THE CHANGING NOTION OF ŚIṢṬA
FROM PATAÑJALI TO BHARTṚHARI

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The word *śiṣṭa* is used by the traditions of Dharmaśāstra as well as Sanskrit Grammar to refer to a community of social and linguistic élites whose socio-cultural and linguistic behavior was considered to set the norm to be described by the respective texts of Dharmaśāstra and Sanskrit Grammar, and to be emulated by others. This notion is by no means static, though the changing nature of this notion has not been sufficiently investigated in previous studies. In this paper, an attempt is made to trace the major changes in the notion of *śiṣṭa* from Patañjali to Bhartṛhari. I have dealt with the notion of *śiṣṭa* in the earlier phase of Sanskrit Grammar, i.e. from Pāṇini to Patañjali, in my previous research (Deshpande 1985, 1979). Here, I will briefly refer to this earlier phase, and will discuss Bhartṛhari's contribution in greater detail.

In the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, there is no explicit reference to *śiṣṭas*, though one can build a fairly clear picture of the community whose linguistic behavior Pāṇini was describing. In my forthcoming article "Socio-linguistic Parameters of Pāṇini's Sanskrit" (appearing in Professor A.M. Ghatage Felicitation Volume), I have discussed several issues relating to the earliest phase of Sanskrit Grammar and the nature of the language described by these early grammarians. To summarize the more extensive discussion in that paper, we can state the following things. Pāṇini's grammar dealt with a mass of language data which included within its scope language material from the bygone age of Vedic texts, as well as contemporary regional and scholastic dialects. To the extent his grammar dealt with contemporary usage, it seems to cover the dialects spreading from the Northwestern region of the subcontinent to the eastern region of the subcontinent. Essentially, its linguistic geography is restricted to North India. However, within that region, it does not describe the linguistic usage of everyone. Pāṇini is primarily describing the linguistic usage of the Brāhmaṇa males. The grammar is addressed to an audience of Brāhmaṇa males. Here too, the grammar does not describe all possible usage of this community, but describes how this community should speak correctly. This means that Pāṇini drew a dividing line between what he perceived to be the élite linguistic usage and the non-acceptable lower-class usage. This dividing line was not a totally hard and fast line. It

changed from region to region, time to time, and grammarian to grammarian. Thus, to make a cautious statement, Pāṇini's grammar tells us more about what he considered to be proper usage of Sanskrit, and less about what the people actually spoke. In this respect, Pāṇini's grammar is similar to texts like *Manusmṛti*, which tell us more about how the people should behave, and less about how they actually behaved. In general, this is what we can infer from Pāṇini's grammar, but there is no explicit theoretical discussion about this matter in the rules of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

As we move to Kātyāyana and Patañjali, we find more explicit discussion of the question of who sets the standard of usage for Sanskrit. Kātyāyana brings in some important notions. The first notion brought in explicitly by Kātyāyana is that the science of grammar does not create any new facts of language, but it only describes what is already found in the world of linguistic usage. The usage of language is given to the science of grammar. It does not invent this usage. If this is the case, what is the role of grammar? According to Kātyāyana, the role of grammar is to make a religious restriction (*dharmaniyama*), i.e. to specify explicitly which usages found in the world are proper, and therefore lead to the user gaining religious merit, and which usages found in the world are not proper, and therefore do not lead to the user gaining religious merit. Thus, while all linguistic usage described by a grammar is based on the actual linguistic performance observed in the world, grammar does not aim at describing this totality. It describes only a subsection of the total usage found in the world. It describes the proper, correct, and the meritorious linguistic usage, and by exclusion indicates that the rest of the linguistic usage is improper, incorrect, and does not lead to religious merit. However, Kātyāyana himself does not explicitly get into the discussion of how a grammarian decides which linguistic usage is proper.

For the first time, Patañjali goes into an explicit discussion of most of these issues. Yes, the grammar describes only what already exists in the linguistic performance of the world. Yes, the grammar does not describe the entire linguistic usage of the world. Yes, it describes only the merit-conducive usage, and leaves out the rest as being not conducive to religious merit. But, then how do we know which usage is conducive to religious merit? For the first time, Patañjali goes into details of this question. In his *Mahābhāṣya* on P.6.3.109, Patañjali says:[1]

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1   *ke punaḥ śiṣṭāḥ / vaiyākaraṇāḥ / kuta etat / śāstrapūrvikā hi śiṣṭir vaiyākaraṇaś ca śāstrajñāḥ / yadi tarhi śāstrapūrvikā śiṣṭiḥ śiṣṭipūrvakaṃ ca śāstraṃ tad itaretarāśrayaṃ bhavati / itaretarāśrayāṇi ca na prakalpante / evaṃ tarhi nivāsataś cācārataś ca / sa*

Who are the *śiṣṭas*?

They are the grammarians.

How is it?

The linguistic behavior of the élites presupposes the science of grammar, and the grammarians know the science of grammar. [Therefore, the grammarians must be the élites.]

But, if the behavior of the élites presupposes the science of grammar, and if grammar presupposes the behavior of the élites, then this argument becomes circular. Circular arguments are not acceptable.

Then we define *śiṣṭas* by their place of residence and their way of life. That way of life is found only in the region of Āryāvarta.

What is this Āryāvarta?

It lies to the east of [where the river Sarasvatī] disappears [in modern Rajasthan], to the west of Kālaka forest [near modern Allahabad], to the south of the Himālayas, and to the north of the Vindhyas. Those Brāhmaṇas who live in this Āryāvarta, the land of the Āryas, who store just a basketful of grain, who are not greedy, and who without any motive have attained the highest wisdom in some branch of learning, they are the *śiṣṭas*.

If these *śiṣṭas* are the decisive standard for correctness of language, then what is the function of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

Pāṇini's grammar aims at helping one recognize these linguistic élites.

How can the linguistic élites be recognized by means of Pāṇini's grammar?

A student of Pāṇini's grammar observes another person who has never studied that grammar but who uses constructions taught in that grammar. He [i.e. the student of Pāṇini's grammar] thinks that it must be either divine grace or some innate nature that this person who does not study Pāṇini's grammar still uses constructions taught in it. Perhaps he may know even other usages [which are deemed to be correct but are not taught by Pāṇini]. This way Pāṇini's grammar aims at helping one recognize the élite speakers of Sanskrit [= *śiṣṭas*]. (MB 3:174)

In this major passage discussing the notion of *śiṣṭa*, several clarifications emerge. Patañjali's *śiṣṭas* are restricted to the region of Āryāvarta, which interestingly does not extend to cover even Pāṇini's birthplace of Śalātura, or even his Udīcya region. Secondly, there is evidence in the *Mahābhāṣya* to show that Patañjali's linguistic élites did not use Sanskrit at all times, but only in the context of ritual, while they seem to prefer the use of

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cācāra āryāvarta eva / kaḥ punar āryāvartaḥ / prāg ādarśāt pratyak kālakavanāt dakṣiṇena himavantam uttareṇa pāriyātram / etasminn āryanivāse ye brāhmaṇāḥ kumbhīdhānyā alolupā agṛhyamāṇakāraṇāḥ kiñcid antareṇa kasyāścid vidyāyāḥ pāragās tatrabhavantaḥ śiṣṭāḥ / yadi tarhi śiṣṭāḥ śabdeṣu pramāṇam kim aṣṭādhyāyyā kriyate / śiṣṭajñānār-thāṣṭādhyāyī / katham punar aṣṭādhyāyyā śiṣṭāḥ śakyā vijñātum / aṣṭādhyāyīm adhīyāno 'nyam paśyaty anadhīyānam yetra vihitāḥ śabdās tān prayuñjānam / sa paśyati / nūnamasya daivānugrahaḥ svabhāvo vā yo 'yam na cāṣṭādhyāyīm adhīte ye cātra vihitāḥ śabdās tāṃś ca prayuṅkte / ayam nūnam anyān api jānāti / evam eṣā śiṣṭaparijñānārthā-stādhyāyī /, Mahābhāṣya III, p. 174.

