CHAPTER

1

The Date and Authorship of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*

The *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* may very well represent the earliest available record of an uncompromising non-dualistic doctrine (*advaita-vāda*) in the Vedānta school.[1] The text itself comprises of 215 verses traditionally divided into four *prakaraṇas*. The first *prakaraṇa* is traditionally interspersed between the prose of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*,[2] and is said to be an exposition of its main themes, although Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya has suggested that the *Upaniṣad* is actually later than the *prakaraṇa*.[3] Because of this association, the text is often called the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā* or as Bhattacharya preferred, the *Āgama-śāstra*. However, the remaining three *prakaraṇas* show little or no connection with the actual text of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, although there is a degree of doctrinal overlap. Nevertheless, each *prakaraṇa* has evidence of Buddhist influence in its language and arguments. The propensity for Buddhist ideas reaches such a degree in the fourth *prakaraṇa*, that some have suggested that it is actually a separate Buddhist work in its own right.[4]

The Identity and Date of Gauḍapāda

According to the Vedāntic tradition, Gauḍapāda is the teacher of Govinda, Śaṅkara's own teacher. Śaṅkara twice quotes the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (BSBh). In BSBh II.1.9 Śaṅkara cites GK I.16, referring to its source as "the teacher(s?) who know the meaning of the Vedānta tradition" (*atroktaṃ Vedāntārtha saṃpradāya vidbhirācāryaiḥ*). In BSBh I.4.14, GK III.15 is quoted and attributed to "those who know the tradition of the Vedānta" (*tathā*

ca saṃpradāyavido vadanti). In his commentary on *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.12.1, Śaṅkara also appears to refer to "the most revered follower of the school of Prajāpati," whose views are to be found in the four *prakaraṇas*. Again in *Upadeśasāhasrī* 2.18.2 Śaṅkara pays homage to his "teacher's teacher" (*guror garīyase*). Recently, however, Thomas Wood has cast doubt upon this evidence, pointing out that the phrase "*guror-garīyase*" can be taken to mean "extremely great teacher," "he who is greater than a (mere guru)," or even "highly venerable guru."[5] Wood argues that there is nothing in this section of the *Upadeśasāhasrī* which would link the reference in 2.18.2 either to Gauḍapāda or to the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*. As for the evidence from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣadhāsya*, he suggests that the phrase '*prakaraṇa-catuṣṭaya*' is a reference to the four instructions given by Prajāpati to Indra regarding the nature of the self in CU 8.7–12 and not to the four *prakaraṇas* of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*.[6] Nevertheless, it is equally likely that Śaṅkara is here referring to the author of the four *prakaraṇas* (of the GK) and stating that they conform to the "school of Prajāpati" insofar as they deal with the doctrine of the four states of the self outlined by Prajāpati in the text of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (CU) 8.7-12. Enough doubt, however, has been cast on the import of these references to treat them with some caution.

In the commentary on the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*, which may or may not be by Śaṅkara, the author of the text is referred to as the *bhāṣyakāra's* "grand (or supreme) teacher" (*paramaguru*, GKBh IV.100.) The ambiguity of the term "*paramaguru*" however should be noted. The term may be used to denote a "grand-teacher" (that is the teacher of one's own teacher) or may be used in a more figurative sense where it merely implies the primary source of one's inspiration. In the latter sense, the term does not imply membership of the same *saṃpradāya* or lineage of teachers. One cannot be certain, then, that the traditional view that Gauḍapāda is the teacher of Śaṅkara's teacher is in fact an accurate interpretation of the textual evidence available.

Whatever the precise relationship between the author(s) of the GK and Śaṅkara, one cannot doubt the esteem with which the *kārikās* and the author to whom they are ascribed were held. This much is clear from the references to the knower(s) of the Vedānta tradition when quoting GK III.15 and I.16 in BSBh I.4.14 and II.1.9. Despite this we know little more about the figure of "Gauḍa" or "Gauḍapāda" other than a number of mythological legends accepted by the post-Śaṅkara Vedānta tradition.[7] Information about the life and precise identity of "Gauḍapāda" is lost in the same hazy mists that shroud our knowledge of the early Vedānta school in India.

There has been a suggestion that the verses are the handbook of an early school of Vedānta, established in Bengal.[8] This is based upon the fact that part of northern Bengal was once called Gauḍadeśa. "Gauḍapāda" then, would mean the "summary verses from Bengal," and would not be the name of an individual at all. This of course, goes against all of the traditional interpretation of the evidence that we have before us in the works of Śaṅkara and his successors. On this point, however, it is interesting to note that Sureśvara, one of Śaṅkara immediate disciples, quotes the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* and Śaṅkara's *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, describing the two authors of these texts as "Gauḍas" and "Draviḍas" respectively (*Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* IV.44–46).

Sureśvara appears to be contrasting the two authors by referring to their places of geographical origin, Śaṅkara in the south of India (Draviḍas), and the author of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* in the north (Gauḍas). Certainly, if the tradition is correct in describing Gauḍapāda as a *samnyāsī* he would have renounced his own family name. It would not have been inappropriate for him to have been known according to his connection with the Gauḍadeśa region, in which case "*pāda*" would be an honorific title like "*ācārya*." This is, in fact, how Sureśvara understands the name as he alternates between "Gauḍas," "Gauḍapāda," and "Gauḍācārya."[9] If this is a correct appraisal of the situation, the reason why Gauḍapāda's place of origin was so important to his identity is still an unanswered question. Perhaps he became famous in a region distant from his own native area and so, as a "foreigner," was named after his birthplace; alternatively, Gauḍapāda may represent the name of the foremost teacher of an early (i.e. pre-Śaṅkarite) school of non-dualistic Vedānta founded in Bengal.[10]

The GK makes no obvious reference to the *Brahmasūtra* and its concomitant traditions,[11] yet references are made to the "established doctrines of the Vedānta" and to the Upaniṣadic literature in the first three *prakaraṇas*. In the GK all Vedāntic texts, of course, are said to reflect the text's own radically non-dualistic position and not the realism of the difference-non-difference (*bhedābheda*) school usually associated with pre-Śaṅkara Vedānta.[12] Do we have here the work of an alternative Vedānta tradition, running counter-current to the realistic (*pariṇāma*) tradition of the *Brahmasūtra*, or are we just witnessing the age old technique of reading one's own views into the traditions of the past? There is no firm evidence that might substantiate the hypothesis that there was a separate strand of early Vedānta philosophy displaying a form of radical non-dualism similar to that of the Śaṅkarite school. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that historical evidence concerning

the roots of the Vedānta-*darśāna* is shrouded in mystery and that there is still much that remains undiscovered.

