations he offers are also based on or at least partially influenced by personal Yogic practice and corresponding experiences. Except for this proviso, however, there is nothing in the Vivaraṇā which could prevent us from regarding it as an authentic Yoga text, as a trustworthy source of information about traditional Yoga thought, albeit at a particular point of time and perhaps with a certain degree of originality still to be determined. I deem it therefore legitimate to start from the assumption that the passage I am going to analyse does not from an exception in this regard, i.e. that it may indeed be looked upon as representative for the manner in which (the) very adherents of Yoga – and most probably also of Sāmkhya- itself attempted to cope with the theory of the four varnas within the framework of their own philosophical doctrine.

3. After having explained YS 2.28 word for word, the author of the Bhāṣya adds the following remark, evidently meant to clarify a particularly important aspect of what is stated in this sūtra (209, 1-2):  

\[ yogyāṇaṁ uṣṭhānam aśuddheḥ viyogakāraṇaṁ, yathā para-\]
\[ chedaśyaṁ vivekakhyāṇes tu prāptikāraṇaṁ, yathā \]
\[ dharmah sukhasyaṁ nānyathā kāraṇaṁ. \]

“The following up of the aids to Yoga is the cause of dis correlation (viyoga) with impurity, just as an axe [is the cause of the disjunction (viyoga) of a tree] which is to be cut [from its root]. Now [the eight aids] are the cause of attaining discriminative discernment, just as right-living (dharma) is [the cause of getting] happiness, in other ways it is not a cause”.  

The key word ‘cause’ (kāraṇa) leads to a digression, i.e. its mention is regarded by the author of the Bhāṣya as the right opportunity to deal in a systematic and comprehensive manner with all the different types of ‘causes’ recognised in the system. To this topic he proceeds by simply continuing with the—general and at the same time principal—question (209.3): kāti ca tātāṁ kāraṇaṁ şāstre santi, which is answered concisely: navaśeśa śīha, but only to add immediately afterwards, introduced only by "namely" (tad-yathā), a verse which indeed looks very much like a sangrahāśloka handed down by tradition for it reads thus (209.4-5):  

\[ Uttarāśthityaḥbhāvyakāroprayāṇyaśtaḥ | \]
\[ Viyogāṇayatadvātityaḥ kāraṇaṁ navadhā śiśtam. \]

As the nine causes said to be distinguished in the Yoga-Śāstra are here merely enumerated, by means of a complex compound at that, they are subsequently named and explained one after the other in the Bhāṣya itself. When coming to the last, viz. dṛṣṭikāraṇa, “the cause of sustentation”, the Bhāṣyakāra states (210:3-5):  

\[ dṛṣṭikāraṇaṁ śaṅkaraṁ indriyaṁ tāni ca tasyaṁ \]
\[ mahābhidāṁ śaṅkaraṁ tāni ca parapsaram \]
\[ sarvaśeśaṁ tairiyagonyamānusadāvatāni ca parapsarpārthayat ... \]

“The cause of sustentation [is for instance], the body [as the cause which sustains] the sense-organs, and these [organs as the cause sustaining] this [body], [and again] the great elements [as the sustaining cause] of bodies, and these [bodies as the cause sustaining] each other: and [finally] animal and human and divine [bodies as the cause sustaining] all [the other objects], since they exist for each other/serve each the purpose of the others”.

This rather detailed, i.e. rather well illustrated explanation of the “cause of sustentation” is in its turn made further clear by the Vivaraṇākāra (210, 16-26, 211, 6-7):  

\[ dḥṛteḥ kāraṇaṁ triḥ dharānam dṛṣṭih, tasyaḥ kāraṇam śaṁ śrīm aṁ śāṅkaraṁ \]

\[ dṛṣṭiḥ kāraṇaṁ śaṁ śrīm aṁ śāṅkaraṁ śaṁ śrīm aṁ śāṅkaraṁ \]
exist for each other/serve each the purpose of the others. The animal (body) is the sustaining cause of the human and divine (bodies) in that it renders assistance (to them) by [being used for] riding or [functioning as] draughθmals, by giving milk, by [giving clarified butter used as] oblation [in sacrifice], etc.

