

NĀGĀRJUNA'S *MADHYAMĀ PRATIPAD*
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I felt highly honored and privileged when Dr. Koushik Joardar, Head, Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University requested to write an article for the felicitation volume (*abhinandanagrantha*) of Professor Raghunath Ghosh. I know Professor Raghunath Ghosh since 1985 as a leading thinker and writer in classical Indian Philosophy in general and Navya-Nyāya in particular. Apart from giving justification for Navya-Nyāya view on Vyāpti Ghosh worked on Philosophy of Harmony and modern Indian Philosophy. Ghosh has developed a Critique of Dharmakīrti (2001) from the Nyāya point of view. His critical approach in addressing the problems of Indian Philosophy has been appreciated by scholars around the world. Keeping parity with Ghosh's contribution in interpreting the perennial issues of classical Indian Philosophy and my present interest of research in this short article for the felicitation volume of Professor Ghosh I propose to discuss the multi-dimensional implications of Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamā Pratipad* (Middle Way). Many adverse criticisms of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy, I think, owe their origin in their failure of grasping the various dimensions and implications of the core concepts of his philosophy.

Nāgārjuna identifies *śūnyatā* with *pratīyasamutpāda*. It is also called *Madhyamā pratipad*. It is thus interesting to see the specific senses in which these terms have been used in Madhyamika philosophical literature. Truth does not lie either in eternalism or in nihilism as both are extreme theories. It lies in the middle position. But this middle way has been used mainly in ethical sense by the Theravādins. For them, it means certain restrictions like avoiding taking too much food or taking too little or avoiding too much or too little sleeping etc. Nāgārjuna uses it in metaphysical sense. In *MMK* 15.7¹ it is said thus, "in the *Kātyayanavāda-sūtra*, the Lord who had the right insight into both *bhāva* (ens) and *abhāva* (non-ens) rejected both the extreme alternatives of 'is' and 'is not.'" (Singh, 1968:49) But what it is cannot be adequately described with the help of our knowing faculties; it refers to a state of realization. It is also called *śūnya*. Keeping away from all sorts of metaphysical beliefs Nāgārjuna has used the term *śūnya* in a very technical sense - in the mundane level it indicates dependent co-origination of things and in trans-mundane level or *nirvāṇa* it has been used as an empty concept. In this sense in Nāgārjuna's philosophy, as Candrakīrti tells us, *śūnyatā* means *pratīyasamutpāda* and understanding *śūnyatā* in this import, keeps us away from clinging to any extreme views and this is the realization of *advaya* [non-dual reality] - avoiding both (the *extremes* of *eternalism* and *nihilism*). Eternalism considers change as only a

shadow of continuity whereas nihilism advocates that the change is the basic and the continuity is mere functional feature of the world which is actually fictitious.

Śūnyatā understood in its two fold aspects has been described as *Madhyamā pratipad* as taught by Buddha and this is said by Nāgārjuna in *MMK* 15.7. Again, in *MMK* 24/18, Nāgārjuna makes it crystal clear that what is meant by *śūnyatā* is meant by *pratītyasamutpāda*, is also meant by *upādāya prajñāpti*, conceptual dependence. This is, in fact, *madhyamā pratipad*.² In ontology it means going *beyond* both the extremes of *absolute existence* and *absolute non-existence*. Psychologically it indicates a position *beyond absolute views of substantiality* and *non-substantiality*. Morally speaking, it advocates a balanced position, a position *beyond 'self-mortification* and *excessive enjoyment*.' From epistemological consideration, its import lies in a *balanced mean* between 'no knowledge-claim is certifiable' and 'every knowledge-claim is certifiable.' In this sense it is multi-dimensional in import. This is also the nature of *tattva* or *nirvāṇa*. Despite a variety of imports of *Madhyamā pratipad* it *does not advocate a different theory of the world*; rather it advises us 'to rise to a unitary world view'. In this sense it may be called *anānārtha*, as *nirvāṇa* is also called. But Nāgārjuna is well-aware of the fact that because of the technicality involved in understanding his philosophical position there may remain *misunderstanding, confusion* and *error* to follow what is meant by *madhyamā pratipad*. As an additional caution and advice, he tells us that this *middle path* once adopted in the technical sense of *śūnyatā*, it continues to prevail as an empty concept and in this sense it is *anuucchedam*. This is also the nature of *nirvāṇa*. It is called *advayaprajñā* in the sense of *knowledge free from the duality of extreme views (antas, dr̥ṣṭi)* of '*absolute being*' and *absolute becoming*. But due to inveterate ignorance (*avidyā*) the faults of extreme views, we may remain under the sway of wrong implication of *śūnyatā* in its literal import. So a proper understanding of *śūnyatā* eradicates all possibility of or doing away with the veil of extremism and thus it may be called *aśāśvata*. This is also a distinguishing feature of *nirvāṇa / tattva* in negative epithet. A proper understanding of *Madhyamā pratipad* thus involves *therapeutic* consideration. According to the *Mādhyamika*, *nirvāṇa* has the characteristics of complete eradication (*ksaya*) of all figments of imagination or thought constructions. They do not have non-conditional absolute existence. Like *Nirvāṇa* as a philosophical

