

THE DIALECTICAL METHOD
OF NĀGĀRJUNA

Vigrahavyāvartanī

Second Edition (Revised and Enlarged)

*Translated from the original Sanskrit with
Introduction and Notes by*

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TRANSLATION

I

OBJECTIONS

I. If an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of the things (*bhāva*), whatever they may be, exists nowhere (*sarvatra na vidyate*), your [very] statement must be devoid of an intrinsic nature (*asvabhāva*). It is not, therefore, in a position to deny the intrinsic nature [of the things].

Whether in the causes (*hetu*), in the conditions (*pratyaya*), in the combination of the causes and the conditions (*hetupratyayasāmāgrī*), or in a different thing, nowhere does exist an intrinsic nature of the things, whatever they may be. On this ground it is said that all things are void (*śūnyāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ*). For instance, the sprout is neither in the seed, its cause, nor in the things known as its conditions, viz., earth, water, fire, wind, etc., taken one by one, nor in the totality of the conditions, nor in the combination of the causes and the conditions, nor is it anything different from the causes and the conditions (*na hetupratyayavinirmuktaḥ prthag eva ca*). Since there is nowhere an intrinsic nature, the sprout is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). Being devoid of an intrinsic nature, it is void (*śūnya*). And just as this sprout is devoid of an intrinsic nature and hence void, so also are all the things void because of being devoid of an intrinsic nature.

Here we observe: If this is so, your statement that all things are void, must also be void. — Why? — Because your statement is neither in its cause — the [four] great elements (*mahābhūta*), taken collectively or severally (*saṃprayukteṣu viprayukteṣu vā*)¹; — nor in its conditions, the efforts made in the breast, the throat, the lips, the tongue, the roots of the teeth, the palate, the nose, the head, etc. (*urāḥkaṅṭhau-ṣṭhajihvādantamūlatālunāsikāmūrdhaphrāṅṭhiṣu yatneṣu*); — nor in the combination of both [the cause and the conditions]; — nor again is it anything apart from the cause and the conditions. Since it is nowhere, it is devoid of an intrinsic nature, [and] since it is devoid of an intrinsic nature, it is void. For this reason, it is incapable of

denying the intrinsic nature of all things. A fire that does not exist cannot burn, a weapon that does not exist cannot cut, water that does not exist cannot moisten; similarly a statement that does not exist cannot deny the intrinsic nature of all things. In these circumstances, your statement that the intrinsic nature of all things has been denied, is not valid.

II. Now, if this sentence (*vākya*) is endowed with an intrinsic nature (*sarvabhāva*), your former proposition (*pūrvā pratijñā*) is destroyed (*hatā*). There is a discordance¹, and you should state the special reason for it (*tasmin viśeṣahetuś ca vaktavyaḥ*).

Now you may think, in order to avoid this defect (*mā bhūdeṣa doṣa iti*): this sentence is endowed with an intrinsic nature, and being endowed with an intrinsic nature, it is non-void (*aśūnya*); thus the intrinsic nature of all things has been denied by it. — To this we reply: If so, then your former proposition 'All things are void' is destroyed.

Furthermore:

Your statement is included in all things (*sarvabhāvāntargata*). [Now] if all things are void, for what reason is your statement non-void, — that statement which has denied the intrinsic nature of all things because it is [itself] non-void (*yenāśūnyatvāt sarvabhāvasarvabhāvah pratiśiddhaḥ*)? Thus arises a controversial discussion in six points (*ṣaṭkoṭiko vādaḥ*)². — How is it? — Well,

(1) If all things are void, then your statement is void, being included in all things. [And] a negation by that [statement] which is void is a logical impossibility (*tena śūnyena pratiśedhānupapattiḥ*). In these circumstances, the negation that all things are void is not valid (*anupapanna*). (2) If, on the other hand, the negation that all things are void is valid, then your statement is non-void. [But] that negation which it establishes because it is non-void, is not valid (*aśūnyatvād anena pratiśedho 'nupapannaḥ*)³. (3) Now, if all things are void, but your statement by which is effected the negation (*vena pratiśedhaḥ*) is non-void, then your statement is not included in all things (*sarvatrasamgrhitam*). Your proposition, there, is contradicted by the example⁴. (4) If, on the contrary, your statement is included in all things, and if all things are void, then your statement also is void.

