

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF 'BEING' IN CLASSICAL
VAIŚEṢIKA¹

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While 'non-being' and 'negation' are among the favourite topics of recent Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika studies², the corresponding theme of

¹ Abbreviations:

- Kir.** Kiraṇāvali by Udayanācārya, in: *Vaiśeṣikadarśanam ... with the comm. of Praśastapāda and the gloss of Udayanācārya*, ed. V. P. DVIVEDI (Benares 1919; Benares Sanskrit Ser. 9).
- NBh** Nyāyabhāṣya, see ND¹, ND².
- ND¹** The Nyāya-Darśana. The Sūtras of Gautama and Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana, with two comm. ... ed. GANGANATHA JHA and DHUNDHIRAJA SHASTRI. Benares 1925; Chowkhamba Sanskrit Ser.).
- ND²** Nyāyadarśana of Gautama, with the Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana, the Vārttika of Uddyotakara, the Tātparyatikā of Vācaspati, and the Parīśuddhi of Udayana (Volume I — Chapter I). Ed. ANANTALAL THAKUR (Darbhanga 1967; Mithila Inst. Ser. Ancient Text 20).
- NK/PB** Nyāyakandali by Śrīdhara, in: *Bhāṣya of Praśastapāda, together with the Nyāyakandali ...*, ed. V. P. DVIVEDI (Benares 1895; Vizianagram Sanskrit Ser. 6).
- NM** Nyāyamañjari of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, ed. S. N. ŚUKLA, 2 vols. (Benares 1934/36; Kashi Sanskrit Ser. 106).
- NS** Die Nyāyasūtras. Text, Übersetzung ... von W. RUBEN (Leipzig 1928; repr. Nendeln 1966; Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 18/2).
- NV¹** The Nyāyavārttikam by Udyotakara Miśra, ed. V. P. DUBE (Calcutta 1887—1914; Biblioth. Indica).
- NV²** Nyāyavārttika, see ND².
- PB²** Praśastapādabhāṣyam ... with comm. Sūkti, by Jagadīśa Tarkālaṅkāra, Setu by Padmanābha Miśra, and Vyomavati by Vyomaśivācārya, ed. GOPINATH KAVIRAJ (Benares 1924—1930; Chowkhamba Sanskrit Ser.).
- PP** Prakaraṇapañcikā of Śālikanātha Miśra, with Nyāyasiddhi (by Jayapurīnārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa), ed. A. SUBRAHMANYA SASTRI (Banaras 1961; Banaras Hindu Univ. Darśana Ser. 4).
- VS¹** The Vaiśeṣika Sūtras of Kaṇāda ..., transl. by N. SINHA (Allahabad 1911; Sacred Books of the Hindus 6; contains also the Sanskrit text of the Sūtras).
- VS²** Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda, with the comm. of Candrānanda, crit. ed. JAMBUVLAYAJI (Baroda 1961; Gaekwad's Oriental Ser. 136).
- Vy.** Vyomavati by Vyomaśiva, see PB².

'being', although both historically and systematically more—or at least equally—fundamental, has only met with a somewhat casual interest³. The conception of *sattā* and *bhāva* as 'highest universal' (*param sāmānyam*) is, no doubt, sufficiently familiar; yet, its exact implications in the context of classical Vaiśeṣika, its interrelations with *astitva*, *sattāsambandha*, *svātmāsattva* etc., and its function and describability in terms of, or in contrast to, such Western concepts as 'existence' have never been thoroughly investigated.

One of the consequences of this has been that discussions of *abhāva* are often lacking in perspective and do not do justice to the full and proper historical and systematic dimensions of their theme. It usually remains unanswered or even completely unquestioned how and why *abhāva* was "added" as a seventh *padārtha*⁴, and how, and to what extent, certain ways of conceiving of 'being' may have been conducive to certain corresponding ways of conceiving of 'non-being'. — At any rate: An exploration of the role and development of *abhāva* especially in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika is necessarily incomplete as long as it does not go hand in hand with an exploration of the theme and terminology of 'being' which forms its counterpart and background; and this, of course,

The following is a revised and considerably expanded version of a paper read at the 29th International Congress of Orientalists, Paris 1973. In the meantime, the stimulating discussions with the participants of my Seminar in Indian Philosophy (Oriental Studies 711) at the University of Pennsylvania, with whom I read some of the related texts, gave me a welcome opportunity to re-examine this complex of questions.

³ Cf., e. g., J. B. BHATTACHARYA, *Negation* (Calcutta 1965). — J. F. STAAL, *Negation and the Law of Contradiction in Indian Thought*. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 25/1 (1962) 52–71. — B. K. MATILAL, *The Navya-Nyāya Doctrine of Negation* (Cambridge, Mass. 1968). — B. GUPTA, *Story of the Evolution of the Concept of Negation*. Beiträge zur Geistesgeschichte Indiens, Festschr. f. E. FRAUWALLNER (Wien 1968; = WZKSO 12/13) 115–118. — D. SHARMA, *The Negative Dialectics of India* (East Lansing, Mich. 1970).

⁴ See below, notes 26–28; more specific references to this theme are to be found in D. N. SHASTRI, *Critique of Indian Realism* (Agra 1964), and especially in R. R. DRAVID, *The Problem of Universals in Indian Philosophy* (Delhi etc. 1972).

