

Shivdasani Conference “Thinking inside the Box: The Concept of a Category in Indian Philosophy”
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THE SEVEN CATEGORY ONTOLOGY REAFFIRMED

Texts: Before 17th Century

- VS Kaṇāda, *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*. Muni Sri Jambuvijayaji crit. ed. with Candrānanda’s *Vṛtti* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series 136, 1961).
- Pbh Praśastapāda, *Praśastapādabhāṣya*. Text and index in Johannes Bronkhorst and Yves Ramseier, *Word Index to the Praśastapādabhāṣya* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994).
- PTN Raghunātha, *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa*. (1) Edited with Rāmabhadra’s *Ṭīkā* and Raghudeva’s *Vyākhyā* by V. P. Dvivedi (Varanasi 1915). (2) Edited and translated by Karl H. Potter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Harvard Yenching Institute Studies, vol. 17, 1957).

Texts: 17th Century Vārāṇasī

Jayarāma Nyāyapañcānana (1985). *Padārthamālā*, edited with Laugākṣī Bhāskara’s *Prakāśa* by N. Srinivasan (Tanjore: Sarasvati Mahal Library, series no. 217, 1985).

Mādhavadeva Bhaṭṭa (1903–4). *Nyāyasāra*, edited by Nagesvara Pant Dharmadhikari in *The Pandit*, new series vol. 25 (455...) and vol. 25 (97...), also sequential numbering 1–246. Reprinted Benares 1905.

Raghudeva Nyāyālaṃkāra Bhaṭṭācārya. *Dravyasārasaṃgraha*. Unedited. [Stein 2766; Asiatic Society III.A.9].

Kaundabhaṭṭa. *Padārthadīpikā*, edited by Ramakrishna Shastri (Varanasi: Benares Sanskrit Series 14, 1900).

Laugākṣī Bhāskara (1985). *Prakāśa* on Jayarāma’s *Padārthamālā*. In Jayarāma (1985).

Veṇīdatta. *Padārthamaṇḍana*, edited by Gopala Sastri Nene (Benares: Vidya Vilas Press; Princess of Wales Sarasvati Bhavana texts 30, 1930).

Umāpati Upādhyāya. *Padārthīyadivyaśaṣṭh*, edited by Dhiranand Mishra (Dharbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1961). [Maithilī]

Chronological Table

	MITHILĀ	NAVADVĪPA	VĀRĀṄASĪ
1300s	Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya Vardhamāna		
1400s	Yajñapati Pakṣadhara (Jayadeva) Śaṅkara Miśra		
1500s		Raghunātha Śiromaṇi Vidyānivāsa	
		Jānakīnātha Kṛṣṇadāsa	
1600s		Rāmabhadra Sārva. Bhavānanda	Viśvanātha
		Dinakara Jagadīśa Śrī Rāma Rāmarudra	Rudra Govinda Śarman
		Harirāma	Annambhaṭṭa
	Gokulanātha	Mathuranātha Gadādhara	Jayarāma Laugākṣī Raghudeva Mahādeva Punat. Mādhavadeva Venīdatta
1700			

1. The reach of Vaiśeṣika realism

Kaṇāda: “I shall enumerate everything in this world that has the character of being” (*yad iha bhāvarūpam tat sarvaṃ mayā upasaṃkhyātavyam*; cited in Halbfass 1993: 69).

Six/ seven categories:

- unobservable as well as observable substantial objects (*dravya*),
- the particular qualities (*guṇa*) and motions (*karma*) of those objects including their spatial and temporal position,
- a hierarchy of generic universals (*sāmānya*) under which the particular substances, qualities and motions fall,
- a uniquely identifying ‘distinguisher’ (*viśeṣa*) for each non-composite particular,
- a single real connecting relation to bind the objects to their qualities, motions, universal features and distinguishers (*samavāya*; ‘inherence’),
- finally, and only after Praśastapāda, a domain of real particular and generic absences (*abhāva*), such as the real absence here and now of a certain particular pan or of any pan at all.

