
Analysis of the *Nyāyabhāṣya* with Reference to the *Nyāyasūtra* 4.1.37 and 38

The First Step in Constructing the Context

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1. Introduction

We have a variety of ways or positions for dealing with the interpretation of a text. One way is “the configuration of texts.”¹ The primary feature of this method is the idea that a particular text exists as a knot of various relationships tying together groups of other connected texts: pre-text, inter-text, para-text, and meta-text. In this way, a particular text for study, which we name the Small Text (S-Text), acts as the nucleus for a configuration of other texts, the S-Text forming what we call the Large Text (L-Text) with other texts. The S-Text is not analyzed in isolation, but within the L-Text in order to manifest the context, which is not referred to in the S-Text itself.² An important point of interpretation of the S-Text is to find the context under which the S-Text was generated. However, the context has “a tacit dimension,” which even the author of the S-Text did not realize.³ Previously Hirano [2007] has argued that the configuration of texts method gives us the opportunity of manifesting this tacit dimension. This configuration of texts is illustrated in Figure 1 in the next page.

Each constituent in the L-Text is explained as follows: the “pre-text” is a prerequisite for the S-Text’s existence. Plot, drafts, proofs, and so on are elements of the pre-text. “Inter-text” stands for the whole text, which has a relation of quotation with the S-Text in a broad sense. The relationship between the S-Text and the inter-text then is called “inter-textuality.” “Meta-text” is the interpretation assigned to the S-Text. “Para-text” is the collection of other texts by the same author. If only some portion of a text is regarded as the S-Text, the rest of the text is regarded as para-text. Moreover, the tacit dimension is a part of context, which has influence on the genesis of the S-Text.⁴

1 On “the configuration of texts,” see Matsuzawa [2003: 27–28] and Hirano [2007].

2 On the concept of context, see Baldick [2001 (1990): 50].

3 On the concept of a tacit dimension, see Polanyi [1966].

4 On the concept of the constituents of the text and Figure, see Matsuzawa [2003: 27–28].

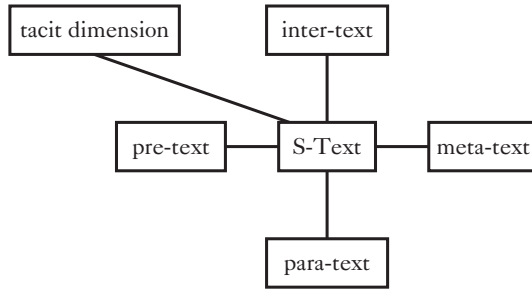


Figure 1

This way may be highly useful for interpreting Indian philosophic texts since it is rare to have enough existing contextual information in reference to these texts. In this paper we will apply the Indian philosophic texts to the configuration of texts, specifically, the chain of texts from the Nyāya school, which was mainly concerned with the study of logic in ancient India. Then we will consider the S-Text from the relationship with the inter-text, which is a first step in collecting material that might explain the genesis of the S-Text.

2. Indian Philosophic Texts

The chain of texts we will be exploring here consists of: the *Nyāyasūtra* (*NS*), which is attributed to Gautama or Akṣapāda (~A.D. 200)⁵ who is referred to as the founder of the Nyāya school; the *Nyāyabhāṣya* (*NBl*) by Vātsyāyana (ca. 450–500), which is a commentary on the *NS*,⁶ and the *Nyāyārttika* (*NV*) by Uddyotakara (ca. 550–610), which is a commentary on the *NBl*.⁷ These texts, the *NS*, the *NBl*, and the *NV*, respectively correspond to the text genre called the *Sūtra*, the *Bhāṣya*, and the *Ṭikā*.⁸

The general character of the *Sūtra* is that it consists of a set of brief and significant aphorisms (*sūtras*). It does not elaborate on the doctrines of a school since it was used as useful hints for recollecting the doctrine by those who had already been given oral instruction about the doctrines. The doctrines of a school, which stem from the *Sūtra*, were articulated in commentary texts called the *Bhāṣya* (commentary) and the *Ṭikā* (sub-commentary). The *Bhāṣya* contains explanation and interpretation of unclear meanings of aphorisms (*sūtras*) in the *Sūtra* text. Therefore we can imagine that those who had not been given sufficient oral instruction on the doctrines could understand the *Sūtra* with the help of the *Bhāṣya*. Finally the *Ṭikā* makes a detailed description of

5 On the dates of authors, see Potter (ed.) [1995 (1977): 9–12]. On the date of Gautama, see Potter (ed.) [1995 (1977): 220–221].