⁵ A satisfactory treatment of this intricate historical question would require a more careful distinction of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika traditions than it is usually met with especially in Indian contributions. — Within Vaiśeṣika itself, it is remarkable that Candramati's *Daśapadārthasāstra*, in which the Vaiśeṣika system is restricted to a 'doctrine of categories', presents 'non-being' as a separate *padārtha*, while Prāśastapāda's *Padārthadharmasamgraha*, which re-emphasizes the more traditional 'physicalistic' aspects of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy of nature, has no room for it.

also requires an awareness of the implications of our own terminological tools in the area of 'being' and 'non-being'. It is certainly not very helpful to use phrases like "negation as an entity"⁵ or "non-existence as reality"⁶, as long as it remains unclarified how the "reality" with which 'non-being' itself is credited has to be distinguished from, and related to, that meaning of 'to be' according to which non-being is not being.

The following remarks are meant to be preliminary and do not claim to present anything like an exhaustive answer and solution. They are by and large confined to classical Vaiśeṣika texts of the 1st millenium A. D., especially to Praśastapāda's Padārthadharmaśaṃgraha and its commentaries, and they are focussing on the genesis, meaning and function of that conceptual construction which is indicated by the terms *sattā*, *astitva*, *sattāśambandha* and *svātmasattva*. — Within the Indian panorama, the Vaiśeṣika way of dealing with 'being' is certainly not the most inspiring and convincing one; yet, it is illustrative in its stubborn and honest one-sidedness, and moreover, it is one of the most important catalysts for the development of Indian 'ontology', and highly effective in terms of the critical responses which it stimulates.

As to the terminology of 'being' in the Vaiśeṣikasūtras, the following short reminders may be sufficient for the purposes of our present discussion: In this text of notoriously unsatisfactory philological status, two terms, *sattā* and *bhāva*, represent the understanding of 'being' as the highest *sāmānya*⁷, i. e. the most universal, all-pervasive common feature—perceptible by all senses—, of 'substances', 'qualities' and 'motions' (*dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*). It appears likely that at an earlier stage Vaiśeṣika did not go beyond these three 'categories' or constituents of reality⁸. And if, in accordance with the testimony of Vyomaśiva and others⁹, Kaṇāda actually announced his philosophy as a programme

⁵ K. H. POTTER, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1963) 200ff.

⁶ D. N. ŚĀSTRĪ, *Critique of Indian Realism* (Agra 1964) 395ff.

⁷ Cf. VS¹ I, 2, 4ff.; on the perceptibility of *bhāva* cf. VS² IV, 1, 14 (= VS¹ IV, 1, 13).

⁸ VS¹ I, 1, 4—the only passage presenting an enumeration of all six 'categories' and using the term *pādārtha*—is neither found in VS² nor in the Sūtra version of the anonymous commentary published by ANANTALAL THAKUR (*Vaiśeṣikadarśana*, Darbhanga 1957); the authenticity of VS¹ I, 1, 4 was already questioned by M. R. BODAS in his introduction to *Tarkasamgraha* of Annambhaṭṭa, ed. Y. V. ATHALYE (Bombay 1897; repr. of 2nd ed. Poona 1963) XXXIIIff.

⁹ Cf. Vy. 47: *yad iha bhāvarūpaṃ tat sarvaṃ mayā-upasaṃkhyātavyam*; Vy. 492: *yad bhāvarūpaṃ tat sarvaṃ abhidīśyāmi*.

of naming, enumerating whatever has the character of being (*bhāvarūpa*), we may assume that he was referring to this group of 'categories' which are obviously more suitable for being enumerated than the 'universals' (*sāmānya*) etc. It would, of course, be idle to speculate on whether 'being' was already an explicitly developed theme of thought in "original" Vaiśeṣika, or whether the idea of 'being', which forms the horizon of this programme of exhaustive enumeration and classification¹⁰, was simply and commonsensically taken for granted. — How the way of presenting *asat* and contrasting it with *sat* in VS IX fits in with the original *bhāva*-orientation, and whether or to what extent this section of the text may at all be regarded as old and authentic, is a question which we cannot enlarge upon here¹¹.

The most familiar rendering of *sattā* and its terminological equivalent *bhāva* is 'existence'¹²; this translation demands some caution insofar as it should not be taken as suggesting any contrast to 'essence'. Although the connotation of 'actuality' and 'manifestness' is undeniable in the actual usage of *sat*¹³, *sattā*, as used thematically and terminologically, leaves 'essence' and 'existence' undivided, just as it does not establish any confrontation between 'being' and 'nothing'. Rather, it puts whatever there is, or 'exists', on a common ground with anything else that exists, thus providing a basis for comprehensive enumeration and classification. We may also note here that the traditional verbal and actional connotations of *bhāva*, accentuated especially by grammarians and grammatically oriented philosophers¹⁴, do not affect the Vaiśeṣika

¹⁰ On the implication of completeness and exhaustiveness in Kaṇāda's programme cf., e. g., NK 8—9: ... *sarvajñena maharṣiṇā sarvārthopadeśīya pratyakṣena* ...; this formula is repeated on p. 149.

¹¹ See above, n. 4.

¹² This translation is taken for granted in most of the general histories of Indian philosophy; it is also used, e. g., in the majority of texts referred to in notes 2—3 and 26—27. B. K. MATILAL, however (cf. n. 2), has "being-ness"; in his more recent publication: *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis* (The Hague 1971) he paraphrases "existence or being-ness". — D. H. H. INGALLS, *Materials for the Study of Navya-Nyāya Logic* (Cambridge, Mass. 1951) — generally a work of considerable terminological impact upon English translations of philosophical Sanskrit terms — gives "reality".