perspective, it also needs to be developed by a person. "As a development of such a philosophical position, it is not a transferable property; it becomes null and void as soon as the death of a person (*pudgala*) takes place. Therefore, it is characterized as *aśāśvata*."³ The philosophy of *Madhyamā pratipad* advises us to keep vigilance to fight shy of any kind of inclination to any extreme or absolute position of metaphysical belief, however attractive it may be. Its proper import cannot be grasped apart from *Pratītyasamutpāda*, *Śūnyatā* and *Nirvāṇa*. In this consideration perhaps, Candrakīrti equates them as '*Nirvāṇa = Saṃsāra = Pratītyasamutpāda = Madhyamā pratipad. = Śūnyatā = Niḥsvabhāvatā*.'⁴ To know the world as being emptied of any intrinsic nature destroys our craving for it and the fact of this realization leads to the cessation of suffering and when there is no suffering, *nirvāṇa* is realized as an *empty concept*, as a *limiting concept* to guide man's spiritual *therapeutic* direction. This leads to the realization of reality in the highest sense and this again is beyond thought-constructions, that is to say, it cannot be explained even as empty or non-empty, both or not both.⁵ The true import of *madhyamā pratipad* does not lie in any literal sense to be a '*middle position between two 'antas'* (extremes). Adjectives in negative epithets like 'intangible, incomparable, incomprehensible' as marks of middle path suggests that it cannot be 'combined, caged and confined' in the fourfold netting of human understanding. It is the philosophical position of *rising above all views* - it is '*catuṣkoṭivinirmukta - sarvāsvabhāvanutpattilakṣaṇā śūnyatā*.' It is the realization that nothing arises by itself, that is to say, everything is devoid of self-nature and therefore a thing that has origination is to be understood as dependently originated. Here by depending on something (*pratītya*) the rejection of eternalism is done. Again, by the word *samutpāda*, which means 'by-product', another extreme theory of annihilation is rejected. In this way, Nāgārjuna advocates, the *philosophy of Middle Way*.⁶ It rejects exclusive and absolute claims made by metaphysicians but admits empirical validity of human know-ability and relative nature of the world. For the Mādhyamika, the problem arises only when we are blindly attached to any particular view as absolute at the complete disregard for others and the result is dogmatism (*drṣṭivāda*). From moral consideration also, it as the commitment-less denial of dogmatic assertions about the nature of reality is immensely important. Because in social aspect this dogmatism brings *intolerance, conflicts* and as such,

suffering. There, as we have seen earlier, with regard to things of the world which involve both 'being' and 'non-being', our dogmatic reason recognizes the role of one with complete exclusion of the other and thus absolutizes what is relative. Again, forgetting its relative, dependent nature and its legitimate limit, it tries to apply its empirical categories to interpret the *reality-in-itself* and thus relativizes it.⁷ The purpose of Nāgārjuna's *prasaṅga* (dialectic) is thus to correct the errors of dogmatism and the *Madhyamā pratipad* - the way that goes beyond or rises above all kinds of absolute or extreme forms of clinging and exclusive *theory-making*. This is also *advaya prajñā*, (the non-dual wisdom), the highest truth (*paramārtha satya*).⁸ The central thought of Mādhyamika philosophy is contained in the *Madhyamā pratipad*.⁹

