

The Buddhist View of the Utility of Logic as a Way of Knowledge

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Introduction

In the Indian philosophical tradition during the lord Buddha's period, various traditionalists pursued different paths to get knowledge in their quest for enlightenment. Among them, the people who accepted the knowledge that comes traditionally, the people who got knowledge through intuition, and those who got knowledge through argumentation are the main ones. Among them, the people who used logic as the authentic way of knowledge can be called rationalists and they used their logical ability to build knowledge by using logic. The Buddhist source used terms such as '*takkī, takkikā, vīmaṃsī*' etc. to describe such logicians. Such people were scattered in many places in contemporary society and it can be recognized through the behavior of 'Upāli, Saccaka' etc. that such people tried to argue with the Buddha and try to defeat him through argument. Thus, even though logic has a strong place in society, it can be understood that the Buddha's view of logic is moderate. He did not strongly reject or strongly accept the argument and has shown that the argument is not sufficient as a way of knowledge. Here, the sutras of *Āṅguttaranikāya Kālāma sutta*, *Majjhimanikāya Sandaka sutta* etc. are important and in *Kālāma sutta* it can be identified how the word "mā" was used to express 'unsatisfaction' with the argument. But it is impossible to identify a way of rejecting the argument strongly. Similarly, in the Sandaka Sutta, the probability that the argument may be correct has been indicated by showing four cases of the argument. Thus, the research problem of this research, which was conducted with the aim of studying the Buddhist attitude towards the authenticity of logic as a way of gaining knowledge, is "What is the Buddhist attitude towards the utility of logic as a way of knowledge?". This research, conducted using both primary and secondary sources, employs a qualitative research methodology.

Methodology

This research has been conducted under qualitative research methodology. Authentic primary and secondary sources have been used in data collection.

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Among the primary source used here, *kālāma sutta of Aṅguttaranikāya*, *Sandaka Sutta of Majjhimanikāya*, *saṅgārava Sutta of majjhimanikāya* as well as upāli Sutta of majjhimanikāya, cūḷa saccaka sutta etc. are the main ones. To make the research work successful, The secondary sources used such as ‘*Early Buddhist theory of knowledge*’ written by K.N. Jayathilakaya, ‘ශ්‍රීන්‍යනාවාදයෙහි දර්ශනය හා චරණය’ written by Asanga Thilakarathne, ‘දර්ශනික ප්‍රශ්න, written by Mr. Gunapala Dharmasiri and the research article called ‘ඥාන’ by Usgoda Dhammagaru Thero for the Sinhala encyclopedia, etc.

Results and Discussion

A study of the source confirms that there were traditions in India that accepted logic as a means of attaining knowledge. Here it is clear that there were logicians among the people who accepted different ideologies as shown in the *Brahmajāla sutta of Dīghanikāya*. Accordingly, the sutta states the following about the people who tried to prove their opinion through argument.

“Monks, a certain monk or monk will argue here. Will ask. Arguing and questioning from his point of view, he measured the matter only with wisdom, 'The soul and the world are eternal and barren...' (*idha bhikkhave ekacco samaṇo vā Brāhmaṇo vā takkī hoti vīmaṃsī. so takkapariyāhataṃ vīmaṃsānucaritaṃ sayampaṭibhānaṃ evamāha: 'sassato attā ca loko ca vañjho*) Thus, it seems that through the argument, the views of eternity (śāsvatavāda) etc. were grasped.

Thus, it is stated in the Sandaka sutta of majjhimanikāya about the people who gained knowledge through logic, “Furthermore, a scholar in this world who takes logic from reason will take it from reason. He looked at the Dhamma, which was his understanding, which was taken from logic and went according to Vemansava” (*puna ca paraṃ sandaka, idhekacco satthā takkī hoti vīmaṃsī. so takkapariyāhataṃ vīmaṃsānucaritaṃ sayampaṭibhānaṃ dhammaṃ deseti*).

Likewise, according to the Kālāma sutta of Aṅguttaranikāya, it is confirmed that there were people who chose logic as their way of knowledge. People arguing like this argued by showing that they were right and others were wrong. (*idameva saccam mogha maññaṃ*)

Thus, according to the Buddhist source, there are four types of rationalists in contemporary Indian society.

- The group that argues according to anuśrava (religious literature, religious tradition).
- The people who come to some meditative gain and reason accordingly
- The people who get the wisdom of remembering previous races and

reason like ‘I was before’ etc

- Pure logical people who took logic as pure.

