The following are some of the dogmatic and absolutistic assertions in regard to the exact number of things:

(i) All things are one, because all are equally existent.

According to the Jātātukākārā this is Brahmādwaitavaḍa which he explains as under:

The entire phenomenon of the world is nothing apart from the light of consciousness. It could not be apprehended if it were different from that light; since no unconscious thing can be apprehended by itself.

It is not proper to hold that an unconscious thing becomes manifest due to its connection with the light (i.e. consciousness). Because such a connection of an unconscious thing with inner consciousness or light is not possible. There cannot be the relation of object (viṣaya) and subject (viṣayin) because what cannot be anything cannot be the subject (viṣayin).

It is equally meaningless to hold that knowledge creates a fruit (i.e. a new attribute), viz. jñātatā (knowyness) in
the object, because if it be so, then this would not be possible in respect of the objects of the past as well as of the future, and so cannot be the viṣaya (the things in which the fruit is created). Thus, the phenomenal world could not be apprehended if it were quite a different thing from the Consciousness itself. And hence everything is a mere appearance of this light, i.e. Consciousness.

It is not proper to urge that it could be accepted that the jar etc. which are consciousness themselves (prakāśatmanah) and are liable to manifestation (i.e. origination) and disappearance (destruction), are different from each other. The apprehension of such a difference cannot be established by pramanas. If such a difference (vyāvrtti) were there, it could be perceived only after the apprehension of two things, viz. the jar and the thing from which it is different cognitions which are unique and just of their own nature and not capable of getting information of each other, cannot cognise even another cognition before they could differentiate it from themselves.

1. न च कर्म ज्ञानम् फलं ज्ञातीति सांप्रत्युः,
   बलीतानांगस्योऽक्षियोऽऽस्मवादः ।
   - NVTT. 4.1.40.

2. न च प्रकाशात्मानं घटाय: क्षौद्वयवचिष्ण:।
   परस्पर्यावृत्ता: क्षमित्तिति सांप्रत्युः ।
   - NVTT. 4.1.40.

3. सः हि यथा व्याजति तदुपग्रहेण गृह्यते ।
   - NVTT. 4.1.40.

4. न च विज्ञानां विलंबणानि स्वस्मांतावस्थितानि परस्परातन्तरिभिः
   ज्ञानांस्त्यर्थकं प्रवृंदुमुत्साहस्य प्राप्ते स्वस्माद् व्याकरणिः ।
   - NVTT. 4.1.40.
It should not be argued that "the apprehension of the difference which has the thing denied and the substratum of that denial as its cause, is produced simultaneously with its cause", because there could not be the relation of cause and effect between these two as is the case with the right and the left horns of the cow.

Nor should it be held: "Only one cognition which is itself momentary, first cognises the thing denied as well as the substratum of the denial and then cognises the denial itself." Because a thing, which is sequence and hence it cannot act like a thing which is possessed of that sequence.

It might be urged: One cognition cognises the thing denied and the substratum of that denial, and then, another cognition denies it". But this also is not proper. Because if it be so, there would be the contingency of Maitra having the cognition of denial or negation even when Caitra has cognised a thing. It is not proper to say that the apprehension of the nature of cognition is itself the apprehension of the denial. Because this could be so only if the nature of a thing (svarūpa) and its difference from others (tadanyavārtti) were one and the same, (which is not so). He (who holds these two to be one and the same) should clarify whether the bhāva (positive thing) is of the nature of Vyāvrtti (difference) or the Vyāvṛtti is of the nature of bhāva. If the former; then as
Vyāvṛtti is not there at all, bhāvas also would be such (i.e., absolutely non-existent). And then there would be the contingency of accepting Śūnyāvāda—only expressed differently. If the latter, then it would mean that bhava which is positive in form is one with Vyāvṛtti. But bhāvas, as they are positive in form, are not absent; so things could not be really different from one another (or absent in one another. And this is what is meant by "All things are one, because, all are equally existent".