¹³ This connotation in the understanding of *sat* is also evident in the rejection of the implicit, potential 'being' which is implied by the Sāṃkhya doctrine of *satkārya*; cf., e. g., NK 143f. — M. BIAUDEAU states: "... la pensée indienne ne distingue à aucun moment l'essence de l'existence" (*La philosophie de Maṇḍana Mīśra vue à partir de la Brahmasiddhi*, Paris 1969, p. 71).

¹⁴ Cf. L. RENOU, *Terminologie grammaticale du Sanskrit* (Paris 1957) 243—244; 470—471.

usage. — Although awkward, an expression like 'beingness' might therefore be a more appropriate translation of *sattā*.

While *sattā* and *bhāva*, if and insofar as they are used terminologically, are obviously treated as synonyms in the Vaiśeṣikasūtras¹⁵, there is, nevertheless, a functional difference which has to be taken into consideration: While *sattā* has a strictly terminological role, to which it remains basically confined also in later texts, *bhāva*¹⁶ is much more flexible and open to various other, less terminological functions, which should not be taken as evidence for the Vaiśeṣika doctrine of 'being' or 'beingness'¹⁷. Yet, this variety of other usages is by no means negligible. The very fact that it exists and that it accompanies, and inevitably intrudes into, the doctrinal and terminological statements about 'being' is itself a potential stimulus of raising questions and objections, e. g. concerning such issues as the problem of self-reference, and it may thus have its direct or indirect bearing on the thematic and doctrinal level, too¹⁸.

Prāśastapāda goes on using *sattā* and *bhāva* in accordance with the language of the Sūtras, presenting 'beingness' as an attribute comparable with, and only more extensive in its scope, than 'blueness'; insofar as they are factors of unity and similarity, objective bases of recurrent perception and linguistic repetition, they are on equal terms. In trying to accentuate his point, Prāśastapāda even refers to the unity of the blue liquid which can give blueness to many different things in the process of dying: *yathā parasparaviśiṣṭeṣu carmavastrakambalādiṣv ekasmān niladravyābhisambandhān nilaṃ nilam iti pratyayānuvṛttiḥ, tathā parasparaviśiṣṭeṣu dravyaguṇakarmasv aviśiṣṭā sat sad iti pratyayānuvṛttiḥ, sō ca arthāntarād bhavitum arhati-iti, yat tad arthāntaram sō sattā-iti siddhā*¹⁹. — In addition to *sattā*, however, Prāśastapāda has a term which is symptomatic of his way of restructuring and rounding off the Vaiśeṣika system: the 'common abstract attribute' (*sādharmya*) *astitva*,

¹⁵ The synonymity of both is explicitly stated by Candrānanda on VS¹ I, 2, 4. — There is no evidence for equating Kaṇāda's *bhāva* with Prāśastapāda's *astitva*, as D. N. SHASTRI, Critique of Indian Realism (Agra 1964) 148, would like to do.

¹⁶ To a lesser degree, this may be said about *sattva* (not in VS), too, which appears sometimes in terminologically less committed functions than *sattā*; cf. Vy. 126; NK 19.

¹⁷ In contrast with VS I, 2, 4, cf., e. h., the less terminological uses of *bhāva* and *abhāva* in VS¹ I, 2, 9ff. (= ²I, 2, 10ff.).

¹⁸ Cf. the two levels of using *abhāva* in locutions like *abhāvasya prthag anupadeśo bhāvopāratantryān na tv abhāvāt* (NK 7).

¹⁹ PB 311—312.

'is-ness'²⁰, which, together with *jñeyatva* ('knowableness') and *abhidheyatva* ('nameableness'), covers all six 'categories' and can accordingly be predicated of *sattā* itself. 'Beingness', like all 'universals' (*sāmānya*), 'is' itself in that sense of 'to be' which is represented by *astitva*; its 'being' in the sense of *sattā* would, of course, lead to an infinite regress (*anavasthā*). — Although there is no such second-level term and concept of 'being' in the Vaiśeṣikasūtras, there are nevertheless certain locutions — e. g. *dravyagunakarmabhyo 'rthāntaram sattā*²¹ — which may be taken as presupposing or implicitly requiring it; the word *arthāntara*, often, but somewhat loosely used in the Sūtras, is, as we have seen, explicitly referred to by Prāśastapāda, and it is obviously one of the signposts for his account of 'being'²².

Subsequent to his introduction of the term *astitva* — *ṣaṇṇām api padārthānām astitvābhidheyatvajñeyatvāni*²³ — Prāśastapāda characterizes *dravya*, *guṇa* and *karman* as having *sattāsambandha*, 'connection with beingness', and *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya* as having *svātmasattva*, 'beingness of, or by virtue of, the own nature'²⁴. He does not explain these terms, which — if we may disregard here the occasional use of *sattānusambandha*²⁵ — occur only once in his text. — There have been several usually rather incidental attempts to translate, paraphrase or account for this conceptual structure and its constituents. M. HIRIYANNA explains *svātmasat* as "intrinsically real" and contrasts it with the "borrowed being" of *dravya* etc.; he adds: "This distinction is remarkably like that between subsistence and existence"²⁶ — but without really clarifying his understanding of these Western terms. G. PATTI interprets *astitva* as 'essentia' in the scholastic sense and *sattā* as 'existentia', and he paraphrases *svātmasattva* as "Wesen, das sich selbst genügend ist"²⁷. T. VETTER finds intimations of a transcendental approach (in the Kantian and Post-Kantian sense) in the Vaiśeṣika formulations²⁸. — By and large, the implications of the fact that there is a twofold concep-

²⁰ On the conception of a *mahāsāmānya* as coinciding with *padārthatva* according to Jaina commentators cf. H. U. I., *The Vaiśeṣika Philosophy* (Varanasi 1962) 35 ff.; it seems that Candramati himself does not have the term and concept of *astitva*.