If one accepts the *prima facie* evidence that Śaṅkara's *Chāndogya Upaniṣadbhāṣya* refers to the four *prakaraṇas* of the GK (and, as we have seen, Wood's arguments suggest that this is by no means the only interpretation of the evidence), then it is clear that the GK must have been established as a composite work of the Vedānta school by the eighth century CE (Common Era). This is apart from the fact that we have a commentary on the GK which may well prove to be by Śaṅkara himself. Śaṅkara's near contemporary, the Buddhist Śāntarakṣita, in the midst of discussing the views of the "*aupaniṣadas*," cites at least thirteen verses from GK II and III in his *Madhyamakālaṅkārakārikā*.[13] Citations by Śaṅkara, Sureśvara, and Śāntarakṣita together firmly establish the existence of the first, second, and third *prakaraṇas* by the eighth century CE. Let us summarize the evidence of citations of the GK prior to the ninth century CE.

1. Śaṅkara (c. eighth century CE) cites GK I.16 and III.15 in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*. Both times he refers to their source as the knower(s) or teacher(s) of the Vedānta *saṃpradāya*.
2. Śaṅkara's pupil Sureśvara cites GK I.11 and 15 in *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (NS) IV.41-42, attributing the verses to "Gauḍas" (see NS IV.44). In his *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣadvārttika* (BUV), Sureśvara quotes GK III.15 (BUV II.1.386), which he attributes to "Gauḍācārya." In BUV IV.8.886 and 888, Sureśvara quotes GK II.38 and III.46 referring to them as the "*ślokas* of Gauḍapāda." Finally in BUV I.4.389 three words from GK II.17 are quoted as "*Gauḍapādīya vacas*."

Other verses from the GK are also quoted by Sureśvara but without any specific attribution. BUV I.4.744 quotes GK I.3 as "*āgama-śāsana*"; BUV I.4.712 quotes GK I.11 without attribution (although in the NS Sureśvara attributes this *kārikā* to "Gauḍas.") In BUV 1.4.615, the author cites GK I.14, referring to it as "the well-established view of the Vedānta."

3. Maṇḍana-miśra (c. seventh-eighth century CE) cites GK I.11 in *Brahmasiddhi* III.171a (150) in his discussion of Vedic testimony with the words "Thus it is said" (*tad uktam*).
4. The Buddhist philosopher Śāntarakṣita (c. eighth century CE) cites *kārikās* 17–20, 31–32, and 35 of the second *prakaraṇa*

> and *kārikās* 4, 6, 8, and 30–32 of the third *prakaraṇa* in a discussion of the views of the "*aupaniṣadas*" in his auto-commentary to *śloka* 93 of his *Madhyamakālaṅkārakārikā*.

This evidence establishes beyond any reasonable doubt that GK I, II, and III were established texts of the Vedānta school by the eighth century. From the evidence of citations and attributions in the works of Sureśvara, we can establish that there was a link of authorship in the verses quoted, establishing an early acceptance of the common authorship of the first, second, and third *prakaraṇas*. The common source of these verses is said by Sureśvara to be known as "Gauḍas," "Gauḍapāda," or "Gauḍācārya." Note, however, that no author, not even the Buddhist Śāntarakṣita (who quotes copiously from the GK), makes any reference to the fourth *prakaraṇa* in spite of the fact that it amounts to nearly half of the entire text which we now have before us.

Citations from later authors also reflect an omission of *kārikās* from the fourth *prakaraṇa*. It is not, however, merely the fourth *prakaraṇa* that is conspicuous by its absence. Commentators from rival Vedānta schools refer to the first *prakaraṇa*, but in most cases, the remaining three are surprisingly ignored. Rāmānuja (1055–1137 CE) quotes GK I.16 in the introduction to his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, describing it as *śruti*. Kūranārāyaṇa, a member of Rāmānuja's own lineage, wrote a commentary on MU and GK I, referring to both as *śruti*. No mention is made in either case of any other *prakaraṇas*. The dualistic Vedāntin Madhva (1199–1278 CE) also wrote a commentary on MU and GK I, which he also refers to as *śruti*. Again, there is no suggestion that there are any other verses to be commented upon. This brings up two important issues. Why do these writers and commentators seem to think that GK I is *śruti* and why do they not mention the other *prakaraṇas*? It is certainly strange to write a commentary on a text and then to stop after the first chapter. Puruṣottama the seventeenth century Śuddhādvaitin wrote a commentary on the first and second *prakaraṇas* and according to Conio intended to comment on the third.[14]

Why is there no mention of GK IV in any text prior to the *Gauḍapādīyakārikābhāśya* (GKBh) itself? If the GKBh is not an authentic work of Śaṅkara then the author of that text may have lived as late as the twelth century CE since it is not until Ānandagiri (c.1300 CE), the author of the *Gauḍapādīyakārikābhāśyavyākhya*, that the commentary is first mentioned (and attributed to Śaṅkara). Kūranārāyaṇa, Madhva, and Puruṣottama, all make no reference to a fourth *prakaraṇa* despite writing a commentary on the first *prakaraṇa*

(and in the case of Puruṣottama, on the second and probably the third *prakaraṇas* also).