Of course, he who holds the above view; does not deny the difference of things which is based on beginningless, indefinable Avidyā. And there is no means of cognising the difference of the knower from the knowledge as the situation is not different. Hence there is no mutual difference between the objects of cognition nor also between the objects of cognition and the cognition itself. The cogniser also is not different from the cognition, so also the cognitions are not different from one another. Therefore, light is itself the self-luminous, absolutely unchanging and eternal,
mass of Bliss, on which the manifold phenomenon of name and
form has been projected by the beginningless Avidya. Hence it is that we have such Vedic passages: as the following:

"Brahman is only one and without another" and
"There is no difference whatsoever here. He goes from death to death who sees as it were difference here" and the like.

Other such views absolutistic are:

(i) All things are two, being divided into 'eternal' and 'non-eternal'.
(ii) All things are three, cogniser, cognition and object of cognition.
(iii) All things are four: Cogniser, means of cognition, object of cognition, and cognition.

And so on. There are other such assertions also.

1. तस्मात् प्राकाश स्व स्त्यप्राकाशः कुटस्थनतः कानन्द्यनः कायविषोऽपि
   पदश्रीतिविशिष्कित्रिक्षाप्राप्तिः श्रृंग इत्यद्वैतिविद्यः।
   NVTT. 4. 1. 40.

2. सुखेपावक्षितो श्रृंग।

3. नेः प्राणस्ति फँचन।
   भृत्यःं भृत्युमाप्नेविय व य च नानाव पश्चविय।

4. The other assertions referred to in the Bhāṣya are:
   (i) the view of the Sāmkhya that the puruṣa (soul) and Prakṛti (Primordial Matter) are the only two entities,
   (ii) the view of the Baudhās that the only entities are the five Skandhas of Form, Name, Impression, Sensation and Cognition, and (iii) that of the Pāṣupatas that the only entities are the Paśu (living beings), their bondage (पाप), the removal of this bondage, and the Lord.
   NVTT. 4. 1. 40.
We now proceed to examine these views:

Any absolute limitation of the number (of things) cannot be established; whether the means (to prove it are not available or available.

(संवेदनांकबालिकः कारणानुपमत्वपतिपत्तिम्यायः | N.S. 4.1.41).

If the means of proving the Sādhyā (probandum) be something different from it, no absolutistic limitation of number could be established. Because such a means would be something over and above the limited number, hence that limited number which is desired to be proved could not be proved. "As far example", says Uddyotakara, "if one holds that all things are one, and then gives a proof to establish it, he will not be able to prove that all things are one". Because, he regards the proof as different from his Sadhya and hence, instead of his proving one thing, he would establish two things.

And if there be no difference between the means of proof (Sādhana) and the Sādhyā, then also, the limitation of number could not be established, because there would be no real means of proving the Sādhyā. And in the absence of the means, nothing could be proved.
Vācaspāti explains that if the opponent does not recognise any other thing, he should clarify how one thing is perceived. Because nothing in the world could be apprehended by itself, without the help of another thing. Even cognition and lamp are not apprehended without the help of something other than the. The object of cognition is something different from the cognition itself. This will be explained later in connection with the refutation of Viṣṇunāvāda, says Vācaspāti. "It is not impossible", remarks he, "to perceive the difference between cognition and the object (of that cognition). That is to say, "when we say 'I perceive blue', blue, which cannot be referred to as 'I' and which is not of the form of white etc. is cognised by each person. Thus blue etc. are different from one another. Otherwise, he who is ordered: 'Bring a jar', would close his eyes and sleep; and he who is ordered to sleep, would bring water; because nothing could then be distinguished from anything else".

It is not proper to say that this apprehension of diversity (among the things of the world) is due to the indefinable, beginningless, Avidyā; because the Naiyāyikas have refuted Anirvacanīyakhyāti. Hence this notion of difference is established on the basis of the experience of all and cannot be set aside just by looking at the face of the cause.