²¹ VS¹ I, 2, 8.

²² See above, n. 19. — In Candramati, *sattā* appears as a separate *padārtha*.

²³ PB 16.

²⁴ PB 17; 19.

²⁵ PB 312.

²⁶ *Indian Philosophical Studies I* (Mysore 1957) 111.

²⁷ *Der Samavāya im Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika-System* (Roma 1955) 143.

²⁸ *Erkenntnisprobleme bei Dharmakīrti* (Wien 1964) 94.

tual bifurcation. sc. *sattā*—*astitva* on the one hand, *sattāsambandha*—*svātmasattva* on the other hand, have not really become thematic in these discussions.

Returning now to Praśastapāda's own text, we may first of all observe that the terms in the immediate neighbourhood of *sattāsambandha* resp. *svātmasattva* suggest some commonsensically obvious implications of such a distinction. The bringing about of 'merit' and 'demerit', the status of cause and effect, impermanence, etc. (*dharmādharmakartṛtva*, *kāraṇatva*, *kāryatva*, *anityatva*)—these features are restricted to the realm of particulars, which are, and have a concrete, 'manifest' being, insofar as *sattā* is inherent in them²⁹. With regard to the second group of 'categories'—sc. 'universals', 'individualities' and 'inherence'—Praśastapāda says: *sāmānyādinām trayāṇām svātmasattvaṃ buddhilakṣaṇatvaṃ*³⁰ *akāryatvaṃ akāraṇatvaṃ asāmānyaviśeṣavattvaṃ nityatvaṃ arthaśabdānabhidheyatvaṃ*³¹ *ca-iti*³². 'Universals' etc. can be said to be, insofar as they are genuine objects of knowledge; they are irreducible constituents, parts of the world; they are, however, not physically separable entities, nor metaphysically superior archetypal powers.

As for *astitva*, which covers both groups of 'categories' and their respective ways of being, the conjunction with 'knowableness' and 'nameableness', together with the whole context in which it appears, gives us some hints: *astitva* means the applicability of the word 'is'³³, i. e. the fact that there is an objective basis and condition for saying 'it is', in the sense of its being identifiable, recognizable, distinguishable from, not reducible to other entities, and thereby knowable, speakable, suitable as truth-condition for thought and speech. — We may recall here Praśastapāda's familiar practice of justifying the assumption of entities by claiming them as indispensable causes or conditions (*kāraṇa*, *hetu*, *nimitta*³⁴) of undeniable occurrences in thought and speech (*pratyaya*, *vyavahāra*). The word *asti* may be used to accentuate the veridical claim attached to such assumptions, as, e. g., in the following statement

²⁹ PB 17—18.

³⁰ The term *buddhilakṣaṇatva* obviously refers to the *buddhyapekṣam* of VS¹ I, 2, 3; cf. NK 19.

³¹ *Arthaśabdānabhidheyatva* reflects VS¹ VIII, 2, 3 (= VS² VIII, 14): *artha iti dravyaguṇakarmasu*; as to the characteristic *akāraṇatva*, Śrīdhara specifies that it can only exclude *samavṛtyasamavṛtyikāraṇatva*, not, however, *nimittakāraṇatva* as capability of 'causing' knowledge or apprehension (NK 20).

³² PB 19.

³³ Cf. Vy. 118.

³⁴ On 'causality' in the case of 'universals' etc. see above, n. 31.

with regard to *samavāya*: . . . *iti pratyayadarśanād asty eṣām sambandha itī jñāyate*³⁵.

Śrīdhara paraphrases *astitva* as *svarūpavattiva*, and he determines that it is the 'characteristic nature' of any entity which constitutes its 'is-ness' (*yasya vastuno yat svarūpaṃ tad eva tasya-astitvam*³⁶). Obviously, this is in keeping with the connotation of identifiability and recognizability in *Prāśastapāda*'s use of *astitva* and, moreover, with his use of the term *svarūpa*, as in *ātmāsvarūpa*, *svarūpābheda*, *svarūpālocanamātra*, etc.³⁷. At the same time, however, the concept of *svarūpa*, in its functional openness and almost universal applicability, can hardly safeguard the ontological positivity which *Prāśastapāda* connects with his notion of *astitva*, which, according to the whole context and orientation of his thought, is not supposed to include 'non-being' (*abhāva*).—Already Udayana remarks: *abhāvas tu svarūpavān api* . . .³⁸, and a critic like Śrīharṣa can justly emphasize that identifiability and distinguishability, as constituted by *svarūpa*, are no basis for contrasting 'being' and 'non-being', reality and fiction³⁹. — In spite of its veridical functions, *Prāśastapāda*'s *astitva* preserves a basically 'existential' connotation. It is insofar characteristically different from *tattva*, as it is at home in the more epistemologically oriented *Nyāya*, where it is explained as including both *sat* and *asat*: Both 'being' and 'non-being', 'presence' and 'absence' may be objective correlates of thought and speech, insofar as they may have a truth-conditioning function with regard to positive resp. negative propositions⁴⁰. *Tattva* is an essentially veridical term; and it indicates a framework and context of thought which was certainly more conducive to the later development of *abhāva* than the original, 'positively' ontological world-orientation of *Vaiśeṣika*.

The second group of 'categories', sc. 'universals' etc., may easily be subsumed under this all-inclusive notion of *astitva*: Their whole

³⁵ PB 325; cf. 311: *yad anugataṃ asti* . . . (on *sāmānya*).