Similarly, the human (body) is the sustaining cause of the divine and animal (bodies in that it renders assistance to them) by sacrificing (to the former), taking care (of the latter), etc. Similarly the divine (body) is the sustaining cause of the other two (in that it renders assistance to them) by cold, heat, by causing to rain etc.

In this (very) manner, the (different) varṇas and stages of life, too, are the sustaining cause (of each other) in that they support each other. For (ultimately) the whole world without exception exists and subsists by mutual support.

4: Although one would, of course, very much like the author of the Vivaraṇa, to have been less concise in his explanations, especially as regards the penultimate sentence, his comments are perfectly clear except for what he says on the words sarvesaṁ tairagyonaṁ manuṣaṁdaivaṁ taitvati ca parasparārthaṁ of the Bhāṣya. Evidently, he is of the opinion that sarvesaṁ is to be construed with what follows, thus deviating from the other commentators like Vācaspati-miśra and Vijñānabhaṭṭa. I do not want to discuss here whether this interpretation is really justified, i.e. meets the Bhāṣyakāra's intention; what I want to point out instead is that if the Vivaraṇa-kāra's construction is taken for granted, one cannot spare him the reproach of having failed to make sufficiently clear what according to him is ultimately meant by this sentence. For he not only confines himself to just adding padārthaṁ to sarvesaṁ, but he also neglects, in what he says subsequently, to consider in detail in which regard precisely "animal and human and divine bodies are the sustaining cause of all padārthas". And this failure seems not to be made good by his explanation of parasparārthaṁ; on the contrary, to be given the information that each of these three types of bodies
is the sustaining cause of the other two rather adds to the confusion at least at first sight. On closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that the fact that one and the same entities are first said to be the dhṛtikāraṇa “of all padārthas” and then the sustaining cause “of each other”, is the clue to the solution of the problem: What the Vivaraṇa-kāra obviously means is that animal etc. bodies are in so far the sustaining cause of all padārthas as they sustain each other by various means, and it is only due to this mutual support that these bodies themselves exist and subsist; yet their existence and subsistence form also the necessary precondition for unfolding their specific activities on which in their turn depend “all the things” of this world, be they ‘natural’, man-made or god-made.

This interpretation is not only plausible in itself, but it is also confirmed by the text of the Bhāṣya—as construed by the Vivaraṇa-kāra, for after all, it is the reason that is stated when it is said that “these bodies serve each the purpose of the others” (parasparāratvāti). The author of the Vivaraṇa hence seems to draw a distinction between the totality of bodies as such beginning with that of the demiurg Brahmā and ending with those of plants, on the one hand, and “animal and human divine bodies”, on the other. Whereas all bodies of whatever kind support each other and thus function mutually as cause of sustentation, those of animals, men and gods are distinguished by the fact that by supporting each other in this manner they are at the same time the sustaining cause of all the other-things of this world which owe their existence solely to these three highest classes of living beings.

One need not be a biologist or ecologist in order not to miss the enormous significance both these ideas undoubtedly have, quite apart from their importance for our knowledge and understanding of the Saṃkhya and Yoga systems. For what is testified to in them is a conception of ‘nature’ which not only comprises human beings as well as plants, but is also a complex whole which is essentially and basically characterized by a mutual dependence of the different classes and species of living beings, i.e. by the fact that each of the various “bodily” beings irrespective of its place within the given hierarchy is dependent on others for its very existence and subsistence, though it should not be overlooked that the author of the Vivaraṇa when speaking of animals evidently thinks of domestic cattle only. It has probably gotten around in the meantime that western civilization has almost totally neglected this old truth and that it is only now, viz. when faced with the disastrous results of its suicidal shortsightedness, that it is re-discovering it, though, of course, on the basis of a distinctly different conception, and stage of development, of ‘natural’ sciences.