In the Mādhyamika texts the conception of *nirvāṇa* is pictured not as an ontological entity but only as the change of attitude and this is completely in parity with Mahāyāna tradition. "Nothing to be added and nothing to be removed. Truth should be realised as truth and one who does so is released."

Nāpaneyam ataḥ kiñcit upaneyam na kiñcan /

Draṣṭavyam bhūtatobhūtabhūtadarśī vimucyate //

Nāgārjuna's treatment of *śūnyatā* as '*madhyamā pratipad*' has the sanction of *Buddhavacana* (as it is found in the *Samyutta Nikāya* II/7): Nāgārjuna's treatment of *śūnyatā* as *madhyamā pratipad* has the sanction of *Buddhavacana* (as it is found in the *Samyutta Nikāya* II/7): "Everything is: this, O Kaccāyana, is one extreme; everything is not: this, O Kaccāyana is the second extreme" ... and not accepting these two extremes, the *Tathāgata* preaches his philosophy of *Middle Path*".¹⁰

From the above exposition, it is clear that Nāgārjuna followed a unique method of philosophizing. So are the epistemic logic of *prasaṅgāpādāna* and the negation of four different pattern of 'theory-making' about reality. This is *not another metaphysical theory*. So it is said that while considering the nature of reality, one should avoid the extreme views like eternalism and nihilism. Emptiness is of the non-origination of all things having their own nature, and Reality-in-itself (*tattva*) cannot be reached by the four patterns of 'theory-making' ability of human knowing. This is the real significance of the Middle Way taught by the Buddha, according to Nāgārjuna. In mundane matters *śūnyatā* means *niḥśvabhāvatā* and that everything is

conditionally originated. It is also called *upādāya prajñapti* for the reason that as a *derived name* it does not have any ontological reference to the *named*. In the context of the ultimate nature of things (*dharmā-s*), it is to be understood as non-conceptual, beyond determination. In epistemological consideration it means understanding the true nature of things through the purification of the method of knowing. By advancing a critique of rival metaphysical theories, Nāgārjuna developed a meta-philosophical approach. The purpose of this approach lies largely on freeing us from all misconceptions about reality. It believes that when our mind becomes free from clouds of dogmatic beliefs, it would become transparent (*amalā*) and *advaya-prajñā* is then to emerge.

Now let us consider a pertinent question: Does the Mādhyamika advocate 'nihilism', 'blank phenomenalism or absolute negativism'? The underlying current that dominates the irrationalistic or chaotic interpretation of the philosophical position of Nāgārjuna seems to spring from nihilistic interpretation of the most technical concept of his philosophy verily known as '*sūnya*'. Nihilism is a philosophical theory which became popular after its origin in the nineteenth century European philosophy. In India, its counterpart is known roughly as '*sarvavaināśikavāda* or *ucchedavāda*' or *sarvābhāvavāda*.

But this is clearly a case of misinterpretation in the context of Mādhyamika philosophy. Ontologically speaking the Mādhyamika, as we have seen in our exposition, does not negate the reality of the world altogether. Nāgārjuna being a critical philosopher negates or deconditions all absolutistic theories about metaphysical beliefs. He does not hold the view that 'there is no reality', rather he through the dialectical examinations of the metaphysical theories of other only tries to tell us that nothing is non-conditionally arisen in the world.. By equating *sūnyatā* with *pratītyasamutpāda*, Nāgārjuna only insists that we should accept the relative, dependent nature of things and it is a case rather of transcending both affirmation and negation. To accommodate the relative nature of things, Nāgārjuna guides us to penetrate over and rely on the distinction of the empirical and the ultimate meaning of reality. The nihilistic interpretation of *sūnyatā* springs from the understanding of the literal sense of the word *sūnya* to mean '*stupendous zero*'. Śāṅkara thus misunderstands Nāgārjuna in his criticism. However, the word *Śūnya* is used as an