³⁶ NK 16. — Cf. the uses of *svabhāva*, *svarūpa*, *svadharma* in NBh on IV, 1, 38 (ND¹ 707ff.; NS IV a 35 in Ruben's edition).

³⁷ PB 311f.; 186f.

³⁸ Kir. 6; Udayana discusses why *abhāva* has not been mentioned as a special 'category' and adds: *prāptiyoginirūpaṇādhinanirūpaṇatvāt, na tu tucchatvāt* cf. also *Nyāyakusumāñjali* on *Kārikā* I, 10. — Unlike later commentators, Udayana does not, as it is sometimes maintained, take *astitva* as including *abhāva*, and insofar not as co-extensive with *jñeyatva* and *abhidheyatva*; cf. Kir. 27.

³⁹ Cf. *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhāḍya*, ed. with Hindi comm. by C. ŚUKLA (Benares 1961/62) 21ff.; also 421ff.

⁴⁰ Cf. NBh and NV on I, 1, 1 (ND¹ 1; 11f.); concerning VS I, 1, 4, which may have been modelled on NS I, 1, 1, see above, n. 8.

'is-ness' is *svātmasattva*, often paraphrased as *svarūpasattā*⁴¹; as such, it consists exclusively in their being identifiable natures, forms of their own and is consequently, although implying 'absence of beingness' (*sattāviraha*⁴²), eternal, unchangeable and independent.

The application of 'is-ness' to the particular 'manifest' 'substances' (*dravya*) etc. and their way of being is more intricate. In order to avoid confusion, we have to keep in mind that there are two kinds or levels of ontological dichotomy in *Prāśastapāda* (*sattā*—*astitva* and *sattāsam-bandha*—*svātmasattva*), and we have to take into consideration that in the passage under discussion he uses the word *sattāsambandha*, not simply *sattā*⁴³. Within the context of his thought, this is by no means negligible: Dealing with the common and specific attributes of all six 'categories', he can, according to his own principles, only speak in terms of *sādharmya* and *vaidharmya*, not in terms of *sāmānya* resp. *sāmānyavibhaga*. Therefore, any use of *sattā* in this context and on this level of discourse would be illegitimate. The 'categories' and their instances, such as *sattā* itself, represent his way of naming and enumerating the components of the real world; they are immediately world-oriented ('*intentio prima*'). The *dharma*s (*sādharmya*—*vaidharmya*) as abstract attributes⁴⁴, on the other hand, do not present any further separable or juxtaposable world-components, but ways and viewpoints of comparing and conceptually relating the actual world-components. They constitute a kind of second level of the system, which still deals with the real objective world, but is less immediately world-oriented, more concerned with systematic and structural devices and without the crudely hypostasizing ontological commitment of the 'first level'. — *Prāśastapāda* does not have a theory of semantic levels, but he has a keen systematic mind and is keeping himself constantly aware of the danger of *anavasthā*, 'infinite regress'. He carefully avoids confusing his two levels of discourse and never treats a *sāmānya* and a *sādharmya* as commensurable or comparable. Consequently, the question what *sattā* and *astitva* have in common remains unasked; and the 'ontological dichotomy' which is involved here does not become explicitly thematic. — The term *sattāsambandha*, which is used in the *sādharmya* analysis, does not refer to *sattā*, 'being-

⁴¹ Cf. NK 19: ... *svarūpaṃ yat sāmānyādināṃ tad eva teṣāṃ sattvam*. In Vyomaśiva's 'ontological' sections, the notion of *svarūpa* plays a less prominent role than in Śrīdhara and Udayana. Vyomaśiva seems to be more interested in psychological explanation than in conceptual analysis.

⁴² Kir. 30.

⁴³ Although this distinction is not really carried through by the commentators.

⁴⁴ On the use of *dharma*, cf. NK 16: *yady api dharmāḥ śatpadārthebhyo na vyatiricyante* ...

ness' as such, but rather to the condition of being related to it, which, though being common to all the individual 'substances' etc., is not an actually pervasive and ontologically separable factor of community like *sattā* itself: Being found in all particular 'manifest' entities (*vyakti*), it nevertheless leaves them confined to their particularity. It is the universality of 'beingness' in the particularity of its being 'manifested' by individual entities.

In a sense, *sattāsambandha* comes closer to 'existence' than *sattā* itself⁴⁵, insofar as there is a more notable connotation of actuality and temporality: 'Connection with beingness' is the, in itself temporal and in the more ordinary cases impermanent, condition of being qualified by the qualifying universal 'beingness', which is as such eternal or rather atemporal. — In *Prāśastapāda* commentaries and other later texts, the formula 'connection with beingness' often serves—especially in the compound *svakāraṇasattāsambandha*, 'connection with the beingness of the own cause'⁴⁶—the purpose of explaining *utpatti*, 'genesis', and *kāryatva*, the destructible contingent being of effects, i. e. composite entities. The question of its applicability to the ultimately simple and indestructible components or causes, such as the atoms, remains out of consideration or is, obviously not quite in agreement with *Prāśastapāda*'s own position, explicitly dispensed with⁴⁷. — It may be noted that in later texts not only *sattāsambandha* tends to coincide with 'destructibility' resp. 'producibility'; also *sattā* itself, not being distinguished from *sattāsambandha*, appears in a more temporal perspective, and its role is often reduced to serving as a counterpart and presupposition of *pradhvaṃsābhāva*, i. e. non-being resulting from destruction⁴⁸. — For a *Vaiśeṣika* critic of the 1st millenium like Śālikanātha, on the other hand, *sattā* still represents an understanding of 'being' which leaves no room for temporality and change⁴⁹.