5. It is, however, the concluding sentences of the Vivaraṇa passage quoted above to which I want to draw particular attention here, viz. evam varṇāśrayāṇām api ananyopakāreṇa dhṛtikāraṇavat parasparopāśrayeṇa hi jagad akhilam api dhriyate II. As in many other instances of commentarial explanations going beyond a mere paraphrase of the elements of the mūla text, one is faced here too with the elementary, yet nonetheless intricate problem whether one may look upon what is said by the commentator as a faithful interpretation of the ideas of the Bhāṣyakāra, or at least of what he meant to imply, or whether one has to do with an entirely new idea of the Vivaraṇa-kāra himself. I do not see any possibility of reaching an objective decision in the present case, but this much can be said without provoking the reproach of arbitrary interpretation: What is stated by the author of the Vivaraṇa in these two sentences perfectly agrees with the Bhāṣyakāra’s explanation of dhṛtikāraṇa; at worst, it has to be styled as the outcome of thinking congenially along the very lines of the Bhāṣya.

Ignoring in what follows the final sentence, for it forms but a generalizing, albeit emphatic and impressive résumé of the contents of the passage taken together, let me concentrate on the first sentence. It refers not only to the four varṇas, i.e. the well-known division of Indian society into Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaśyas and Śūdras (which was not merely a theoretical concept,
but a social fact of immense importance), but it also includes the
distinction between the four stages of life in the developed, i.e. final
theoretical form of this conception according to which ideally one
has to run through four successive and different ways of life. Of
both these quadruple divisions it is said that each member is the
sustaining cause of the remaining three, respectively, owing to the
fact that each of them helps or supports all the others.

A modern exegete, at least in the West, might feel tempted to
take this statement to mean that the four varnas and the four
dśramas are here considered to be on a par with each other. It is,
evertheless, evident that such an interpretation would be utterly
wrong. Clearly any idea of social equality was absolutely alien to
the Vivaraṇakāra, too, who cannot but have shared the conviction
that hierarchical value is intrinsic to the ‘classes’ as well as to the
stages of life, — a conviction not only common to Hindus in general,
but also regarded by many classical Indian authors as the essential
constitutive element of Hindu society. Clearly the Vivaraṇakāra
does not think in the least of calling into question this hierarchical
structure, not to speak of criticizing or refuting it." It is more than
probable that he would have uncompromisingly attacked anyone
who dared to come up with such an idea.

There is hence nothing ‘revolutionary’ in what the Vivaraṇakāra
says about the varna and dśrama systems, but nevertheless there is
something in it which deserves our full attention, viz. the explicitly
stated idea, which forms the very gist of the sentence under discus-
sion here, that the four varnas and the four dśramas support and
thus sustain each other mutually, that none of them is able to get along without the others. This is,
indeed, something excitingly new, for, as far as I can see, no such
idea is found expressed anywhere else, including the vast Dharma
śāstra literature.

There are admittedly statements like that of Manu 3.77
and 78:

but they are all evidently intended to counter the tendency to a one-
sided over-evaluation of the various forms of ascetic life and to give
instead the householder’s life and his ‘production capacity’ its due
by emphasizing his overall economic importance for the other, viz.,
‘non-productive’ sections of society. In the present case this intention could hardly be more explicit than in Manu 3.78d, i.e.
by claiming — with marked self-confidence — the highest rank for gṛha-
ashya, and in Manu 3.78b, i.e. by pointing out the important role the (Brahmanical) householder plays in transmitting the Veda
and imparting knowledge of the vedārtha. But to remind the brahma
cārins, vānaprasthas, and sannyāsins of the fact that the food they eat is given to them and ultimately produced by the gṛha
dhas and that the Vedic knowledge they are to acquire is imparted (to them) by this group (alone), is tantamount to pointing out to them they depend on the householders for their very subsistence. Yet that the dependence is clearly conceived of here not as a mutual, but as a unilateral one, is strikingly confirmed by the comparison in verse 3.77ab, i.e. by paralleling the function of the gṛha
to that of prāṇa, on which Medhātithi aptly remarks: na hy aprāṇasya jīvita asti, prāṇadhāraya eva jīvanam. Just
as in terms of physiology the life of each and every “breathing
being” (prāṇin) depends completely on prāṇa, so too the other
dśramas depend completely on the gṛha as regards their subsistence etc.

