

Harsh Narain, *Evolution of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Categoriology*. Volume I: *Early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Categoriology*. Varanasi, Bharati Prakashan, 1976. 256 pp.

The Vaiśeṣika was originally a system of nature-philosophy which sought to explain the world by enumerating the constituent elements. At a certain stage of the development of philosophical thinking, the doctrine of categories was introduced into this system, and the original theories were gradually remodelled on the basis of categorial analysis. The six categories which characterize the Vaiśeṣika doctrine are found mentioned in the oldest extant Vaiśeṣika literature, viz., the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (Abbrev. *VS*). It is supposed that *VS* took its present form after passing through a process of alteration and interpolation, but, because of the scarcity of material, it is difficult to trace the historical development of the Vaiśeṣika system in its early stages. An attempt to describe the origin and development of the Vaiśeṣika system was made by E. Frauwallner in his *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, Bd. II (Salzburg 1956). He expounded the view that the following four stages were to be distinguished in the development of the classical Vaiśeṣika: (1) the oldest enumerative nature-philosophy, (2) the formulation of new ideas, such as the atom-doctrine, causality-theory, etc. and the completion of an atomic-mechanic world-picture, (3) the emergence of the doctrine of categories, (4) the remodelling of the old nature-philosophy in the light of the doctrine of categories. Frauwallner was fully aware of the fact that his arguments were largely based on conjecture, but he said, "Aber der Versuch musste einmal gemacht werden. Denn erst so wird vieles, was im erhaltenen System zunächst seltsam

anmutet, verständlich und begreiflich" (p. 316). The lines of development of the Vaiśeṣika doctrines thus drawn by him seem to me basically quite acceptable.

The book under review is intended to clarify the stages by which the classical Vaiśeṣika doctrine of six categories was gradually formed. The subjects dealt with in the essential part of this book (Part III: Beginning of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Categoriology, p. 101ff.) are closely related to what was discussed by Frauwallner in his description of the third stage mentioned above. It is to be regretted that the author, H. Narain, has not referred to Frauwallner's work, which would have provided him with a clearer perspective in respect to the development of the doctrine of categories as can be shown by the following example. The author maintains the view that the early Vaiśeṣikas propounded only three categories, viz., substance (*dravya*), attribute (*guṇa*) and motion (*karman*), and adduces in confirmation of his view evidence found in *VS* with such expressions as 'a stronger point in favour of our thesis is . . .', 'the strongest point in favour of our thesis is . . .' (pp. 122–123). However, his arguments are not so convincing. They may serve to prove that the said three categories are different in characteristic features from the others, but not that categories other than those three were not originally posited. The author could have made his view more plausible by accepting Frauwallner's assumption that there was a stage of enumeration of entities prior to the formulation of the doctrine of categories. Progress from the enumeration of entities to the classification of them into substance, attribute and motion may be regarded as a natural course, but the categorization of universal (*sāmānya*), differential (*viśeṣa*) and inherence (*samavāya*) certainly presupposes advancement in philosophical reflection.

In his explanation of the three original categories (p. 124ff.), the author criticizes the arguments put forward by K. Potter concerning the equation of *dravya* with 'substance' and of *guṇa* with 'quality'. The author's discussion of *guṇa* is most cogent. Potter is opposed to the identification of *guṇa* with 'quality' for the reason that, while a quality is acknowledged as a characteristic which remains one and the same in many things, a *guṇa* is recognized as an entity related to one particular thing and not shared by many things. That is to say, he regarded a quality as repeatable and a *guṇa* as unrepeatable. Against this view the author argues that there were in the Indian tradition two opposite views, one that a *guṇa* is repeatable and the other that it is unrepeatable. He cites sources which prove that the former and the latter views were held respectively by the Vaiyākaraṇas and Mīmāṃsakas and by the Jains and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas. As equivalent for *guṇa*, the author adopts 'attribute' rather than 'quality' and gives some reasons which I consider to be adequate.

A detailed examination of the relevant terms and concepts in the early Vyākaraṇa texts constitutes a characteristic feature of the present book. The author supports the view set forth by H. Ui that the Jains were precursory to the Vaiśeṣikas, but criticizes him for his not taking into consideration the theories developed by the Vaiyākaraṇas. Some important observations on the formulation of the early Vaiśeṣika doctrines have been made by the author through his investigation of Vyākaraṇa texts. For example, with a view to clarifying the origin of the category 'existence', which is termed *bhāva* or *sattā* in *VS*, the author carefully examines the term *bhāva* in the *Nirukta* and in the early Vyākaraṇa texts, and on the basis of this examination describes the genesis of 'existence' as follows. The term *bhāva* originally denoted the action which was thought to be at the root of all existing things; the early Vaiyākaraṇas soon derived the notion of existence (*sattā*) from that of action, which notion gave rise to the Vaiśeṣika concept of 'existence' (pp. 163–166; 170–171). It seems likely that, as held by the author, 'existence' was first added to the original list of categories before the concept of 'universal' was formed.