Accepting *Prāśastapāda*'s own terms, the structure of his system and his way of not explicitly touching upon certain questions, one may concede that a conceptual settlement has been reached, and that

⁴⁵ The basic unsuitability of 'existence'—'essence', 'contingent' and 'necessary' being, 'esse ab alio'—'esse a se' etc. for the translation of *Prāśastapāda*'s 'ontological' terminology should, however, always be kept in mind. — On the temporality of *sattāsambandha* cf. Bhāsarvajña, *Nyāya-bhūṣaṇa* (Varanasi 1968) 468.

⁴⁶ E. g. Vy. 126; 129; 143; NK 18.

⁴⁷ E. g. NK 17; Vy. 126.

⁴⁸ Cf., e. g. Dinakari on Viśvanātha's *Kārikāvali*, v. 9; ed. SANKARA RAMA SASTRY (Mylapore, Madras 1923) 114.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rjuvimalā on Prabhākara's *Bṛhatī*, ed. A. CHINNASWAMI SASTRI (Benares 1929) 120f.; also PP 97ff.

his treatment of the problem of 'being' has its peculiar consistency. There are at least two ways and levels of talking about 'being': There is 'being' as *sattā*, the most comprehensive instance of the 'category' *sāmānya*, hypostasized 'somethingness' which has itself become a something, a datum of sense-perception, one real and ontologically separable factor and component among others which constitute the world as it is given to us; and there is 'being' as *astitva*, which merely, and in a sense tautologically, states that whatever is, is (*asti*), i. e. has a certain character of positivity, identifiability.—Acceptance of this framework is, of course, not what we may expect from an opponent; and in the following centuries, this whole complex of 'being' was a highly welcome target of criticism and ridicule especially for Buddhists, Jainas, and Mīmāṃsakas, then also for Vedāntins⁵⁰. The commentators—I am mainly referring to Vyomaśiva, Śrīdhara, and Udayana—are forced into sometimes rather desperate conceptual efforts; occasionally, however, they cannot avoid to lay bare and make explicit the inherent tensions and ambiguities of Prasastapāda's apparently well-closed system.

It is beyond the scope of our present discussion to give a detailed account⁵¹ of the origin and systematic implications of the objections to *sattā* as they are stated in the *pūrvapakṣa* sections of the Vaiśeṣika commentators. Consequently, we cannot fully explicate how these commentators try to defend and justify both *sattā* and *astitva*, nor can we analyze their attempts to rephrase the conceptual relationship between *sattāśambandha* and *svātmasattva*; it may suffice here to recall their practice of utilizing the concept of 'metaphorical being' (*upacārasattā*, *aupacāriki sattā*⁵²) and of applying the principle of 'co-occurrence' (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*⁵³; cf. also *sādhāraṇadharmādhikaraṇatā*⁵⁴), which accounts for the extrapolation of 'being' to whatever has a common substratum with 'beingness', i. e. also to 'universals' etc.—At any rate, 'beingness', *sattā* itself is stubbornly defended against epistemological, pragmatistic and other decompositions (*pramāṇasambandhayogyatā*, *arthakriyākāritva*, *varāmānakālasambandhitva*⁵⁵). The argumentation is

⁵⁰ Such as Śrīharṣa (see above, n. 39).

⁵¹ Exemplary materials from these discussions will be presented and analysed in a monograph now under preparation.

⁵² Cf. Vyomaśiva's use of *upacārasattā*, Vy. 124ff.; on the function of this concept in the philosophy of grammar see K. A. SUBRAMANIA IYER, Bhartṛhari (Poona 1969) 209ff.

⁵³ Cf. Kir. 24: *sattāikārthasamavāya*.

⁵⁴ Vy. 142f.

⁵⁵ E. g. Vy. 126f.; NK 12; *varāmānatva* becomes again prominent in Raghunātha; cf. K. H. POTTER, The Padārthatattvanirūpamam of Raghunātha Śiromapi (Cambridge, Mass. 1957) 61f.

largely *ad hominem*; and all the opposing interpretations of 'being' are charged with leading to an infinite regress (*anavasthā, anavasthāna*⁵⁶). However, it is evident that the positive establishment of *sattā* as common denominator of whatever exists and its defense in terms of 'supreme similarity' becomes increasingly difficult and awkward in this atmosphere of discussion. Śrīdhara incidentally concedes that this alleged similarity of all 'beings' ultimately consists in their being distinguishable from non-being⁵⁷. In this way, he obviously weakens the old claims concerning the independence (*svātantrya*) of the conception of 'being'⁵⁸ and consequently the defense-line against the Buddhist *apohavāda*. — *Astitva*, being more of a functional concept, is in general more open to re-definition and re-interpretation, and accordingly subject to a process of semantic evaporation which is due to an increasingly epistemological and reflexive attitude. Its positivity is eventually relegated to the positivity, the affirmative character of the apprehension of which it is the object or content: Śrīdhara explains *astitva* occasionally as *vidhipratyaya-viṣayatva*⁵⁹; Udayana's widely accepted formula is *vidhimukhapratyaya-viṣayatva*⁶⁰. The difficulties and potential consequences of defining *astitva* as *svarūparatva*, as identifiability, distinguishability of whatever may 'be' identifiable or distinguishable, have already been referred to⁶¹.