Prakrits on other occasions. Here, I would like to emphasize two points in Patañjali's discussion.

a. The linguistic usage of Sanskrit is already established in the world, and the users of Sanskrit do not necessarily learn this language from studying grammar books. To put it in another way, there is grammar-independent usage of standard Sanskrit, and it is this grammar-independent usage of standard Sanskrit which the grammarians are expected to observe and follow in their description of standard Sanskrit.

b. The grammarian realizes that there is circularity in claiming the grammarians themselves to be the normative speakers of Sanskrit and then claiming that the science of grammar follows the usage of the normative speakers. Patañjali explicitly recognizes this dilemma and tries to find a way by pointing to a speaker of standard Sanskrit who is not a grammarian or a student of grammar.[2] This way he is able to break the inherent circularity discussed above. However, he is able to break out of this circularity only because there supposedly existed grammar-independent usage of Sanskrit. This seems to confirm the belief in the tradition of Sanskrit grammar that the grammarians from Pāṇini to Patañjali were *lakṣyaikacakṣuṣka* "those whose eyes are solely fixed on the usage to be described." This is the period when grammar is believed to have followed the usage of language which existed independent of that grammar. The tradition says that the grammarians who came after Patañjali were *lakṣaṇaikacakṣuṣka* "those whose eyes were solely fixed on the rules of grammar."[3] This is the period when the language is believed to have followed the grammar, implying that the usage of language followed exclusively from the prior study of the grammatical description, and that there was no grammar-independent usage of Sanskrit to be observed any longer.

Around 400 A.D., about 500 years after Patañjali, came Bhartṛhari. According to the later traditional division mentioned above, he indeed

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2   This point seems to have escaped the attention of Abhyankar and Limaye (1965: 404) when they explain a Śiṣṭa as: "People of recognized learning and culture. People who have studied and understood the Vyākaraṇa and other śāstras and can speak with authority." To support this interpretation, they approvingly quote the passage *śiṣṭāh vaiyākaraṇāh / śāstrapūrvikā hi śiṣṭih, vaiyākaraṇāś ca śāstrajñāh (MB* on P.6.3.109). However, they fail to point out that this is only a prima facie view finally rejected by Patañjali, who explicitly rejects it by pointing out its circularity.

3   The terms *lakṣyaikacakṣuṣka* and *lakṣaṇaikacakṣuṣka* are attested in the works of Nāgeśabhaṭṭa (Cf. *Paribhāṣenduśekhara,*, p. 78 and 145; *Uddyota* on *Pradīpa* on *Mahābhāṣya* on P.8.3.15). Renou's *Terminologie Grammaticale du Sanskrit,* p. 261 also refers to attestations from Nāgeśabhaṭṭa's works.

belongs to that period of Sanskrit grammar when grammarians had their eyes solely fixed on the rules of grammar, since there was no grammar-independent usage of Sanskrit to be found. The particular description of these two phases, using the terms *lakṣyaikacakṣuṣka* and *lakṣaṇaika-cakṣuṣka*, is not found in any work of Bhartṛhari, but belongs to much later works. Hence, we cannot attribute this division directly to Bhartṛhari himself. Then, what do we find in Bhartṛhari? Did he at least implicitly support such a division? While he claims to be an interpreter of Patañjali, is there any indication in his work that he is in fact offering us a new view of Sanskrit grammar and Sanskrit language, a view which is significantly different from the one found in Patañjali, and a view which is a more accurate reflection of the changed situation? I would like to attempt to provide some answers to these questions in this paper. Consider the following passages from Bhartṛhari's works.

> **Passage 1:** *nyaṅkor neti smṛtyanatare pratiṣedha ārabhyate, nyāṅkavam iti / ihāpy av-yutpattipakṣe nyāṅkavam iti śiṣṭaparṣadā uktatvād ayaṃ vyākhyānaṃ saṃsādhnoti /* [Bhartṛhari's *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā* in Palsule 1983: 12]. Translation: "In another Smṛti a prohibitory rule *nyaṅkor na* is framed (to account for the form) *nyāṅkava*. Here (in Pāṇini's grammar) also *nyāṅkava* has been accepted by the whole body of the Śiṣṭas, on the view that the *Uṇādi* words are unanalysable. So, he (the Bhāṣyakāra) gives an explanation." [Palsule 1983: 35]

Comments: A grammatical description is termed *smṛti* "recollection, memory." This implies that, at least in this view of grammar, a grammar is a statement by some authority of his recollection of how the ideal usage is supposed to be. Taken literally, it is simply a descriptive statement. Bhartṛhari then says that the word *nyāṅkava* was used by a body of Śiṣṭas (*śiṣṭa-parṣad*), and this was why Patañjali came up with an explanation for this word. Here, Patañjali is depicted as being responsive to what the Śiṣṭas say, and this fits the description of the role of a grammarian as found in the *Mahābhāṣya* itself. A grammarian is expected to be responsive to the usage of the Śiṣṭas.

> **Passage 2:** *śabdāh smaryante abhyudayāya / anye tu doṣāya /* [*Mahābhāṣyadīpikā* in Palsule 1983: 13].
> Translation: "(Correct) words are taught for worldly prosperity in the Smṛtis; the others lead to sin." [Palsule 1983: 35]

Comments: This explains the function of the Smṛtis, which include grammar. This function is very much in agreement with the discussion which goes back to Kātyāyana and Patañjali. I would suggest that we not

render the word *abhyudaya* by "worldly prosperity." Such a rendering brings in the contrast between the notions of *abhyudaya* "worldly prosperity" versus *nihśreyasa* "spiritual prosperity" as seen in the works of Śaṅkara, such as the introduction to his *Gītābhāṣya*. This is a very late contrast and is intended neither in Bhartṛhari's work, nor in the works of Kātyāyana and Patañjali.