6 On the commentaries on the *NS* besides the *NBl*, see Hirano [2007: 220].

7 On the commentaries on the *NBl* besides the *NV*, see Hirano [2007: 220–221].

8 On the text genre in Indian philosophy, see Hirano [2003: 84–85].

the *Bhāṣya*, taking the objections from other schools into consideration.⁹

The *NS*, it has five chapters (*adhyaḥayas*). The first chapter deals with the topics the instrument of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), the object of knowledge (*prameya*), the nature of an argument, etc. The second chapter deals with doubt (*saṁśaya*), general discussion of the instruments of knowledge, the meaning of words, etc. The third chapter deals with the self, the sense organs, judgment, etc. The fourth chapter deals with causation, pain, the relation of whole and parts, etc. The fifth chapter deals with kinds of futile rejoinders, ways of losing an argument, etc.¹⁰ Each chapter is then divided into daily positions (*āhnikas*), and each daily position is composed of aphorisms (*sūtras*). An aphorism is referred to such as 4.1.38. The first number, '4' of 4.1.38, indicates the number of the chapter. The second number indicates the daily position in the chapter. The third number '38' indicates the number of the aphorism in the daily position.

3. The Commentary on the *NS* 4.1.37

For this paper, we are concerned with ontological discussions concentrating on two *sūtras* in the 4th chapter of the *NS*. The two *sūtras* at the first daily position of chapter 4 in the *NS* are as follows:¹¹

Everything is non-existent since mutual absence is proved in the entities.
(The *NS* 4.1.37, p. 977,2: *sarvam abhāvo bhāvesv itaretarābhāvasiddheḥ*.)

No, since identity of entities is proved.
(The *NS* 4.1.38, p. 980,2: *na, svabhāvasiddher bhāvānām*.)

The relationship of the above two *sūtras* is that of an objection and an answer to it. That is to say, the former *sūtra*, 4.1.37, is the objection and the latter *sūtra*, 4.1.38, is Gautama's answer.¹² Each *sūtra* does not give the readers a detailed explanation of each ontological standpoint upon which the opponent and Gautama respectively base their own arguments. Therefore, first we must look into the commentary of Vātsyāyana, the *NBh*, on the above *NS* 4.1.37 in order to know the standpoint of the opponent and the interpretation of unclear meanings of the statements of the *sūtra*.¹³

[Objection:] Everything is non-existent as long as it belongs to the existent. Why? Because mutual absence is proved in the entities. [That is to say,] a cow is

9 On the explanation of the media of the Indian philosophic texts, see Chatterjee and Datta [1984 (1934): 10–12], Dasgupta [1997 (1922): 62–67], and Hirano [2003: 84–85].

10 On the summary of the *NS*, see Matilal [1977: 78–80] and Potter (ed.) [1995 (1977): 221–238].

11 On the translation or explanation of the *NS* 4.1.37 and 4.1.38, see Junankar [1978: 364–367], Gangopadhyaya [1982: 303; 305], Jha [1984 (1912–1919): 1511; 1515], and Nakamura [1996: 345–346].

12 On the dispute between two *sūtras*, see Halbfass [1993 (1992): 151–152].

13 On the translation or explanation of the *NBh* for the *NS* 4.1.37, see Junankar [1978: 364–367], Gangopadhyaya [1982: 303–304], Jha [1984 (1912–1919): 1511–1513], Vidyābhūṣana [1990 (1930): 144–145], and Honda [1999: 245–248].

not existent in the form of a horse. A cow is not a horse. A horse is not existent in the form of a cow. A horse is not a cow. In this manner, since the cognition of non-being (*asat*) or negation (*pratiśedha*) has grammatical agreement with a word for the existent (*bhāva*), everything is non-existent.