This is all highly surprising since we know for sure that GK I, II, III and IV and the *bhāṣya* upon them must have been composed before the time of Ānandagiri (late thirteenth century CE). The *bhāṣyakāra* differs in many respects from the views of the original *kārikās* themselves, and this in itself suggests that the four *prakaraṇas* are sufficiently separated from the commentator in time for their meaning to be unclear. In the fifteenth century, we find Sadānanda quoting GK III.44, 45 with the words "*tad uktam*" (Thus it is said). However, the crucial point is that we find Vedāntic and Buddhist scholars writing in a time after Ānandagiri (and hence after the establishment of the four *prakaraṇas* as a single text and the composition of a *bhāṣya* upon them), who ignore the existence of certain *prakaraṇas*, especially the fourth. One cannot doubt that these *prakaraṇas* (especially the first three) were in existence at this time, nor can one doubt that they were considered by some to constitute a single text. The fact, however, that there were established traditions which took the first *prakaraṇa* to be *śruti* along with the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* to which it is appended, suggest that the identity of the four *prakaraṇas* was not a universally accepted view even perhaps as late as the seventeenth century (if we assume that Puruṣottama did not intend to write a commentary on GK IV also).

What we find, in fact, are authors who clearly post-date GK IV ignoring the fourth *prakaraṇa*, perhaps because they were not aware of it or because they did not consider it a text which belonged with the other three. Surely Rāmānuja and Kūranārāyaṇa (Viśiṣṭādvaita), Madhva (Dvaita), and Puruṣottama (Śuddhādvaita), as critics of the "*māyāvāda*" of Śaṅkara's Advaita school, would have jumped at the chance to further substantiate the charge that the Advaitin is a crypto-Buddhist by referring to the Buddhist terminology and arguments of GK IV. Yet none of these authors even go as far as to criticize the more Buddhistic aspects of any of the *prakaraṇas* on which they do comment. In fact, all appear to have an extremely reverential view of the *kārikās*, (in many cases GK I being ascribed the status of *śruti*). Madhva in his dualistic commentary on the first *prakaraṇa* interprets all references to "*advaita*" as "free from impurities and imperfections." Clearly, this is not what the author of the first *prakaraṇa* seems to have intended when he used the term. That Madhva felt a need to comment on such a markedly non-dualistic text is perhaps a testimony to its authority within Vedāntic circles in general.

Authorship of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā*

The Relationship Between the First and Second Prakaraṇas

As with many Indian works, the attempt to piece together the historical background of the texts composition is fraught with theoretical and practical difficulties. The first *prakaraṇa* is in many respects different from the other three, not least because of its intimate connection with the prose of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. The content of GK I consists of a discussion of various creation theories, an exposition of the doctrine of the four states of experience and an explanation and exhortation to meditate upon the syllable Om. Although a refutation of creation theories remains a central feature of all four *prakaraṇas*, both the doctrine of the four states of experience and meditation on the syllable Om are absent from the remaining three *prakaraṇas* despite great emphasis on the analysis of experience and on the practice of *yoga*.

This discrepancy could be explained in a number of ways. One might suggest that repetition of major themes is unlikely in the GK since it is a collection of terse and brief *kārikās* rather than a lengthy and verbose exposition of Advaita philosophy. Be that as it may, the centrality of these doctrines in GK I belies the silence of the later *prakaraṇas*. Many themes (and indeed even entire arguments and verses) are in fact repeated throughout the GK, and one would expect the psychological analysis of experience in GK I to be referred to again, particularly in the discussion of the nature of perception in GK IV. Nor can the centrality of meditation on the syllable Om be questioned. GK I.24, for instance, even goes as far to suggest that having concentrated the mind upon the syllable Om, "one should meditate upon nothing else whatsoever." Why in the 186 verses contained in the remaining three *prakaraṇas* does such a central practice go unmentioned? It is not because of lack of interest for GK III and IV spend much time discussing the nature and consequences of *asparśa-yoga*, the "*yoga* of no-contact." In response, one might point to the fact that GK I is an exposition of the central themes of the MU and that this necessarily restricts the author to a discussion of those ideas found in the *Upaniṣad* itself; in later chapters there is no such obstacle to free discussion. This is a possibility, but GK I is not a strict commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the MU, merely an exposition of some of the central themes of the *Upaniṣad*. The first *prakaraṇa* makes no real attempt to systematically explain the *Māṇḍūkya* prose as one might expect in a straightforwardly commentarial text. This feature of GK I led Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya

to suggest that the *prakaraṇa* pre-dates the MU; a conclusion that seems unwarranted given that GK I is not in fact a *bhāṣya* but a *prakaraṇa*. Its purpose then is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of the words and phrases used in the MU, but rather to discuss some of its main themes.

Other aspects of GK I, however, seem to conflict with verses in the later *prakaraṇas*. GK I.6 introduces the discussion of various creation theories with an unannounced statement which seems to support the idea of creation.

> I.6: *prabhavaḥ sarvabhāvānāṃ satām iti viniścayaḥ.*
> *sarvam janayati prāṇaś ceto' mśūn puruṣaḥ pṛthak.*
> It is the firm conclusion [of sages] that there is an origin of all existing entities. *Prāṇa* creates the universe, *Puruṣa* creates each separate ray of consciousness.