> **Passage 3**: '[*mrjer*] *vrddhir acaḥ*' *ity etāvad evāstu* / [*tataḥ*] '*aci kñiti vā bhavatī'ti* / *asya ca smartā bhāsyakāraḥ* / *ayaṃ cādiśisṭa iti* / [*Mahābhāsyadīpikā* in Palsule 1983: 13].
> Translation: "To that end let (the sūtra) be as [*mrjer*] *vrddhir acaḥ*. Then *aci kñiti* (and finally) *vā*. The author of this is the Bhāsyakāra who is the foremost of the Śisṭas." [Palsule 1983: 35]

Comments: This is a very significant passage. Here Patañjali offers a new grammatical formulation [or rather reformulation] which accounts for words not previously accounted for by Pāṇini's grammar. Who is the author of this new grammatical rule? Bhartṛhari says that Patañjali is the Smartā "recounter, rememberer" of this rule. This is the role Bhartṛhari ascribes to grammarians. They do not produce new usage, but recollect the standard usage. So far this is fine. But then Bhartṛhari says that Patañjali is the foremost of the Śisṭas. While in Passage 1 above, Bhartṛhari says that Patañjali as a grammarian is responsive to the usage of the body of Śisṭas, here he calls him the foremost of the Śisṭas. Clearly, there is a conflation of the two functions here which Patañjali himself tried his best to keep separate. Patañjali's logic was that if the grammarians are themselves to be called Śisṭas, and if grammar is to follow the usage of the Śisṭas, then this argument becomes circular. Therefore, Patañjali tried to find a non-circular definition of the Śisṭa. Bhartṛhari has conflated the two roles by saying that the best Śisṭa is the best grammarian, and that Patañjali has the honor of being both. This peculiar conflation of the roles is not just casual or occasional in Bhartṛhari, but, as we shall see, it is the hallmark of his thought. Bhartṛhari's recognition of Patañjali as the foremost of the Śisṭas has several possible implications. The first implication is that the roles of being a grammarian and a Śisṭa need not or cannot be kept separate, and that these roles can be, or perhaps must be, combined. Secondly, by calling Patañjali a Śisṭa Bhartṛhari seems to affirm that a Śisṭa need not be a contemporary person, but that a person of one era could be considered to be a Śisṭa for another era. It seems that for Patañjali himself, the notion of Śisṭa seems to carry with it an associated notion of contemporariness. By considering Patañjali to be not

only a Śiṣṭa, but the foremost Śiṣṭa, Bhartṛhari seems to be implicitly subscribing to the notion expressed later by Kaiyaṭa in the maxim: *yathottaram munīnām prāmāṇyam* "the later the sage, the greater his authority." Of course, this doctrine applies only to the first three sages of the Pāṇinian tradition, i.e. Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patañjali. This makes Patañjali the most authoritative among these three ancient sages, and the doctrince does not apply to the period after Patañjali, which makes Patañjali the foremost authority for all periods of Sanskrit grammar. By considering Patañjali to be the foremost Śiṣṭa, Bhartṛhari is also subordinating his contemporary Śiṣṭas to the authority of Patañjali. In effect, Bhartṛhari seems to be subscribing to a new notion of Śiṣṭa, a notion not shared by Patañjali himself.

There is also another role-conflation manifest in Bhartṛhari. He calls Patañjali a Smārta, as well as the foremost among the Śiṣṭas. This seems to combine the two views of grammar, one as a *smṛti* "recollection, description of [ideal, but actual] behavior," and the other as a *śāsana* "teaching, ruling, decree, regulation." Taken literally, the first notion seems to view grammar as a purely descriptive enterprise, while the second notion seems to add a prescriptive and a coercive dimension. The coercive nature of the meaning of the verb *śās* can be demonstrated from many examples.[4]

> **Passage 4:** *upadeśaṃ cāntareṇa saṃskāravati nirapabhraṃśe śabdabrahmaṇi labdha-pratiṣṭhānāṃ śiṣṭānām anumānam* / Bhartṛhari's *Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.12 (Iyer 1966: 43). Translation: "It is the means of inferring that those, who, without being taught, are well acquainted with the true word endowed with correctness and free from corruption, are the cultured people." (Iyer 1965: 18).

Comments: This is merely a restatement of Patañjali's discussion in the *Mahābhāṣya* on P.6.3.109.

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4   This dichotomy of views goes back to the old contrast between the notions of grammar expressed by the terms *vyākaraṇa* and *anuśāsana*. The coercive value of the verb *anu+śās* is manifest in many passages from the late Vedic literature, e.g. *vedam anūcyācāryo 'ntevāsinam anuśāsti – satyam vada / dharmam cara / svādhyāyān mā pramadaḥ ...*, *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* 1.11. The content of the message of an *anuśāsana* is full of the usage of imperatives etc. Similarly, while the views of Āpiśali have been quoted in Passage 1 above under the name *Smṛtyantara*, elsewhere in Sanskrit grammatical literature, the same view has been referred to by using the verb *śās*. For instance, in his *Uṇādivṛtti* (p. 11), Ujjvaladatta cites Āpiśali's view as: *Āpiśalis tu nyaṅkor naicbhāvam śāsti*. This particular conflation of *smarati* and *śāsti* is not new for Bhartṛhari. It is simply an instance of continuation of an old conflation.

Passage 5: *sādhuprayogānumitāṃś ca śiṣṭān na veda yo vyākaraṇaṃ na veda /*,
Bhartrhari's *Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.12 (Iyer 1966: 43).
Translation: "He who does not know (among other things) the cultured users (of
Sanskrit) recognized from their use of correct language, does not know grammar."

Comment: This is also a continuation of the old notion of how to
recognize a Śiṣṭa. Cf. *Mahābhāṣya* on P.6.3.109.

Passage 6: *tatrāmnātā maharṣibhih / sūtrādīnām praṇetṛbhih / vyākaraṇa eva ye
sūtrādīnām praṇetāras te vyapadiśyante / tatra sūtrānām ārambhād eva śabdānām
nityatvam abhimatam / na hy anityatve śabdādīnām śāstrārambhe kiñcid api prayo-
janam asti / vyavahāramātram hy etad anarthakam na mahāntah śiṣṭāh samanugan-
tum arhantīti /* Bhartrhari's *Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.23 (Iyer 1966: 61-62).
Translation: "What is meant by 'taught there by the great sages', is: by the authors
of the sūtras etc. Those who have composed the sūtras etc. of the science of
Grammar are referred to. The very fact that the sūtras have been composed shows
that they considered the words to be eternal. There would be no purpose in
composing the science of Grammar if the words were not eternal. Because they
would be a matter of mere usage and great cultured persons would not take the
trouble of expounding them." (Iyer 1965: 27).

Comment: This passage identifies the Śiṣṭas as the authors of grammatical
texts.

Passage 7: *athavā yaih pratyakṣadharmabhis tatra pravacane sūtrānutantrabhāṣyāni
praṇītāni tair eva śiṣṭair vyākaraṇe 'pi nityāh śabdārthasambandhāh ity āmnātam /
teṣām ca vyavasthitam loke prāmānyam iti /* Bhartrhari's *Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.23 (Iyer 1966:
63).
Translation: "Or (it might be said) those very sages who have realised the truth and
have, in the course of their different teachings, composed Sūtras, Anutantra
(vārttikas) and Bhāṣya, have, in the science of Grammar also, declared that the
word, the meaning and their mutual relation are eternal. And their authority in the
world is established." (Iyer 1965: 28).