[Answer: The objection is] wrong, because there is a contradiction between the two words (“everything” and “non-existent”) in the statement of the thesis which is “everything is non-existent,” and between the thesis and the reason. The word “everything (*sarva*)” means the state of being the non-remainder of many things. And the word “non-existent (*abhāva*)” means the denial of the existent. The former “everything” is discernible and the latter “non-existent” is indiscernible. In this case, how can everything which is discernible be [identical with] non-existent which is indiscernible? Non-existent which is indiscernible can never be stated as being many things or being the non-remainder.

[If you argue that] it is just this everything that is non-existent, [that is to say,] whatever you (the Naiyāyika) think to be everything is non-existent, [we answer that] even so, the contradiction is not removed. The cognition of many things and the non-remainder cannot occur with reference to the non-existent. And [in fact] there is the cognition of everything. Therefore [everything is] not non-existent (*abhāva*).

Moreover, there is a contradiction between the thesis and the reason. The thesis is the denial of existent, which is stated as “everything is non-existent.” The reason is [stated as,] “since mutual absence is proved in the entities.” After admitting and depending on the mutual absence in the entities, as the mutual absence being proved, it is said that “everything is non-existent.” If everything were non-existent, it would not be possible that the mutual absence is proved in “the entities.” If the mutual absence were proved in the entities, it would not be possible that “everything” is non-existent.¹⁴

Although the *NS* 4.1.37 itself is composed of objection against the Nyāya’s doctrine, the *NBh* on the *NS* 4.1.37 is composed of not only an explanation of the objection but also an answer to the objection by the commentator Vātsyāyana. At the beginning of the commentary on the *NS* 4.1.37, the objection is explained. That is to say, as a basis of argument—“everything is non-existent since mutual absence is proved in the entities”—“grammatical agreement (*sāmānādhikarāṇya*)” is introduced. The remainder

14 The *NBh*, p. 236,5–19: *yāvad bhāvajātaṃ tatsarvaṃ abhāvaḥ. kasmāt? bhāveṣv itaretarābhāvasiddheḥ. asan gaur aśvātmanā, anaśvo gauḥ asann aśvo gavātmanā, agaur aśva ity asatpratyaṅgya pratiśedhasya ca bhāvasābdena sāmānādhikarāṇyāt sarvaṃ abhāva itī. sarvaṃ abhāva itī pratijñācākye padayoḥ pratijñāhetvoś ca vyāghātād ayuktam. anekasyāśeṣatā sarvasābdasyārthaḥ. bhāvapratiśedhas cābhāvasābdasyārthaḥ. pūrvaṃ sopākhyam, uttaraṃ ca nirupākhyam. tatra sarvaṃ upākhyāyamānaṃ katham nirupākhyam abhāvaḥ syād iti? na jātvābhāvo nirupākhyo 'nekatayā vā, aśeṣatayā vā śakyah pratijñātum itī. sarvaṃ etad bhāva itī cet? yat sarvaṃ itī manyase abhāvaḥ sa itī. evaṃ ced anivṛtto vyāghātah. anekam aśeṣam cetī nābhāve pratyaṅgyena śakyam bhavitum. asti cāyam pratyaṅgya sarvaṃ itī. tasmān nābhāva itī. pratijñāhetvoś ca vyāghātah. sarvaṃ abhāva itī bhāvapratiśedhaḥ pratijñā. bhāveṣv itaretarābhāvasiddher itī hetuḥ. bhāveṣv itaretarābhāvam anujñāyāsrītya cetaretarābhāvasiddhyā sarvaṃ abhāva ity ucyate. yadi sarvaṃ abhāvo bhāveṣv itaretarābhāvasiddhir nopapadyate. atha bhāveṣv itaretarābhāvasiddhiḥ sarvaṃ abhāva itī nopapadyate.*

of this section is composed of a rejection of the objection. That is to say, Vātsyāyana rejects the objection by pointing out two contradictions in the opponent's statement, which is in a form of the *NS* 4.1.37.