1. तथा हि नीलाधरश् नरास्मदवैशालिकों निर्लं प्रत्यात्मक

अनुमत्तोऽर्थः सः नीलाधरीनामायि परस्तरस।

- NVT. 4. 1. 41.
Moreover, from the effect which is perceived clearly and is of the nature of cognition of difference, such a cause should be hypostatised as could justify the rise of the notion of the difference or diversity of things. And that is a means of perception. Because, while determining a thing as 'blue', he knows its difference from yellow, etc. due to the contact of the type of Samyuktaviśeṣaṇatā (being the Qualifier of that which is in Conjunction) (-pitābhāva, negation of yellow is the Viśeṣaṇa, of nīla, with which the eye is in conjunction). Experiencing 'blue' as 'blue' and experiencing or remembering 'yellow' as 'yellow', he can discern them as the thing to be denied and the substratum of denial just by their colour, though he might not have grasped their mutual difference from each other.

That "it does not appear as different", does not mean that "it appears as non-different". And so also it does not mean that blue and yellow, whose natures are cognised are not related as avadhi (that from which to differentiation is made) and avadhimat (that which is differentiated).

"Since difference is located in both of them, they cannot have a different means of proof." This is in that,

"तथा हि तन्नीलः परिच्छिन्नः वीतादि नाः समै
परिच्छिन्ति संयुक्तविशेषणसालक्षणविद्यायार्थिनिकार्थि ।

- NVTT. 4. 1. 41.
This is not that - such cognitions would not arise in respect of things if there were no difference in them. The difference between the cogniser and the cognition is also thereby explained.

The cognisers are also different and this can be inferred from the fact that they are known to enjoy their respective diverse pleasures and pains. Some are deaf, others blind or one-eyed and so, some are learned, others rogues, some live a mundane existence, others are emancipated. Hence one has to accept that they are different. Because one thing cannot possibly be connected with contrary characteristics at the same time.

Even if the abheda (non-difference) be somehow rendered possible by imagination, it would amount to the position of gomaya-pāyasiyanyāya [gomaya (cow dung) is pāyasiya (a milk-preparation), because it is gavya (derived from the cow)]]

Thus the said interpretation of the śrutis is not tenable as it is contradictory to perception, and so, the śrutis giving up the direct meaning, resort to lakṣaṇa, which is inferior when they say 'akamevādvitiyam' etc., just as they are known to do in "yajamānaḥ prastaraḥ" or "adityo vai yupaḥ".

As Jaimini says, they are eulogistic in character and convey a secondary meaning.

1. श्रवणज्ञानोऽवस्थानेन प्रवचनभाषान:। स्तच्चांतिवीद नायन्ययमिति मेवं किता न थः। सत्तेन प्रसावुप्तिः प्रवचन मेदो व्यास्यत:।
2. कर्मणयां कर्मचित्त संसारस्मान: बपि क्र्य गोमयपाक्ष्यायन्यायावहस्ति।
3. cf. Nyāt. 4. 1. 41.
The purvapaksin argue: "What has been urged is not proper as the means (of proving) is only a part (of that which is to be proved). (न, कारणाक्यवस्तुः। सूत्रा। Nyāya Sūtra. 4. 1. 42).

It is not proper to say that "the limitation of number cannot be proved. Because the means of proving the proposition is only a part of the subject matter of that proposition. That is to say, it need not be anything different. This is true of the tenets that there are only two things and so forth.

Viśvanātha explains similarly that as the means is regarded as a part of the subject of the proposition, it is not altogether a different thing, because we find no difference between the part and the whole.

The Siddhāntin refutes this by saying:

"The reason put forth is no reason at all, because, (according to the objector), things can have no parts. (निर्यवत्वात्। 4.1.43.)."