Comment: Iyer's translation does not do justice to the expression *tair eva
śiṣṭair* in the text. It says: "by the same Śiṣṭas, [it has been declared in the
science of grammar.]" This passage also clearly identifies the Śiṣṭas as the
authors of grammatical texts. The commentator Vṛṣabhadeva glosses the
words *tair eva śiṣṭair* with *pāṇinyādibhih* (Iyer 1966: 63).

Passage 8: *śiṣṭebhya āgamāt siddhāh sādhavo dharmasādhanam / arthapratyāyanā-
bhede viparītās tv asādhavah //* *VP* 1.27 (Iyer 1966: 81).
Translation: "The correct words, acquired from the cultured through tradition, are
the means of obtaining merit. The incorrect words, while not differing from them
as far as conveying of the meaning is concerned, are of an opposite character." (Iyer
1965: 40)

Comment: The words *śiṣṭebhya āgamāt siddhāḥ* are syntactically unclear. Do they refer to two separate sources for the knowledge of correct words, or are they dependent on each other in some way? The next passage from the *Vṛtti* deals with this issue in its own way.

> **Passage 9:** *yathaivānyāni dharmasādhanāni [vi]śiṣṭopadeśapāramparyāgamāvicchede-*
> *nāgatāni anabhiśaṅkanīyāni vyavasthitāni / ... tathā sādhvasādhuvyavasthānam apy*
> *anavacchinnapāramparyam anabhiśaṅkanīyaṃ yathāgamād eva siddham iti / Vṛtti* on
> *VP* 1.27 (Iyer 1966: 82).
> Translation: "Just as other means of attaining merit, received through uninterrupted tradition consisting of successive teaching of the cultured are well established and are not to be doubted, in the same way, the distinction between what is correct and what is not is based on unbroken tradition and is not to be doubted, but is to be accepted according to tradition." (Iyer 1965: 40).

Comments: This passage makes it clear that for Bhartṛhari the conception of Śiṣṭa is not a synchronic conception including only the contemporary Śiṣṭas. For him, this conception represents an *āgama* 'tradition, continuous transmission.' The Śiṣṭas of one generation transmit their knowledge to the next generation of Śiṣṭas in an unbroken way, and presumably the latter-day Śiṣṭas derive their authority from their being in line of transmission from the Śiṣṭas of the older generation.

> **Passage 10:** *nānarthikām imāṃ kaścid vyavasthāṃ kartum arhati / tasmān nibadhyate*
> *śiṣṭaiḥ sādhutvaviṣayā smṛtiḥ // VP* 1.29. *ko hi śiṣṭaḥ sambhinnabuddhir api lokam*
> *praty abhiniviṣṭo durjñānaṃ duradhyeyaṃ ca svarasaṃskārādiniyamaṃ laukika-*
> *vaidikānāṃ śabdānāṃ prayojanaṃ vyavasthāpayitum utsaheta / na cānarthako*
> *niyamaḥ / kṛto 'pi śiṣṭair aparair na parigṛhyate / pramāṇaṃ vā viduṣāṃ loke na syād*
> *iti / tasmād anādir gurupūrvakramāgatā śiṣṭānumānahetur avyabhicārā lakṣaṇapra-*
> *pañcābhyāṃ paryāyaiḥ śabdavatī cāśabdā ca smṛtir nibadhyate / Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.29
> (Iyer 1966: 84-85).
> Translation: "Nobody would establish this system of rules without a purpose. Therefore, this tradition relating to correctness is being composed by the cultured. (Comm.:) Which cultured person, even if he has a confused mind and no sympathy towards the world, would undertake the regulation of the accent and other signs of correctness of the words of the Veda and of the world which are so difficult to know and to learn and which are the very purpose of Grammar? And such a regulation would not be useless. (If it were) such a regulation made by the cultured would be unacceptable to the others. And it would not be authority in the world for scholars. Therefore, this tradition (relating to words) beginningless, handed down from teacher to pupil, the means of inferring who the cultured persons are, infallible, consisting of general rules and their elaborations, is being composed in different ways, through direct statements and by implication." (Iyer 1965: 42).

Comments: Here, the verse from the *Vākyapadīya* and the *Vṛtti* seem to be espousing slightly different ideas. To focus on this difference, we can note that the verse says that the grammatical Smṛti is composed by the Śiṣṭas (*śiṣṭaiḥ nibadhyate smṛtiḥ*). On the other hand, the *Vṛtti* says that the grammatical Smṛti is a tool to detect who the Śiṣṭas are (*śiṣṭānumāna-hetuḥ*). Of these two conceptions, the first one is the new conception developed by Bhartṛhari, while the second conception is the old conception found in the *Mahābhāṣya* on P.6.3.109.

Passage 11: *āvirbhūtaprakāśānām anupaplutacetasām / atītānāgatajñānam pratyakṣān na viśiṣyate // VP 1.37 // atīndriyān asamvedyān paśyanty ārṣena cakṣuṣā / ye bhāvān vacanam teṣām nānumānena bādhyate // VP 1.38. Vṛtti: atha ca tapasā nirdagdhadoṣā nirāvaraṇakhyātayaḥ śiṣṭāḥ pratibimbakalpena pratyakṣam iva svāsu khyātiṣu samkrāntākāraparigraham avyabhicaritam sarvam paśyanti /... antaryāminam anugrāmam abhijātinimittanibandhanam anabhivyaktam śabdabrahma śaktyadhiṣṭhā-nam devatāḥ karmanām anubandhaparināmaśaktivaikalyāni sūkṣmam ātivāhikam śarīram pṛthag anyāmś ca tīrthapravādeṣu prasiddhān arthān rūpādivad indriyair agrāhyān sukhādivat pratyātmasamvedyān ye śiṣṭā vyāvahārikād anyenaiva cakṣuṣā muktasamśayam upalabhante / teṣām anumānaviṣayātītam vacanam vyabhicāribhir anumānair apākartum aśakyam /* (Iyer 1966: 94-96).

