CHAPTER-IV
EXTERNAL WORLD IN SUNYAVADA
“I salute him, the fully enlightened, the best of speakers, who preached the non-ceasing and the non-arising, the non-annihilation and the non-permanence, the non-identity and the non-difference, the non-appearance and the non-disappearance, the dependent arising, the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious”.

Madhyamikavrtti, p-11, Nagarjuna,
The systematic philosophy of Madhyamika was formulated by the great Buddhist scholar Acarya Nagarjuna. As a logical dialectician he was a historical personality. His dialectic is a great new contribution to the world philosophy. In fact, he discovers a new system of Philosophy applying the new method of logic which covers the whole body of Philosophy. Recent Archeological investigations record that Nagarjuna most probably lived during the last quarter of the first and first quarter of the second centuries C.E. He was born in a Brahmin family at a place in South India which is now it is in Andra Pradesh. According to European scholars, Nagarjuna lived about the middle of the second century A.D.

Prof. T.R.V. Murti distinguishes the three or four stages in the course of Madhyamika development. The first is the stage of systematic formulation by Nagarjuna and his immediate disciple Aryadeva. In the second stage, Madhyamika is divided into two schools—the prasangika and the svatantrika, represented by Buddha palita and Bhavaviveka respectively. In the third stage (early 7th Cent.) Candrakirti re-affirms the prasangika (reductio ad absurdum) as the norm of Madhyamika the regour and vitality of the system is in no small measure due to him. Santideva (691 – 743) though coming a generation or two later, may also be taken as falling within this period. These two account for the high level attained by the Madhyamika system. The fourth and the last stage is a syncretism of the Yogacara and the Madhyamika, the chief representative of which are Santaraksita and Kamalasila.
Nagarjuna came to Nalanda from the south and propagated the new Prajnaparamita teaching. Naga means that he was the founder of a new important phase in Buddhism. "The most important works authorised by Nagarjuna according to Buston are six—(1) Prajnamula (Mulamadhyamaka Karikas) which is the Madhyamika sastra, par excellence, (2) Sunyata Saptati (The unreality of things) (3) Yukti Sastika (4) Vigrahavyavartani, these books are the refutation of possible objections that may be raised against the negative method of Sunyata. (5) Vaidalya Sutra and Prakarana, the self-defense of Nagarjuna against the charge of perverting logic’ is to be had in Tibetan (6) The sixth work according to Buston is Vyavahara. Siddhi, showing that from the point of view of the absolute truth (non-substantiality) and from the empirical standpoint – worldly practice go along together.”

There is good evidence that Nagarjuna almost certainly wrote the Vaidalyasutra and Prakarana, the Vyavaharasiddhi, the SuhrLekha, the Ratnavali, the Catuhstara, the Pratityasamutpadahrdhayakarika and Sutrasamuccaya. In addition to these works, the Prajnadanda, the Mahayanavimsaka, the Upayahrdaya, the Mahaprajna-Paramitasasra and the Dasabhumivibhasasasra are said to have been written by Nagarjuna.

Aryadeva was the chief pupil and successor of Nagarjuna. He most probably lived at about the turning point of the second and third centuries A.D. He was born in the island of Sinhala and was a son of the king of the land Catuhsataka is the most celebrated work of Aryadeva. The original work is lost,
but it is preserved in Tibetan and again reconstructed into Sanskrit. "The Satasastra is in all probability the work of Aryadeva. It is lost in the original, but is preserved in Chinese and also in Tibetan. It is also believed that the Hastavalapararana' and cittavisuddhi are the work of Aryadeva. The correct Madhyamika standpoint is upheld by Aryadeva and the work ends with a verse characteristic of the Dialectic." Thus, Nagarjuna and Aryadeva are the founders of the Madhyamika system. It seems that Nagarjuna was first concerned to establish the Madhyamaka as the ultimate essence of Buddhist philosophy. Aryadeva demonstrated that the philosophical method of the Madhyamaka could be systematically and successfully applied to the doctrines of the heterodox schools.

Buddhapalita and Bhavaviveka initiated a new phase in the development of the Madhyamika system. Therefore, Madhyamika systems were divided into the Prasangika and Svatantrika schools. Buddhapalita was the founder of Prasangika school. "He takes the essence of the Madhyamika method to consist in the use of reductio ad absurdum arguments alone." The Mulamadhyamakavrtti is only the work of Buddhapalita. The original work is lost but it is preserved in Tibetan translation.

Bhavaviveka is the founder of the Svatantra (svatantrika) Madhyamika school. He was a younger contemporary of Buddhapalita. Karatalartna was the work of Bhavavivetka. He attempts to establish the basic Madhyamika standpoint by syllogistic arguments. The form of his syllogistic
arguments is that the conditioned things are unreal from the point of ultimate
truth, because they are produced through cause and conditions like things created
by magic. The unconditional such as space, Nirvana etc, are non-existent from
the standpoint of ultimate truth, because they are non-originating like the sky-
lotus. He points out that he does not mean to deny the empirical reality of things,
but only their ultimate reality.

Chandrakirti and Santideva are the foremost exponents of the
Prasangika Madhyamika school. “It is Chandrakirti and Santideva that give to
the Madhyamika system its rigorous, orthodox form.”⁴ According to Buston and
Taranatha, Chandrakirti was born in the south in Samanata. “He entered the
order and studied the holy text from Kamalabuddhi – the disciple of
Buddhapalita and Bhavya.”⁵ The well known works of Chandrakirti are-
“The Mulamadhyamaka karika of Nagarjuna and the Madhyamakavatara an
independent work on the Madhyamika system.”⁶ He also wrote an
autocommentary on the Madhyamakavatara as well as commentaries on the
Yuktisastika and Sunyatasaptati of Nagarjuna and on the Catuhsataka of
Aryadeva. “Stcherbatsky describes him as a mighty champion of the purely
negative method of establishing monism.”⁷ Chandrakirti is the chief exponent of
the Prasangika school. Chandrakirti criticized Bhavaviveka method of argument
on Madhyamika and accepted the method of argument suggested by
Buddhapalita in his approach to the Madhyamika Philosophy. Another great
exponent of the Prasangika school was the Santideva. His works are equally
important in Madhyamika Philosophy. He composed two important works viz, the Sutrasamuccaya and the Siksaṃuccaya.