[And] since it is void, it cannot establish a negation (*śūnyatvād anena nāsti pratiśedhaḥ*). (5) Let us then assume that it is void and that there is the negation by it (*atha śūnyam asti cānena pratiśedhaḥ*): 'All things are void'. But, in that case, all things, though void, would be capable of performing actions (*śūnyā api sarvabhāvāḥ kāryakriyāsamarthā bhavēyuh*) — which is absurd (*na caitad iṣṭam*). (6) Let it be granted, then, that all things are void and that they are not capable of performing actions (*atha śūnyāḥ sarvabhāvā na ca kāryakriyāsamarthā bhavanti*); let the proposition be not contradicted by the example (*mā bhūdeṣāntavirodhaḥ*). In that case, however, the negation of the intrinsic nature of all things by your void statement is not valid.

Furthermore:

Thus, if your statement exists (*tadastitvāt*), there arises the following discordance: some things are void, and some other things, non-void (*kiñcid chūnyam kiñcid aśūnyam*). And you should state the special reason for that discordance, explaining why some things are void, while some others are not. You have, however, not stated that reason. In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.

¹ Yamaguchi's explanation of *viśamikatva* by *viśamavyāpti* is 'anachronistic', as pointed out by the editors (p. 43, n. 9). The word has the same meaning as the usual *viśamya*.

² This has nothing to do with the *ṣaṭpakṣirūpakathābhāsa* (*Nyāyasūtras V*, 1, 39-43) — despite Yamaguchi's note (2).

³ For the statement is 'included in all things'. — This is certainly the correct interpretation, as suggested in the Edition, p. 44, n. 3 (and not that on p. 35). The Naiyāyika's objection here is closely related to that raised in the *Nyāyasūtras II*, 1, 13-14, in connection with the Mādhyamika negation of the Naiyāyika *pramāṇas* (cf. vv. XXXI-LI below): *sarvāpramāṇapratīśedhāc ca pratiśedhānupapattiḥ*; — *tatpramāṇye vā na sarvāpramāṇavipratīśedhaḥ*. Cf. also Vātsyāyana on *Nyāyasūtra IV*, 2, 30.

⁴ *tatra dr̥ṣṭāntavirodhaḥ*. — The proposition, 'All things are void', is contradicted by the example (*dr̥ṣṭānta*) of the statement that is non-void. Since the statement is not 'included in all things', there can be no question of all things being void.

Moreover:

III. If you think that it is like 'Do not make a sound', [we reply:] this

also is not valid. For here a sound that is existent prevents the other sound that will be (*śabdena hy atra satā bhaviṣyato vāraṇaṃ tasya*).

You may think: When somebody says: 'Do not make a sound', he himself makes a sound, and that sound prevents the other sound; in just the same manner, the void statement 'All things are void' prevents the intrinsic nature of all things. — To this we reply: This also is not valid. — Why? — Because here a sound that is existent negates the future sound. In your case, however, it is not an existent statement that negates the intrinsic nature of all things. For, in your opinion (*tava hi matena*) the statement is non-existent, the intrinsic nature of all things is non-existent (*vacanam apy asat sarvabhāvasvabhāvo 'py asan*). Thus, 'It is like "Do not make a sound"' is a defective proposition (*viśamoḥpanyāsa*)¹.

¹ *viśama upanyāsaḥ* is a favorite remark of Patañjali, author of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Cf. L. Renou, *Terminologie grammaticale du Sanskrit* (Paris, 1942 and 1957), s.v. *upanyāsa*. — Let it be noted in passing that Nāgārjuna's prose—of which the commentary on the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* is the only extant example—is very similar to that of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Among the 'imitators' of Patañjali's style (cf. on this point L. Renou, *Histoire de la langue sanskrite*, Lyon-Paris, 1956, pp. 135-6) is therefore to be counted now Nāgārjuna.

Moreover:

IV. If you think that the same holds true of the negation of the negation (*pratiśedhapratiśedha*) also, that is false. It is your proposition which by virtue of its specific character is thus rendered defective (*lakṣaṇato dūṣyate*), not mine.

You may think: 'According to this very method (*anenaiva kalpeṇa*), a negation of negation also is impossible; so your negation of the statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things is impossible (*tatra yad bhavān sarvabhāvasvabhāvapratiśedhavacanam pratiśedhayati tad anupapannam iti*)'. — To this we reply: This also is false. — Why? — Because the objection applies [only] to the specific character of your proposition, not to that of mine. It is you who say that all things are void, not I. The initial thesis (*pūrvakah pakṣaḥ*) is not mine. — In these circumstances, your statement that, such being the case (*evaṃ sati*), a negation of negation also is impossible, is not valid¹.

¹ According to the realist, the Mādhyamika commits the logical error of negating, through a void statement, the intrinsic nature of all things. The realist, however,

does not commit any such error when he negates the Mādhyamika's statement negating the intrinsic nature of all things — for he does not hold that all things are void; his statement, therefore, is not void.