Translation: "The knowledge of the past and the future of those whose insight has manifested itself and whose mind is in no way tainted differs in now way from perception (*VP* 1.37). The words of those who, with their divine vision, see things which are beyond the senses and unknowable, cannot be set aside by reasoning (*VP* 1.38). (*Vṛtti:*) But cultured persons, whose impurities have been burnt away by austerities, whose cognitions are free from all limitations, see everything vividly reflected in their cognitions. The supreme inner Controller, the atoms which are the abode of the initial cause of creation, the unmanifested Word–Absolute which is the substratum of its powers, the gods, the residual forces generated by action, leading to particular results and not to others, in their maturity, the divine otherworldly body, and other such things known in all scholarly circles, imperceptible to the senses like colour and beyond the range of inner experience like happiness are undoubtedly perceived by the sages with their extraordinary eye. The words of these sages, dealing with matters beyond the range of inference, cannot be upset by reasoning which is so liable to err." (Iyer 1965: 47-48)

Comments: Here the verses of the *VP* do not mention the Śiṣṭas explicitly. However, the *Vṛtti* takes this to be a description of the Śiṣṭas. A comparison of this description of the Śiṣṭas with the description given by Patañjali on P.6.3.109 shows that while Patañjali is speaking about a real community of ideal speakers residing in the region of Āryāvarta, a community of learned Brāhmaṇas, Bhartṛhari has almost mythologized the conception of Śiṣṭa. It has no specific regionality or temporality, but it has a very high degree of spirituality. This high degree of spirituality seems to

indicate that he is not speaking about any contemporary persons, but mythologized great sages of the golden age of Sanskrit grammar. His reference to *ārṣa cakṣus* "vision appropriate to a Ṛṣi", which Iyer wrongly translates as "divine eye," makes it clear that Bhartṛhari's Śiṣṭas are the ancient Ṛṣis, and not any contemporary persons. With this attitude, it makes eminent sense that Bhartṛhari views Patañjali to be the foremost of the Śiṣṭas. By the time of Bhartṛhari, Patañjali has been mythologized into a Ṛṣi, and his *Mahābhāṣya* is referred to as an *ārṣa* text (*VP* 2.481). As Abhyankar and Limaye (1965: 203) point out, these two verses of the *Vākyapadīya* have been quoted by Kaiyaṭa in his *Pradīpa* on *Mahābhāṣya* on P.6.3.109, where he elucidates Patañjali's conception of Śiṣṭa. However, Kaiyaṭa sees no difference between Bhartṛhari's conception and Patañjali's conception. Kaiyaṭa cites these verses to explain the import of the expression *kiñcid antarena kasyāścid vidyāyāḥ pāram gatāḥ*. Kaiyaṭa takes this to mean that the Śiṣṭas acquire mastery of knowledge without even being taught by a teacher (*vinaiva abhiyogādinā*, Uddyota: *abhiyogo gurūpadeśaḥ, ādinā abhyāsādiḥ*). The implication is that they have direct access to all knowledge through their yogic and ascetic practices, and they need neither instruction nor practice. It is almost certain that Patañjali does not have any such thing in his mind. We need to be aware that Kaiyaṭa's understanding of the *Mahābhāṣya* has been significantly colored by his reliance on Bhartṛhari, and that several crucial distinctions escaped his attention.

> **Passage 12:** *astam yātesu vādesu kartrsv anyesu asatsv api / śrutismṛtyuditam karma loko na vyativartate // VP* 1.125. *Vṛtti: iha pranetrvad āgamānām api pravādesu vicchedo 'bhyupagamyate / tesu pratyastamitesu yāvad anye pranetāro notpadyante, āgamāntarāni ca na pratāyante tatrāpy antarāle śrutivihitāni karmāni smṛtini-bandhanāmś ca bhaksyābhaksyādīn niyamān nātikrāmanti śiṣṭāḥ /* (Iyer 1966: 204). Translation: "Even if the doctrines perish and there are no more authors to compose others, cultured people follow the right path mentioned in the *śrutis* (Scripture) and the *Smṛtis* (written tradition). [Iyer translates this verse under number *VP* 1.133.] [Commentary:] In all discussions, it is admitted that, like the authors, the written traditions themselves can disappear. When they come to an end and before other authors arise and other written traditions are elaborated, there may be an interval during which cultured people do not violate the rites taught in the Scripture nor the regulations relating to what to eat and what not to eat embodied in the written traditions." (Iyer 1965: 120)

Comments: Iyer's translation needs some comment. The verse of the *VP* uses the expression *loko na vyativartate*, which literally means: "the world (or people) do not violate." Under the influence of the *Vṛtti*, Iyer

translates the word *loka* as being equivalent to Śiṣṭa. In this particular case, there seems to be some contextual justification to support a restricted meaning for the word *loka*. Since the verse speaks about the "world" not violating the rules laid down in the Vedas and Smṛtis, we can assume that the verse does not refer to the world or people at large, but only to those people who follow the rules laid down in the Vedas and Smṛtis. Therefore, a more restrictive view of the notion of *loka* is justified.[5] There is also no need to bring in any notion of "written" traditions. There is no reference to writing. The verse of the *VP* seems to refer to a decadent age where the ancient traditions have been lost, and yet some people seem to continue to follow the regulations from the ancient traditions, perhaps by instinct. These people could not be the same as the great ancient Ṛsis, referred to as Śiṣṭas elsewhere. Thus, the Śiṣṭas referred to in the *Vṛtti* of this verse must be good people in a decadent age. Thus, the word Śiṣṭa seems to have been used with some latitude, though mostly to refer to the ancient glorious Ṛsis.

Passage 13: *sādhutvajñānaviṣayā saiṣā vyākaraṇasmṛtiḥ / avicchedena śiṣṭānām idaṃ smṛtinibandhanam // VP 1.133. Vṛtti: yathaiva bhakṣyābhakṣyagamyāgamya-vācyāvācyādiviṣayā vyavasthitāḥ smṛtayaḥ yāsu nibaddhaṃ samācāraṃ śiṣṭā na vyatikrāmanti tatheyam api vācyāvācyaviśeṣaviṣayā vyākaraṇākhyā smṛtiḥ / smṛto hy arthaḥ pāramparyād avicchedena punaḥ punar nibadhyate / prasiddhasamayācārāyāṃ ca smṛtāv anibandhanaśabdāyāṃ śiṣṭasamācārāvicchedenaiva smaryate /* (Iyer 1966: 212-213).

Translation: (Iyer 1965 translates this verse under *VP* 1.141): "Knowledge of the correctness of words is the subject of this tradition called Grammar. It is here that the uninterrupted tradition of cultured people is recorded. (Commentary:) Just as traditions relating to what can be eaten and what cannot be eaten, which woman one can marry and which woman one cannot marry, what can be said and what cannot be said are well established and cultured people do not go against the code of conduct based on them, in the same way, this tradition called Grammar relates

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5   Here, we should distinguish the use of the word *loka* in this verse of the *VP* from the use in the first *Vārttika* of Kātyāyana on Pāṇini's grammar: *siddhe śabdārthasambandhe lokato 'rthaprayukte śāstreṇa dharmaniyamaḥ* "With the words, their meanings, and the relationship between them being already established by (the usage of) the world and (with the words) being used to express meanings, the science of grammar makes a restriction as to (which words are conducive) to religious merit." Here, the word *loka* refers to the world at large, i.e. to speakers of correct as well as incorrect words. All this usage of language, correct as well as incorrect, is given to grammarians, and all that the grammarians can do is to say which kind of usage is meritorious. They do not invent linguistic usage, either correct or incorrect. Of this totality of linguistic usage, Patañjali would say that the usage of the Śiṣṭas represents the correct and the meritorious usage. Thus, the Śiṣṭa usage represents a subset of the linguistic usage in the world.

to what particular words can be used and what not. What is remembered from generation to generation, in an uninterrupted manner is again and again embodied in words. A tradition which has no written basis but the observance of which is well-known is preserved by the continuity of the practice of the cultured." (Iyer 1965: 124-125).