Relativity is the essence and Sunyata is the reality of the world. The world is constituted by the relations of things. It is the totality relations of things. But the relativity of the world cannot be established or it is unintelligible. Therefore, the world is Sunyata. The aim of Madhyamika philosophy is to establish the Sunyata through the relativity of things of the world.

Madhyamika is a philosophy of philosophies because it is the view of all views. The system of Madhyamika philosophy is the criticism and negativism in the method of dialectic. It is the philosophy of dialectic as criticism. “The consciousness of the total conflict in reason and the attempt to resolve it by rising to a plane than reason is dialectic.” In the system of criticism, Madhyamika does not have its own theory. It is the criticism of other’s theories. In fact, it does not have its own view. It is the view of others views. Criticism is itself a philosophy without its own theory. “Criticism of theories is no theory. Criticism is but the awareness of what a theory is, how it is made up, it is not the proposing of new theory.” It is not the philosophy of ‘is’ or ‘is not’ neither both nor non-both. “Reality cannot be expressed in terms of ‘is’ ‘is not’ dichotomizing mind.” Neither it asserts the real existence of the external world nor does it deny that the world is non-existence, neither both nor non-both. It takes middle path and it is absolute. Therefore, the dialectical aim of Madhyamika philosophy is not to establish a thesis but to expose the
contradiction implied in opponent arguments. It is purely an analytic in nature until there is no position left to be proved. Thus, Madhyamika is a philosophy of middle path in the method of dialectic. "The middle path is the avoidance of both the dogmatism of realism (the reality of objects) and the skepticism of nihilism (the rejection of objects and consciousness both as unreal)." 11

According to the absolutism, the entire world is the manifestation of the absolute reality. Reality exists independently. It is unconditional. Madhyamika denies this view and points out that whatever exists, it is relative, conditional and devoid of individual reality. *Conditions are the essence of origination, existence and destruction of the world.* Therefore, there is no existence of individual independent reality of the world. The world is relative and its reality is Sunyata which is neither existence nor non-existence neither both nor non-both.

Madhyamika asserts that the reality of the world cannot be realized fully unless one realises the interdependent nature the world. All things are empty in this sense that things are devoid of definite nature, character and function. The world is itself related and relativity of things constitutes the world. According to Prajnaparamita Sutra, *all phenomena are devoid of self existence (nihsvabhaval) are empty* (Sunyata). Therefore, the inexpressible and unintelligible nature of relativity of the world is Sunyata. It is the inner essence and heart of the Madhyamika philosophy. To say that all things are empty is to suggest that concepts or categories through which one constructs the experiences
are unintelligible. So, the reality of things cannot be explained by the interplay of concepts, such as being and non-being, or existence and non-existence. Nagarjuna said in Mulamadhyamakakarika “We declare that whatever is interdependently originated is empty (sunyata). It is a conceptual designation of the relativity of existence and is indeed the middle path.”

Thus, Sunyata is middle path between the existence and non-existence of the world. Originally there is nothing to affirm and there is no new anything to negate. “Sunyata is the pivotal conception on which the entire Buddhist thought turned.” The way of Sunyata is the way of nirvana and involves mental, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Religiously, emptiness connotes nirvana, a total freedom or liberation from ignorance, evil and suffering in the world. Psychologically, emptiness is non-attachment. Epistemologically, emptiness is prajna, i.e unattached insight that no truth is absolute. The so called ultimate truth and worldly truth are relative to each other. Such wisdom is a positive force in illumination of extremes and ignorance so that one may be enlightened. Metaphysically, emptiness means that all things are devoid of nature character and function.

This is really a new revolution in Indian Philosophy. In Indian Philosophy Madhyamika made a Copernicas revolution similar to that of Kant in modern European philosophy. Madhyamika revolution is the criticism of atma and anatma tradition in the method of dialectic and Kant’s revolution is the criticism of empiricism and rationalism in knowledge. Dialectic, a real art of
philosophy is born in Madhyamika philosophy. "Dialectic is a self-conscious spiritual moment; it is necessarily a critique of reason."\textsuperscript{14}

It is observed that the entire Madhyamika system is the reinterpretation of pratityasamutpada theory. The Lord Buddha announces some inexpressible or unsoluble problems to his followers. His silence is the major point and issue of the middle path of Madhyamika philosophy. "The wonderer vacchagotta asked the Buddha, why he did not answer the fourteen questions? The lord said, to hold that the world is eternal or to hold that it is not, or to agree to any other of the proposition you adduce Vaccha is the jungle of theorizing, the wilderness of theorizing, the tangle of theorizing, the bondage and the shackles of theorizing, attended by ill, distress, perturbation and fever; it conduces not to detachment, passionlessness, tranquillity, peace to knowledge and a wisdom of Nirvana."\textsuperscript{15} His refusal to answer to the follower’s questions about the world is the direct awareness of the conflict in reason. The fourteen inexpressible or avyayartake of the Buddha are (1) whether the world is (a) eternal (b) or not (c) or both (d) or neither (2) whether the world is – (a) finite (b) infinite (c) or both (d) or neither (3) whether the Tathagata (a) Exist after death (b) or not (c) or both or (d) neither(4) (a) whether the soul is identical with the body (b) or different from the body.