Moreover:

V. Now, if [you say that] you deny the things after having apprehended them through perception (*pratyakṣa*)¹, [we reply:] that perception through which the things are apprehended does not exist (*tan nāsti pratyakṣaṃ bhāvā yenopalabhyante*).

You cannot say that you deny all things in the statement 'All things are void', after having apprehended them through perception. — Why? — Because even perception, an instrument of true cognition (*pramāṇa*), is void, being included in all things (*sarvabhāvāntargatavāt*). The person who apprehends the things (*yo bhāvān upalabhate*) is also void. Thus, there is no such thing as apprehension through perception, an instrument of true cognition (*tasmāt pratyakṣeṇa pramāṇena nopalambhabhāvah*); and a negation of that which is not apprehended is a logical impossibility (*anupalabdhasya ca pratiśedhānupapattiḥ*)². In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid.

You think, perhaps (*syāt te buddhiḥ*), that you deny all things (*sarvabhāvavyāvartanaṃ kriyate*) after having apprehended them through inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*āgama*) and comparison (*upamāna*)².

¹ Here and in the following verse are mentioned the four *pramāṇas* or 'instruments of true cognition', typical of the Nyāya school, viz., perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*āgama* or *śabda*), and comparison (*upamāna*).

² Because negation is not possible without an object to be negated (see XI-XII below).

To this we reply:

VI. In our refutation of perception, we have [already] refuted inference, verbal testimony and comparison, as well as the objects to be established by inference, verbal testimony and example (*anumānāgamāsādhyā ye 'rthā dṛṣṭāntasādhyāś ca*)¹.

We have [already] refuted inference, comparison and verbal testimony, in our refutation of the 'instrument of true cognition' (*pramāṇa*), perception. Just as perception, an 'instrument of true cognition', is

Furthermore :

XX. It is not possible to hold that the negation comes first and then the thing to be negated. Nor is it possible to hold that the negation comes after [the thing to be negated], or that they are simultaneous. — The intrinsic nature of the things is, therefore, existent (*yataḥ svabhāvaḥ san*).

It is not possible to hold that the negation comes first and then the thing to be negated. For, if the thing to be negated does not exist (*asati hi pratiśedhye*), of what is the negation (*kasya pratiśedhaḥ*)? Nor is it possible to hold that the negation comes after the thing to be negated. For, if the thing to be negated is [already] established (*siddhe hi pratiśedhye*), what purpose is served by the negation (*kim pratiśedhaḥ karoti*)? Now [if you say that] the negation and the thing to be negated are simultaneous, [we answer]: even in that way, the negation is not the cause of the object to be negated, nor is the object to be negated the cause of the negation (*na pratiśedhaḥ pratiśedhyasyārthasya kāraṇam, pratiśedhyo na pratiśedhasya ca*), just as of the two horns¹, grown simultaneously (*yugapadutpannoḥ*), the right horn is not the cause of the left horn, nor is the left horn the cause of the right horn. — In these circumstances, your statement that all things are void is not valid².

¹ *śaśa*^o in the text is an unnecessary addition to *viśāṇa*, as the editors have rightly observed (p. 54, n. 9). — Cf. Candrakīrti on *MK XX*, 7: *na caikakālayoḥ sayetarago-viśāṇayoḥ jānyajanakatvaṃ dr̥ṣṭam, vāmadakṣiṇakarayoḥ carāṇayoḥ vā*. — *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*, quoted by Yamaguchi, p. 78; *Tarkaśāstra* in Tucci, p. 18; Gaudapāda, *Āgamaśāstra* (= *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*) IV, 16 (cf. Vidhuśekhara Bhaṭṭācārya, *Gaudapādīyam Āgamaśāstram*, University of Calcutta, 1950, pp. 115-6); Jayantabhaṭṭa, *Nyāyamañjarī*, p. 628, l. 13; Bhāsarvajña, *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa*, p. 350, l. 18 (read *sayetarayoḥ*, instead of *sādhyetarayoḥ*).

² Cf. *Nyāyasūtra II*, 1, 12: *trāikālyāsiddheḥ pratiśedhānupapattiḥ*. — Vātsyāyana: *pūrvam hi pratiśedhasiddhāu asati pratiśedhye kim anena pratiśedhyate? paścātsiddhau pratiśedhyāsiddhiḥ, pratiśedhābhāvād iti. yugapatsiddhau pratiśedhyāsiddhyabhyānujñānād anarthakāḥ pratiśedha iti*. As will be seen, Vātsyāyana's interpretation is a little different from that given in the commentary on our verse here. See also *Nyāyasūtra V*, 1, 20.