The problems inherent in Praśastapāda's 'ontological' construction and generally in the conception of *sattā* as pervasive and qualifying *sāmānya* of whatever is *sat* are further illustrated by a question which was not explicitly considered by Praśastapāda himself, but, as one of stock arguments of the Vaiśeṣika critics, had to be faced and discussed by his commentators: Does that which is connected with 'beingness' have any 'being' in itself or not⁶²? Pursuing the implications of this question we may add: 'Is there' anything like an individual entity in itself of which 'beingness' would just be a further 'real predicate'⁶³?

⁵⁶ Vy. 124ff.; NK 12f.

⁵⁷ NK 12: ... *teṣām abhāvavilakṣaṇena rūpeṇa tulyatāpratibhāsanāt*; in his defense against Prābhākara objections (cf. PP 97ff.), Śrīdhara has to face the fundamental difficulties which Aristotle avoided by not accepting 'being' as 'highest genus' (nor any summum genus at all).

⁵⁸ Cf. NV³ 11f.; this passage is referred to by Śrīdhara, NK 226.

⁵⁹ NK 15; cf. NK 226: *vidhirūpatā*.

⁶⁰ Kir. 27; Udayana adds *pratīyogyanapekṣanirūpanatva*.

⁶¹ See above, notes 38—39.

⁶² Vy. 126: *kiṃ sattā satām atha-asatām*; NK 17: *kiṃ sattāsambandhaḥ sato 'sato vā*. — But see also below, n. 76.

⁶³ According to Kant's formulation, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* B 626: "Sein ist offenbar kein reales Prädikat ...".

Is there an *astitva* of 'substances' etc. apart from their *sattā*? And does *sattā* actually add anything to what an individual thing 'is' as such?

One method of reacting to this notorious dilemma (*vikalpa*) had been not to accept it as such and to deny any temporal, 'physical' implications of the idea of a 'connection with beingness': *na sataḥ sattāsambandhaḥ, na-asataḥ | yadā-eva tad vastu tadā-eva sattayā sambaddham . . .*⁶⁴. — The Vaiśeṣika commentators are familiar with kind of reply and refer to it in their argumentation⁶⁵; yet this does not take care of all their problems: The basic Vaiśeṣika attitude of dissection and juxtaposition precludes them from simply and firmly grounding the meaning and unity of 'being' in the concrete unity of the *vastu*; as their reactions demonstrate, the difficulties caricatured by this 'dilemma about being or non-being' (*sadasadvikalpa*) are, indeed, deeply rooted in the ontological orientation of the system.

Especially Śrīdhara, blurring in a sense Praśastapāda's distinction of two levels of discourse, goes rather far in suggesting an actual ontological cleavage. Arguing that both *astitva* and *sattā* are necessary to adequately describe and explain the world as it is, he says that while *sattā* is necessary to account for our apprehension of 'being' in its unity and universality, *astitva* or *svarūpavattva* is indispensable insofar as *sattā* would never inhere in what does not have a *svarūpa*, a characteristic nature of its own⁶⁶. Arguing against the attempt of the Prābhākaraś to understand 'being' in terms of the mere *vastusvarūpa*, the 'characteristic nature' and self-identity of each single entity, and without the assumption of a real *sattāsāmānya* (*sattā* being reduced to an 'extrinsic qualification'—*upādhi*, sc. *pramāṇasambandhayogyatā*, 'suitability for being connected with a means of knowledge'⁶⁷), Śrīdhara never says, nor does he presuppose, that there is no such thing as an independent *vastusvarūpa*. Instead, his whole emphasis is on that it would not be sufficient to explain our apprehension of the unity of 'being' in the different entities⁶⁸. Vice versa, the Prābhākara's denial of an independent real

⁶⁴ NV¹ 322; cf. NM I 286.

⁶⁵ Cf. Vy. 126: *tad asat, niṣpādasambandhayor ekakālatvāt*; cf. also NK 15 (concerning *samavāya* in general): *svakāraṇasāmarthyād upajāyāmānam eva tatra sambadhyate, yathā chidrikriyā chedyena . . .* Vy. 690 has: *niṣpādasambandhayor ekakālatvād iti*; this may go back the Vākya and Bhāṣya commented upon in Praśastapāda's lost Tīkā: see below, n. 76.

⁶⁶ NK 16.

⁶⁷ See the references given in n. 49; a long discussion concerning this point is found in Maṇḍana, *Brahmasiddhi*, ed. S. KUPPUSWAMI SASTRI (Madras 1937) 85ff. Cf. also pp. 289ff. (on *svarūpamātra* as *ekāki bhāvaḥ*).

⁶⁸ NK 11f.; cf. Kir. 23.

sattā, by reducing it to *pramāṇasambandhayogyatā*, does not at all affect his acceptance of the independent extramental existence of things (*vastu*) as such. And, of course, no Vaiśeṣika author ever says that without *sattā* there would simply be nothing; the very idea of 'nothing' or 'nothingness' is, in fact, quite outside their horizon. — On the other hand, to predicate *sattā* of 'universals' etc. is regarded as mistaken only insofar as it superimposes a factor of unity and universality upon what has, or 'is', just its 'own form', *svarūpa*⁶⁶.

Sattā, thus reduced to a factor of unity-in-diversity, appears as a kind of extra to the individual existence of each particular (*dravya* etc.); and according to its status as a real, epistemologically and ontologically separable 'universal', it cannot simply coincide with, and not even completely depend upon, the fact that things are or exist⁷⁰. *Sattā* is not the being of the world, which is as such never really thematized; *sattā* is and remains an occurrence in the world.