Madhyamika claims that Buddha’s ‘silence’ opens the mark of dialectic; way of middle path and it is the direct teaching of Sunyata "The lord said, “the world is used to rely upon duality ‘it is’ and ‘it is not’ but for one who
sees in accord with the truth and wisdom, how phenomena arise and perish, for him there is no ‘is’ or ‘is not’. “That everything exists is katayana, one alternative that it does not, is another alternative. Not accepting either of the alternatives, the Tathagata proclaims the truth from the middle position.” The structure of the presentation of fourteen inexpressible is dialectic Therefore, Madhyamika claims the initial state of dialectic is the direct teaching of the Buddha himself.

Buddha teaches that the world is a process of dependent origination and it is impermanent. This major theme of early Buddhist philosophy has been differently analyzed and developed by the different schools of Buddhist philosophy. The realistic and pluralistic Sarvastivada philosophy analyse this theme through the elements of mind and the elements of matter. According to them, elements are momentary but ultimate. Nagarjuna claims that there is no notion of elements in the teaching of the Buddha. In *prajnaparamitahrdayasutra*, he writes that in emptiness neither the aggregates (skandhas) sense-sphere (ayatanas) nor elements (dhatus) exist. Indeed, Nagarjuna rejects the reality of aggregation of the elements. Therefore, he denies the dharma theory of Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools. “The verse summary of the Astasahasrika status, all elements (Dharmas) are not really there, their essential original nature is empty. The text further states that the Bodhisattiva comprehends all elements as empty, signless, unimpeded and without any duality.” Therefore, what they call elements all these entities are essentially empty. The prajnaparamita literature rejects the three principles of abhidharma
literature, viz, suffering, impermanent and not self. "It is stated in the Versesummary that impermanence and permanence, suffering and happiness, the self and not self, the pure and impure, are of just one suchness (tathata) in emptiness."

Nagarjuna points out in his karika that the Buddha has rejected both 'is' and 'is not' view of all views. Therefore, he declares that dependent origination and emptiness or Sunyata- these two are the same and identical. This philosophical equation includes three terms viz, interdependent origination, insubstantility and emptiness. Phenomena are interdependently originated (pratityasamutpāna). They are therefore devoid of independent existence (nihsvabhava) which equals their emptiness (sunyata). This three are the basic teachings of Madhyamika philosophy and the status of the external world.

Thus, relativity is the basic concept and Sunyata is the reality of the Madhyamika philosophy. The world is devoid of independent existence and so the world is relative. Relativity is the essence of all things. But the relativity of things cannot be understood or it is unintelligible, because all relations are contingent. Therefore the world is Sunyata. The world is devoid of any substantality or any permanent reality. It is relative each and every moment. Thus, relativity constitutes the world. 'The world is real' is not true and 'the world is not real' is also not true, neither both nor non-both. In experience the world appears as real, unconditional, and independent but in ultimate truth the world is conditional, relative and devoid of any permanent reality. Thus, the
phenomenal world is unreal; it is unreal only from the point of the ultimate truth. “The universe of relative or subjective illusion is superseded by unconditioned reality. When the obscuration of ignorance and emotions are removed the actual state of reality as unconditioned and inexpressible reveals itself.”

The world is Sunyata. Sunyata cannot be conceptualized in thought. It is the inner essence of external world. Sunyata is the essence of all things. It is non-dual and free from all empirical predicates and relations. It is devoid of every kinds of determination. The real is defined in Madhyamika as transcendent to thought as relational, non-determinate- quiescent, non-discursive non-dual. “The world is not conglomeration of things. It is simply a process and things are simply events. A thing by itself is nothing, at all. This is what is meant by the Sunyata or emptiness of all dharmas.” The world is Sunyata and it is the final philosophy of Madhyamika. Everything contain in the so called external world is devoid of individual reality. Therefore, the world is an appearance. It is true only relatively. But this relativety cannot be conceptualized in thought as ‘it is’ or ‘it is not’. According to Madhyamika, no truth is absolute. Every truth is made from a particular standpoint. Its truth value is not purely objective. In the strict sense, all truths are conventional. They are human projections.

Ultimately, to realize this empty nature of truth is prajna. True wisdom is knowing nothing substantial. In a strict sense, it has no knowing or knowledge. Prajna is an insight that acts of knowing, the knower and the object
to be known. The distinction between the subject and the object, truth and falsity are all empty. This is wisdom without attachment.

Thus, it is found that from the epistemological point of view the knowledge which occurs through our sense organs is not real knowledge of the world. Our experience gives us only an unconditioned world, because it appears as real to us. But the world is relative and its reality is conditional. *All things of the world are dependent, relative and devoid of any absolute reality.* Everything originates and exists depending on some other thing. Thus, from point of view of the ultimate truth the world is an illusion. According to Madhyamika, all our mental categories like causality; substance, name etc are the construction of our imagination. They do not denote any objective reality of things. The world devoid of objective reality is unreal. Nagarjuna says that the wheel of existence originates from the propensity for erroneous imagination. “Nagarjuna states that emotional obscuration of attachment; aversion and delusion originate from imagination (vikalpa).”

Thus, for Nagarjuna intellectual functions are responsible for the sustenance of the phenomenal universe.

Like Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti also says that the concepts like knowledge and the object of knowledge, the verbal expression and object expressed, the agent and action are the construction of imagination. “The notion of profit, loss, happiness notoriety praise-blame-all these are the construction of our imagination. These notions originate from thought constructions which are beginningless.”
According to Madhyamika, neither the world can be established as existent or real nor as non-existent or un-real, neither both nor non-both. It is cannot be said that A certainly relates with B. It is also not true that the existence of B certainly depends on A. Therefore; relations of particular things are not true, because they are not identical. Even we see the same waive, but actually first moment of waive and second moment of waive are not identical. Similarly, relations of things are not same and identical. All relations are not absolute but the relativity constitutes the world. In this sense, the world is Sunyata. It is neither existence nor non-existence. In every way Madhyamika takes the middle path between these two. The meaning of middle path is relativity and reality of relativity is Sunyata.