II

REPLY¹

[Refutation to the first objection]

XXI. If my statement does not exist in the combination of the cause and the conditions, or independently of them, then the voidness of the things is established because of their being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*śūnyatvaṃ siddham bhāvānām asvabhāvatvāt*).

If my statement does not exist in its cause and in its conditions...², it is devoid of an intrinsic nature, and, being devoid of an intrinsic nature, it is void. Now the voidness of this statement of mine is established because of its being devoid of an intrinsic nature. And just as this statement of mine is void because of its being devoid of an intrinsic nature, so also are all things void because of their being devoid of an intrinsic nature. In these circumstances, your statement: 'Because of the voidness of your statement it is not possible to establish the voidness of all things', is not valid.

¹ In this part Nāgārjuna quotes all the verses translated above, and then gives his reply. I have not thought it necessary to repeat them here.

² The commentary here is a restatement of what was said by the opponent in verse I above.

Furthermore :

XXII. That nature of the things which is dependent is called voidness¹, for that nature which is dependent is devoid of an intrinsic nature (*yaś ca pratītyabhāvo bhavati hi tasyāsvabhāvatvam*).

You have not understood the meaning of the voidness of the things. So you have set out to criticize me, saying: 'Since your statement is devoid of an intrinsic nature, the negation of the intrinsic nature of the things is not valid'. That nature of the things which is dependent is voidness. — Why? — Because it is devoid of an intrinsic nature. Those things which are dependently originated are not, indeed, endowed with an intrinsic nature; for they have no intrinsic nature (*ye hi pratītyasamutpannā bhāvās te na savabhāvā bhavanti, svabhāvābhāvāt*). — Why? — Because they are dependent on causes and conditions (*hetupratītyasāpekṣatvāt*). If the things were by their own nature (*svabhāvataḥ*), they would be even without the aggregate of causes and conditions (*pratītyākhyāyāpi hetupratītyam*). 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 (*pratīyasamutpānnatvāt*), 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 (*svabhāvasūnya*) 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 (*niḥsvabhāvatvaprasādhane bhāvānām vartate*).—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.

¹ *yaś ca pratīyabhāvo bhāvānām śūnyateti sā proktā.* — Cf. *MK XXIV*, 18: *yaḥ pratīyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe. (yaḥpratīyayādhiṇu sa śūnya uktah, Anavataptahradāpa-saṃkramaṇa-Sūtra*, quoted by Candrakīrti, several times. Cf. *supra*, p.90).

Furthermore:

XXIII. Suppose that a person, artificially created (*nirmitaka*), should prevent (*pratīśedhayeta*) another artificial person, or that a magic man (*māyāpuruṣa*) should prevent another man created by his own magic (*svamāyayā sṛṣṭam*) [from doing something]. Of the same nature would be this negation (*pratīśedho 'yaṃ tathaiva śyāt*)¹

Suppose that an artificial man should prevent another artificial man occupied with something (*kasmīṃścid arthe vartamānam*), or that a magic man created by a magician (*māyākāreṇa sṛṣṭaḥ*) should prevent another magic man created by his own magic and occupied with something. There, the artificial man who is prevented is void, and he (the artificial man) who prevents is also void; the magic man who is prevented is void, and he (the magic man) who prevents is also void. In like manner, a negation of the intrinsic nature of all things by my statement is possible, even though this statement is void (*evam eva madvacanena śūnyenāpi sarvabhāvānām svabhāvapratīśedha upapannaḥ*). In these circumstances, your statement: 'Because of the voidness of your statement, a negation of the intrinsic nature of all things is not possible', is not valid. In this way is also prevented

the controversial discussion in six points that you spoke of (*tatra yo bhavatā ṣaṭkoṭiko vāda uktah so 'pi tenaiva pratīśiddhaḥ*)². For, this being so, it is not true that my statement is not included in all things; there is nothing that is non-void; nor are all things non-void³.

¹ Cf. *MK XVII*, 31-32.

² P.95, above.

³ According to the opponent, either the Mādhyamika's statement is not 'included in all things', and in that case some things are void and some others, non-void; or the statement, being 'included in all things', is itself void and thus non-existent and hence incapable of performing an action, viz., the negation. But the Mādhyamika says in reply that his statement is 'included in all things', being void like all other things. There can be no question of some things being void and of some others being non-void. It cannot be maintained, however, that the statement does not exist at all: it exists in a certain manner — like the artificial man or the magic man. Though void, the latter prevent other void persons from doing something; similarly the statement, though void, can negate other void things.