4. The Commentary on the *NS* 4.1.38

Following the *NS* 4.1.38—"No, since identity of entities is proved"—is the answer for the *NS* 4.1.37. We will next examine the interpretation of the *NBh* on the *NS* 4.1.38 as follows:¹⁵

[I] Everything is not non-existent. Why? Because the entities really exist by virtue of their own nature. It is asserted [by the Naiyāyika] that the entities exist by virtue of their own property. And the entities' own property is what? Substance, quality, and action have the common [property] of being (*sat*) etc. Substances have [their own] peculiar property of the possession of action and so on. Moreover, earths (*pṛthivī*) have [a unique property] ending with touch.¹⁶ Indeed, each [entity] has endless difference. And the distinct properties of universal, particular, and inherence are grasped. Therefore, [if everything were non-existent,] there would not be the difference of object, which causes right cognition as being etc., since absence is indiscernible. However, [the fact is that] there is [the difference of object]. Therefore, it cannot be said that everything is non-existent.

[II] Or, [we can interpret] "no, since identity of entities is proved" as "[no, since their] own specific nature (*svarūpa*) [of entities is proved]." When the word "cow" is uttered, what is understood is substance characterized by a universal, not merely non-existence. And if everything were non-existent, non-existence that is called "cow" would be recognized. Moreover, the word "cow" would signify non-existence. However, when the word "cow" is used, a particular substance is understood, and not non-existence. Therefore, [the opponent's view "everything is non-existent"] cannot be right.

[III] Or, [we can interpret "no,] since identity [of entities] is proved" [as follows]. [The opponent] said that a cow is not existent in the form of a horse. [However,] why do you not say that a cow is not existent in the form of a cow? Since you do not say so, [it follows that] a cow is existent in the form of a cow, [and this point is indicated by the statement] "identity [of entities] is proved (*svabhāvasiddhi*)."¹⁶ Moreover, why do you not say that a horse is not a horse, or a cow is not a cow? Since you do not say so, it is understood that the substance exists by virtue of its own specific nature.

[IV] And when non-difference (*avyatireka*) is denied, the cognition of non-

15 On the translation of the *NBh* for the *NS* 4.1.38, see Gangopadhyaya [1982: 305–307] and Jha [1984 (1912–1919): 1515–1517].

16 According to Gangopadhyaya [1982: 305], the peculiar properties of earth are color (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), and touch (*sparsā*).

being (*asat*) has grammatical agreement with the existent. Difference (*vyatireka*) means the relation of conjunction and so on. In this case, non-difference means the relation named “identity.” And when this (relation) is denied, the cognition of non-being always has a grammatical agreement [with the existent]. For instance, it is said that the fruits of jujube are not existing in the bowl. [When] it is said that a cow is not existent in the form of a horse, and a cow is not a horse, non-difference between cow and horse is denied, [in other words,] there is not an identity between cow and horse. And when this [the relation of identity] is denied, the cognition of non-being has grammatical agreement with the existent cow, [which is stated as] a cow is not existent in the form of a horse. For instance, when conjunction between the fruits of jujube and the bowl is denied, the cognition of non-being has grammatical agreement with the real existent (the fruits of jujube), [which is stated as] the fruits of jujube are not existing in the bowl.¹⁷

The interpretation of the *NS* 4.1.38 by Vātsyāyana offers four reasons for rejecting the objection. That is to say, in order to reject the opponent’s argument, “everything is non-existent,” he insists that the entity has “its own nature (*svarūpa*),” and that a word of a particular entity signifies existence, and that since even the opponent does not say “a cow is not a cow,” identity of the entity must be admitted by the opponent too. Lastly, “the cognition of non-being has grammatical agreement with the existent” does not prove the non-existence of being since it is caused by the deny of relation (identity, conjunction, etc.) between entities. Hence it follows that the entity must exist with its own nature.