empty concept even in Mādhyamika philosophy. The negative conclusion that we see in his philosophy is only the outcome of his philosophical opponents' theses. Since Nāgārjuna does not deny the reality of any phenomenal thing and since in the level of *samvrtic* truth he accommodates the conditionally originated nature of things and denies any kind of ontological difference between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, his philosophy ought not to be interpreted as 'nihilism'. It is a case of misinterpretation. The concept of *nirvāṇa* is only an empty concept, a limiting concept formed in contrast with what is conditional. Let us take an example to explicate it. If I say, "Do not make any sound in the class": is it a sound or not? There are two aspects of this statement - the *negator* and the *negatum*. When as a consequence of the making of sound "Don't make any sound in the class" the whole class becomes silent the purpose' of mine is over. Like this Nāgārjuna's use of the term *śūnya* will become an empty concept when all false views about reality are negated. Its purpose is thus *not only logical but therapeutic too*. Again, Nāgārjuna calls his philosophy the philosophy of *middle path* and *not* a theory of *śūnya* or *śūnyavāda*. It is the name given by his philosophical opponents. Thus in *MMK*, *Śūnyatāsaptati* and in *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, with *reducto-ad-absurdum* arguments he has ruthlessly shown the hollowness of the philosophical theses of his opponents. To say something as relatively real is *not to say that it is fictitious (alika) or blatantly unreal*. Even if we analyze the word *śūnya* in the sense of 'zero' as we use it in Arithmetic, we shall see that 'zero' does not have any intrinsic value. But when the *zero* is associated with any other number say 1, 2, 3 etc. we cannot say that 'number' constituted in association with *zero* is valueless. We can only say that *zero* has only relative, dependent, conditional value. Like this, all *dharma-s* which are considered as having substantiality (*āttā*) in *Ābhidhārmika* schools of philosophy, according to the Mādhyamikas, are independently not real since they are devoid of self-essence but are real in fulfilling the conditions of being dependently arisen.

Another question needs to be considered here: Is it a theory about reality? From what has been said above, it becomes clear that although Nāgārjuna criticizes all views about reality, he himself is not advocating one more theory of reality. All so-called philosophical theories so carefully constructed by his philosophical opponents are non-sensical. In fact, Nāgārjuna himself had apprehended such an

allegation against his philosophical position. So both in Mādhyamikakārikā as well as in Vīgrahvyāvartanī in clear terms he dismissed the possibility of 'theory-making' in his case. In chapter XIII titled Saṃskāra Parīkṣā of *MMK*, he devoted the following two kārikās (i.e.7, 8):

Yadyaśūnyambhavetkiñcitsyācchūnyamiti kiñcan /
Na kiñcidastyāśūnyam ca kutapśūnyam bhaviṣyati //
Śūnyatā sarvadr̥ṣṭinām proktāniḥ śāranam jinaiḥ /
Yeṣā tu śūnyatādr̥ṣṭi stānasādhyān babhāsire //

[“If there were to be something non-empty, there would then be something called empty. However, there is nothing that is non-empty. How could there be something empty? The victorious Ones (i.e. the Buddhas) have taught that emptiness is the relinquishing of *all views*. Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible” - Eng. trans. David J. Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna, MLBD, 1991 (Delhi ed.) pp. 222-223.]

Here Nāgārjuna clearly says that his main purpose is to eradicate the belief in substance, quality etc. in ontologically independent sense. If we use *śūnyatā* as a feature of something substantial, then it must be admitted as 'something' in metaphysical sense. Something is called substantial if it is 'non-empty something'. Since '*na kiñcid astyaśūnyam*' - here there is nothing 'non-empty' we cannot admit something as "empty". Nāgārjuna thus gives us a caution referring *buddhavacana* that one who tries to formulate a metaphysical theory of emptiness is an '*incurable*' person from delusion. While interpreting these verses of *MMK*, Candrakīrti in *prasannapadā* refers to an observation made by Lord Buddha to Kāśyapa about *śūnyadr̥ṣṭi*.¹² Taking *śūnyatā* as another metaphysical theory vanishes all hopes for that person to get rid of his delusion. Here is a metaphor of the sick person. Let me quote it "Suppose someone is sick. The doctor gives some medicinal herb to him. And that medicinal herb, after removing all other 'defects' in the system, does not itself get out of the system. What do you think now, Kāśyapa? Will that person be relieved of sickness?