Having already introduced the idea that it is the entirety of human experience that should be examined in an evaluation of reality and not just the experiences of our waking state (GK I.3d), various metaphysical theories explaining the nature of creation are put forward for consideration. *Prāṇa* as the vital breath brings life to things (i.e. causes them to come into being), and *Puruṣa* diversifies consciousness into living beings (*jīvas*). Karmarkar argues that the account of creation given in this verse cannot be Gauḍapāda's since he upholds *ajātivāda*;[15] however, there is no evidence from the text itself to substantiate Karmarkar's view. The *Vaitathyaprakaraṇa* (GK II) gives the following account of the world's appearance,

> II.16: *jīvaṃ kalpayate pūrvaṃ tato bhāvān pṛthagvidhān,*
> *bāhyān ādhyātmikāṃś caiva yathāvidyas tathāsmṛtiḥ.*
> [The *ātman*] first imagines the *jīva* (individual soul), and then different things, external and internal (objective and subjective); as one knows so does one recollect.

It should be noted, however, that GK I.6 and II.16 are not *necessarily* incompatible. I.6 can be interpreted as a description of a *vivarta*-type transformation where the individualization of consciousness into separate *jīvas* is merely imagined or "apparently-constructed" (*kalpita*).[16] Perhaps we are to assume that the theory propounded in GK I.6 is not the author's position, although it is the view of those convinced (*viniścaya*) about such things. Nevertheless, it seems most plausible to interpret the verse, along with Bhattacharya, as a reference to the views of wise men. The term *viniścaya* occurs

nowhere else in the GK, although similar terms such as *viniścita* (GK I.8), *niścita* (GK I.14, 22; II.17, 18; III.23), *suniścita* (GK IV.92, 95), and *niścaya* (GK II.12) occur throughout the text.[17] One should note, however, that these terms are generally used in a positive manner, endorsing or supporting the view put forward, except perhaps for *viniścita* in GK I.8. That the latter is used to refer to the views of others may be significant in this instance since it occurs two verses after the *kārikā* currently under discussion.

The next three verses discuss various other cosmogonic theories. GK I.7 attributes the view that creation is "like a dream and an illusion" (*svapna/māyā-vat*) to "others"—it does not appear to be the author's own view (although GK I.16 accepts the concept of "beginningless *māyā*.")

> I.7: *vibhūtiṃ prasavaṃ tv anye manyante sṛṣṭicintakāḥ,*
> *svapnamāyāsvarūpeti sṛṣṭir anyair vikalpitā.*
> Some creation-theorists, however, think of creation as an outflowing (emanation). Creation is imagined by others as having the same form as dream and illusion (*māyā*).[18]

In the first line of this verse we find the term "*vibhūti*," the quality of all-pervasiveness. Thus for some thinkers creation is an emanation, an overflowing of the "pleroma." The second line describes a view that is hard to distinguish from the author's own. The natural interpretation of the reference to the *māyā* theory of creation in GK I.7cd is that it is the view of a rival school. Placing one's own view in the midst of discussion of the views of others would seem to be a peculiar juxtaposition to say the least. However, in GK II.31 that same doctrine is said to be the established view of the Vedānta. What are we to make of this?

Karmarkar takes GK I.7cd to be a reference to the doctrines of the *Lankāvatārasūtra*.[19] Certainly it is problematic to accept Bhattacharya's assertion that "[t]his view is held by some Vedāntists including our teacher."[20] Hixon suggests that the author's quarrel with this view is that it mistakenly accepts creation in the first place.[21] This is an attractive interpretation. In the *Vaitathyaprakaraṇa* (GK II) we find criticisms to the effect that our common sense notions of "normality" should not be derived purely from our waking experience and then extrapolated to stand for all facets of our experience (II.8). Thus, it would be absurd to talk of creation as having the form of a dream or an illusion for these can only be defined according to a dualistic creation scheme. It would be like explaining a flower by saying that it is like

a lotus. Dreams and illusions constitute a (relatively) minor aspect of the so-called "created" realm. Be that as it may, this does not explain the attribution of this view to others given its adoption by the author at a later point.

Thomas Wood argues that GK I.7cd cannot be a reference to the author's own view since it occurs in the midst of a list of the views of others.[22] Despite this, in GK I.16 we find a reference to the enlightened *jīva* awakening to a non-dual reality which was previously masked by beginningless *māyā*.

> I.16: *anādimāyayā supto yadā jīvaḥ prabudhyate,*
> *ajam anidram asvapnam advaitaṃ budhyate tadā.*
> *When the jīva*, asleep due to beginningless *māyā*, is awakened, it then realizes the unborn, sleepless, dreamless non-duality.

How are we to reconcile the author's adoption of this term with his attribution of it to "others" in GK I.7? Wood suggests that *māyā* is used in GK I.16 in a 'non-illusionistic" sense, that is in a manner which is more conducive to the earlier (realist) meanings of *māyā* as found in the various *Saṃhitās* and *Upaniṣads*.

> Note that this verse refers to the individual who awakens from the illusion of difference and of individuality. It does not say that the world itself is unreal, but only that duality is an illusion. This is compatible, of course, with the view that the world is unreal, but is also compatible with the view that the world is real but also non dual.[23]

For Wood in fact this verse

> does not necessarily mean that the world as such disappears. A more natural and much less problematic way of reading the *kārikā* is to say that when the true nature of things is realized, the world—which is a manifestation of brahman—is realized to be non-dual and non-different from *brahman*. In other words, when a person attains Self-realization, it is not the world as such but his misapprehension and misperception of the nature of the world that is sublated.[24]

This interpretation of GK I.16 is interesting since it is not incompatible with the *māyā* doctrine as it is actually found in the Advaita Vedānta school (although it would be on Wood's interpretation of Advaita). One way of stating the Advaita position is to say that the world exists insofar as it partakes of the reality of Brahman. This is not to deny that the world exists but merely to qualify the nature of

that existence, so as to emphasize its total dependence upon the substrate Brahman. The problem with Wood's analysis of the GK is that his discussion of Advaita Vedānta is hampered by an overly-simplistic and one-sided interpretation of the *māyā* doctrine, which he takes to be an assertion of the complete unreality of the world. Wood wishes to suggest not only that GK I does not uphold such a view but also that such a view is philosophically more problematic than the realistic metaphysics of the *Upaniṣads* and early Vedānta. Thus,