Now about your statement [contained in v. II above]:

XXIV. This statement is not endowed with an intrinsic nature (*na svābhāvīkam etad vākyam*). There is therefore no abandonment of position on my part (*tasmān na vādahānir me*). There is no discordance (*nāsti ca vaiśamikatvam*), and [hence] there is no special reason to be stated (*viśeṣahetuś ca na nigadyaḥ*)¹.

This statement of mine, being dependently originated, is not endowed with an intrinsic nature (*na svabhāvopapannam*). As previously stated, since it is not endowed with an intrinsic nature, it is void. And since this statement of mine is void, just as all other things are void, there is no discordance. For, there would be a discordance [only] if we said: This statement is non-void (*aśūnya*), while all other things are void (*śūnya*). We, however, do not say that. There is, therefore, no discordance. And since the following discordance, this statement is non-void while all other things are void, does not exist, we do not have to state the special reason (*tasmād asmābhir viśeṣahetur na vaktavyaḥ*): for this reason (*anena hetunā*) this statement is non-void while all [other] things are void. — In these circumstances, your statement: 'There is on your part an abandonment of position, there is a discordance, and you should state the special reason', is not valid.

¹ On the word *nigadya*, which is against Pāṇini III, 1,100, see *Indologica Taurinensia* (Torino), VII (1979), pp. 110-11.

[Refutation of the second objection: see v. III above.]

XXV. The example given by you: 'It is like "Do not make a sound"', is not appropriate. There a sound is prevented by another sound, but the case here is not just the same (*śabdena tac ca śabdasya vāraṇaṃ naivam evaitat*).

This example, moreover, is not ours (*nāpy ayam asmākaṃ dṛṣṭāntaḥ*). That void statement does not prevent voidness (*na śūnyatām pratiśedhayati*) as a person, when he says: 'Do not make a sound', makes a sound and at the same time prevents a sound. — Why? — Because, in this example, a sound is prevented by another sound. But the case here is not the same. We say: all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature, and hence void. — Why?

XXVI. Because, if things devoid of an intrinsic nature were prevented by something devoid of an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyaṇāṃ cen naiḥsvābhāvyaṇā vāraṇaṃ yadi*), with the cessation of [their] being devoid of an intrinsic nature would be established [their] being endowed with an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyanivṛttau svābhāvyaṃ hi prasiddhaṃ syāt*)¹.

This example would be appropriate if by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature were prevented things devoid of an intrinsic nature — as by the sound: 'Do not make a sound' is prevented another sound. Here, however, by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature is negated the intrinsic nature of the things (*iha tu naiḥsvābhāvyaṇā vacanena bhāvānāṃ svābhāvapratiśedhaḥ kriyate*). If by a statement devoid of an intrinsic nature were negated the things' being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*yadi naiḥsvābhāvyaṇā vacanena bhāvānāṃ naiḥsvābhāvyaṇā pratiśedhaḥ kriyate*), the things, by the very fact of being negated in their quality of being devoid of an intrinsic nature (*naiḥsvābhāvyaṇā pratiśiddhatvād eva*), would be endowed with an intrinsic nature (*sasvābhāvā bhaveyuh*). Being endowed with an intrinsic nature, they would be non-void. We, however, declare that the things are void, not that they are non-void (*śūnyatām ca vāyam bhāvānāṃ ācakṣmahe, nāśūnyatām*). This, therefore, is a non-example (*adrṣṭānta evāyam*)².

¹ *naiḥsvābhāvya* is used here both as an adjective and as a noun. The first is derived from *niḥsvābhāva* 'absence of an intrinsic nature', and the second, from *niḥsvābhāva* 'devoid of an intrinsic nature'. Cf. v. IX above.

² For the Mādhyamika, the opponent's example is not appropriate. When one says: 'Do not make a sound', one prevents by the sound one makes another sound. The Mādhyamika, however, by his void statement, 'All things are void', does not negate other void things but only negates the things that we regard as *non-void*. There is thus no agreement between the two cases.

XXVII. Or suppose that an artificial person should prevent the false notion of somebody who with regard to an artificial woman thinks: 'This is a woman'. This would be like that (*evaṃ bhaved etat*).

Or suppose that in an artificial woman, void of an intrinsic nature (*svābhāvāśūnya*), some man should have the false notion (*asadgrāha*) that it is really (*paramārthataḥ*) a woman and, as a result of that false notion, should feel desire for her. The Tathāgata or a disciple of the Tathāgata would [then] create an artificial man (*nirmitako nirmitaḥ syāt*), [and] the latter would dispel the false notion of that man, through the power (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Tathāgata or of the disciple of the Tathāgata. Likewise, by my void statement, comparable to the artificial man (*nirmitakopamena śūnyena madvacanena*), is prevented the idea of an intrinsic nature in all things which are devoid of an intrinsic nature and comparable to the artificial woman (*nirmitakastrisadrṣeṣu sarvabhāveṣu niḥsvābhāveṣu yo 'yaṃ svābhāvagrāhaḥ sa nivartyate*). Thus, this is an appropriate example for establishing voidness, not the other one (*tasmād ayam atra dṛṣṭāntaḥ śūnyatāprasādhanaṃ praty upapadyamānaḥ, netarāḥ*)¹.