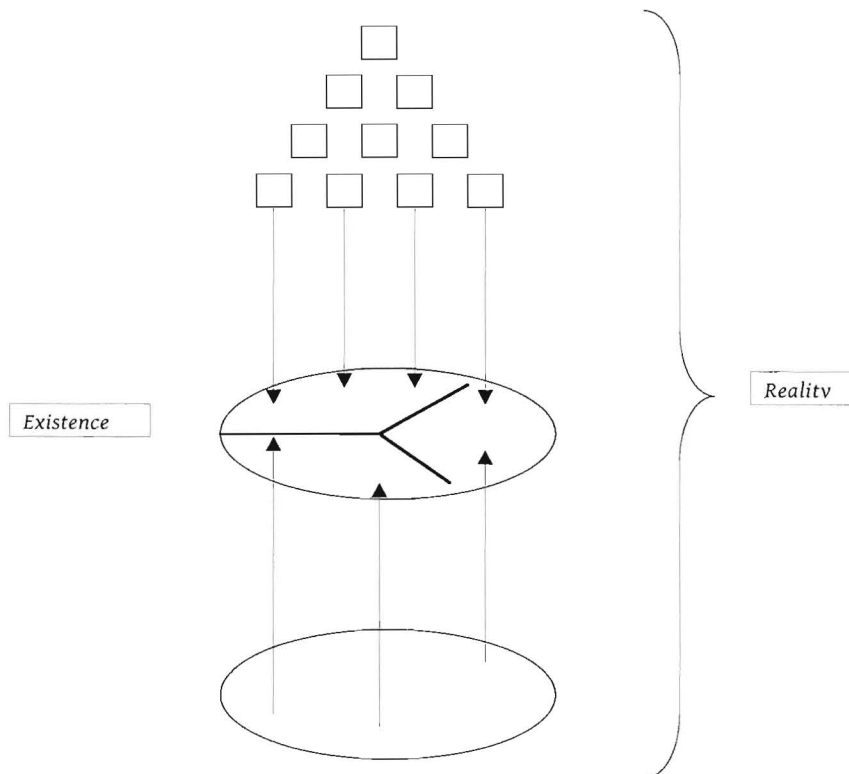


DIAGRAM: THE VAIŚEṢIKA WORLD

2. Between ultra-realism and anti-realism

“*padārtha*”: loosely translated as “category” or “division of reality” = ‘the object for which a word stands’.

Ultra-realism (Meinong): A commitment to every singular term having a referent.

Dummett (Dummett, Michael, *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1991):

Integral to any given version of realism are both the principle of bivalence for statements of the disputed class, and the interpretation of those statements at face value, that is to say, as genuinely having the semantic form that they appear on their surface to have. Rejection of either one of these will afford a means of repudiating realism and will constitute a form of anti-realism, however restrained, for statements of the disputed class. (1991: 325.)

Dummett:

If it is his rejection of the principle of bivalence that marks the reductionist’s divergence from realism, then the realist may continue to be a realist, despite espousing even a full-blooded reductionism, as long as he continues to adhere to the principle of bivalence. (1991: 327-8)

= “sophisticated” realism (p. 324). Admits the possibility of reduction without translatability (weak reductionism) or even the possibility of reduction through an actual translation (strong or full-blooded reductionism), as long as one continues to treat singular terms in the disputed class as genuinely referential.

Three places where traditional Vaiśeṣika draws back from a thorough-going metaphysical realism :

- (i) rejection of the existence of the merely possible
- (ii) the account of number as a cognition-dependent quality
- (iii) the commitment to the principle that whatever has being is knowable. “All six categories possess reality, nameability and knowability” (*ṣaṅṅām api padārthānām astitvābhidheyatvajñeyatvāni*; PBh 11 [1895: 16]).

3. Reactions to Raghunātha

Raghunātha:

A. rejects motion and distinguisher as separate categories.

B. affirms eight new categories:

- power (*śakti*),
- ownedness (*svatva*),
- moment (*kṣaṇa*),

- .causehood (*kāraṇatva*),
- .effecthood (*kāryatva*),
- .number (*saṃkhyā*),
- .the qualifying relation pertaining to absence (*vaiśiṣṭya*),
- .and contentness (*viśayatā*).

4. Category rejection and entity elimination

Raghunātha's rejection of the classical category of differentiator (*viśeṣa*):

And further, differentiator is not another category, because there is no proof. For [the atoms, i.e.] the eternal substances discriminate by themselves, without a discriminating property, just as do the differentiators of other thinkers. (30.3)

Raghudeva: "The meaning of the statement that 'differentiator is not another category' is that it is not a [sort of] being different from the five beginning with substance" (*na dravyādīpañcabhinno bhāva ityarthah*; 30, 21-2).

Rāmabhadra: "the meaning is that it is not a [sort of] being different from those beginning with substance" (*dravyādibhinno na bhāva ityarthah*; 91, 11).

Raghunātha's affirmation of being-owned (*svatva*) as another category, (*padārthāntara*):

Being-owned is another category. If you think that it is being-fit-for-use-as-one-wishes, [we answer] "What is that 'use'?" If you say eating and such like, [we answer] "no, for it is possible to eat the food of another." If you say that this is prohibited by written law, [we answer] "Which written law is that?" If you say that it is the scripture beginning "One may not take what belongs to another", [we answer] "How does that apply if one does not yet have the notion of being-owned?" Therefore, being-owned is indeed distinct. And the proof is just the written law beginning "One may not take what belongs to another". It is produced by receiving as a gift, by purchasing, and on inheritance, and it is destroyed by giving away and so on. (62,1-64,2).

4. Jayarāma's Padārthamāla

Jayarāma discusses

- .causal power (*śakti*),
- .similarity (*sādrśya*),
- .the qualifying relation pertaining to absences (*vaiśiṣṭya*),
- .causehood (*kāraṇatā*),
- .locushood (*ādhāratā*),
- .absenteehood (*pratiyogitva*),
- .contenthood (*viśayatā*).