> A Vedantist who adhered strictly to the *Upaniṣads* would treat the conclusion that world is unreal as absurd, and conclude that the argument shows that the no-substance (*adravya, niḥsvabhāva*) view of the Buddhist is untenable.[25]

The view that the world is an unreal illusion is attributed not only to Advaita Vedānta by Wood but, as the above quote suggests, to the various schools of Buddhism also. Thus, "according to the Mahāyāna, the world is not the manifestation of an absolute at all: it is simply unreal."[26] Of course, there is a sense in which "the world is unreal" is a kind of shorthand for the Mahāyāna notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the Advaitic notion of *māyā*; however, given the importance of the two-truths doctrine in both the Mahāyāna and Advaita, it is never the case that the world is *simply* unreal.[27] There is nothing simple or simplistic about the Advaitic denial of the ultimate reality of the dualistic world. The matter is a highly complex issue involving the utilization of a number of different analogies to explain the (ultimately) inexplicable (*anirvacanīya, acintya*) relationship that exists between Brahman and the universe. While the author of the GK pre-dates the adoption of the *anirvacanīya* explanation of *māyā*, it is misleading to suggest, as Wood does, that the GK, the Advaita Vedānta school and the schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism all *simply* deny that the world is real. As we shall see when we come to consider the meaning(s) of the term "*māyā*" in the GK, there are verses which could be taken to imply that the world is completely unreal only if read out of context. However, there are many others that refute this interpretation of *māyā* (e.g. GK III.28, IV.52, 53.) Wood, in his understanding of Advaita as a wholesale denial of the reality of the world is attributing to the school what GK IV.83 sees as an extreme view which "forever covers the Lord (*bhagavān*)" from sight, namely the nihilistic view that "it does not exist."

> I.8. *icchāmātraṃ prabhoḥ sṛṣṭir iti sṛṣṭau viniścitāḥ,*
> *kālāt prasūtiṃ bhūtānāṃ manyante kālacintakāḥ.*

> Creation is merely the will of the Lord so [think others who have] a firm conviction about creation and those who speculate about time consider the creation of beings [to be] from time.

Prabhu, the "powerful one" is used in GK I.8 giving the view discussed a distinctively theistic connotation. Kūranārāyaṇa in his commentary suggests that creation by the Lord's volition is the view of the *aupaniṣadas*. Thus he takes this to be the author's final position (*siddhānta*). This is difficult to accept given the position of the view, embedded within a list of opponent's doctrines, and its apparent incompatibility with *ajātivāda*. In the commentary, the *bhāṣya-kāra* (Śaṅkara?) says that in this view the Lord is seen as a potter. As such his pots are manifestations of his creative will and are neither external nor unrelated to such will. The *Kālācintakās* are those who think about time, they accept that time is the great dispenser.[28]

Consider also GK I.9 the final verse of the creationist section of GK I, and so one might expect, some indication of the author's own position.

> *bhogārtham sṛṣṭir ity anye krīḍārtham iti cāpare,*
> *devasyaiṣasvabhāvo' yam āptakāmasya kā spṛhā.*[29]
> Creation is for the sake of enjoyment (or experience)—so say some. Others say it is for the sake of sport. This again is the lordly own-nature of the divine, for what desire is there for the one who has obtained all wishes?[30]

Two teleological theories are put forward to account for the purpose or aim of creation. This is an odd topic to consider given that the author of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* upholds the doctrine of non-origination (*ajātivāda*), which denies that creation has even occurred in the first place. Discussion of the purpose or aim of creation then would seem to be philosophically irrelevant and superfluous to the author. However, it would appear that the GK is addressing "those who are convinced that there is an origin of all existent entities" (mentioned at the outset of this discussion in GK I.6). The first theory outlined in GK I.9 is that the purpose of creation is for the divine being to have experiences. This is the import of various Upaniṣadic verses, where the divine being creates because of a desire for duality.[31]

The second theory considered is that diversity is for the sake of God's sport or diversion. The author's response to these views is not without ambiguity. "This again is the lordly own-nature of the divine, for what desire is there for the one who has obtained all wishes?" Wood suggests that:

> It is possible that the *siddhānta* is given by the doctrine of self-nature (*svabhāva-vāda*) of AP 9c-d only (so that the view that creation is the object of enjoyment or play is also rejected), but it seems more likely that the second half of the *kārikā* simply makes explicit what is implicit in the doctrine that creation is merely the play or sport of *īśvara*, i.e. that there can be no purpose or motive (*prayojana*) in creation, for the Lord is by definition beyond all desires. This is the view of the Brahma-sūtras.[32]

If the doctrine that creation occurs in comformity to the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of the divine being (GK I.9cd) is the author's own view, as Wood suggests, then this appears to contradict GK II.34.

> II.34: *nātmabhāvena nānedaṃ na svenāpi kathañcana,*
> *na pṛthan nāpṛthak kiñcid iti tattvavido viduḥ.*
> The universe is manifold neither through the nature of *ātman*, nor through its own nature. Nothing whatsoever is either separate or non-separate—this the knowers of reality know.

Wood acknowledges, however, (in the aformentioned quote) that there is another interpretation of GK I.9cd. On this view, I.9cd is an explanation of the form creation must take if it is to be said to occur at all. The author suggests that creation must conform to the nature of the divine being from which it stems. How then can a purpose be found for the creation of the universe given that the basic nature (*svabhāva*) of the divine (*deva*, literally "the shining one") is free from all unfulfilled desires? Here is a compact yet devastating attack upon attempts to formulate a cosmogonic theory applicable to the notion of an omniscient and omnipotent God. While the *līla* concept is used to overcome this philosophical problem in the *Brahmasūtra*, it is not immediately clear that the author accepts the validity of this conception himself. One might suggest that if Brahman has all of its desires fulfilled, then it will also have no desire to indulge in sport either.

