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## **Sunyata: A Non-Substantialistic Paradigm par Excellence**

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- ¶1. anirodliamanutpadamanucchedamasasvatam/  
anekarthamananarthanianggamamanirgantam//  
yah pratityasamutpadam prapaficopasainam sivant//  
desayamasa sambuddhastam vande vadam varam//
  
- ¶2. The substantialistic outlook loomed large in philosophical thinking about reality. It was dominant both in eastern and western thought. In the East it is the *Sunyavadins* who pioneered a thorough-going non-substantialistic approach to reality. The Madhyamika thinkers, following the Buddha, laid a firm foundation for *sunyata* as the paradigm par excellence of non-substantialistic philosophical understanding. The *Sunyavadins* are the uncompromising critics of the concept of substance and the ontologies founded on it. They contend that the true nature of reality is non-substantial; the entities and events of experience do not have a self-nature (*svabhava*) or a constant being; nothing is independent and self-abiding. Nowhere, internally or externally, is there an entity that is static, fixed, and existing in its own right. The phenomena, physical, mental, or both at once, are empty (*sunya*) of self-nature and independent being. They exist in relational origination and mutual dependence; everything arises in the matrix of relational causes and conditions (*pratitasamutpada*). The reality is all-inclusive, undivided, and quiescent in its ultimacy.

- ¶3. This paper is an attempt at the exposition of Nagarjuna's notion of *sunyata* as an excellent model of non-substantiality. Part one of the paper presents in brief the concept of substance in the Asian philosophies like the *Upanisad*, early Buddhism, and the *Nyayavaisesika*. Part two constitutes a short account of the nature and structure of the *sunya* dialectic. The third part deals in detail with Nagarjuna's criticism of the concept of substance. The fourth part brings out in detail the implications of the criticism for *sunyata*—relational and conditional origination, mutual dependence and the ultimate quiescence of existence as a whole. In the last part, it is concluded that the concept of substance is a mere mental construction; no substantial entity, either physical, mental, or both at once, exists in actuality. The idea of substance does not correspond with reality as such, whereas *sunyata* is reality as such; whatever is in correspondence with *sunyata* is in correspondence with the "thusness" (tathata) of reality.

### Substance in Indian Philosophy

- ¶4. Philosophers have defined substance as a self-caused (*causa sui*), an independent and a permanent being; it is indeterminate, unconditional, and absolute. It has a self-nature (*svabhava*), a self-identity (*mama*), a self-hood (*atmiya*) and an individuality (*ahamkara*). Substance has been viewed as the substratum or locus of the ever-changing attributes. Remaining numerically one and essentially the same amidst diversity is its distinctive mark. In Asian philosophy, the concept of substance figures primarily in the *Upanisadic* doctrine of the Atman or the Brahman. According to it, substance is the Soul or the Self that is uncreated, immutable, undivided and eternal; it is self-luminous, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. It is the pure Subject, the Knower, the ultimate Witness, which never becomes an object of knowledge. To put it succinctly, the substance is a homogenous "mass of constant consciousness and is devoid of all worldly attributes."[\[1\]](#) The early Buddhists deny the soul-substance but admit the substantiality of the elements (*dharmas*) of existence comprising the five skandhas, the twelve ayatanas, and the eighteen dhatus.[\[2\]](#) These elements are claimed to be discrete, specific bits of realities existing in their own right, in the form of seeds. They are neither created nor can they be destroyed. "They are in this sense atman, self-being."[\[3\]](#) Based on the self-being of the elements, the Sarvastivadins argue that all things including those in the past and in the future exist without ever ceasing to be.[\[4\]](#) The momentariness (*ksanatva*) or the transiency (*anityatva*) of the elements is their function only; it is their efficiency to renew themselves without essential change. The flux of life or the concatenation of the elements does not affect their reality.[\[5\]](#) The elements constitute the personality devoid of soul-substance (*pudgalasunyata*). When the elements are decomposed "no substance or soul of any kind remains."[\[6\]](#)