‘Certainly not’ O Honourable one! ‘If that medicinal herb, after removing all defects of the system does not itself get out of the system, then that person will be more sick’. The Honourable one said, "In this manner, O Kāśyapa, emptiness is the means of "getting out" of all views. But if someone takes emptiness to be a view, I

call him to be incurable" [Matilal, 2002, p.211].¹³ When all delusions of metaphysical theory-making tendency becomes eradicated, we realize emptiness attitude becomes non-emptiness 'samsāra attitude vanishes into *nirvāṇa* attitude. Keeping the spiritually therapeutic device in consideration here, we cannot treat it as a 'simple intellectual concept but an aspiration which one can realize only through meditation on twenty varieties of *sūnyatā*.'¹⁴ This is the implication of *Madhyamā Pratipad*.

Notes and References:

1. In *MMK* 15/7, Nāgārjuna clearly says thus :
Kātyāyanavavāda cāstīti nāstīti cobhayam /
Prativeddham bhagavatā bhāvābhāvāvibhāvina //
[*Kātyāyanavādasūtra* tells us that Lord who had the proper insight into both the extreme views that consist of 'is' and 'is not' rejected both the extremes].
2. *MMK* 24/18:
Yaḥ pratītyasamutpādah sūnyatāh tam pracakṣmahe /
Sā prajñāpti rupādāya pratīpat saiva madhyamā //
3. A. M. Padye: *The Framework of Nāgārjuna's Philosophy*, Bibliotheca Indo Buddhica No. 35, Indian Book Centre, 1988, p. 144.
4. In all spheres of life Buddhism advised us to follow the *middle path*. In *Samyutta Nikāya*, IV (400-4001) it is thus said,
Yo cāyam kāmesu kāmasukhallikā-muyoga hino gammo puthujjaniko anāriyo anattasamhito. Ete kho bhikkhūve, ubho ante anupagamma majjhimanipadā Tathāgatenā abhisam-buddha cakkhukariākaraṇi upasamāya abhiyāya sambodhyāya nibbānaya samvāttāti.
According to *Lankāvatārasūtra* *nirvāṇa* means the removal of thought construction (*vikalpasya manovijñānasya vyāvrttirnirvāam ityucyate*, p. 126). When *vijñānas* are transformed, it is *nirvāṇa* and it is devoid of (*sūnya*) the physical dichotomy of being and non-being and of eternity and non-eternity – *Ibid*, p. 99.
5. It is well known that Buddha was not fond of metaphysical speculations and he used to remain silent when such questions had been put to him. T R V Murti translated the term '*avyākṛta*' as 'inexpressible' (*CPB*, p. 36), Jayatilleke (*BTK* p. 472) as '*unanswerable*'. Matilal thinks these questions are perennial in nature and they "have no solutions". I think, the *avyākṛta* questions have been addressed by Buddha to show the relative limited nature of human knowability; "they show us the limits of our understanding" (Matilal p. 215). *Majjhimanikāya's Culamalmakya-sutta*, mentions the number of such questions as limited to ten whereas Candrakīrti in *prasannapadā* on *MMK* chapter 22 (*Tathāgataparīkṣā*), *kārikā* no. 12 :
Śāśvatāśasvātādyatra kutah śānte catusṭayam /
Antānantādicāpyatra kutah śānte catusṭayam //
says that *avyākṛta* questions are fourteen in number. As Candrakīrti puts it.
Is the world 1) eternal or 2) non eternal or 3) both or 4) neither Is the world 5) finite or 6) infinite or 7) both or 8) neither 9) Does the Tathāgata exist after death or 10) does not or 11) both or 12) neither 13) Is the soul identical with the body or 14) Is it different from the body?
In the *Culamalmakya-sutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* question nos. 7 and 8 are not included and therefore, there in the questions are known as '*daśama-avyaktani*'.
6. *Catuskotivivirmukta-sarva-svabhāvanutpaṭṭi-lakṣaṇā sūnyatā*.