The concept of mutual dependence is, however, met with
within the framework of traditional Indian ideas about kingship.
The (lawful) ruler is entitled to claim a particular gift from his
subjects, and even from hermits, as compensation for his
affording protection to them, etc. Yet, in this case, too, what
we have to do with is a dichotomic division of society, al-
though it is an individual, viz. the king, and not a group of people.
who forms the one side of the relation, whereas the other side is made up of the subjects in their totality to whichever varña and áśrama they may belong. It is hence not what one would call probable that this narrower concept of mutual dependence was the starting point for developing the idea we find expressed in the Vivaraṇa.

For this idea is, as we have already seen, characterized 1. by referring to the fourfold division of the varnas and of the áśramas, and 2. by the view that each of the ‘classes’ and stages of life equally gives to all the others and takes from them, i.e. that as far as its relation to the others is concerned it is an upakārya as well as an upakāraka. As already stated above, it is a pity that this is only asserted by the author of the Vivaraṇa and not explained in any detail. For one would, of course, very much like to know in addition in what exactly the upakāra given by a particular varña and that received by it consists, according to the author’s understanding of the social functions of the different groups. That he must have had a clear notion of these functions can, I think, be taken for granted; for there is no indication whatsoever which would justify the suspicion that what he says in the last two sentences is but the result of an ad hoc extension of the concept of mutual dependence to a domain not intended by the Bhāsyakāra, viz. that of society and its hierarchical structure. To say it in other words: There is every likelihood that the Vivaraṇakāra knew what he was talking about.

Yet, no matter how important this conception of society may appear to those interested in traditional Indian theories of society, one should not lose sight of the fact that it is clearly a philosophical context in which it is attested, viz. that of the systematic distinction of nine different types of causes in general and that of the ‘cause of sustentation’ in particular. When after recognizing this latter to be a cause sui generis Sāṁkhya and/or Yoga philosophers apparently started to investigate it, they came to realize that it works on different levels and in different spheres of the manifest world, beginning with the great elements which sustain the various bodies.

In perfect agreement with the term dhṛti itself (in the sense in which it is used here) this cause is, however, conceived of as operating mainly in the sphere of bodily beings as such, i.e. of beings endowed with organs of sense, as having – in accordance with their type and species – a distinctive nature, as characterized by a particular capacity to act, and, last but not least, though this holds good for men only, as belonging by birth to a particular varña and by age to a particular áśrama. The conception of society attested to in the Vivaraṇa passage thus forms but an integral and harmonious part of a much wider theorem; yet what is perhaps even more noteworthy is the fact that according to this theorem there is no essential difference between the physiological and biological nature of bodily beings, on the one hand, and the social reality – or rather the ideal social functions of the different ‘classes’ of human beings: Both are equally governed by the ‘law of give and take’, by a mutual dependence which alone is able to ensure dhṛti to all the individuals. Just as e.g. man qua human being is dependent on animals and gods, so can he qua Brahmin etc. only exist and subsist thanks to the assistance rendered him by the Kṣatriyas etc. No matter to which varña an individual belongs, his existence and subsistence depend on the support he gets from the others, and the rights that may accrue to him because of his particular social status are necessarily complemented by certain duties he must not neglect. Yet, what the Vivaraṇakāra says about the ‘classes’ and stages of life evidently not meant to motivate rules about the ideal behaviour of the varnas: there can hardly be any doubt that it was, on the contrary, the traditional rules in force that paved the way for conceiving society as a whole as a system which is based on mutual dependence.