- ¶5. To the *Nyayavaisesika* the substance is *dravya*, the first of the seven categories to which the entire Universe is reduced. The substances are nine in number: earth (*prthivi*), water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*), air (*vaya*), ether (*akasa*), time (*kala*), space (*dik*), self (*atman*) and mind (*manas*). Of them the first four are the physical elements. They are atomic and have their specific qualities: earth has smell, water taste, fire color, and air touch. Ether is not atomic; it is imperceptible and all pervading, like time and space. Soul is a spiritual substance; it is eternal, all pervading, and the locus of consciousness. Mind is also physical, an atomic substance, but partless, imperceptible, and eternal. Like the souls, the minds are many. The substances are not only material but also mental and spiritual. There are permanent as well as impermanent substances. The *Nyayavaisesika* regard all these substances as "objective realities" having a being of their own.[7] They also distinguish between simple and compound substances. The simple substances are the atoms (*paramanus*) that are eternal, indivisible, imperceptible and ultimately real. They are of four kinds- of the earth, water, fire and air. Each atom has a particularity (*visesa*) of its own and differs from others in quality as well as in quantity. The compound substances are the material objects (*avayavins*) composed of the atoms. They are impermanent, subject to origin, stability and destruction, and breakable into their atoms.[8] Yet they are called substances since each compound substance is by itself a "whole" (*avayavin*) that is distinct from the atoms, the parts of which it is composed.

## The Logic of *sunya*

- ¶6. According to the *Sunyavadins*, substantialism militates against *sunyata*, the "thusness" of reality. It fails to comprehend reality in the matrix of mutual relatedness and quiescence. Substantialism conceives reality in terms of the extremes of "eternalism" (*sasvatavada*) and "annihilationism" (*ucchedavada*). It avoids the middle path of perceiving the reality outside the conceptual framework of the extreme views (*drstis*). Nagarjuna deconstructs substantialism through his trenchant dialectic[9] or "logic" of *sunya*. [10] The logic demonstrates the inconsistencies and ultimate falsehood of the concept of substance, and the extreme views thereof, by analyzing them to their logical necessity and on their own presuppositions. The modus operandi of the analysis is that it frames a thesis, claimed to be exclusively true, against the thesis itself by deducing absurd conclusions which the thesis entails. By the absurdity of the conclusions and the absurdity of the initial thesis, the falsity of the ground is revealed.[11] The logic executes the criticism of an extreme view by formulating it in the form of four possible logical positions (*catuskotika*) in which the view can manifest. The four positions (*Kotis*) are: is, is-not, both is and is-not, and neither is nor is-not. These positions, in other words, are expressed as follows: (1) existence (*asti, bhava, sat*), non-existence (*nasti, abhava, asat*), both existence and non-existence (*astinasti, bhavabhava, sadasat*), and neither existence nor non-existence (*naivasti, na ca nasti*); (2) self (*sva*), other (*para*), both self and other (*ubhaya*), and neither self nor other (*anubhaya*); identical (*tat*), different (*anyat*), both (*ubhaya*), and neither-nor (*anubhaya*); and (3) self (*sva*), other (*para*), both (*ubhaya*), and chance or

devoid of reason (*ahetuka*).[\[12\]](#)

- ¶7. Nagarjuna examines the four extremes thoroughly and establishes that they are neither true nor independent. The extremes are inherently inconsistent and mutually dependent. Being self-contradictory and relapsing into each other, the first two primary extremes, namely, "is" and "is-not" cause confusion and conflict. Being a mechanical combination of the two, the third one cannot explain reality at all; its mutually exclusive alternatives nullify each other. And the fourth one, unable to comprehend the truth of reality, resorts to irrationalism, skepticism, and agnosticism. Being the species of attachment to permanency and impermanency, these extremes deny the truth of the reality that Nagarjuna reveals by their deconstruction. He dismantles the four-cornered conspectus without establishing a thesis of his own, for the truth is beyond all theses. The sunya-logic of deduction ad absurdum (*prasa n gavakya*)[\[13\]](#) reduces a position to ultimate absurdity without advancing a counter position. Its sole aim is to discover the truth by releasing the mind from the fetters of the extreme views. Truth is precisely freedom from the four-cornered perspective of the reality. (*na san nasan na sadasan na capyanubhayatmakam / catuskoti vinirmuktam tattvam madhyamaka viduh //*). The Madhamikas thus have pioneered a critical and a non-substantialistic turn in Asian philosophy.