Comments: Again, Iyer is not justified in bringing in any notion of writing. In the syntax of the original verb, the genitive form *śistānām* is somewhat ambiguous. It could be possibly connected as an agentive genitive with the word *nibandhanam*, which makes the Śistas the authors of these grammatical compositions. Such a view of the role of the Śistas is justified on the basis of several other passages. The *Vrtti*, and Iyer who follows it, seem to connect this genitive with *samācāra* "practice." This word is found in the *Vrtti*, but does not occur in the text of the verse. The verse as interpreted by Iyer does not make any reference to who the authors of the grammatical Smrti are. However, as shown above, another interpretation is possible.

Passage 14: *tasyāś cāsamkīrnam vāco rūpam kārtsnyena sāmānyaviśesavaty asmin laksane vyākaranākhye nibaddham / arvāgdarśanānām tu purusānām prāyena sātiśa-yāh pratighātinyah sāparādhāh śaktayah / niraparādhas tu laksanaprapañcavān aneka-mārgo 'yam śabdānām pratipattyupāyo darśitah / Vrtti* on *VP* 1.134. (Iyer 1966: 221) Translation: (Iyer 1965 translates this passage as *Vrtti* on *VP* 1.142) "The pure form of that word is embodied in this descriptive Science called Grammar, consisting of general and special rules. The powers of those of lower visions, generally admit of degree, are liable to meet obstruction and to commit mistakes. Hence this method of acquiring the words, free from error and consisting of definitions and elaborations and containing many paths, has been developed." (Iyer 1965: 127).

Comments: The commentary *Paddhati* of Harivrsabha (Iyer 1966: 221) on the word *niraparādhah* "free from error" says that the grammatical Smrti texts are free from error because they are composed by the Śistas (*śistaih pranītatvāt*). This comment from Harivrsabha shows that the idea of the Śistas being the authors of grammatical texts was positively endorsed by the commentators of Bhartrhari's works.

Passage 15: *svabhāvajñaiś ca bhāvānām drśyante śabdaśaktayah // VP* 1.135cd *// Vrtti: santi tu sādhuprayogānumeyā eva śistāh sarvajñeyesv apratibaddhāntah-prakāśāh / te viśistakālāvadhipravibhāgām yathākālam dharmādharmasādhana-bhāvena samanvitām śabdaśaktim avyabhicārena paśyanti //* (Iyer 1966: 221-223). Translation: (Iyer 1965: 128-129 translates this verse as *VP* 1.143:) "[As] the powers of words are seen by those who know the true nature of things. (Commentary:) There are cultured people and that they are so can be inferred only from their use of correct words. They, whose inner vision is unobstructed in regard to all things to

be known, see, without error, the power of words, differing at different periods of time and consisting in their being the means of merit or demerit, according to the times."

Comments: This passage also gives a view of the Śiṣṭas which is far more mythologized and utopian as compared to the conception of Patañjali. The commentary *Paddhati* of Harivṛṣabha offers an interesting explanation of the word *svabhāvajña* in the verse: *ye tu śiṣṭāḥ padārthaśaktim pratyakṣeṇa [paśyanti?] te pṛṣodarādivat sarvān sādhūn vidantīti tān praty anarthakam vyākaraṇam / tacchiṣṭaparijñānārthan tu vyākaraṇam iti* / (Iyer 1966: 222). This argues that the Śiṣṭas, with their mystical powers, directly perceive which words are correct and which are incorrect, and they use them appropriately. They do not need to use a grammar themselves to make this determination. Patañjali's notion of Śiṣṭa assumes that there are people who speak correct Sanskrit without learning it from grammar books. However, Patañjali says that this could be either through divine grace or their own inherent nature. He does not enhance the mystical powers of these Śiṣṭas. He merely seems to refer to "natural" speakers of Sanskrit. By the time of Bhartṛhari and his commentators, this "natural" speaker of Sanskrit has been endowed with supernatural mystical Rṣi-like powers. In this sense, the Śiṣṭas have been mythologized.

> **Passage 16:** *anādim avyavacchinnām śrutim āhur akartṛkām / śiṣṭair nibadhyamānā tu na vyavacchidyate smṛtiḥ // VP 1.136 // Vṛtti: smṛtis tu nityam avicchidyamānārthā gadyaślokavākyādibhedena pratikālam anyathā śiṣṭair eva nibadhyate //* (Iyer 1966: 223-224).
> Translation: (Iyer 1965: 129-130 translates this verse as *VP* 1.144:) "Scripture (Śruti) has been declared to be beginningless, continuous and without an author. Written tradition (Smṛti) is composed by cultured Ancients and has continuity. (Commentary:) Written Tradition, on the other hand, has continuity of meaning, but is composed by the cultured differently at different times in prose, verses, sentences etc."

Comments: As pointed out before, Iyer's reference to writing is out of place. This passage most clearly connects the Śiṣṭas with the authorship of grammatical texts. Interestingly, the verse has just the word *śiṣṭa*, but Iyer renders it with "cultured Ancients." Iyer's translation obviously reads something into the text which is not there from a very literal point of view, and yet I feel he captures the contextually recoverable intention of the author of the verse. As I have argued before. Bhartṛhari has mythologized the notion of Śiṣṭa and it does not refer to any contemporary speakers of standard Sanskrit. It refers to mythologized and partially deified ancient authors of Sanskrit grammatical texts. Bhartṛhari's conception of Śiṣṭa,

therefore, has a utopian quality to it, rather than being something which can be understood purely in sociolinguistic terms.

> **Passage 17:** *atha kasmād ete gośabdasya gāvyādayaḥ paryāyā na vijñāyante /na hi śistasamācāraprasiddher anyad evamprakāreṣu smṛtinibandhaneṣv arthesu nimittam abhidhīyate / gāvyādayaś cet paryāyāḥ syur ete 'pi śiṣṭair lakṣaṇair anugamyeran prayujyeramś ca //* Vṛtti *on VP 1.141. (Iyer 1966: 231).*
> Translation: (Iyer 1965: 134 translates this passage as *Vṛtti* on *VP* 1.149:) "Why is it that *goṇī* etc. are not considered to be synonyms of *gauḥ*? In regard to such matters which are embodied in the written Tradition, no other cause other than being well-known in the practice of the cultured can be adduced. If *gāvī* etc. were synonyms, they would also have been included in their rules and actually used."

Comments: This passage clearly attributes two functions to the Śiṣṭas. The usage of the Śiṣṭas is viewed to be standard usage. However, the Śiṣṭas are also authors of the rules of grammar codifying that standard usage.

> **Passage 18:** *na śiṣṭair anugamyante paryāyā iva sādhavaḥ / te yataḥ smṛtiśāstreṇa tasmāt sākṣād avācakāḥ //* VP *1.142 //* (Iyer 1966: 231).
> Translation: (Iyer 1965: 134 translates this verse as *VP* 1.150:) "Since they (= incorrect words, *apabhraṁśas*) are not explained like correct synonyms by cultured people in the written Tradition (*smṛtiśāstra*), therefore, they are not directly expressive."