While it seems likely that GK I.9cd corresponds to the author's own position, it is not immediately obvious that the same can be said for GK I.9ab. It should be noted that GK I.9 approaches the question of creation from a different angle than the views outlined in the previous *kārikās*. Previously, the author discussed theories about the nature of creation. In I.9, the purpose of creation is discussed (a topic that presupposes creation itself). The author then appears to be summing up his discussion of creation theories with the statement that, whatever one's view, creation must always conform to the intrinsic-nature of its creator. This does not commit the author of the GK to this view but

is rather a summarizing statement to the effect that "if you have a theory about creation—you must accept that creation conforms to the nature of the divine [creator]." Given that Brahman is free from all desires, how then is the creation-theorist to explain the purpose of creation? The answer is, of course, that he cannot. This leaves the whole question of explaining the real nature of creation unresolved, which is not surprising since for the author of the GK, creation is only appearance (*māyāmātra*).[33]

Consider also GK I.17 and 18:

> I.17: *prapañco 'yadi vidyeta nivarteta na saṃśayaḥ,*
> *māyāmātram idaṃ dvaitam advaitaṃ paramārthataḥ.*[34]
> There is no doubt that if the multiplicity (*prapañca*) were existing, it would cease to be [upon enlightenment]. This duality is only *māyā*, in ultimate reality there is only non-duality.

I.17 states that *prapañca* does not disappear because it does not in fact exist in the first place. Wood suggests that GK I. 17 and 18 are philosophically untenable since the unreality of the world cannot account for the fact that we perceive the world. How can the unreal even appear?[35] Again we are confronted with Wood's misunderstanding of the Advaita position. In GK II and IV in particular we find most of the *kārikās* therein devoted to a discussion of the nature of perception in order to explain precisely what is going on when we perceive a world of diverse objects. Wood makes no effort to consider this doctrine on its own terms.[36] He suggests in fact that GK I.17ab

> commits the logical fallacy of negating the antecedent of a counterfactual. The valid argument (*modus tollendo tollens*) would negate the disappearance of the world, from which the nonexistence of the world would be inferred.[37]

The argument of GK I.17, however can be understood in a manner which is logically consistent. GK I.17ab suggests that:

a. If *prapañca* existed it would be able to disappear
b. *Prapañca* does not exist.
c. Therefore, *prapañca* cannot disappear.

I.17 is difficult to understand if taken out of context, but it makes perfect sense following on from the previous verse (GK I.16) which describes the realisation of *turīya*. If this world really existed then it

would vanish with the experience of non-duality, but it remains precisely because it is duality and is to be taken as merely illusion (*māyāmātra*). The mistake is in thinking that duality even exists in the first place.[38]

> I.18: *vikalpo vinivarteta kalpito yadi kenacit,*
> *upadeśād ayaṃ vādo jñāte dvaitaṃ na vidyate.*
> [Upon enlightenment] wrong-interpretation (*vikalpa*) would disappear if it were imagined (or constructed) by someone. This way of speaking is for the sake of instruction; when it is known, duality is not found.

GK I.18 is an attempt to circumvent one of the greatest paradoxes of a non-dualistic soteriology—if duality is an illusion how is it that the dream is not broken by the first enlightened being? This presents no real problem for the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* for the following reasons:

1. Duality as *māyā* is not in conflict with non-duality as the ultimate reality (*paramārtha*) since the former is merely an appearance of the latter (see GK III.17, 18; IV.4, 5).
2. The idea of a liberated individual is an erroneous one, no *jīva* is ever liberated, since no *jīva* has ever entered bondage (i.e. *ajātivāda*, see GK II.32; III.48).

This verse is also as clear a denial as one is likely to find of subjective idealism.

We noted in I.7 that the author of the *prakaraṇa* seems to be critical of the view that creation is "in the form of dream and illusion" (*svapnamāyāsvarūpeti*). We also noted Hixon's point that this objection may itself be grounded in the denial of origination in that the use of an analogy from the dualistic realm (i.e., dreams and illusions) to explain that dualistic schema is problematic. The analogy may also have been objectionable on the grounds that describing the world as a dream can lead to the acceptance of some form of subjective idealism or solipsism where the individual "I" is given supreme status. Egocentricity is at the root of the ignorance of attachment to difference (*bheda*) (see GK II.16). The ineffable, non-conceptual nature of reality is developed further by the explicit utilization of Buddhist dialectic in the fourth *prakaraṇa*.

Here in I.17 and 18 we find the first usage of two very important terms in the Gaudapadian exposition of *advaita-vāda*, i.e. *prapañca* and *vikalpa*. *Prapañca* primarily denotes the idea of plurality (literally "fiveness" or *pañca*). It is a common Buddhist technical term denoting

the empty "conceptual proliferation" characteristic of all (false) views, as is the other term which is used alongside it in the GK, the term *vikalpa*—the "conceptually-constructed," (and hence the "imagined"). Clearly these are to be taken as corollaries of each other. Just as ultimate reality is *nirvikalpa*—without conceptualization, so is it *prapañcopaśama* "the stilling of the multiplicity."