### Substance Dialectically Analyzed

- ¶8. Nagarjuna criticizes the concept of substance as an abiding entity or a bifurcated self (*atma*) by applying the four-cornered logic to it. He formulates the existence or the origination of the substantial-self in the four possible views and reduces them to absurdity. The self-substance, if it exists at all, should exist in virtue of being either (1) self-caused, (2) other-caused, (3) both self and other caused, or (4) neither self nor other caused i.e., non-causal.
- ¶9. Nagarjuna's dialectical arguments (*prasangavakyas*) against the first extreme view (*drsti or koti*) that the self-substance creates itself are as follows:
- ¶10. (1) A substance cannot be said to create itself, for the idea of self-causation entails, on the one hand, the absurdity that the substance exists before its creation. But the creation of an already existent being is unwarranted. How can there be the creation of an already existent entity? Self-creation is fallacious, for it begs the question (*petitio principii*) by simply assuming the existence of the thing in question. On the other hand, the idea of self-production also implies that the existent entity in question does not yet exist and has yet to create itself, but how can a nonexistent entity which has not arisen create itself (MK. VII. 13)? A substance therefore cannot create itself either as a created or as an uncreated entity. Both ideas are wrong.

- ¶11. (2) The idea of self-creation entails the contradiction that the substance is both existent and non-existent at a time. It means that a substance possesses two mutually exclusive qualities as its nature at the same time. But it is not logically possible for a really existent entity to have two contradictory natures at a time. A thing is either existent or non-existent but cannot be both. (MK VII. 30. Second verse only).
- ¶12. (3) Self-creation means that a thing produces itself redundantly, *ad infiinitum* (MK. VII. 19. First verse only) and without ever perishing. Redundant production, however, is only a self-duplication; it is not a causation in the strict sense which warrants the production of something new; production *de novo* is possible only when the cause, the existing entity which is supposed to be substantial, ceases to be. But the substantial entity is such that it is permanent; it has a self-nature (*svabhava*) the non-existence of which is not possible. Indeed, the causation of a really existent being does not follow. (MK VII. 30. First verse only).
- ¶13. (4) Nagarjuna argues that a substance cannot create itself, for all creation is possible only in relational origination (*pratitasamutpada*); there is no production without causes and conditions; that which is created necessarily possesses the character of being made or manipulated. But the nature of the substance is such that it has a self-nature that precludes mutual correspondence with something other than itself; it cannot have the character of being manipulated (MK. XV. 1). The substantial reality ceases to be so when it has a mutual correspondence and the character of being made (MK. XV. 2).
- ¶14. (5) Fundamentally, the very existence of a substantial entity is in question, let alone its self creation. A substance is defined as an entity which possesses self-identity (*mama*), self-hood (*atma*) and individuality (*ahamkara*) as its basic characteristics. But a substance, indeed, cannot have these characteristics, for they are in their basic nature relational and quiescence (MK. XVIII.) They cannot have the character of being independent and permanent, and the absence of separated and constant self-hood, self-identity, etc., implies the absence of the substance as a bifurcated and an unchanging entity. Therefore, a substance, if it exists at all, has to exist as a relational and conditional entity, like any other entity. But a relational and conditional entity cannot be equated with the substance under examination, and (self) creation of a non-existent entity does not arise.