Comments: This verse again clearly confirms the notion that the Śiṣṭas are authors of grammatical texts.

> **Passage 19:** *jñānam tv asmadviśiṣṭānām tāsu sarvendriyam viduḥ / abhyāsān maniru-pyādiviśeṣeṣv iva tadvidām //* VP *Kāṇḍa III, Jātisamuddeśa, verse 46 (Iyer 1963: 51).*
> Translation: "The knowledge regarding the universal of those who are different from us proceeds from all the senses, just as that relating to the characteristics of precious stones and coins comes through practice in the case of those who know them." (Iyer 1971: 33)

Comments: Iyers rendering of the expression *asmadviśiṣṭānām* as "those who are different from us" does not do justice to the intention of the verse. As Helārāja appropriately points out, this expression seems to mean "those who are superior to us." It refers to the Śiṣṭas with their supernormal cognitive abilities: *tad evam āgamaprāmāṇyād bhāvatatt-vadṛśaḥ śiṣṭāḥ santy atīndriyārthadarśina iti te yathāyatham gotvabrāhmaṇa-tvādijātīr āśrayavivekenādhyakṣayanti / tac ca teṣām śiṣṭānām jñānam sarvendriyam pratiniyamānapekṣatvāt / sarvajñā hīndriyāntareṇāpīndri-yāntaravyāpāram kurvanti /... brāhmaṇatvādiṣv asti kiñcit sāsnādisthānīyam upavyañjanam asmākam param atīndriyam / śiṣṭais tad avadhārya samjñāḥ*

pranītāḥ / ... tatrabhavatām upadeśād vayam api sampradāyapāramparyād yathāyogam gotvādijātīr adhyavasyāmaḥ // Prakīrnakaprakāśa of Helārāja (Iyer 1963: 51-55). Translation: "Thus, on account of the authority of the tradition [we assert] that the Śiṣṭas do exist who see the truth of things and see things which are beyond the reach of senses. They appropriately determine the existence of different universals such as cowness and Brahminness depending upon the difference of the loci of these universals. That knowledge of those Śiṣṭas comes from all senses, since (for such accomplished persons) there is no restriction on which objects are cognized through which sense. Omniscient persons can accomplish the function of one sense with another sense. Just as [for recognizing cowness, there is] the dewlap [in the individual object], similarly there must be some indicator for the universals like Brahminness. However, those indications are beyond our senses. The Śiṣṭas, after comprehending such indications, make the appropriate designations. Because of the teaching of those honored [Śiṣṭas], we also determine the appropriate universals like cowness through continuity of our tradition." Helārāja seems to be true to the spirit of Bhartṛhari, though perhaps even more ebullient. According to him, we the current grammarians do not have the supernatural cognitive abilities which the ancient Śiṣṭas had, and therefore we can do no better than follow the teachings of those ancient Śiṣṭas. This virtually denies the existence of contemporary Śiṣṭas, and does seem to fall in the general line of the doctrine of declining abilities of humans in the course of time. Helārāja, in fact, discusses this notion of decline of abilities with time, and hence the resulting authority of the past sages, in great detail (Iyer 1963: 53). Again, to emphasize our historical perspective, Patañjali himself does not share in this notion of the non-existence of the contemporary Śiṣṭas.

Passage 20: *bhāvatattvadṛśaḥ śiṣṭāḥ śabdārtheṣu vyavasthitāḥ / yad yad dharme 'ṅgatām eti liṅgam tat tat pracakṣate //* Vākyapadīya, Third Kāṇḍa, Liṅgasamuddeśa, Verse 21. (Iyer 1973: 141).
Translation: "Cultured people who can see the truth and who know the words and meanings adopt whatever gender leads to merit." (Iyer 1974: 114).

Comments: As Helārāja clarifies on this verse, Bhartṛhari is redefining the notion of *loka* "world" in terms of Śiṣṭas. As the older dictum goes: *liṅgam aśiṣyam lokāśrayatvāl liṅgasya* (*Mahābhāṣya*, II, p. 198) "Gender need not be explicitly taught in grammar, since it depends upon the usage of words in the world." While the original statement does not have any reference to Śiṣṭas with mystical supernatural cognitive powers, Bhartṛhari's

interpretation elevates the world of usage to the world of Śistas with supernatural cognitive abilities, who know the absolutely true nature of things and whose cognitive abilities are totally unobstructed: *iha lokaśabdena śistā vivaksitāh / tesām ca vastuparamārtha-sāksātkāritā laksanam / te hi nirāvaranakhyātayo 'bhidheyesu samavetam strītvādi lingam abhyudaye yad yad yasya śabdasya sādhanatām eti tat tad eva tasyācaksate /, Prakīrnakaprakāśa* of Helārāja, (Iyer 1973: 141).

Conclusion:

A close study of all the passages cited above indicates that Bhartrhari has a distinctive conception of Śista, a conception which is substantially different from the conception found in Patañjali's *Mahābhāsya*. Patañjali's Śistas are a real flesh-and-blood community of Brahmins living in the region of Āryāvarta. While they are selfless and learned, they are still contemporary human beings. Patañjali argues that these Śistas speak Sanskrit naturally, and their natural usage does not ensue from a study of Sanskrit grammar. Just as they do not study Sanskrit grammar in order to learn Sanskrit, Patañjali does not depict them as being authors of grammatical works either. In fact Patañjali points to the circularity of argument, if grammar were to follow the usage of the Śistas who were grammarians themselves. He insists on finding a source of grammar-independent usage of standard Sanskrit. Such usage is found in the community of Śistas. Patañjali's Śistas thus represent a sociolinguistic unit of élite speakers of Sanskrit. They most likely spoke Sanskrit as a second language, but they could, so it is claimed, acquire Sanskrit without learning it from grammar books. Patañjali exclaims that such persons must be divinely gifted or must have a special nature that they do not learn Sanskrit from grammar books and yet speak it correctly. However, Patañjali does not depict them as being highly mythologized mystical sages of some ancient times whose cognitive abilities were far superior to the contemporaries of Patañjali. Thus, there is no mystique about them. Besides these contemporary Śistas, Patañjali also refers to mythical sages and their behavior in particular contexts. This is, for instance, the case with the story of the sages called Yarvānastarvāna narrated in the *Mahābhāsya* (Vol. I, p. 11):

> *yad apy ucyate ācāre niyama iti yājñe karmani sa niyamah / evam hi śrūyate / yarvānastarvāno nāmarsayo babhūvuh pratyaksadharmānah parāparajñā viditavedi- tavyā adhigatayāthātathyāh / te tatrabhavanto yad vā nas tad vā na iti prayoktavye yarvānastarvāna iti prayuñjate yājñe punah karmani nāpabhāsante /*

> The statement that there is a restriction on the usage [of correct Sanskrit] applies to the context of sacrificial performance. Thus it is heard. There were in ancient times great sages called Yarvāṇastarvāṇa. They had direct insight into the nature of things, knew this and the yonder worlds, had realized what there is to be realized, and had attained the true knowledge of the world as it is. Those highly honored sages used the [incorrect = Prakrit] expressions *yarvāṇa* and *tarvāṇa* when they should have used [the proper Sanskrit] expressions *yad vā naḥ* and *tad vā naḥ*. However, they did not use these incorrect [= Prakrit] expressions during a sacrificial performance.