17 The *NBh*, pp. 237,5–238,3: [I] *na sarvaṃ abhāvaḥ. kasmāt? svena bhāvena sadbhāvad bhāvanām svena dharmeṇa bhāva bhāvanīti pratijñāyate. kaś ca svo dharmo bhāvanām? dravyaguṇakarmaṇām sadādisāmānyam. dravyānām kriyāvad ityevamādir viśeṣaḥ, sparśaparyantāḥ prthivyāḥ. iti ca, pratyekaṃ cānanto bhedaḥ, sāmānyaviśeṣasamānyānām ca viśiṣṭā dharmā grhyante. so 'yam abhāvasya nirupākhyaṭvāt sadādisampratyāyako 'rthabhedo na syāt. asti tv ayam. tasmān na sarvaṃ abhāva itī. [II] athavā na svabhāvasiddher bhāvanām itī svarūpasiddher itī. gaur itī prajuyamāne śabde jātvīviṣṭam dravyam grhyate, nābhāvamātram, yadi ca sarvaṃ abhāvaḥ gaur ity abhāvaḥ pratīyeta, gośabdena cābhāva ucyeṭa. yasmāt tu gośabdaprayoge dravyaviśeṣaḥ pratīyate nābhāvaḥ, tasmād ayuktam itī. [III] athavā na svabhāvasiddher itī. asan gaur aśvātmanety ucyeṭa. asan gaur gavātmanā kasmān nocyeṭa? avacanād gavātmanā gaur astīti svabhāvasiddhiḥ. anaśvo 'śva itī evā gaur agaur itī evā kasmān nocyeṭa? avacanāt svena rūpeṇa vidyamānatā dravyasyeti vijñāyate. avyatirekapratīṣedhe ca bhāvenāsatpratyayasāmānādhikaraṇyam. samyogādisambandho vyatirekaḥ. [IV] atrāvyatireko 'bhedaḥkhyasambandhaḥ. tatpratīṣedhe sadā cāsatpratyayasāmānādhikaraṇyam. yathā na santi kuṇḍe badarāṇīti. asan gaur aśvātmanā, anaśvo gaur itī ca gavāśvayor avyatirekaḥ pratīṣidhyate, gavāśvayor ekatvaṃ nāstīti. tasmīnś ca pratīṣidhyamāne bhāvena gavā sāmānādhikaraṇyam asatpratyayasya asan gaur aśvātmaneti, yathā na santi kuṇḍe badarāṇīti kuṇḍabadarasamyoge pratīṣidhyamāne sadbhīr evāsatpratyayasya sāmānādhikaraṇyam itī. The last paragraph in the translation is explained by Gangopadhyaya [1982: 307] as follows: In short, the contention that the positive entities do not really exist, because they have grammatical agreement with the term ‘non-existent’, is not logical, for such agreement only implies the absence of the relation of identity, and not the unreality of objects.*

5. New Views in the *NBh*

We shall apply the chain of texts from the Nyāya school to the configuration of texts. The configuration of texts is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