- ¶15. (6) Self-production is not justifiable on another ground. The idea entails the existence of two entities-the producing and the produced, and the relation between them would be either identity or difference. But no production is possible when the producing (substance) and the produced (substance) are identical to each other (MK. XX 19). So self-production is also untenable when the cause-substance and the effect-substance are totally different from each other. There can never be any relation, let alone a causal relation, between two different entities. The cause and the effect cease to be so in case there is difference between them; the cause would be a non-causal cause (MK. XX. 20).
- ¶16. (7) Self-production is a fiction in yet another sense. Substance, by definition, is a self-complete being, a plenum, full of its self-nature (*svabhava*). But the self-nature is such that it disaffirms the relational and causal conditions (*nihsvabhava*) in virtue of which anything may be said to arise. So a substance with self-nature cannot arise again (MK. XXIV. 22). On the other hand, the idea of self-creation also renders the substance an incomplete being, for it is only an incomplete being which needs to be created again in order to make itself complete. An incomplete being, however, cannot create itself or another, for creation necessitates a cause, an entity that is self-complete; an incomplete cause cannot have a producing nature. A substance therefore cannot be said to create itself either as being a complete being or as being an incomplete being. Thus goes Nagarjuna's protean analysis of the view that a substance creates itself. The examination shows that the idea of self-creation is not justifiable under any circumstances. The idea is self-contradictory and thus illogical. Substance therefore cannot be said to exist as a self-created entity.
- ¶17. The second view that a substance is created by something other than itself is untenable too since it involves the following inconsistencies:
- ¶18. (1) Substance cannot be said to be created by the other, for, fundamentally, the substantial entity is independent and absolute; it so exists that it does not require, for its being, anything other than itself. The substance that is dependent on or caused by the other ceases to be a substance.
- ¶19. (2) The creation of a substance by the other is not possible because the very existence of the other is in question, How can there be the other? Is it self-created or other-created? It cannot be self-created, for the impossibility of self-creation has been demonstrated; nor can it be other-created for the other is non-existent; the non-existent other cannot create itself, nor can it be created by the existence, just as the existence can neither create itself nor be created by the nonexistence (MK. XXI. 12).

- ¶20. (3) The existence of the other is not possible for another reason also. The existence of the other would be possible only when the existence of the self were possible. For, what is the self for one the same would be the other for another person. But the existence of the self is not justifiable; nothing exists as a self-substance; everything exists in mutual correspondence with others. This has been mentioned before. And from the non-existence of the self the non-existence of the other follows (MK. 1. 3).
- ¶21. (4) The other cannot exist when the self is non-existent, for the other cannot be anything other than the other-nature, or the varying nature (*parabhava*) of the self-nature (*svabhava*) (MK. XV. 3) (of the self). The primal nature of the self is such that it can never become an extended nature; it can never give rise to a varying nature for the other to arise. The other-nature cannot arise either in the presence or in the absence of a primal nature (MK. XV.9)
- ¶22. (5) The creation by the other is not justifiable, for, the other, if it exists at all, should exist as another substance which is a self-complete being, and how can a self-complete being be the cause of another being? A being of completeness cannot have any relation with anything so that it can produce anything. The other cannot produce the self because the other as another self-being cannot have any relation with the self. They exist as being totally different from each other. And there can be no causality whatsoever between two totally unrelated things. Just as total identity, total difference militates against production per se. All origination is relational and mutually dependent. This has been demonstrated earlier.
- ¶23. (6) And finally, creation by the other is not tenable, for it involves the absurdity that anything can produce anything. It ignores the invariable relation between the cause and the effect. It implies that mere otherness is sufficient for causality, in which case even the stone can be said to sprout, for the stone is as much the other to the sprout as the seed is to the sprout. The idea of other cause implies the absurdity that existence arises from non-existence, something out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), for it presupposes production of the self without first establishing the existence of the other. The idea thereby involves the anomaly that everything arises from everything or nothing, (MK. VII. 19. Second verse only), in which case the orderly world of experience would be reduced to chaos and confusion.