Space being limited, I cannot address myself to this idea in terms of its importance for theories of society. Yet this much I may be permitted to add: Even if this ethicizing of the varna system should turn out to be unique in Indian philosophy, even if no traces
should be discovered of its reception in later texts; it cannot be disputed that it is a remarkable attempt to take into account what seems to have been regarded as social reality by the author, within the framework of a particular system of philosophical thought, i.e. that of Śāṅkara-Yoga. In addition, I hope to have shown once more that there is still much we can learn about these schools of thought when reading the relevant sources, if only we recognize their inherent eloquence.

NOTES


2. O. c., p. 6.


4. See the article referred to in note 3; cf. also the article "On the Quadruple Division of the Yogaśāstra, the Caturvyūhatva of the Cikitsāśāstra and the 'Four Noble Truths' of the Buddha", which will be published in volume XII of the 'Indologia Turinensis' to be issued in 1984 or 1985.


9. O. c. (cf. note 5), p. 120.


13. Cf. Vīvaraṇa 209. 12: tatra kāraṇaprasāṅgena stātraprasiddhānā kāraṇāni vyākṣe...

14. My attention has been drawn by my friend L. Schmithausen to the fact that a very similar list of different causes is found in Buddhist texts also [viz. the Abhidharmasamuccaya (ed. Pradhan, Santiniketan 1950), p. 28. 12 ff. and the Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya (ed. Nagao, Tokyo 1964), p. 31. 10 ff.] and that one of them is precisely the ‘cause of sustentation, (dhrītikāraṇa). But it is defined there as the support or basis (tādāra/ bhājanaloka) of the living beings (sattva /sattvaloka). This additional material and the problem of the relation in which the Yogabhāṣya’s list stands to it, I hope to discuss in an article still in preparation.

15. As was already observed by Woods, o. c. c.

16. Up to this word the translation is Woods’ (o.c, p. 174). As for the remaining part of this passage, I am not able to follow Woods who evidently letting himself be guided by Vācaspatimīśra—renders it thus “and these [elements] reciprocally of all [elements], since human and animal and supernormal bodies depend on each other”. Woods does not adduce any reason for taking tāni (of tāni ca parasparam) to refer to the “great elements” but only very strong reasons could persuade one to disregard the clear parallelism to be observed between sārīram indriyasyām tāni ca tasya / on the one hand, and mahabhūtān sārīram tāni ca parasparam /, on the other; and, to be sure, the explanation given by Vācaspatimīśra—other commentators—who take tāni ca parasparam to refer to the so called accumulation theory does not by any means form a strong reason; it is, on the contrary entirely unconvincing. Woods’ transition is problematic also in that one would, if it were correct, rather expect to find tārtyagyapona—
Dr. Sharma felicitaion Vol.

This is printed in the edition in bold type. Yet, there is not sufficient evidence to permit the assumption that this is not already the vigrahavakya of the Vivarapaksha's, or to preclude the possibility that the text has to be emended here to dhrtikaram.

This is an emendation of the editor which is indeed necessary, unless one wants to go even a step further and consider the possibility that here some words have dropped out e.g. due to aberratio oculi.

Most probably the term indriya is used here to cover both the buddhindriyas as well as the karmendriyas. Nevertheless, to make things easier I render it, following Woods, by "sense-organs".

The fact that the bodies are here said to aradbha by the elements does not, of course imply that the author adopted the arambhavada.

I am far from being convinced that the term tairagynona, as far as its use in Sàdhkya - Yoga texts is concerned, does not also include plants; and e.g. Yuktidipika (ed. Pandey) 137. 26 f: tairagynonà ca padadha bhavati-Patunrgpaktàs vartarpusthavara will definitely lead one to the view that it certainly does. But in view of what the Vivarapaksa subsequently states with reference to the tairagynona bodies, viz. vahanadohanahaviradhibhir, one cannot but gather the impression that at this point he did not have plants in mind.