According to Madhyamika, phenomena originate from a combination of conditions. They do not come into existence of themselves, nor do they appear unless the appropriate conditions are present. Therefore, the existence of phenomena is conditional and relative. This quality of existing dependent upon and relative to other factors is termed the emptiness of phenomena.

Thus, according to Madhyamika all phenomena are empty (Sunya). Emptiness annihilates the alternatives constructed by imagination like existence and non-existence. It transcends thought and expression and is declared to be the actual nature of all phenomena. This is the ultimate truth for Madhyamika. Candrakirti declares that ultimate reality does not correspond to thought or
expression. Thus, for Madhyamika all phenomena are ultimately relative, devoid of independent existence and empty. The ultimate existence cannot be attributed to phenomena, because existence is ultimately impossible. It has no conceptual reality of its own, but is relative to the notion of non-existence. Therefore, the concept of existence is devoid of independent reality and it is ultimately unreal. Thus, the world is devoid of independent reality and ultimately the world is unreal.

According to the Madhyamika, the central mistake made by Buddhist and non-Buddhist metaphysicians is that they fail to see the real nature of the world and falsely assert the reality or existence of things. According to the Salistamba Sutra “There is no elements which migrates from this world to the other, but there is recognition of the fruition of the karma, as there is continuity of causes and conditions. It is not as it were that one dropping out from this world is born into another but there is continuity of causes and conditions.”

Madhyamika points out that pratityasamutpada or dependent origination means the causality of the world. But the relation between cause and effect cannot be established. Neither there the beginning of this causality can be established nor there can be established any end of this causality. Therefore, the world is Sunyata. Nagarjuna asked “If you negate the doctrine of Sunyata, you negate causation.” If the existence of a thing is absolutely real, it would then be self-existent and independent of causes and conditions. But all things are dependent on causes and conditions. So, a thing cannot be self-existent and
absolutely real. On the other hand, if the things are non-existent and absolutely nothing, it would be motionless and its phenomena would not arise. But we see that there is some regularity in the causation of specific things from some fixed conditions. So, they can not be absolutely unreal. Thus, the Madhyamika emptiness is not identified with either absolutism or nihilism.

Nagarjuna elaborates the doctrine of equivalence of the interdependent origination and emptiness in the *vigrahavyavartani* and in the *Sunyatasaptati*. The aim of Madhyamika philosophy is the rejection of the ultimate existence of all elements in order to establish the ultimate emptiness of all entities in the process of dialectical analyses. Nagarjuna writes in *Mulamadhyamikakarika* that, “No element can exist which does not participate in interdependence. Therefore, no elements which are not of the nature of emptiness can exist.”

In emptiness there is no origination, no extinction; no permanence; no identity no difference; no arrival, no departure. Buddha said that to believe something to be real is illusion, Rupa, Vedanta etc, are illusions, mere bubbles etc. In *the Majjhima Nikaya* it is stated, “Depending on the oil and the wick does not light of the lamp burn; it is neither in the one nor in the other, nor anything itself phenomena are like wise, nothing in themselves. All things are unreal; they are deceptions, Nibbana is the only truth.”

To say that either being or non-being is the reality of the universe and has priority over the other, is an extreme view. Reality is beyond being and non-being. What is real must have it own essential nature, and cannot be dependent upon other things or come form causal conditions. But to claim that anything is ultimately real would contradict
the fact that all phenomena are bound by the relation of cause and effect, unity
and diversity, and duration and destruction. For the Madhyamika, the perceived
object, the perceiving subject, and knowledge are mutually interdependent. What
we know through experience is conditional. So, it cannot be ultimately real.

Alternatively, which is unreal can never come into existence. If it
exists, it must have certain characteristics through which we know its existence.
But whatever is unreal has no characteristics. So, it is absurd to say that
something is unreal. Therefore, being as something unreal cannot be established.
Thus, being can not be defined or described as real or unreal. Hence, it is
unintelligible to use being to explain the true nature of the universe. The denial
of being does not mean that non-being can be used to explain and describe the
true nature of the universe. To say that non-being is the reality of the universe is
same as asyimg that which has no characteristics- this is contradictory. So, the
reality of non-being is equally unintelligible.

There are four alternatives in Madhyamika dialectic. These four
alternatives form the basis of catuskoti of Nagarjun’s dialectic. In each there is a
positive thesis and, that is opposed by a negative counter thesis. These two are
the basic alternatives (c) They are conjunctively affirmed to form the third
alternative and disjunctively denied to form the fourth. “In the composition of
the alternative, there is a positive thesis which is opposed by a negative counter
thesis; these two basic alternatives are conjunctively affirmed to form the third
alternative, and disjunctively denied to form the fourth.”27 The opposition of
negative thesis by the positive thesis does not mean to set up own thesis. Madhyamika does not have its own thesis but in every problem Madhyamika equilly contests by the negative nature of the same problem. “In rejecting one thesis the Madhyamika does not accept its counter thesis. He does not set up one opponent another. Every thesis is self convicted and not counter balanced by antithesis.”

The real fact of Nagarjuna dialectic is that he negates both positive and negative alternatives. He negates the being and non-being, ‘is’ and ‘is not’ two times in one and the same dialectic. Ultimately, Nagarjuna negates the world. Sunyata is an action of negation. It is a re-affirmation of the infinite an inexpressibly positive character of the real. The world is appearance. It is not true in itself. The world is devoid of absolute reality and its absoluteness is Sunyata. The absolute is not a mater of empirical observation. The world of experience does not reveal the absolute anywhere within its limits.