- ¶24. The third extreme that a substance is created both by itself and the other is not justifiable when the existence of the substance as the self-being and as the other-being has been established in the refutation of the first and the second theses. The third position is illogical, for how can anything be caused at a time by two mutually exclusive things that can never meet? Or, how can there be a thing which possess as its nature at a time two self-contradictory natures, viz., the self-nature and the other nature? If a thing were to possess these two different characteristics at two different times, then the thing in question would cease to be one; there would be two different things. Or, if the two natures were alike held to be absolutely and wholly true of one and the same thing, then each nature would cancel the other, and with the cancellation of the two natures the very thing in question would be cancelled; it would cease to be. Moreover, on the one hand, being a mere syncretic form of the first two extremes, the third one is a natural heir to all their inconsistencies. On the other hand, being a disjunctive proposition with mutually exclusive alternatives which nullify each other, this position cannot explain anything "and there is nothing further that remains as the true description of the thing;"<sup>[14]</sup> it suffers from the utter impossibility of the description of existence or creation. So Nagarjuna declares that the origination of the substantial entity is not justifiable even by the third view of both being and non-being (MK. VII. 20), self and other creation.
- ¶25. And the fourth extreme that the substance is caused neither by itself nor by the other is untenable because it implies that the events and entities are not caused but happen to be by mere accident (*ahetuka*). It ascribes randomness to the systematic world. The position thus is representative of the irrationalist who fails to see the cosmic nature of the world of experience. The fourth position may also be taken as the position of the agnostic who denies the possibility of all thought, knowledge, and description about the world. But the agnostic position is not consistent with itself, for it, indeed, presupposes a certain amount of the knowledge of the world in the making of the statement that no description, thought or knowledge of the world is possible. In making this statement the agnostic is thinking and describing the world in a certain way. The position of the agnostic seems to be no better than fool's talk.<sup>[15]</sup> This extreme is also representative of the sceptic position that no definite knowledge or description of the reality is possible. The position is not self-consistent too, for if everything is held to be uncertain, this position would also be uncertain. The sceptic position cannot be an exception to itself. The sceptic cannot hold for sure the position that he or she does not hold any definite position. This position may eventually lead to eel wriggling-quibbling, sophistry, and evasion.<sup>[16]</sup>

¶26. Thus Nagarjuna examines the four extreme views about the existence of the substance and reduces them to absurdity by bringing to light the dead ends they meet and the contradictions they entail. He establishes the fact that a substance cannot arise or exist in any of the four ways. No entity can ever arise either from itself, from another, from both, or from neither (from the lack of causes) (MK. 1. 1), says Nagarjuna. With the refutation of the origination of a substance in all the four possible ways, the very existence of the substantial entity is refuted. A substance cannot exist in any way other than the four ways that are examined. A substance and the exclusive concepts or the extreme views related to it are false. They are non-substantial and do not have an essential truth. On ultimate analysis they are proven to be relational and mutually dependent. Substance and qualities, identity and difference, are relational; one cannot exist or be meaningful without the other.

### *sunyata*

¶27. The criticism of the concept of substance has profound implications for *sunyata*-the non-substantial nature of reality. The criticism reveals that the reality-physical, mental, or both at once-is relational and conditional. Entities, events, and concepts are devoid of self-nature (*svabhavasunya*), empty of essential or self-being (*anatma*); they are non-permanent (*anitya*), and arise in virtue of mutual dependence (*pratityasamutpada*). It is wrong to view reality in the substantialistic terms of the mutually exclusive views (*drstis*) of either being or nonbeing, self-nature or extended nature, existence or non-existence, (MK. XV. 7) constancy or disruption, (MK. XV. 11) finite or infinite, (MK. XXV. 22) identity or difference, permanence or impermanence, both or neither. (MK. XXV. 23).

¶28. *sunyata* refers not only to the determinate truth (*samvrti satya*)-the relational, the co-arising and the all-inclusive nature-of reality. It also refers to the indeterminate, the undivided (*advaya*), and the absolute truth (*paramarthika satya*) of reality which is quiescence (*santam*). Quiescence is the supreme excellence, the wonderful peace, perfection and bliss that reality is in its ultimacy. Quiescence is the thusness or the thatness (*tattva*) of reality. Nagarjuna expresses it in terms of the "eight nos" or negations as non-extinction (*anirodham*), non-origination (*anutpadam*), non-destruction (*anucchedam*), non-permanence (*asavtata*), non-identity (*anekartham*), non-differentiation (*ananartham*), non-coming into being (*anagamam*) and non-going out of being (*anirgamam*).<sup>[17]</sup> Nagarjuna further describes quiescence as non-conditionally related (*aparaprathyayam*), non-conceptualized by conceptual play (*prapancairaprapancitam*) and non-discriminative (*nirvikalpam*) (MK. XVIII. 9).