¹ *upapadyamāna* in this sentence is not so 'odd' as the editors think (p. 60, n. 13). See also the end of the commentary on the next verse, and that on v. LIV. The word occurs also in other texts.

XXVIII. Or this reason (*hetu*) is similar in nature to the thesis to be established (*sādhyasama*), for sound has no [real] existence (*na hi vidyate dhvaneḥ sattā*). We do not speak, however, without having recourse to the conventional truth (*saṃvṛtyavahāra*).

The reason (*hetu*)¹ 'It is like "Do not make a sound"' is of the same nature as the thesis to be established — Why? — Because all things, being devoid of an intrinsic nature, are alike (*naiḥsvābhāvyaṇāviśiṣṭatvāt*). That sound, being dependently originated, has no existence by its own nature (*na hi tasya dhvaneḥ pratityasamutpannatvāt svābhāvāsattā vidyate*). [And] since it has no existence by its own nature, your statement: 'For here a sound that is existent prevents the other sound that will be', is precluded (*vyāhanyate*). It is not, however, without having

recourse to the conventional truth (*vyavahārasatya*), it is not by rejecting the conventional truth, that we say: All things are void. For it is not possible to teach the absolute truth (*dharma*) without having recourse to the conventional truth. As it is said:

'The transcendent truth cannot be taught without having recourse to the conventional truth. [And] Nirvāṇa cannot be attained without realizing the transcendent truth'².

Thus, all things are void like my statement (*tasmān madvacanavac chūnyāḥ sarvabhāvāḥ*), and that all things are devoid of an intrinsic nature, follows in both ways (*ubhayathopapadyamānam*) [i.e., both by virtue of the 'reason' and of the thesis to be established]³.

¹ The term *hetu* 'reason' is used here in the sense of *dr̥ṣṭānta* 'example'. A similar instance is furnished by Gauḍapāda's *Āgamaśāstra* (= *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*) IV, 20 (quoted in my paper referred to in note 3 below). Śāṅkara, in his comment on the latter passage, observes: *hetur iti dr̥ṣṭānto 'trābhīpretāḥ, gamakatvāt. prakṛto hi dr̥ṣṭānto na hetuḥ*. Note that the 'reason' is inseparably connected with the 'example' in the Nyāya inferential system. See *Nyāyasūtra* I, 1, 34-37, and Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya* on I, 1, 39. Cf. also *Nyāyasūtra* V, 1, 11 : *pratidr̥ṣṭāntahetur ca nāhetur dr̥ṣṭāntaḥ*.

² *vyavahāram anāśrītya paramārtho na deśyate/paramārtham anāgamya nirvāṇam nādhigamyate*|| (MK XXIV, 10).—The verb *ā-gam-* is used in both the senses 'to have recourse to' and 'to understand, realize'. On its use in the latter sense cf. Aśvaghōṣa, *Buddhacarita* XII, 38 and 116; *Saundarananda* XVI, 42 (both in E. H. Johnston's editions, Lahore 1936 and 1928, respectively; reprint: Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1972 and 1975).

The absolute truth is beyond words (*anākṣara*). But it is taught 'through superimposition' (*samāropāt*), with the help of the conventional truth. — See Murti, pp. 232, 253.

³ For the realist, when one says: 'Do not make a sound', a sound that is existent prevents another sound that is not existent, whereas the Mādhyamika's statement 'All things are void' cannot prevent anything, for it is itself void. To this the Mādhyamika replies that there is no sound that is 'existent'; the objection, therefore, is not valid. — The idea of *sādhyasama* will occur again when Nāgārjuna takes up the question of the possibility of a negation in the three times (v. LXIX). This is one of the several Naiyāyika technical terms used by Nāgārjuna in this treatise (see Glossary, published in *JIP* 5 [1978], pp. 240-41. It should be noted, however, that Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti do not use the term in the sense in which Nyāya uses it. See my 'Note on the interpretation of the term *sādhyasama* in Madhyamaka Texts', in *JIP* 2, 3/4 (March/June 1974), pp. 225-30. Cf. also, for instance, Candrakīrti, *MKV.*, p. 283, 11, 3ff. There is a verse in Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka* (reconstructed from the Tibetan), which, although it does not use the term *sādhyasama*, is clearly reminiscent of the Nyāya use of it (on which cf. B. K. Matilal, 'A Note on the Nyāya Fallacy *Sādhyasama* and *Petitio Principii*', in *JIP* 2, 3/4, pp. 211-24). The opponent wants to prove the reality of the sense-objects on the ground that they are perceived.