According to Nagarjuna, origination of things of the world cannot be established. “No existence whatsoever are evident anywhere that are arisen from themselves, from another, form both, or form a non-cause.” Thus, the origination of all entities is ultimately not possible. According to Nagarjuna, conditions (Pratyana) do not in fact pertain to either existence or non-existence. If to existence what purpose do they serve, if to non-existence, whose purpose do they serve? Condition cannot truly be said to pertain to an existence effect. Since the effect already exists, the conditions are superfluous. On the other hand, in the
absence of an effect conditions are obtained. Alternatively, if conditions pertain to a non-existence effect then the cause will be disassociated from the effect. Thus, conditions are unintelligible and vacuous apart from an effect. Since the conditions are unintelligible, the world constitutes of conditions is also unintelligible. Therefore, the world is Sunya. “A condition of an effect that is either non existent or existent is not proper; of what non-existent (effect) is a condition? Of what use is a condition of the existent (effect).”

Since the “conditions are unintelligible, the existence and origination of things are also unintelligible. Things are devoid of self-existence. Therefore, Nagarjuna writes “existence arises neither from itself nor from another; it does not arise from both’ how then does it arise?” Nagarjuna analyses the notion of the origination through the dialectic of categories of existence and non-existence. He writes that existence does not originate, since it is existent. Non-existent does not originate since it is non-existent. Both existence and non-existent also do not originate since these properties are dissimilar. Therefore, he points out that the notion of origination ultimately cannot be established. Therefore, it is Sunyata.

Identity and difference of things cannot be established. “Whatever is dependent, i.e. relative is neither identical with nor different from, the related object. Hence it is neither eternal nor annihilated.” This position indicates the impossible nature of relative entities, which are not intelligible either in terms of co-presence or disassociation. The same reason is also found in sunyatasaptati
“Neither that which originates dependently nor that upon which it depends are existent.”\textsuperscript{33} Thus, cause and effect are entities which exist dependent upon and relative to each other. Hence, they are unintelligible either in terms of co-presence or disassociation.

The relation between act and agent cannot be established. Agent can not be understood in absence of act and act cannot be understood in absence of agent. Neither the act and agent are identical nor are they different from each other. The relation between act and agent can not be established. Therefore, their relation is Sunyata. “An agent who is both existent and non-existent does not perform an action that is both existent and non-existent, for they are self-contradictory. Where can existent and non-existent co-exist?”\textsuperscript{34} If the definitions (Laksana) were different from the definiendum (Laksaya) the later would be bereft of any distinguishing mark and if both were identical then there would be the absence of both as such.”\textsuperscript{35} Similarly, there is no whole apart from the part and there is no part apart from the whole. The relation between whole and part can not be established. Therefore, the relation is Sunya. Relativity or mutual dependence is a mark of unreal. No phenomena, no object of knowledge escapes this universal relativity.

The relation between perceiver and perceived object, subject and object cannot be established. The perceiver cannot perceive all sides of objects at the same time. Secondly, the perceiver cannot claim that he perceives the same object in the next moment of his perception. Objects are neither the same nor are
different in different moments of perception. Therefore, neither the perceiver perceives nor does he not perceive the existence of external world, neither both, nor non-both. If there is no subject then there is no object. Again, if there is no object, then there is no subject. The relation between perceiver and perceived object, subject and object cannot be established. Therefore, their relation is Sunyata. Since relations are Sunyata. The world is Sunyata.

The existence and relation between substance and quality can not be established. The notion of substance can be understood in terms of the qualities. Qualities do not exist apart from the substance. One can be understood in terms of the other. We do not know the real nature of substance. All relations are transient and unreal. Substance and qualities are relative to each other. Therefore, they are unreal.

The relation between self and upadana (states) cannot be established. "There is no self apart from the states (upadana) nor is the later without the self that gives unity to them nor are they anything together."36 Buddha said that what we call self or soul is the aggregation of pancha skandhas. Nagarjuna points out in his karika that the relation between self and aggregates (Skandhas) cannot be establish. "If the self were to be identical with the aggregates, it will partake of uprising and ceasing. If it were to be different from the aggregates it would have the characteristics of the non-aggregates."37 Therefore, the existence of self cannot be established. The relation between fire and fuel (agnindhana) is examined by Nagarjuna to illustrate this predicament.
Fire is not fuel nor is fire different from fuel. One cannot exist without the other
i.e. one has to understood in terms of the other. “All entities, like the self and its
modes (atmo padanayahkramah) as well as particular empirical things such as
tables and chair are completely covered by this analysis.”38 Secondly, the soul is
neither prior nor posterior to the act, neither both nor non-both. There is no soul
prior to acting, feeling and thanking. Nagarjuna says in Madhyamikakarika (ch-
ix) “Some say that the entity (soul) whose act it is to see hear and feel, existed
prior to the acts. But how can we know that it existed prior to the acts”? - If soul
could exist prior to and therefore to the acts of seeing, cannot seeing take place
independent of soul.” 39

The soul and the acts of seeing presuppose each other. That soul
cannot be known until the acts of seeing etc, take place. So, it does not exist
prior to these acts. Nor does it become existent posterior to them. For if the acts
of seeing etc, could take place independently of the soul, what is the use of
bringing in the later. The relation between soul and acts of seeing is neither
identical nor different, neither both nor non-both. Therefore, the reality of their
relation is Sunyata.