1. Uddyotakara adds by way of refutation: स्व तत्त्वत्व विविधतिम वातिन वातावस्तुः। सिद्धार्थ्य का भ्रमणिका। तस्मां न तत्त्वत्वविविधतिम (Problems) distinct from the sadhya (probandum). Nothing will not be proved without the means of proof.

- Ny. 4. 1. 42.

2. अक्ष्यान्त्विनविनासा। भेदानव।।

- Vṛttī on 4. 1. 42.
The reason which is put forth: "as the means of proving is only a part of what is to be proved" is not a valid reason. Since the opponent in the beginning asserts the oneness of all things without any exception, in the proposition "all things are one". There could not possibly be a part which dissected from it could serve as the proof. Uddyotakara explains that a thing which is to be proved, cannot itself be the means of proving it, a thing cannot operate on itself, the means cannot be the object.

The same is the case with the other views limiting the number of things to two, three etc. etc. If these extreme views in respect of the number of things are meant to deny the difference of things which is due to some peculiar attributes (like the difference between trunk of a trace and man due to the peculiarities of face, hollow, hands etc.) they must be rejected as theirs is a wrong doctrine, being contradictory to perception, inference and verbal testimony. And if they admit such a difference, by saying that things are classified under one head, due to their having common characteristics and as different due to their peculiarities, they give up their extreme obstinate view.

Uddyotakara explains that if they hold such a view that non-difference is due to common characteristics and difference
due to peculiar characteristics, even then, our view stands unrefuted. Similarity can be there only if things are different; so if one recognises similarity, he must recognise difference; or if he denies difference he must also deny similarity consequently; because no similarity is seen which is not co-existent with peculiarities.

As in the case of the section on God; here also we are intrigued to find a refutation of the dogmatic views that things are one; two; etc; when the Naiyāyikas themselves recognise sixteen padārthas. Moreover, there is no sūtra, which puts forth this pūrvapakṣa of Saṁkhyaikānta. On the contrary, it is Vātsyāyana who gives an exposition of what this pūrvapakṣa could be, before MS. 4.1.41 starts straightaway refuting it. And as Viśvanātha very frankly says, interpreted thus, this section could deal only with the refutation of Advaitavāda which holds that "all is one" in the true sense of the term; (and not meaning that all should be classified under the broad category of 'existents'), Viśvanātha does not approve of such an interpretation of the Śruti (ekam eva......; sad eva........), Uddyotakara also says that this should refer to the classifications of things under one head (− all being existent), or under two categories (existent non-existent) etc, and not to any such view that they are just one or two or three and so on. Otherwise
as Visvanātha says, the recognition of six or seven padārthas would not be possible. Thus in the view of Visvanātha, and also it seems in the view of Vācaspati, this ultimately comes to be meant to be a refutation of only Advaitavāda. In other cases, a reason establishing that things are classified under, two, three..... heads comes under one of these heads. As for example, there is no contradiction if a non-eternal means of inference establishes things as two-fold, eternal and non-eternal. And Vācaspati feels that this is quite in place here, because for the Advaitavādin, pretyabhāva etc. are imaginary, and it was but proper that the author of the Nyāya-sūtra should have refuted such extreme views after the exposition of pretyabhāva.

1. तस्यायत्त्वः निराकारणपर्वं एक प्रकारं समंज्ञत श्रद्धा संज्ञापत्:। व्यञ्जनः 4.1.43

2. कृताविषयं एकान्तेऽपि प्रत्येकमावयो न तत्त्वविक हेतुं
   बपि कृताविषयं प्रत्येकमावयो न केवलम् प्रत्येकमावयो नपि कृताविषयं
   बपि कार्यं प्रत्येकमावयो न परत्वविक हेतुं। तस्यादित्वेऽकार्यं यवत्वविकः तत्स्य प्रत्येकमावयं
   कृत्यप्रत्येकमावयं श्रद्धा तत्स्यमते परिचिता हेतुं। — NVTT, 4.1.43