But Āryadeva argues that they are not perceived, and concludes: *tasmāt sādhyena sādhyasya siddhir naivopapadyate*. Since the 'reason', the fact of being perceived (*pratya-kṣatva*), is itself to be proved (*sādhyā*), it cannot establish the thesis to be established (*sādhyā*). (*The Catuhśataka of Āryadeva, Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with copious extracts from the Commentary of Candrakīrti*, reconstructed and edited by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, *Viśva-Bhārati Series* 2, Calcutta 1931, Ch. XIII, v. 5 [*Kārikā* 305, p. 172]). So far as I can see, Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti never express themselves in this way. — Vaidya's interpretation of Āryadeva's *Kārikā* 396 (Ch. XVI, v. 21), followed by May (P. L. Vaidya, *Etudes sur Āryadeva et son Catuhśataka, chapitres VIII-XVI*, Paris 1923, p. 166; cf. May, p. 93, n. 205), is inexact. See Candrakīrti's comment, pp. 289-90. The rendering of *sādhyasama* by '*petitio principii*', 'pétition de principe', found in the modern translations of Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, is to be modified in the light of these recent contributions.

Now about your statement [contained in v. IV]:

XXIX.¹ If I had any proposition (*pratijñā*), then this defect (*doṣa*) would be mine. I have, however, no proposition (*nāsti ca mama pratijñā*). Therefore, there is no defect that is mine (*tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ*).

If I had any proposition, then the defect previously stated by you would be mine, because it would affect the specific character of my proposition (*mama pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptatvāt*). [But] I have no proposition. Thus [we observe:] When all things are void, perfectly appeased and by nature isolated², how can there be a proposition? How can something affect the specific character of a proposition (*kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptiḥ*)? [And] how can there be a defect, caused by the fact of affecting the specific character of a proposition (*kutaḥ pratijñālakṣaṇaprāptikṛto doṣaḥ*)? — In these circumstances, your statement: 'The defect is only yours because it affects the specific character of your proposition', is not valid³.

¹This and the following verse are quoted by Candrakīrti, *MKV*, p. 16.

² *śūnyeṣu atyantopāśānteṣu prakṛtīvivikṭeṣu*. — The things' being devoid of an intrinsic nature does not mean that they have no nature at all. In their essential nature (*prakṛti*), they are nothing but the universal and absolute Reality, which is 'perfectly appeased' (*atyantopāśānta*) and 'by nature isolated' (*prakṛtīvivikṭa*). That Nature, isolated from its appearances, is not, however, an entity that can be determined objectively. 'By their nature, the things are not a determinate entity. Their nature is a non-nature; it is their non-nature which is their nature. For they have only one nature, i.e., no nature (from the objective standpoint)': *prakṛtyaiva na te dharmāḥ kiñcit. yā ca prakṛtiḥ sāprakṛtiḥ, yā cāprakṛtiḥ sā prakṛtiḥ sarvadharmāṇām* — *ekalakṣaṇatvād*

yad utālakṣaṇatvāt. (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, p. 96, ed. by P. L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1960). — The expression *prakṛtīvivikta* occurs on the same page of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Nāgārjuna uses the words *śānta* and *upaśānta* in the same sense. The Absolute is 'appeased', because it is not 'grasped', and hence not expressed in words. Cf. *MK XVIII, 9; XXV 24*.

In the Mahāyāna works the Absolute is often spoken of as beyond 'grasping' (*upalambha*). Objectively speaking, it is 'non-existent'. But from its objective non-existence we should not conclude its metaphysical non-existence. On the contrary, its objective 'non-existence' is evidence of its highest metaphysical 'existence', its being 'not grasped' in an objective sense is evidence of its being 'grasped' in the highest metaphysical sense, i.e., beyond the subject-object split. We read thus in the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālamkāra*;

yāvidyamānatā saiva paramā vidyamānatā

śarvathānupalambhaś ca upalambhaḥ paro mataḥ || (IX, 78; ed. by S. Lévi, Paris, 1907).