The purpose of the inclusion of verses 17 and 18 in the GK appears to have been to explain how it is that the liberation of an individual does not cause the dissipation of duality for everyone else. The objection the author appears to have in mind is one often stated by Sāṃkhyans in particular, namely that if there is only one *ātman*; salvation for one is salvation for all. The simple response to this is to point out that while there is in fact only the non-dual supreme self (*paramātman*) there are in fact many empirical selves (*jīvātman*). The author of the GK does not respond this way since it is his view that in fact there has been no origination of any empirical selves (*jīvātman*, see GK II.32; III.13, 48). The response that is given to such an objection therefore amounts to a denial that the problem exists. This duality was never there in the first place, and, as part of that duality, the individual is also not real. One should not be lead into the error of thinking that the world is merely a mental construction of the individual; to do so is to assume the reality of an individualized ego and this is precisely the type of "egocentricity" that causes the proliferation (*prapañca*) of duality.

GK I.18, however, appears to contradict II.12, 13, and 18:

> II.12: *kalpayaty ātmanātmānam ātma devaḥ svamāyayā,*
> *sa eva budhyate bhedān iti vedāntaniścayaḥ.*
> The divine *ātman* imagines itself through itself by means of its own *māyā*. It alone is aware of diverse things. This is the conclusion of the Vedānta.
>
> II.13: *vikaroty aparān bhāvān antaś citte vyavasthitān,*
> *niyatāṃś ca bahiś citta evaṃ kalpayate prabhuḥ.*
> It diversifies those objects existing within consciousness, and [those] fixed ones external to consciousness. In this manner does the Lord imagine.
>
> II.18: *niścitāyāṃ yathā rajjvām vikalpo vinivartate,*
> *rajjur eveti cādvaitaṃ tadvad ātmaviniścayaḥ.*
> When the rope is clearly seen wrong-interpretation (*vikalpa*) disappears and there is non-duality of the rope alone; likewise is the clearly seen *ātman*.

There are, however, a couple of ways in which this apparent contradiction may be resolved. First, one could draw attention to I.18cd

which suggests that verses discussing the imagining (*kalpita*) of anything are in fact provisional in the sense that they are put forward for the sake of teaching others. Thus, the rope-snake analogy of II.18 is not to be taken too seriously—it is, after all, only an analogy. In fact, both I.18 and II.18 agree in their final summation that in fact there is only non-duality (*advaita*) and nothing else. It is also possible to overcome the apparent contradictoriness of these verses by suggesting that they are discussing different topics. I.18 denies that any individual person (*jīva*) could have imagined the world. This is a denial of subjective idealism (*dṛṣṭisṛṣṭivāda*, "the doctrine that seeing-is-creating") and solipsism (*ekajīvavāda*). This does not conflict with the idea that a divine *ātman* (*ātmā devāḥ*) in fact does the imagining (*kalpayate*). (Even Wood acknowledges that the distinction between *jīvātman* and *ātman* is sometimes to be presumed—see his discussion of GK I.16 on p.119, quoted earlier.) That this is the author's intention can be elicited from the fact that verses such as GK II.12 and 13 use the "theistic" terms "*deva*" and "*prabhu*" to describe the *ātman* that imagines (*kalpayate*) the universe. It seems beyond any reasonable doubt that these terms are included to differentiate the author's own view from the view explicitly denied in I.18. In GK II.12 and 13 it is clearly not the *jīvātman* that is the cause of the world's appearance.[39]

The Relationship of GK II, III, and IV

There are a number of instances of repetition of verses from the second and third *prakaraṇas* in the fourth (e.g. II.6–7 :: IV.31–32; III.20–22 :: IV.6–8; III.29–30 :: IV.61–62; III.48 :: IV.71). Occasionally minor terminological changes occur (e.g. GK IV often has the term "*dharma*" (Buddhist?) instead of the "*bhāva*" of GK II and III) (see chapter 5). This is an example of the more obvious adoption of Buddhistic terminology in the fourth *prakaraṇa*. Despite this change, there are no inconsistencies between the views propounded in GK II, III, and IV. GK II.32 could be seen to be contradicted by IV.73, but upon closer analysis it is clear that IV.73 is simply a clarification of II.32 (in the same way that II.34 is), establishing the sense in which it is correct to talk about origination and cessation. Such a clarification would have been inappropriate in GK II since it does not devote any *kārikās* explicitly to the two-truths doctrine, although it clearly presupposes such a distinction.

Other evidence, however, is suggestive of the separate authorship of the fourth *prakaraṇa*. The invocation (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) at the beginning of GK IV (possibly to the Buddha) implies that it is an

independent work. Clearly the fourth *prakaraṇa* is a new departure, dealing with the topics of the previous *prakaraṇas* but from a slightly different perspective. This in itself does not necessitate separate authorship since the author of GK IV clearly endorses the views expounded in the second and third *prakaraṇas* (GK I as we have seen is more problematic). It should be noted, however, that GK IV is clearly the most philosophically sophisticated of the four *prakaraṇas*. Again this should not surprise us since the chapter constitutes nearly half of the entire text and so has more time to spend on the issues which it discusses. The degree of sophistication of GK IV implies that Vetter[40] and Hixon[41] are unlikely to be correct in their belief that GK IV is the earliest of the four *prakaraṇas* to be composed. Vetter argues that the doctrine of the non-origination of *ātman* propounded in the first three *prakaraṇas* presupposes the non-arising of *dharmas* as discussed in GK IV. Vetter, of course, is correct to argue that the Gauḍapādian conception of non-origination is dependent upon the Mahāyāna conception of *dharma*. This will become clearer as we come to consider these ideas in subsequent chapters. Such philosophical dependence, however, does not in itself prove that the GK's discussion of *dharmas* in the fourth *prakaraṇa* was thereby the first text to be composed. All four *prakaraṇas* presuppose Mahāyāna philosophical notions; GK IV is an explicit discussion of that dependence. This does not necessitate that it was written first. On the contrary, the sophistication of the fourth *prakaraṇa*, and its awareness of Mahāyāna scholastic controversies suggests that it is a supplement, openly infused with the technical vocabulary of Buddhist scholasticism, and designed to elaborate upon the issues discussed in the first three *prakaraṇas*.