The characteristics (laksana) cannot exist apart from the
characterized things (laksa). The characterized thing cannot exist apart from the
characteristics. They are relative to each other. Therefore, they are not real.
Similarly, the relation and existent between production and destruction cannot be
established. If there is no production; there can be no destructions. There is no
death without birth. Again there is no destruction without production. One is possible in terms of another. But their relation cannot be established or intelligible. "There is neither destruction nor production, neither transitoriness nor eternality neither unity nor plurality, neither coming nor going. The world is devoid of origination and destruction. Production, existence and destruction are only apparent or phenomenal."\textsuperscript{40}

The relation between cause and effect is unintelligible. Therefore, their relation cannot be established. There are four possible views of causality -

(i) An effect is already real in a cause (2) An effect is at the outset unreal in a cause (3) An effect is both real and unreal in a cause (4) An effect is neither real nor unreal in a cause. "If an effect is already real in a cause, there can be no production. If at the outset unreal in a cause, there can be no production either. If both real and unreal, there can be no productions, how can there be productions."\textsuperscript{41}

According to Samkhya philosophy, the effect pre-exists in the cause before its production. If the effect does not pre-exist in cause, the cause never produces its effect. Therefore, cause and effect are identical. This is known as the Satkaryavada of Samkhya philosophy. But according to Buddhist, the effect does not pre-exist in its cause before its production. If the effect already exists in its cause before its production, there is nothing to say that the effect is produced. This is known Asatkaryavada of Buddhist philosophy. Madhyamika takes middle path between the sat and asat. Neither the effect pre-exists in its
cause nor the effect non-exists in the cause. If an effect is already real in a cause and becomes again a product, there arises an infinite regress. Again if an effect does not pre-exist in its cause the characteristic of cause can not be established. Therefore, neither the relation between cause and effect is identical nor are they separate from each other. In fact, the relation between cause and condition is unintelligible. Nagarjuna Says, “Neither of those of things is established which cannot be conceived either as identical or different from each other.”

If it is accepted that the entity is potential in the beginning and it becomes an actual then there will be a difference between the cause and effect. If cause is fully actual then there is no purpose in its reproducing itself. If the cause were partly actual and partly potential the thing would not be one, it would then be containing two opposed natures. If the cause were wholly potential then it cannot manifest itself. If the cause and effect were identical how is one to function as cause and the other as effect? On the other hand, if cause and effect were identical then cause and effect would be two names of same thing. Again if cause and effect are identical, then the effect would be repetition of cause after its production. Therefore, cause and effect are not identical. Nagarjuna says, “The identity of cause and effect (act and the result) is utterly untenable, if so there would be no difference between the doer and the thing done.” Neither the cause is potential nor non-potential, neither both nor non-both because the real cause cannot be established in the series of casual relations. If it is supposed that any one cause is real and final cause in the series of casual relations, there will be an infinite regress, because the cause is not the cause of itself. The same
effect becomes a cause in the next moment. A cause depends on the other cause and condition. Suppose in the series of causation A is the cause of B, B is C, C is D— even here we begin from A, but A is not final cause. It again depends on other cause for existence. External objects are cause by them self, products the effect and become a cause depend on other conditions and again condition of some other thing at the same time. “Nagarjuna shows that the whole world of experience is an appearance a mere network of unintelligible relation.”

In the complex relations of the world, the final cause of the object cannot be established. The relation between cause and effect is Sunyata. Since the relation is empty all created and non-created things are empty. Therefore, the world is empty. Through the relation between cause and condition Nagarjuna points out that the production of particular things is impossible because the existence of cause and effects cannot be established independently. A cause is neither earlier then the effect, nor later than the effect and it is not as an effect at the same time. “Earlier than, later than, and simultaneous with such events are impossible.” A cause cannot be determined either earlier or later of the effect. Secondly, a cause cannot be determined whether it is a cause or an event. Because which is now effect, it will become cause in the next moment or which was effect it is now become a cause. Thirdly, a final cause of the production cannot be established. If we suppose that some one is final cause, there will be an infinite regress, because that cause originates depending on some other cause. Therefore in the series of casual relation the production of particular things cannot be established. The reality of production is sunyata. In the seventh
chapter of Mulamadhyamika karika Nagarjuna criticizes the notion of origination and explain that the notion of origination is not justified whether it be relative to existence, or to non-existence. Again, origination cannot be relative to both existence and non-existence, for as was shown above two mutually contradictory predicates cannot be asserted to of identical entity.

External objects are nothing in themself. Objects do not arise and themself. Therefore, the world does not exist itself. There is no existence of individual reality reality outside the object or inside the object. There is neither being nor non-being. "There can not be being without non-being nor can there be being without non-being. If there can be being without non-being, then being should always be non-being." Being and non-being are contradictory to each other in nature. Therefore, being and non-being are empty.

It is believed that everything possesses a nature of itself. But Madhyamika view shows that such a self-nature does not really exist. "Things are produced from various conditions and hence have no self-nature. If they have no self-nature how can there be such things?" Conditions producing various things are of two kinds -- (1) External condition and (2) Internal condition. External conditions are for example clay, revolving wheel, string and a craftsman all of which together produce a jar. The internal conditions are for example ignorance, action, consciousness, name-form, the six sense faculties, touch, feeling, desire, clinging, formation of being, birth and old age, death, each has a cause first and then is produced. Thus, both internal and external things are
produced by various conditions. Since they are produced by various conditions, they have no self-nature. If a thing has no self-nature, it cannot have other nature, nor both self nature and other nature. Because the so called other nature has in fact no self-nature. If it is supposed that something exists because of other nature then a cow exists because of horse nature, a horse exists because of cow nature, but all these are impossible. “All conditions are empty, since conditions are empty; things produced by conditions are also empty. Thus, all created things are empty.”