Cf. also Candrakīrti, *MKV*, p. 265: *avidyātimiraḥprabhāvopālabdham bhāvajātam yenātmanā vigatāvidyātimirāṇām āryāṇām adarśanayogena viśayatvam upayāti tad eva svarūpam eṣāṃ svabhāva iti vyavasthāpyate ... sa caīṣa bhāvānām anuṣṭādātmakeḥ svabhāvo 'kiṃcittvenā-bhāvamātravād asvabhāva eveti kṛtvā nāsti bhāvasvabhāva iti vijñeyam. [Supra, p. 90. See also Ātman-Brahman, p. 67, n. 3; pp. 96-8].*

³ The Mādhyamika may say that, if in the realist's opinion he cannot deny with his void statement the reality of the things, the realist himself cannot deny the Mādhyamika's negation. To this the realist replies that the objection does not apply to him, for it is the Mādhyamika, not he, who holds that all things are void; his statement negating the Mādhyamika's negation is therefore not void. — But the Mādhyamika replies in turn that the realist's objection is not valid, for the Mādhyamika has no proposition of his own. 'All things are void' is not a "proposition". It only expresses the Inexpressible, with the help of the conventional truth — as he has already explained in the preceding verse. The real language here would be silence: *paramārtho hy āryāṇām tūṣṇābhāvaḥ*, Candrakīrti (*MKV*, p. 57; cf. Murti, p. 232; *supra*, p. 90: for a different reading cf. J. W. de Jong, 'Textcritical Notes on the Prasannapadā', in *Indo-Iranian Journal* (Dordrecht) 20 (1978), p. 33).

[Refutation of the third objection; see vv. V, VI above].

XXX. If I apprehended something with the help of perception, etc., then I would either affirm or deny (*pravartayeyam nivartayeyam vā*). [But] since that thing does not exist, I am not to blame (*tadābhāvān me 'nupālambhaḥ*).

If I apprehended something with the help of the four *pramāṇas*, viz., perception, inference, identification and verbal testimony, or with the help of one of these, then only would I either affirm or deny. [But] since I do not even apprehend an object of any kind (*yathārtham evāham kaṃcin nopalabhe*), I neither affirm nor deny (*tasmān na pravartayāmi na nivartayāmi*). In these circumstances, your criticism (*yo bhavato-pālambha uktaḥ*): 'If [you say that] you deny the things after having apprehended them through one of the *pramāṇas*, viz., perception, etc.,

[we reply:] those *pramāṇas* do not exist, nor do exist the objects to be apprehended through them (*tais ca pramāṇair api gamyā arthāḥ*'), does not concern me at all (*sa me bhavaty evānupālambhaḥ*).

Furthermore:

XXXI. If such and such objects are established for you through the *pramāṇas* (*yadi ca pramāṇatas te tesāṃ teṣāṃ prasiddhir arthānām*), tell me how those *pramāṇas* are established for you (*teṣāṃ punaḥ prasiddhim brūhi katham te pramāṇānām*)¹.

If you think that such and such 'objects of true cognition' (*arthānām prameyāṇām*) are established through the 'instruments of true cognition' (*pramāṇa*), just as the things to be measured (*meya*) are established through the measuring instruments (*māna*), [we ask:] How are those 'instruments of true cognition', viz., perception, inference, comparison and verbal testimony, established? If [you say that] the *pramāṇas* are established without the help of *pramāṇas* (*yadi tāvān niṣpramāṇānām pramāṇānām syāt prasiddhiḥ*), then [your] proposition that [all] objects are established through *pramāṇas* is abandoned (*pramāṇato 'rthānām prasiddhir iti hiyate pratijñā*)².

¹ The Mādhyamika-Naiyāyika controversy over the *pramāṇas* is well known from the *Nyāyasūtras II*, 1, 8-19. Vācaspatimiśra, in his *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭikā* (p. 249 in *Vizianagram Sanskrit Series* No. 15, Benares 1898), expressly states that the objector is a Mādhyamika. Furthermore: 'L'attitude des philosophes bouddhiques est expliquée avec précision' (L. de La Vallée Poussin, *MKV*, p. 56, n. 1). Here we have the Mādhyamika's own version of this controversy. See on this question Murti, pp. 149ff.

² Because the *pramāṇas*, the 'means of true cognition', are also 'objects' (*artha*). Cf. v. XXXIII below. — 'It might be better to omit the entire sentence' (Text, p. 63, n. 5).

XXXII a-b. If the *pramāṇas* are established through other *pramāṇas*, then there is an infinite series (*anavasthā*).

If you think that the 'objects of true cognition' (*prameya*) are established through the 'means of true cognition' (*pramāṇa*) and that those 'means of true cognition' are established through other 'means of true cognition', then there follows an infinite series — What harm is there if there is an infinite series?—

XXXII c-d. Neither the beginning nor the middle nor the end can then be established.