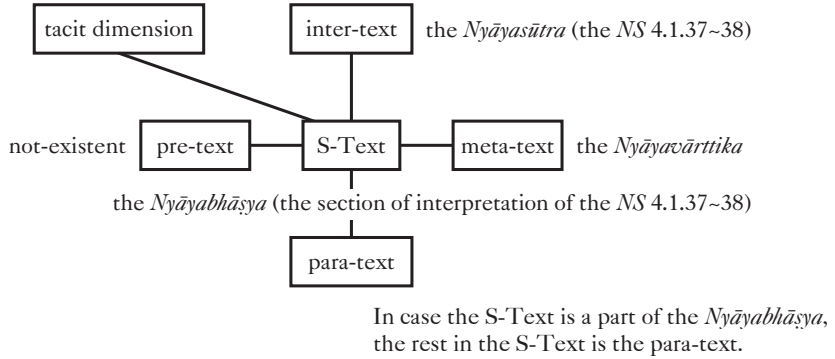


Figure 2

While the *NBh* is regarded as the S-Text, the pre-text, the plot, draft, and proofs etc. by Vātsyāyana, who is the author of the S-Text (the *NBh*), are not existent or have not been preserved. Therefore the pre-text of the *NBh* is not mentioned in this case. Regarding the inter-text, the *NS* is denoted as the inter-text for the *NBh* since the *NBh* comments on the *NS* in the form of quoting words or phrases from the *NS*. In other words, inter-textuality can be pointed out between the *NS* and the *NBh*. In addition, a particular text in which the objections in the *NBh* are mentioned is also held to be the inter-text. Therefore, if the objection in the *NBh* is identified with a particular text, this text is also added to the inter-text of the *NBh*. Regarding the para-text, if Vātsyāyana wrote other texts besides the *NBh*, these texts are held to be the para-text of the *NBh*. However, we do not know whether he wrote any texts besides the *NBh*. So other texts by Vātsyāyana cannot be placed into the configuration of texts. On the other hand, if only a part of the *NBh* were to be regarded as the S-Text, the remaining parts of the *NBh* would be regarded as the para-text of the S-Text. The interpretation section in the *NBh* on the *NS* 4.1.37 and 38 is regarded as the S-Text in this paper, therefore, it follows that the remaining sections in the *NBh* amount to the para-text. Regarding the meta-text, since the *NV* is a commentary on the *NBh*, it is regarded as the meta-text of the *NBh*.

While the statements of *sūtra* are simple, the writing of the *NBh* is more explanatory. When commenting on the *sūtra*, the *NBh* offers new or original views,¹⁸ which were briefly mentioned at the end of the preceding third and fourth chapters, that the *sūtra* does not explicitly refer to. In this section, I will approach these new

18 On the study of the “originality” of the text from a viewpoint of the quotation theory, see Hirano [2004].

views from a different angle. With regards to the comment on the *NS* 4.1.37, Vātsyāyana points out two contradictions in the opponent's argument: between the words of "everything" and "non-existent," and between the thesis and the reason. Then, with regards to the comment on the *NS* 4.1.38, he points out the inconsistency between experience and the opponent's view. That is to say, if everything were non-existent, we could not perceive the diversity of entities, although we do, in fact, perceive this. Second, there is an inconsistency in the use of words. If everything were non-existent, a particular word would signify something non-existent, however, we experience, in fact, that a word signifies something existent. Moreover, Vātsyāyana exposes the fact that the opponent also cannot help admitting the identity of entity.

6. Conclusion

Positioning the *NBh* as the S-Text, this paper has considered the *NBh* with reference to the *NS* as the inter-text. To be precise, the section of interpretation in the *NBh* on the *NS* 4.1.37 and 4.1.38 was positioned as the S-Text, and was considered with reference to the inter-text—the *NS* 4.1.37 and 38. This concerned a pair of *sūtras* composing a dispute over an ontological issue. To put it briefly, the *NS* 4.1.37 declares an entity non-existent, and, on the contrary, the *NS* 4.1.38 declares the entity existent.

In order to explore these *sūtras*, we first discussed the new views mentioned in the interpretation of the *NBh*. The new views are not declared in the object of interpretation: the *NS* 4.1.37 and 38. That is to say, Vātsyāyana presents several reasons as new views which support the entity to be existent and rejects the opponent's argument. Now that we are sure that the *NBh* offers new views, the next step is to discuss what was the tacit dimension under which the new views were generated. This, of course, needs further consideration. In subsequent studies, I will consider the interpretation in the *NBh* on the *NS* 4.1.37 and 38 as the S-Text with reference to the para-text, which consists of the rest of the section in the *NBh*, besides the portion of interpretation, in the *NBh*, on the *NS* 4.1.37 and 38. Consideration from the para-text will provide material for discussing this tacit dimension under which the new views were generated.

Bibliography and Abbreviations

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NBh: *Nyāyabhāṣya*.

NS: *Nyāyasūtra*.

NV: *Nyāyavārttika*.

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