Knowledge is inexplicable. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the skin, and the manas are the sense organs. Colour, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought are the objects of these sense organs. They exist in relation to each other. Colour cannot exist apart from the eye. The sense organs cannot apprehend their objects. The eye cannot see itself and therefore cannot see another object. It is said that the eye can see another object though it cannot see itself. This is a false analogy. “The act of seeing unreal that which has already been seen (drsta) is not being seen. That which has not yet been seen (a drsta) is not being seen. The object of seeing must be either what has already been seen or what has yet to be seen. The object already seen is non-existent now. The object not yet seen also is non-existent at present; therefore the object of seeing is non-existent.” In the absence of the object the act of seeing is non-existent. Knowledge is impossible the knower and the known are non-existent. Knowledge depends upon the knower and the Known. If the knower and the
known are non-existent, knowledge also is non-existent. Knowledge is relative and phenomenal. It is not absolutely real.

If God is self-existent, he should need nothing. If he needs something, he should not be called self-existent. If he does not need anything, why did he change, like a small boy who plays a game to make all creatures? Again if God creates all living being who created him? That God created himself cannot be true, for nothing can create itself. If he were created by another creator, he would not be self existent."51 Again, if God was the creator of all creatures, where did he create them? Was the place created by him? Was it created by another, if it was created by God then where did he create? Thus, there would be an infinite regress. If that were created by another, there would then be two Gods but this cannot be true. Therefore, all things in the universe are not made by God.

Time is unintelligible. The past, the present, and the future are relative to each other. They are not self-existent. They exist in relation to each other. "The past is that nature of an object which was produced, and has been destroyed. The present is that nature of object, which has been produced but not destroyed. The future is that nature of object which has not yet come in to being."52 If things do not exist in the past, present and future, the present, the past and the future are unreal without relation to one another. They are relative and mutually dependence. Therefore, these are mere appearances or phenomena.
Time exists only in relation to things. It cannot exist apart from them. Things are unreal. Therefore time is unreal.

The dialectical aim of Madhyamika is to establish the relativity of the world. The different arguments presented by Nagarjuna shows that the nature of the world is interdependent. It is the network of different relations. The existence or non-existence of god, substance, origination, destruction, time etc can not be established independently. All these can be established and understood in terms of the other. "Nagarjuna says objects or concepts are without own beings because they are interdependent." Madhyamika takes middle path between existence and non-existence, being and non-being, origination and destruction, mind and matter, substance and attribute etc, every possibilities of the world through the dialectic, characterize the relativity by the interrelation nature of the world. Through the middle path of all entities of the world, Madhyamika concludes that the nature of middle path of all entities is Sunyata. Therefore, the reality of the world is Sunyata.

The concept of Sunyata has been differently analysed by the Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers. Yogacara criticizes the concept of Sunyata as total nihilism, because it means nothingness or void. If the world is Sunyata then there is no world. If there is no world there is no Sunyata or Asunyata. But this is not true. The world is the manifestation of consciousness. Therefore, the nature of consciousness is not Sunyata. The term nihilism means the doctrine that nothing or nothing of a specified and every general class exists or is
knowledge or is valuable. According to Oxford english dictionary volume 2, “nihilism involves the denial of all existence. In this sense nihilism means pure negativism or ucchedavada- nothing exists here and here after. With this connotation the word nihilism can never be acceptable to Nagarjuna. According to Nagarjuna “Pratityasamutpada is Sunyata, pratityasamutpada is a midway between the two extremes of negativism (uccheda) and eternalism (sasavada). “Nagarjuna denied negativism and eternalism equally. Sunyata is Sunyata. It is neither eternalism nor nihilism.”

Thinker’s who have taken Sunyata either nothingness or nihilism or negativism or void or null class or zeroism, they have not understood the term Sunyata appropriately as Nagarjunna meant the term Sunyata in his philosophy.

Sunyata is not negativism. It does not simply negate all affirmation about reality. It also negates all negations about the reality. Reality is neither sat (existence) nor asat (non-existence). “It only asserts that the absolute is inaccessible to thought, it does not say that the absolute is a non-entity. It only maintains that the absolute is realized in non-dual, transcendental wisdom.”

The Madhyamika negates all views about reality. It does not negate reality itself. It cannot, therefore be called nihilism. According to T.R.V. Murti “no-doctrine about reality does not mean ‘no reality’ doctrine.” Sunyata is negative only for thought, but in itself it is the non-relational knowledge of the absolute. It may even be taken as more universal and positive than affirmation.”

Candrakirti says, “Madhyamika only points to the relativity of things, and that his doctrine transcend both affirmation and negation.” Sunyata is not nihilism but only
relativity and conditionless. It is not a rejection of the world of becoming but an explication of its inner implication that the unconditioned is the ultimate truth of the conditioned.

Some other thinkers claim that the term ‘Sunyata’ meant the Absolute. Indian Vedantic thinkers and western some non-Buddhist thinkers assimilate the term ‘Sunyata’ with the term ‘Absolutes. For, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan “Nagarjuna absolute seems to be immobile in its absoluteness.” He points out that in fact the Madhyamuka does not deny the real he only denies doctrines about the real. Dr. Murti believes that prajnaparamita is absolute.

Madhyamika claims that Buddhist and other non-Buddhist thinker wrongly interpret the concept of Sunyata. Sunyata means not void or devoid. It simply means the non-acceptance of independent reality or any entity in the world. One of the Buddhist thinker Lama chimpa writes in his essay ‘the basic theory of Sunyata, “the term Sunyata cannot be used for the Madhyamika philosophy. As none of the Madhyamika school teacher’s has ever said that everything is Sunyata but they have said that there is Sunyata of everything i.e., a thing is non-substantial by its nature, as a thing has a tendency of being illusive as nothing remains permanent.” When we realize that the external world is neither real nor unreal, neither both nor non-both, we have a glimpse of Sunyata. Sunyata is the denial of Svabhava (nature) of all mundane existence. The world does not have its. The worldly objects are like castles in the air, magical elephants or objects of dream only the ignorant or persons of weak
understanding take them to be real. According to Nagarjuna, the denial of self-nature of all existence does not mean that Sunyata is something like positive existence. If there had been something like Asunyata or external existence, there would have been Sunyata as well. It means Sunyata does not have any existence of its own. Ultimately Madhyamika uses term ‘Sunyata’ in the negative sense. “Sunyata is the negation of all philosophical standpoints or Dristis. It cannot itself be taken as stand points or Dristis.” According to Nagarjuna, if any body takes Sunyata as a standpoint, he suffers from an incurable or asadhya disease. Chandrakirti explicitly says “if Sunyata is taken by any one as any thing positive or Bhavarupa, he is completely destroyed.”