Meanwhile, it can be seen that Sachchakas etc. created various dilemmas, presented them to others, and argued with them to tire them out.

In the study of Buddhist suttas, it can be seen that Buddhism emphasizes the shortcomings of logic and logic, and it has been pointed out in the *kālāma sutta* of *Āṅguttaranikāya* that something should not be accepted just because it agrees with the logic or theory (*mā takka hētu, mā naya hētu*). But it does not say that the Buddha rejected the argument outright.

Information is found in the *Saṃyuttanikāya* about four methods used by the Buddha in solving problems, and one of them is the ‘*paṭipucchā vyāākaraṇa*’. That is, when someone asks a question, answering it by asking counter-questions. Some logical form is also found in this *paṭipucchā vyāākaraṇa*. For that, for example, in the *kālāma sutta* of *āṅguttaranikāya*, the dialogue between Buddha and *kālāma* about evil (*akusala*) can be described as follows.

Lord Buddha - *Kālāma*, does covetousness arise in a man's heart for good or for evil?

Kālāmas - Lord, it is for evil

Lord Buddha - *Kālāma*, does hatred arise in a man's heart for good or for evil?

Kālāmas - Lord, born for evil.

Lord Buddha - *Kālāma*, Are these merits or evil?

Kalamas - Lord, evil.

Lord Buddha - false or true?

Kalamayan – Lord, false.

Looking at this conversation, it is clear that there is some form of logic in it. Thus, it is clear how logic has been used as a way of explaining the doctrine to others.

People like *Sacchaka*, *Upali*, *Abhayaraja Kumara* who were in Buddha's time are famous among the people who came to debate with Buddha. Likewise, *Sunakkhatta Thero* said, “*takkapariyahataṃ samaṇo gotamo dhammaṃ dēseti*” and was clinging to the misconception that ‘Buddha is a logician’. Here the Buddha said that he does not belong to such an extreme buddha saying, “*Sariputra*, that empty man named *Sunakkhatta* has no *dharmabodha* about me...” Emphasized. Thus it is clear that the Buddha was neither a rationalist nor a rationalist. But it

cannot be said that he did not know the nature of the reasoner or the way to reason. According to the Sacchaka Sutta, in the conversation between the Sacchaka and the Buddha, when the Sacchaka later says something opposite to what he first said.,

“*manasi karohi, aggivessana; manasi karitvā kho, aggivessana, byākarohi. na kho te sandhiyati purimena vā pacchimam, pacchimena vā purimam.*” (Aggivessna, remember, Aggivessana, remember and read the answer, your first speech and the next speech, and the last speech and the first speech do not match.) He makes the statement. Accordingly, it is confirmed that the Buddha had a clear understanding of how to reason. Moreover, in the Sutta Nipata about the form of the logician who presents his opinion through logic, it is pointed out that “*sakamhi diṭṭham kata macchayeyya - chandānuniṭo ruciya nivitṭho*”. That is to show that one's own opinion is the truth and expect to win one's own opinion. It is very difficult for someone in such a position to point out a different path.

Similarly, there is some logical form in the statement “*yam kimci samudaya dhammam, sabbam tam nirōdha dhammam*” found in suttas such as the dhammacakkapavattana sutta. Also, “*yadaniccām tam dukkham, yam dukkham tadanattā*” there is also a logical form in the statement. Here, if someone says that ‘Buddha’s teachings are devoid of logical form, he rejects logic’, that statement is incorrect. But the application of ‘Atakkāvacara’ which he uses in the ariyapariyesana sutta of Majjhimanikāya to describe the dharma he understood is very important here. It says ‘irrational’. It explains the Buddha's attitude towards the limitations of logic. Thus, the Buddha's specialty in using logic is that even though he used logic in preaching the Dharma, he did not take that logic or language as a preoccupation.

Conclusion

Through the above study, it is possible to understand how Buddha's attention was primarily focused on logic, which was used as a main path of knowledge in the contemporary Indian philosophical tradition. However, it can be seen how the Buddha expressed his displeasure about using logic as an authentic way of knowledge. However, there is no outright rejection of logic in Buddhism. Moreover, in the work of Dharma communication, it can be seen through this how the Dhamma sermons were conducted in a rational form to make the listener easily understand the Dharma. Thus, it can be confirmed that although logic was not accepted as an authentic way of knowledge in Buddhism, it was also recognized for its utility in gaining knowledge.

Keywords: Buddhist Attitude, Enlightenment, Logic, Rationalism, Reason

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