- ¶29. The two truths, viz., the empirical and the trans-empirical to which *sunyata* refers are not totally different from each other. Determinate truth is not separate from indeterminate truth, but only the determinate form of the indeterminate itself; the divided truth is only a division within the undivided. But there can never be absolute determination or division of the indeterminate and the undivided. Determinate truth is only the appearance of indeterminate truth.<sup>[18]</sup> *Sunyata* as the indeterminate truth is the ground of *sunyata* as the determinate truth. The former is nirvana and the latter samsara. They are not essentially different from each other (MK. XXV. 19). There is not the slightest difference between the two. The realm (the limits) of nirvana is the realm of samsara (MK. XXV.20). Nirvana cannot be realized by avoiding the realm of samsara. Nor can it be expressed without relying on the relative truth of samsara (MK. XXIV. 10). Those who fail to understand the subtle distinction between the two truths fail to understand the profound significance of the Buddha's teachings (MK. XXIV.9).
- ¶30. As a skillful means of avoiding the extreme views, *sunyata* is itself the middle way (*madhyamapratipad*). Firmly established in *sunyata*, the farer on the middle path comprehends the reality as it obtains, the relative as relative, the absolute as absolute. The farer grasps the determinate truth in terms of mutually dependent concepts and views; the farer uses the concepts and views as contingent and convenient designations in respect of the relative truth, but avoids all conceptualization or ideation in respect of the absolute truth (*prancasunya*). The substantialistic outlook is due to the elements of attachments or defilements which condition the mind to view the reality in terms of the extremes of permanence (*sasvatavada*) and impermanence (*ucchedavada*), which are the sources of division, discrimination, intolerance, conflict and suffering. The elements of attachment are of two kinds: the physical taintings (*klesavaranas*) and the mental tainting (*jneyavaranas*). *sunyata* destroys the elements of attachment by destroying the self-nature (*svabhava*) of the reality as a whole, including the elements of defilements. Nagarajuna likens the substantialistic world to an imaginary city in the sky (MK. VII. 34) which is totally unrelated to samsara and nirvana which belong to the realm of the uncreated. The wise never indulge in conceptual diffusion or substantialistic entification of reality; they are always choicelessly aware of the immortal teachings (*sasanamrtam*) of comprehending the undivided truth (*advayadharma*) in accordance with the middle way of non-identity (*anekartham*), non-differentiation (*ananartham*), non-interruption (*annucchedam*), and non-continuity (*asasvatam*) (MK. XVIII. 11).

## Concluding Remarks

- ¶31. The concept of substance is a mere mental construction; there is no such thing as a substantial or a self-abiding entity anywhere. Everything exists in relational and conditional origination. Nothing exists devoid of mutual dependence. The so-called substance belongs to the realm of the "created" and it is unfindable in actual reality which is non-substantial, or *sunyata*. *sunyata* is neither created nor uncreated but a beginningless and an endless interdependence and quiescence of the undivided reality. The concept of substance does not correspond with *sunyata* in any way. Where the one is there the other is not. *sunyata* is not a concept but an actuality to be directly realized by relinquishing all the views and the concepts. Conceptualizing the *sunyata*, which is in truth non-conceptualizable and beyond all views, is highly disastrous. It is as dangerous and ruinous as a badly seized snake or a wrongly executed incantation (MK. XXIV. 11). It destroys the unwise, the people of low insight who reduce it to a concept. As Nagarjuna puts it, those who cling to *sunyata* as an idea are incorrigible (MK. XIII. 8). They are the victims of irremediable sorrow.
- ¶32. Nagarjuna therefore controverts all attempts at grasping *sunyata* as an ontological category. He says that the term *sunyata*, like any other term, is used as a provisional name or as a thought construction (*prajnaptirupadaya*) (MK. XXIV. 18) for the provisional understanding (*prajnaptartham*) of the "thusness" of all existences without "entifying" them. It is the middle way of understanding the truth. *sunyata* is as much sunya as *svabhava* is. In other words, nonsubstantiality is as empty of substantiality as substantiality is. Just as clinging to substantiality is denied through the emptiness of substantiality, (*nihsvabhava* or *svabhavasunya*), Nagarjuna denies clinging to non-substantiality through his teaching of the emptiness of nonsubstantiality (*nihsvabhavasunya*). Nagarjuna has taught not only emptiness but also the emptiness of emptiness (*sunyatasunya*). Thus *sunyata* may be called a paradigm par excellence for understanding and expressing the relational origination and quiescence of the whole of existence, which is both immanent and transcendent at the same time. *Sunyata* is the basis of all existence. Anything true is possible only in virtue of being in correspondence with *sunyata*. Nothing is possible without being in correspondence with *sunyata* (MK. XXIV. 14).