Now a question arises if the world is Sunyata then is Sunyata itself a reality of the world? There is no place of individual permanent reality in Madhyamika philosophy. But it does not mean that there is no truth or reality of the world. The world itself is relative and relativity of the world is Sunyata but the Sunyata itself is not relative. There is no Sunyata apart from the relativety and the unintelligible nature of relativity of the world is Sunyata. Sunyata is the reality of the world.

There are two kinds of truth in Nagarjuna’s philosophy—(1) Relative truth and (2) Absolute truth. Relative truth is only phenomenal truth. The relative world of phenomena is conventional or relative truth. According to Nagarjuna “There is no entity that is not dependent. An absolute non-relational entity does not therefore exist. Relativity of dependence is an invariable mark of
the unreal. The real is the absolute self-conceived and self-existent. Conversely the dependent is an appearance."\textsuperscript{63} The relative truth is called \textit{Samvṛti satya} in Madhyamika philosophy. It literally means a covering of screen, which keeps of the truth. \textit{Samvṛti} is the product of man's reason. It is the cause of universe and its phenomena. \textit{Samvṛti} covers the real nature of things. Therefore it is the veil of ignorance. It veils the nature of the reality. "\textit{Samvṛti} is the cause and conditions. It is the relative, contingent and dependent nature of phenomena."\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Samvṛti} truth is two kinds (1) Lokasamvṛti and (2) Alokasamvṛti. Lokasamvṛti is the relative truth of the external objects and Alokasamvṛti is the illusory truth of illusions, like double moon "Lokasamvṛti is relative conventional or pragmatic and Alokasamvṛti is illusory truth."\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{Sunyata is absolute.} The absolute truth is real, non-dual, and free from all empirical predicates and relation. It is devoid of every kind of determinations. "The real is invariably defined in the Madhyamika treaties, as transcendent to thought as non relative, non-determinate, quiescent, non-discursive, non-dual."\textsuperscript{66} Absolute truth cannot be characterized by predicate taken single or in combination. The absolute is incommensurable inexpressible. It is transcendent to thought. It is not open to thought. "In one sense it may be said that the cognition of everything is the cognition of the absolute, because it is that which appears under these varied and valid forms. In another sense, absolute is not known through any of these forms, for it is not a particulæ entity."\textsuperscript{67} We really know the absolute, but its real language is silence. The absolute is identical with phenomena. The difference between absolute and phenomena is
epistemic subjective and not real. According to Nagarjuna, there is not the little difference between the absolute and the universe. The absolute has always been of one uniform nature. The universe viewed as a whole is the absolute, viewed as a process it is the phenomena.\textsuperscript{68}

Thus, the world is relative is only phenomenal and the world is Sunyata is absolute. Therefore, from the phenomenal point of view the world is relative and from the metaphysical point of view the world is Sunyata. The world appears as real, independent and permanent due to the illusory nature of experience. The illusory truth always covers the relative truth of the world. When we remove oneself from the illusory truth of the world, we perceive the relative truth of the world. The absolute truth can not be attained without the relative truth of the world. But the absolute truth or Sunyata itself is not relative truth. Thus, the world is relative and its status is Sunyata but Sunyata itself is not relative. Sunyata is absolute.
REFERENCE

1. Murti, T.R.V. *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p, 89
3. Op.cit, p, 95
10. Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Concept of Buddhist Nirvana*, p, 18,
17. Santina, P.D. *Ibid*, p, 11,
21. Nagarjuna, *Sunyatasaptai*, p-60; *Mulamadhyamakakarika* xviii.5
Prasannapada Commentary to Mulamadhyamakakarika-xviii.5.  
Ratnavali II, 112, 113


24. Radhakrishnan, S *Indian Philosophy*, vol, I, p, 646,


28. Loc.cit, p, xii

29. Nagarjuna, *Madhyamakavrtti* (p); *Madhyamikasasra* (v), p-4  
(Translated by J.kalupahana)


32. Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhyamakarika*, ch-18, stanza 5-10

33. Nagarjuna, *Sunyatasaptati*, stanza, 14

34. Nagarjuna, *Madhyamakavrtti* (p), 185; *Madhyamikasasra* (v) p.77


37. Nagarjuna, *Madhyamakarika* (p), 341; *Madhyamikasasra* (v) p, 145

38. Nagarjuna, Madhyamikakarika, p, xxv


40. Sinha, J.N. *Indian Philosophy*, vol ii, p, 389,

41. Cheng, Hsuch Li, *Nagarjuna Twelve Gate Treatise*, p, 57


43. Loc.cit, p, 137.
44. Radhakrishnan, S, *Ibid*, p, 647,
45. Cheng, Hsuch Li *Ibid*, p, 101,
46. Santina, P.D. *Ibid*, p, 123
47. Hsuch, Cheng Li, *Ibid*, p, 102
49. Op.cit, p, 57
53. Mittal, Kewal Krishna, *Sunyavada the Madhyamika Thought*, p, 32,
54. Misra, H.N.*Sunyavada the Madhyamika Thought* p-66
56. Loc.cit, p, 42.
61. Loc.cit, p, 63
62. Lic.cit, p, 63
65. Loc.cit, p, 395.
67. Op.cit, p, 232,