Philological evidence in fact does not definitively resolve the matter of the chronological composition of the four *prakaraṇas*, nor does the silence of Buddhist and Vedāntic authors with regard to the fourth *prakaraṇa*. As we have seen, Vetter suggests that the four chapters are separate works connected to each other insofar as they reflect the development of thought of the author of the GK as a whole.[42] If Vetter and Hixon are correct in the establishment of GK IV as the earliest of the four *prakaraṇas*, then what we have in the GK is a textual crystallization of the process whereby Buddhist philosophy became increasingly "Brahmanized" and incorporated into the Vedānta tradition. Thus GK IV would represent the early thought of the Buddhist-inspired Gauḍapāda, while GK II, III, and I (probably composed in that order given their relative Brahmanical content) would represent later stages in the "Vedānticization" of Gauḍapādian thought.

Perhaps GK IV was explicitly written to show that even Buddhism has a great deal of affinity with Vedāntic doctrines. This, of course, would imply that Buddhism is worth considering. We can assume, therefore, that GK IV was composed with the intention of either "wooing" Buddhists toward Vedānta, or establishing the validity of Vedāntic ideas within a context of Buddhist philosophical hegemony. Both possibilities suggest a pre-Śaṅkarite date for the fourth *prakaraṇa*. Buddhism was in the beginning of its decline in India around the eighth and ninth centuries CE and there would have been little reason for justifying the (established) doctrines of Vedānta along Buddhist lines.

Upon examination it becomes clear that GK IV deals with two main philosophical themes. First, it spends a considerable amount of time discussing the nature of experience, developing a phenomenology of perception, that has most often been described as "idealistic." We shall have reason to cast doubt upon such unqualified characterization in due course. Nevertheless, this analysis of experience is not a significantly new departure for the GK, being little more than a rendering explicit of the implicit epistemological presuppositions of GK II. The second theme discussed in GK IV is the central tenet of the *Gauḍapādīya-kārikā* as a whole, i.e. the doctrine of non-origination. Together these two themes constitute the fundamental lynchpins of Gauḍapādian thought.

The originality of the fourth *prakaraṇa*, however, should not be over-emphasized. Both the third and fourth *prakaraṇas* accept the "consciousness-vibration" (*cittaspandita*) theory of perception and use the term "*māyā*" in a phenomenological-experiential context. GK III introduces the reader to the concept of "*asparśa-yoga*"—a term also discussed in the fourth *prakaraṇa*.[43] GK III is thoroughly Vedāntic in its style, form, and content and yet still shows clear signs of Buddhist influence.[44]

The philosophical unanimity of GK II, III, and IV can be illustrated by a brief consideration of their textual inter-relatedness. *Kārikās* 1–10 and 14–15 of GK II correspond to GK IV.32–41 in their elucidation of the doctrine that the world is like a dream (*svapna*) and an appearance (*māyā*.) Nevertheless, this does not mean that *kārikās* 11–13, 16–31, 33 and 35–38 of the second *prakaraṇa* are incompatible with GK IV, only that the content of these verses concerns specifically Vedāntic themes that are not considered in the fourth *prakaraṇa*. Thus those verses which do not find direct philosophical connections with the fourth *prakaraṇa* can be linked up with GK III.1–19 and 23–27, which deals with the same basic themes from the same philosophical perspective. The discussion of the many different ways in which the

ātman is wrongly conceived (*vi-kḷp*) as many different things (GK II.20–30) is intimately connected with the author's underlying belief that *ajātivāda* does not conflict with any other doctrines (*avirodhavāda*). The explicit elucidation of this claim, however, is not to be found in the second *prakaraṇa* itself, but in GK III.17, 18, and IV.4, 5. Likewise GK III.20–22 and 27–48 expound views identical to those found in GK IV.

To sum up the relationship of the texts, GK III appears to be an important bridging text between GK II and GK IV. The second *prakaraṇa* functions as a basic outline of the GK's philosophical position (GK I being a discussion of the MU). GK III is a "theological" justification of this position through an examination of various Vedāntic sources and "great sayings" (*mahāvākya*). GK IV functions as a further exposition of the topics introduced in the second and third *prakaraṇas* using the philosophically sophisticated terminology of the Buddhists.

Philological analysis also points to further similiarities between GK III and IV. In particular the use of the phrase "*ajātisamatā*" in GK III.2 and 38 is unique to the GK and is paralleled by the conjunction of "*aja*" and "*samya*" in GK IV.93, 95, and 100. The philosophical and linguistic similarities between GK III and IV suggests common authorship or at least common lineage (perhaps the author of one was the teacher of the other). It is likely, however, that GK IV was originally a separate text in its own right (hence the invocation at GK IV.1). The purpose of GK IV, apart from its playfully Buddhistic pretensions, appears to have been to provide an exposition of the "*ajātisamat-ādvaita*" doctrines of the first three *prakaraṇas* through a philosophical analysis of the nature of experience. GK IV, then, is primarily a phenomenological treatise written with the intention of refuting the claim that the doctrine of non-origination contradicts experience. That the fourth *prakaraṇa* is a separate text, however, does not necessitate that it is the work of a different author.

The question of the chronological order of the four chapters, however, is not an easy one to answer definitively. It could be argued that the discussion of the similarity of the waking and dream states in the second *prakaraṇa* presupposes the "idealistic" epistemology elucidated in the fourth. This might imply that the fourth is the earlier of the two. However, it might also be argued that the fourth is merely an unpacking of the presuppositions of the second. The length of the fourth *prakaraṇa* makes it all the more likely that it will clarify points raised in the other *prakaraṇas*. The greater sophistication of the fourth *prakaraṇa* may be taken as evidence of an early date (based upon the argument that the other *prakaraṇas* presume its existence) or a later