It should be noticed here that I start from the assumption that the Vivarapaksa for one took the sentence sreva$a tairagynonamûsadiva$tani etc. of the Bhasya to be, not an explanation of the preceding one, viz. tani ca parasparam, but a specification with regard to certain, i.e. the most important bodily entities. Should this interpretation be wrong in itself and also not meet the intention of the Bhasyaksa, one would have to assume that by tairagynonamûsadiva$tani the whole range of 'bodily beings' is covered (cf. also fn. 21) and that the second of the two sentences of the Bhasya under discussion is added in order to point out that the 'bodily beings' in their totality are not only the sustaining cause of the others, but also the dhrtikara$ of all the remaining things of the manifest world. Unfortunately the author of the Vivaraga confines himself to the rather vague upakaryopakara$katadvarega in explaining the first sentence. In any case, my interpretation would be affected only partially, the main correction necessary being that no such distinction is drawn and that plants too are cause of sustentation of all padartha.

The use of the particle api is by itself not sufficient evidence.

Cf e.g. Vivaraga 66. 22, where in the context of proving the existence of dvara among others the following pratijja is met with: anekakarti bhoktrikriyasthuthama phalamandhavide sajnanavadupadisthani varga jnanadadushthanami.

As it was done e.g. by certain Buddhist authors.

As is to be expected, the various commentators seem not to be of one opinion about the general purpose of these two verses. Yet, Ragha$ananda explicitly states: ghastha$ramam prakara$jkavat stauti and Nandana and Magirama clearly agree with him.

Cf. e.g. Medhatithi's explanation of jana$na by vedarthavayakhyana$jojyena or Sarvajnanaraya$as remark: ghastha$yavadyapa$ndhikarat trayopjali jana$na.

That by the expression tray$gy$nam in the present context the vanaprasthas are included cannot be disputed. Hence, one is confronted with the problem in which sense they too, "are sustained by the householder with knowledge and food". Among the different commentators it seems to have been only Ragha$ananda who was aware of this problem; for, in commenting on verse 77 he states: taddatta$bhisopajjivivisad brahma$cintamanyasam vanaprasthasha$ viraktasya purvam ghastha$idyudyupayogitvat viraktasya tu gharmad$bhu ca [Manu 6. 27 cd] ityavakya$msarama$yati ghastha$opajjivivisad cd/-. The reference to Manu 6. 27 and 28 (which latter is evidently meant by -adi) is admittedly useful; yet can we be sure that Manu 3. 77 and 78 were formulated by an author who had in fact in view the very practice prescribed in the two verses of the 6. Adhyaya?

The edition used by me in quoting from the commentaries is always: Manu-Smriti with Nine Commentaries ..., ed. by J.H. Dave (Bharatya Vidy$ Series), Bombay 1972 ff.

31. It should be noted that in Manu 3.77 and 78 the three other āśramas are taken together and thus opposed as one group to that of the householders.

32. I am, of course, aware of the fact that there is no lack of material testifying to the idea that Brahmans and Kṣatriyas render certain services to each other. But statements about a/the mutual dependence of these two or any other group of two are still something distinctly different from the concept attested to in the Vivaraṇa, for this latter consists in recognizing such a dependence 1. to exist between each āśrama taken by itself and all the other and 2. to be the cause of sustentation of all the āśramas taken together. In this connection it is perhaps useful to note that Rāghavāṇanda concludes his remarks on Manu 3.78 by explicitly stating: ātraṣāṁ parāparopakāraṇaṁ nirastā. By the way, does the use of the concept parāparopakāraṇa and the rather polemical nirastā indicate that Rāghavāṇanda knew of the view of the mutual dependence of the āśramas and āśramas?