Very elaborate is the discussion of the genesis of the category 'universal' (*sāmānya*) (p. 181ff.). The author makes reference to Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa and Mīmāṃsā treatises and examines the usage of such terms as *sāmānya*, *jāti* and *ākṛti*, which are employed to mean the universal in later times. It is clearly shown by the author that neither in the *Nyāyasūtra* (Abbrev. *NS*) nor in the early Vyākaraṇa works the term *jāti* was used to denote a category. The term *jāti* occurs in *NS*, 2.2.69: *samānaprasavātmikā jātiḥ*, which is usually construed in accordance

with Vātsyāyana's interpretation as meaning that the universal (*jāti=sāmānya*) is of the nature of producing similar cognition (*samāna=samānā buddhiḥ*). According to the author, this *sūtra* originally intended to define *jāti* as 'procreative of the like'. This interpretation seems quite acceptable. Thus the term *jāti* in *NS* is to be taken to mean 'species' in the biological sense, and not the universal as a Vaiśeṣika category. On the other hand, in the early Vyākaraṇa texts it stands for a natural class. This is shown by the author through his examination of Patañjali's definition of *jāti*. In the course of his explanation of Patañjali's usage of the words *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, the author calls our attention to a passage in which Patañjali states that a thing may be regarded sometimes as *sāmānya* and sometimes as *viśeṣa* in accordance with the intention of the speaker (*vivakṣā*). We may consider, as suggested by the author, this passage to be a possible source for *VS*, 1.2.3: *sāmānyam viśeṣa iti buddhyapekṣam*. The author further points out that the word *sāmānya* is used by Patañjali sometimes in the sense of commonness or generality, but he states that *sāmānya* as an entity over and above its substrata was not known to Patañjali. The word *ākṛti* is used in the early Vyākaraṇa texts primarily in the sense of form or configuration and secondarily in the sense of *jāti*. In conclusion the author makes the remark that the germ of the category 'universal' is noticeable in the Vaiyākaraṇa concept of *jāti* and *ākṛti*.

As mentioned above the book is commendable in many respects. However, it is to be deplored that the author often wearies the reader with useless or inappropriate arguments and explanations. In Chapter IV (The Vaiśeṣika Concept of Category), the author gives a panoramic sketch of different theories of category by Western philosophers (pp. 64–83). This is of no use. If a comparison was intended for a clearer elucidation of the main subject, the author should have explained in detail only one theory which is akin to or in sharp contrast to the Vaiśeṣika doctrine. Again, in the section dealing with the Vaiyākaraṇas' concept of *bhāva*, the views held by Western philosophers are shown panoramically (pp. 166–170). When treating the genesis of the category 'existence' (*sattā*), the author refers to the R̥gvedic and Upaniṣadic speculations on *sat* and *asat*, and states, "... there is every reason to believe that it is *sat* and *asat* which came gradually to develop into the categorial notions of existence and non-existence" (p. 163). It is, however, difficult to believe that the Nāsadāsītya hymn or Uddālaka Āruṇi's teaching has anything to do with the Vaiśeṣika category of 'existence'. At the end of the section dealing with the genesis of the category 'universal', the author explains Dharmakīrti's view on the origin of the concept of universal (pp. 201–204). As a matter of course Dharmakīrti never discussed the 'origin' of the universal from a historical point of view, and it is irrelevant to the main subject to refer to Dharmakīrti who lived several centuries after the period of the systematization of the Vaiśeṣika doctrine of six categories. On pp. 233–241 the author lists one hundred and sixteen abbreviations for the books utilized. Some of them are not found in other books and are seldom used by the author. For example, *CMNV* (Umesh Mishra, *Conception of Matter According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Metaphysics*), *PSAH* (B. N. Seal, *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*), *SNVM* (S. Bhaduri, *Studies in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Metaphysics*) and some others are found only once or twice in the Introduction. It would have been better to give the full title or a simplified title in a footnote, so that the reader is not obliged to consult the list of abbreviations.

This book constitutes the first half of the author's work on the evolution of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine of categories. The subjects to be treated in the forthcoming Vol. II: *Development of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Categoriology* are briefly mentioned by the author on pp. 29–30.