Thus, in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, there are two distinct kinds of references, one kind refers to contemporary élite speakers of Sanskrit, i.e. the selfless learned Brahmins of the region of Āryāvarta, and the second kind refers to mythical sages like Yarvāṇastarvāṇa. Only the mythical sages are glorified by a supernormal mystical description, though Patañjali does not invoke their supernormal cognitive powers as an argument. It is simply a rhetorical device. The contemporary Śiṣṭas are described more in terms of their social and scholastic élitism, rather than any supernatural cognitive abilities. There is no doubt that Patañjali argues for grammar being responsive to contemporary Śiṣṭa-usage of Sanskrit. The clear argument is that a grammarian who merely knows what the form would be in terms of the inherited rules of grammar (*prāpti*) is inferior to the one who responds to the desired current standard usage (*iṣṭi*).[6] It says that an inherited system of grammatical rules is inherently an outdated system, and that it needs to be updated and revised by taking into account the contemporary Śiṣṭa usage. While Patañjali is not saying that the current age is as good as the older ages, he does not reach a point of denying the authority of the contemporary Śiṣṭas. While the ancient mythical Yarvāṇastarvāṇa are called Ṛsis, the contemporary Śiṣṭas are not called Ṛsis. They are exalted, and yet real human beings.

We should also refer to another distinction which we find in Patañjali's work. This is the distinction between the notions of *ācārya* versus *ṛsi*. While the word *ācārya* is an expression of respect, it refers to real historical teachers, contemporary or otherwise. Thus, for Patañjali, Pāṇini is an *ācārya*, but the mythical Yarvāṇastarvāṇas are *ṛsis*. This distinction between contemporary or ancestral teacher and mythical Ṛsi is found in several Dharmasūtras. For instance, the *Āpastambīyadharmasūtra* (1.2.5.4:

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6   *evam hi kaścid vaiyākaraṇa āha / ko 'sya rathasya praveteti / sūta āha / āyusmann aham prājiteti / vaiyākaraṇa āha / apaśabda iti / sūta āha / prāptijño devānāmpriyo na tv istijña isyata etad rūpam iti / Mahābhāṣya* on P.2.4.56, Vol. I, p. 488.

tasmād ṛṣayo 'vareṣu na jāyante niyamātikramāt) claims that, because of the transgression of restraints, no Ṛṣis are born among the younger generations. However, it routinely refers to contemporary Ācāryas. Similarly, Pāṇini seems to consider other grammatical authorities to be Ācāryas, rather than Ṛṣis. The term *ṛṣi* in Pāṇini's rules seems to refer to Vedic seers (Cf. P.3.2.186: *kartari carṣidevatayoḥ*) or to a Vedic mantra (Cf. P.4.4.96: *bandhane carṣau*). The term *ācārya* refers to teachers whose opinions are cited (Cf. P.7.3.49: *ād ācāryānām*).

In Bhartṛhari, an entirely new tone has set in. There is a strong undertone that the current times are decadent, and that there are no truly authoritative persons around. Grammarians in this decadent period must look back to the golden age of the great sages and seek authority in their statements. Thus, the ancient grammarians become the Śiṣṭas with super-normal cognitive and mystical abilities, something the contemporaries of Bhartṛhari could not hope to achieve. Thus, the Śiṣṭas are no longer a contemporary community of standard speakers of Sanskrit, but the ancient sages of a golden age of Sanskrit grammar. This indicates that for Bhartṛhari the ancient grammarians are already mythologized and deified to a great extent. While Patañjali has great respect for Pāṇini, he does not call him a Ṛṣi. On the other hand, Patañjali is already a Ṛṣi for Bhartṛhari, who calls his *Mahābhāṣya* an *ārṣa* text (*VP* 2. 481c: *ārṣe ... granthe*). The later tradition clearly considers all the three sages, i.e. Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, and Patañjali to be Ṛṣis or Munis, and the beginning of this process must have already set in by the time of Bhartṛhari.

This in general confirms the set of beliefs which become more explicit in later centuries when Patañjali is more conclusively regarded as an incarnation of the divinity Śeṣa. The iconographic representation of Patañjali as a serpent divinity appears for the first time in the southern Śiva temple at Chidambaram, and the literary references to Patañjali being an incarnation of Śeṣa also probably originate in the southern tradition.[7]

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7   The oldest iconographic representations of Patañjali as a form of the serpent divinity Śeṣa are found in the 13th century A.D. Natarāja temple at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu. Some of this Chidambaram iconography of Patañjali is illustrated in J.F. Staal 1972. The poem *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* by the Kashmirian poet Rājānaka Jayaratha refers to Patañjali as an incarnation of Śeṣa (Chapter 27, verse 167, p. 236). This poem also belongs to the 13th century. Jayaratha's narrative is in part based on the long lost *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya. However, no other recension of this lost work refers to Patañjali being an incarnation of Śeṣa. Then there is the 17th century poem *Patañjalicaritam* by the southern poet Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita which elaborates upon this theme. K.V. Abhyankar (1954: 352) suggests that the southern grammarians knew the account of the transmission of the *Mahābhāṣya* and its recovery by Candrācārya from the south, and then they

As we are informed in the concluding verses of the second *Kāṇḍa* of the *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari's grandteacher Candrācārya recovered the text of the *Mahābhāṣya* from a southern source. It is therefore likely that Bhartṛhari may have been aware of and influenced by these southern traditions regarding Patañjali as a divinity. In a decadent age when one thought that there was no grammar-independent usage of Sanskrit to be found, an identification of ancient grammarians with Śiṣṭas seems to be a way of combining the two previously independent sources of authority. While Patañjali could point to a contemporary community of Śiṣṭas who spoke standard Sanskrit without learning it from grammar books, Bhartṛhari was unable to do that. Thus, this whole argument lost its value. Under such changed conditions, Bhartṛhari created a whole new edifice of authority for Sanskrit grammar by pointing to the golden age of Sanskrit grammar where the great grammarian Ṛṣis were also the great Śiṣṭas. Bhartṛhari seems to argue that these great grammarians had a direct mystical insight into the true nature of Sanskrit and they did not need a grammar book themselves to learn Sanskrit. However, as great compassionate sages, these Munis prepared the grammatical Smṛtiśāstra for generations of lesser abilities to come. Bhartṛhari, who claims to belong to such later generations, accepts this grammatical inheritance with gratitude and reverence. Here is the beginning of the *lakṣaṇaikacakṣuṣka* phase of the Sanskrit grammatical theory.

created the elaborate myths about Patañjali appearing in Chidambaram. However, this does not explain why Patañjali should have been regarded as an incarnation of Śeṣa, rather than of some other divinity.

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