Tadāśrita-mārgoḥ madhyamah. Tattvānām vivecanā-prasange śāśvātavādasya ucchedavādasya caikāngamatāni pariḥaranīyāni, iti kṛtvaiva madhyamakamatasya pratisthāpanam kṛtamācāryaih.

7. The first error of dogmatic reason, that is the absolutisation of the relative is termed by Professor K. Venkataraman as "the error of misplaced absoluteness" (*Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as presented in Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*, Tokyo: Charles - E. Tuttle, 1966, p. 92) Again, *thing-in-itself (nirvāṇa)* which is *vikalpaśūnya* – beyond the reach of thought constructions has become represented as distorted in dogmatic and exclusive metaphysical theories. It is the blunder of relativisation of what is non-relative in nature. Nāgārjuna speaks of three phases of *prasanga*, namely *dr̥ṣṭi*, *śūnyatā* and *prajñā* (TRV Murti; *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1960, p. 140). A dogmatic theory (*dr̥ṣṭi*) arises because of the conceptualisation of reality. A dialectical survey shows the inherent antinomies of different metaphysical claims or theories. As *Abhidharma* admits the reality of *dharma*s as independent of thought fabrications, Nāgārjuna directs here his criticism of *svabhāvātā* against this and shows that *dharma*s have a conceptually constructed existence (*prajñāptisat*) and thus are devoid of any self-essence (*niḥsvabhāva*). This is called *śūnyatā*. When all the false metaphysical theories are no more in work, there emerges the *advaya prajñā* – wisdom of non-clinging to any extreme metaphysical beliefs (*antah dr̥ṣṭi*) and it eradicates the need for postulating either exclusive view of permanence or annihilation. This is explicated by Nāgārjuna in *MMK* 18/6:

Ātmetyapi prajñaptitam anātmetyapi deśitam /

Buddhairnātma na cānātma kaścidityapi deśitam //

Almost the same idea may be gained from a careful reading of Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvali*, I/62 (both Sanskrit and Tibetan texts in Hahn, Vol.-1, 1982]

Dharmayautakamityasmānna-stitvā vyati-kramam /

Viddhim gambhiramityuktan buddhānām sāsānāmrtam //

[Therefore, know the unique doctrine of transcending non-existence and existence, the ambrosia which is in Buddha's teaching called 'profound' — eng. trans., David Burton : *Emptiness Appraised*, Curzon Press, London, 1999, p. 40]

8. It is to be noted here that in Harivarman's. '*Satyasiddhi-śāstra*' (ed. by N. Aiyaswami Śāstri, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1975, p. 897) we may come across a resonance of similar philosophical tuning where the author referred to '*Dharmamudrāsūtra*. Here the author says that to a *yogi*, matter (*rūpa*) is impermanent and in this sense of absence of permanence it is called *śūnya*, empty, it is intrinsically impermanent. Just like a blank pot is described as emptied of water, there is no element of permanence (substantiality) in the aggregate of five *skandhas* and in this sense it is empty (*śūnya*). [*Śūnyamiti yathā ghaṇṭe jale'sati śūnyo ghaṇṭa iti vadanti. Avam pancaskandhesu nāstyatmā ityataḥ śūnya bhavanti*]

9. However, it is interesting to note here that Bhadanta Kumārlat, a *sautrāntika* understands *middle path* as a balanced way of avoiding 'too much' and 'too-less' in actual practice. He explains it with a metaphor of carrying the 'cub' by the mother cat, tigress etc. Buddha's teaching must be understood in the context of existence of self and non-existence of self-resorting to this practical consideration of life.

