

Jadavpur University
Department of Philosophy
M.Phil. Admission Test, 2015

Time: Two hours

Full Marks: 50

1. Comprehension

“Indian metaphysicians have always thought of reality in terms of fundamental kinds called *padārtha*-s. The word *padārtha*-literally meaning “the meaning of word” –is generally translated as “category”. Since the theory of meaning, in most Indian philosophies, is a referential theory, *padārtha* means “what is referred to by the words,” and so the entities that belong to the world. By an understandable extension in the context of metaphysical discourse, it means the most general kinds of things that are, the highest genera of entities. Any discussion of the theory of category of Indian thinking would be facilitated if we start with a provisional listing of categories as is to be found in the Nyāya- Vaiśeṣika- even if there is no reason why we should accept this list to be unrevisable. But it would serve as a good starting point for recovering the basic underlying conceptions, and to review the reasons why many other systems did not accept the list. The list is one of seven categories: *dravya* (substance), *guṇa* (quality), *karma* (action), *sāmānya* (universal), *viśeṣa* (individuality), *samavāya* (inherence), and *abhāva* (negation). The English words within parentheses are approximate translations, to be made precise in the course of the ensuing discussion.

A question with which we may begin is, what sort of considerations justify the inclusion of a kind among the list of categories? In other words, in the technical jargon of the system, what can be accepted as a *padarthavibhājaka upādhi*? One answer is that two properties ϕ and ψ truly can serve as demarcating categories if and only if ϕ and ψ cannot be present in the same locus. In the above list, *dravyatva* (the property of being a substance) and *gunatva* (the property of being a quality) do not inhere in the same thing. The former inheres in a jar, for instance, and the latter in the color of the jar.

But clearly this account is not satisfactory. In the first place, the two properties earthiness and waterness do not inhere in the same loci, yet they are not category –demarcating properties. We need to determine which universals do not demarcate a category. We know that “being a substance” or substancehood is a category –demarcating property. Existence is a universal that is present in all those instances in which substancehood is present. Likewise, earthhood is pervaded by substancehood. We may then surmise that if ϕ is a category-demarcating property, then no property that pervades ϕ , and no property which is pervaded by ϕ , is a category demarcating property. The above account implies that “existence” is not a category–demarcating property, for there are no two mutually exclusive kinds: being and nonbeing. “Being” is not a category. The next highest universals that are pervaded by “being” are categories, according to the Vaiśeṣikas. The *padārtha*-s or categories are the highest –I should add, following Husserl, “non-formal”-genera under which all entities fall. “Being” does not divide entities into classes. The categories are natural classes of entities. There cannot be an all-inclusive category.

There are further questions about the *padārtha*-s that we need to look into. At this place, I can only formulate one of this., but not immediately proceed to answer it. The question is, are the *padārtha*-s, when they are taken to be natural kinds, “descriptive concept” or are they speculative concepts? It does appear as though the first three in the Vaiśeṣika list (i.e., substance, quality and action) are descriptive concepts and the last four are not. But is this initial impression sound? We need, in this connection, also ask, what is the task of a philosophy that intends to deliver a system of categories? Is its task to descriptively ascertain the highest genera of entities? Or, is its task to construct such a system? To such questions we shall return at the end of this chapter.”

Read the following passage and answer the questions mentioned below:

a) What is a category-demarcating property? Discuss.

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b) Do the philosophers who offer a list of categories merely describe the highest genera of entities?

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2. Write an essay on any one of the following topics:

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- i. Refutation of metaphysics
- ii. Gandhiji and modern civilization
- iii. The Sāṃkhya critique of *Brahmakāraṇavāda*
- iv. The distinction between fact and value
- v. Pragmatism as a theory of truth
- vi. Anvitābhīdhānavāda
- vii. Paradoxes of material implication

3. Answer in brief, any two of the following questions:

5+5=10

- i. How do the Naiyāyikas distinguish between a *jāti* and an *upādhi*
 - ii. Why do the post-modern hermeneuticians think that our historical circumstances determine who we are?
 - iii. How does Husserl distinguish between fact and essence?
 - iv. Explain after Bernard Williams the problem of personal identity
 - v. What is the main point at issue between the *svataḥprāmāṇyavādins* and the *parathprāmāṇyavādins*?
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