What seems to be at the bottom of this understanding of 'being', and especially of the conceptual bifurcation of *sattā* and *astitva*, is a deep-rooted ambivalence in classical Vaiśeṣika which again is the result of an attempted integration of different historical levels,—that is of an enumerative, physically oriented philosophy of nature and of a categorical analysis. In other words: It has to do with a tendency to present findings of categorial analysis in the old and traditional shape of an enumeration, juxtaposition of different entities. Initially, there may have been an enumerative philosophy of nature in terms of 'elements' or 'substances'. But then the substances themselves became subject to what is actually a categorial and conceptual analysis and decomposition. They were distinguished from, and stripped of, their qualifications resp. qualifiers (*viśeṣaṇa*), which—*sattā* being regarded as one of them—appear as separate entities, side by side with their qualificands (*viśeṣya*). The Vaiśeṣika's *dravya* is insofar quite different from the Mīmāṃsaka's *vastu* or, e. g., Aristotle's τὸδε τι. Nevertheless—and this adds to the ambivalence—it continues being regarded as having its own, quasi-complete nature and being, and even some kind of separate perceptibility⁷¹; it is never reduced to an unformed ὤλη and not even to what is

⁶⁶ NK 19: *bhinnaśvabhāveṣv ekānuṣāṅgo mīthyā-eva, svarūpagrahaṇam tu na mīṣā, svarūpasya yathārthatvāt*.

⁷⁰ Vyomaśiva (Vy. 143) says about 'universals', in a context dealing with *sattā*: *samastātrayaṇināṣe 'py avasthānam iṣyate*.

⁷¹ Cf. L. SCHMITHAUSEN, Zur Lehre von der vorstellungsfreien Wahrnehmung bei Prāśastapāda. Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens 14 (1970) 125—129. — How the 'facticity' and 'positivity' implied in the perception of the actual thing (*dravya*) qua *viśeṣya* has to be related to the

called 'bare particular' by some recent and contemporary philosophers⁷².—In spite of their conceptual courage, the Vaiśeṣikas are too commonsensical to enlarge upon the more startling 'ontological' consequences of their system according to which, at the end of a process of enumerative dissection into factors and constituents, the unity of the world and each single thing has to be restored by postulating an additional enumerable and juxtaposable factor, i. e. 'inherence', *samavāya*.

In conclusion, we may say that *astitva* has not only the function of circumscribing the whole realm of 'categories', but also of regaining a meaning and type of 'being' which is not, like *sattā*, a logically, epistemologically and ontologically separable attribute of what there is. *Sattā* and *astitva* represent two different levels of philosophical reflection and thematization⁷³. In trying to integrate these in one system, Prāsa-
stapāda shows a sound systematic instinct. Nevertheless, his construction remains easily accessible to misunderstandings and attacks, and, as the further development shows, it does not provide any firm and fertile ground for a tradition of ontology: While the old concept of *sattā* appears more and more fossilized and obsolete⁷⁴, *astitva* represents a meaning of 'being' which tends to evaporate with the development of epistemological reflection, insofar as it tends to coincide with the mere objectivity or thematicity of whatever has been objectified and is positively taken into account at any given level of thought⁷⁵.

However, in stating that the Vaiśeṣika conceptualizations of 'being' do not really lead to a tradition of ontology, we should not forget what

apprehension of *sattā* qua *viśeṣaṇa* is a question which does not really become thematic in Vaiśeṣika; and there is nothing like the Vedānta attempt to equate what is given to 'indeterminate' (*nirvikalpaka*) perception with 'pure being' (*sanmātra*, *sattāmātra*).

⁷² Cf. M. J. Loux (ed.), *Universals and Particulars* (New York 1970), esp. 235ff.

⁷³ Relating our discussion to the old theme of the one and the many, we may say that *sattā* represents a meaning of 'being' according to which it is basically one, while *astitva* posits what there is in its irreducible manifoldness. It is symptomatic that *sattā* itself is understood in terms of *astitva*.

⁷⁴ It is no longer acceptable to Raghunātha Śiromaṇi; cf. reference given in n. 55.

⁷⁵ Insofar, it may be said to coincide with *padārthatva* (cf. n. 20) and to amount to a sense of 'being' as mere 'somethingness', as it is advocated by what is known in our days as 'allgemeine Gegenstandstheorie'.—On the difficulties of defining *astitva*, cf. Vardhamāna and Rucidatta on Udayana in: Kiraṇāvalī by Udayanācāryya, ed. S. C. SARVABHOUMA (Calcutta 1911) 137ff.

has already been emphasized in our introductory remarks—sc. the historical role of this 'ontological' theory as an important, stimulating and truly catalytical target of criticism⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ According to Mallavādin's Dvādaśāranayacakra, as presented by Sīrṃhasūri, it seems that Praśastapāda's (= Praśastamati's) lost Tīkā on a Vaiśeṣikabhāṣya (by Ātreya?) contained more detailed discussions of 'ontological' questions, esp. of the concept of *sattāsambandha*; see the extracts from Mallavādin's work in: VS² 147—152. Mallavādin explains Praśastapāda's understanding of the formula *niṣṭhāsambandhayor ekakālatvāt* (also quoted by Vyomaśiva, cf. above, n. 65) as follows: *siddhasya vastunaḥ svakāraṇaiḥ sattayā ca sambandha iti prāśastamato 'bhiprāyaḥ* (loc. cit. 152). — The question to what extent Praśastapāda's 'ontology' may have been prepared during the somewhat obscure period between VS and PB, which was excluded from the present, more systematically oriented sketch, will be taken up in the projected monograph, referred to in n. 51.