## END NOTES

1. [Eight Upanisads](#), translated by Swami Garbhirananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama (1989), 191 Includes the commentary of Sankara. (Isa, Kena, Katha and Taiitiriya).

2. The *skandhas* are the five groups, viz., form (*rupa*), sensation (*vedana*), perception (*sanjna*), mental conformations (*samskaras*), and consciousness (*vijnana*). The *ayatanas* are the six internal organs of sense and their corresponding objects, viz., the eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odors, the tongue and flavors, the touch and tangibles, and the mind and ideas. The *dhatu*s include the twelve *ayatanas* and the six types of consciousness, viz., the eye-consciousness, the ear-consciousness, etc.
3. Venkata K. Ramanan, [Nagarjuna's Philosophy](#) in *The Maha-Prajnaparamita Sastra* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1987), 57 THE REFERENCE IS INCOMPLETE. IS THIS A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS? IF SO, I NEED THE EDITOR AND FULL PAGE RANGE OF THE CHAPTER; OR IS THIS AN ARTICLE AND “The Maha Prajnaparamita Sastra” IS THE JOURNAL?? PLEASE CLARIFY
4. [2500 years of Buddhism](#) P. V. Bapat (Ed.), New Delhi: Publications Division, Govt. of India (1987), 93-94.
5. T R. Murti, [The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System](#) ; , London: George Allen & Unwin (1955), 73, 75.
6. George Grimm, [The Doctrine of the Buddha: The Religion of Reason and Meditation](#), New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1965), 132.
7. C D. Sarma, [A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy](#) , Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1960), 178.
8. B K. Matilal, [Logic, Language and Reality: Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Issues](#) , Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1985), 274-5.
9. Nagarjuna's dialectic is not the same as the Western dialectic. It is different, for instance, from the Greek *eristic*, a sophisticated disputation which is an end in itself. It is also different from the Hegelian and the Marxian dialectics which are idealistic and materialistic, respectively. The Madhyamika dialectic is soteriological in nature and its aim is the Insight which transcends reason and reveals the truth.
10. Nagarjuna, [Nagarjuna: A Translation of his Mulamadhyamakakarika](#) , translated by Kenneth Inada, Delhi: Sri Sadguru Publications (1983), 23 . Includes an introductory essay.

- [11.](#) Venkata K. Ramanan, [Nagarjuna's Philosophy](#) in *The Maha-Prajnaparamita Sastra* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1987), 152 DITTO NOTE 3
- [12.](#) *ibid.*, 155 DITTO NOTE 3
- [13.](#) Besides Nagarjuna, the Prasangika Madhyamika is represented by Buddhapahita, Candrakirti, Aryadeva and Rahulabhadra. There is a rival group, namely, the Svatantrika Madhyamika which advances a counter position in refuting a position. This school is represented by Bhavaviveka.
- [14.](#) Venkata K. Ramanan, [Nagarjuna's Philosophy](#) in *The Maha-Prajnaparamita Sastra* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1987), 157 DITTO NOTE 3
- [15.](#) *ibid.*, 158 DITTO NOTE 3
- [16.](#) *ibid.*, 158 DITTO NOTE 3
- [17.](#) These eight 'noes' constitute the first two lines of the very first verse of Nagarjuna's MK in which he offers his salutations to the Buddha who taught the doctrine of relational origination (*pratityasamutpada*) and blissful (*sivam*) cessation of all phenomenal thought constructions (*prapancopasamam*).
- [18.](#) Venkata K. Ramanan, [Nagarjuna's Philosophy](#) in *The Maha-Prajnaparamita Sastra* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass (1987), 252 DITTO NOTE 3

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