[The enlightened one speaks about *Dharma* in the manner in which the mother cat (i.e. tigress) carries its cub (in her mouth) – avoiding (the extremes) of being pierced by the teeth-like *dr̥ṣṭi* (wrong/dogmatic conceptions), and loss of belief in *karma*. If the instructed person thinks that there is a (permanent, eternal) soul (i.e. substantiality) he would be hurt by (the dogmatic) view (that there are non-perishable things (in the world). If (on the other hand) he thinks that there is no soul even in the (sense of changing psycho-physical conglomeration) or metaphorical sense then he would lose interest in the cub-like merit acquired through good actions.]

10. See, Mrs Rhys Davids (eng. trans. F. L. Woodward, *Kindred Sayings*, OUP, London, 1926, Vol.-IV, p. 13.
11. Professor Narain in his book titled '*The Mādhyamika Mind*' (Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1997, pp. 109-110) made the following remarks: "The Mādhyamika method is to examine the various modes of being countenanced by common sense and philosophies in general and to repudiate all of them by showing that they lack logic, and hence are chaos rather than a cosmos. This is surely a chaotic or irrationalistic conception of reality... . The chaotic or irrationalistic conception of whatever is the case leads to outright rejection of metaphysics. All science, all metaphysics, proceeds on the tacit assumption that existence is law-governed at bottom and is amenable to reason and logic, which is the first casualty at the hands of the Mādhyamika."
12. *The Madhyamaākaśāstra of Nāgārjuna* ed. R. N. Pandey, Vol.1, MLBD, Delhi 1988, p. 242. *MMK: Prasannapadā* : 1988 (vol-1):242.
13. J. Singh : *An Introduction to Madhyamaka Philosophy*, MLBD, Delhi 1987 edition, p. 44; also see, Obermiller : A Study of the Twenty Aspects of Śūnyatā, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. IX, 1933, pp 170-187. The twenty varieties of śūnyatā are (1) *adhyāmaśūnyatā*, (2) *ahirdhāśūnyatā*, (3) *adhyatmabahirdhāśūnyatā*, (4) *śūnyatāśūnyatā*, (5) *mahāśūnyatā*, (6) *paramārtha-śūnyatā*, (7) *samskrtaśūnyatā*, (8) *asamskrtaśūnyatā*, (9) *atyantaśūnyatā* (10) *anavarāgraśūnyatā*, (11) *anavakāraśūnyatā*, (12) *prakṛtiśūnyatā*, (13) *sarva-dharmaśūnyatā*, (14) *lakhsanaśūnyatā*, (15) *anupa-lambhaśūnyatā*, (16) *abhāvasvabhāvaśūnyatā*, (17) *bhāvaśūnyatā* (18) *abhāvaśūnyatā*, (19) *svabhāva-śūnyatā* and (20) *parabhāvaśūnyatā*.
14. "Those things which are dependently originated are not indeed endowed with an intrinsic nature; for they have no intrinsic nature – why? Because, they are dependent on causes and conditions. If the things were by their own nature, they would be even without the aggregate of causes and conditions. But they are not so. Therefore they are said to be devoid of an intrinsic nature, and hence void. Likewise it follows that my statement also being dependently originated, is devoid of an intrinsic nature, and being devoid of an intrinsic nature, is void. But things like a cart, a pot, a cloth, etc. though void of an intrinsic nature because of being dependently originated, are occupied with their respective functions, e.g., carrying wood, grass and earth, containing honey, water and milk, and protecting from cold, wind and heat. Similarly this statement of mine, though devoid of an intrinsic nature because of being dependently originated, is engaged in the task of establishing the being devoid of an intrinsic nature of the things. In these circumstances, your statement: "your statement, being devoid of an intrinsic nature, is void, and, being void, it cannot negate the intrinsic nature of all things" – is not valid." See, *Vṛṭṭi* on verse no 22 by Nāgārjuna, see, *Vigrahavyāvartanī of Nāgārjuna*, Eng. Trans. with text by Kamalesvar Bhattacharya, 2nd edition, MLBD, Delhi 1986, p. 108.