His aim, as his commentator Laugākṣī makes clear, is to demonstrate that there are indeed exactly seven categories and to refute the claim that power and the others are additional (“śaktyādinām atiriktatvanirāseṇa padārthāḥ saptaiva iti vyavasthāpya...” 181).

5. Mādhavadeva’s Nyāyasāra

Mādhava too begins with a reaffirmation of the seven category ontology:

The categories are just seven, and they fall into two types, being and non-being. There, [the types of] being are six, due to the division into substance, quality, motion, universal, differentiator and inherence. Non-being is of two types, due to the division into relational absence and non-identity. (3)

The book concludes:

Since the [Nyāyasūtra list] beginning with the ways of knowing, the things known and so on are indeed included (*antarbhāva*) here, and since the distinctness (*atiriktatva*) of [the “new” categories] causal power, similarity and so on has been refuted, the categories are just seven. (246).

This summarises the key ambition of seventeenth metaphysics in Vārāṇasī.

Mādhava:

However [says the opponent], it is not the case that there are just seven categories, since causal power is in truth a distinct category. How, otherwise, is it that burning with fire does not [automatically] arise when there is a gem and when the instigating factor arises? So there is a causal power disposed to burning, which [burning] does not arise from the gem but from the instigating factor. This causal power is not a substance, since it does not possess qualities. Nor is it a quality, since it exists even without the cause of any prescribed quality. Nor is it another quality, distinct from [any of the prescribed ones], for to imagine such a quality is ontologically redundant (*gaurava*). Nor does it belong to the category of motion, for it would then wrongly follow that motions like the capacity fire has will be perceptible, since that is the law governing perceptibility. Nor does it belong to the categories of inherence and so on, since it will be destroyed when it arises. Therefore, it is a distinct category. If this is claimed, [we reply], no. Thinking about the causes [of fire] before it has arisen or after it has ceased to be in terms of a permanent causal power is redundant, for one can imagine the causality to be either with respect to the fire as qualified by the absence of the gem as qualified by the absence of the instigating factor, or with respect to the fire together with the absence of the gem as qualified by the absence of the instigating factor. (1903_4: 3,12–4, 11).

6. Subsuming Nyāya into Vaiśeṣika

Annambhaṭṭa: reduction of the sixteen categories of the Nyāyasūtra to the seven categories of classical Vaiśeṣika:

[Tarkasaṃgraha:] As all things are included under one or the other of the above-mentioned categories as the case may be, it is established that the categories are seven precisely (*sarveṣāṃ padārthānāṃ yathāyatham ukteṣu antarbhāvāt saptaiva padārthā iti siddham*). [Dīpikā:] “Well, in view of sixteen categories mentioned in the Nyāyasāstra statement NS1.1.1, how is it that the categories are

seven precisely?" It is to be said in reply: 'As all things...' In other words, all the sixteen categories are included under the seven. (396–7; trans. Bhattacharya 1983: 403–4).

For example,

.*siddhānta* is "a thing accepted by epistemologists", = a substance etc

.*nirṇaya* is "a decision, the result of a way of knowing" = a quality

.*vāda* is "a discussion among those who desire to know the truth" = a quality

Reductive accounts of causal power and ownership:

If it be objected, "Well, even when there is contact of fire with the palm of the hand, if there be some counter-active factor, there does not ensue any burning. Causal power therefore is an additional category", the reply is to say no. As the absence of a counteractive (*pratibandhakābhāva*) is a condition for every effectuation and as it is only causehood (*kāraṇatva*) or the fact of being a condition that is meant by the term "power", there is no necessity for the postulation of power as a distinct category. If it be objected, "Well, as it is admitted that there is purification of bell-metal etc (*kāṃsādi*) by ash etc, an induced power (*ādheya-śakti*) has got to be postulated," the reply is no. The term "purification" stands for the destruction of the contact of ash etc along with every kind of absence of the touch of a polluting agent, simultaneous with the contact of ash etc.

Ownership is not an additional category, for it is of the nature of the fitness of disposing of something at one's pleasure. Acquisition resulting from acceptance of gifts etc. is what determines such fitness. (409–413; trans. Bhattacharya 1983: 405–7).

7. Conclusion

The seventeenth century reaffirmation of the traditional seven category ontology is underwritten by an espousal of a new conception of what is involved in the endorsement of realism; specifically that there is an advocacy of what Dummett has described as sophisticated realism, in place of either the metaphysical realism of Raghunātha or the ameliorated realism of traditional Vaiśeṣika.

Raghunātha ends the *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇa* with a call to philosophers to think for themselves about the arguments:

The demonstration of these matters (which I have) carefully explained is contrary to the conclusions reached by all the other systems. These matters spoken of should not be cast aside without reflection just because they are contrary to accepted opinion; scholars should consider them carefully. Bowing to those who know the truth concerning matters of all the sciences, bowing to men like you (the reader), I pray you consider my sayings with sympathy. This method, though less honoured, has been employed by wise men of the past, namely that one ask other men of learning to consider one's own words (PTN 79,1–80,3; trans. Potter 1957: 89–90).