

2.40 Dhammacakkappavattana sutta: First research thesis of the world

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ABSTRACT

The first sermon of *Gotama Buddha*, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* can be considered as the first ever research thesis submitted for the benefit of the mankind and all other beings in the universe. It is not appropriate to measure the strength and validity of this thesis in terms of Western research methodology. The research methodology expounded in this *sutta* seems to have influenced the Western research methodology developed at a later period. The objective of the present study is to investigate the methodology found in *Dhamma Cakkappawattana Sutta vis-a- vis* the Western research methodology.

The *sutta* is the first expression of the findings of the great research conducted by *Siddhatta Gotama* for about six years. In fact it reveals the research methodology used in Buddhism. The *sutta* itself is similar to a modern research thesis. The contents of the *sutta* can be categorized into six major areas.

1. Abstract of the research thesis
2. Identification of problem and formulation of hypotheses
3. Tools for testing hypotheses
4. Variables used
5. Findings/conclusions
6. Dissemination of findings

Abstract of the thesis

As in a modern research thesis DS also at its beginning gives the abstract of the research. It contains (1) two extremes not to be practiced by Bhikkhus (2) Middle path that should be practiced (3) elements in Middle path (4) results obtained by practicing the Middle path. In short it is the essence of whole research.

Identification of problem and formulation of hypotheses

Suffering (*dukkha*) is the main problem of the research. Based on this problem four hypotheses have been identified, They are 1) there is a suffering (*dukkha sacca*) 2) there is a cause of suffering (*Dukkha samudaya sacca*) 3) there is a cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha sacca*) 4) there is a path for the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha gamini patipada sacca*).

Tools for testing hypotheses

In order to test the above hypotheses and obtain desired results eight tools are to be used. They are

1) right view (*samma ditthi*), 2) right thought (*samma sankappa*), 3) right speech (*samma vaca*), 4) right action (*samma kammanta*), 5) right livelihood (*samma ajiiva*), 6) right effort (*samma vayama*), 7) right mindfulness (*samma sati*), and 8) right concentration (*samma samadhi*).

Variables used

In testing each hypothesis three variables have been used. Thus for h1 the variables are 1) acceptance of the phenomenon concept of suffering as it is (*idam dukkam ariyasaccam*) 2) truth of suffering has to be understood (*dukkham ariyasaccam pariññeyyanti*) 3) truth of suffering has been understood (*dukkham ariyasaccam pariññātanti*). The last variable depends on the second and the second depends on the first. In this way the variables for h2 are: 1) acceptance of the existing of the cause of suffering (*idam dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam*) 2) cause of suffering should be abandoned (*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam pahātabbanti*) 3) cause of suffering has been abandoned (*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam pahīnanti*). Variables for h3 are: 1) acceptance that there is a cessation of suffering (*idam dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam*) 2) cessation of suffering should be realised (*dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam sacchikātabbanti*) 3) cessation of suffering has been realised (*dukkhanirodham ariyasaccam sacchikatanti*). Similarly variables for h4 are: 1) acceptance that there is a path to end of suffering (*idam dukkhanirodhagāminī patipadā ariyasaccam*) 2) path to the end of suffering should be developed (*dukkhanirodhagāminī patipadā ariyasaccam bhāvetabbanti*) 3) path to the end of suffering has been developed (*dukkhanirodhagāminī patipadā ariyasaccam bhāvitanti*).

Findings/conclusions

The outcome of the research is the realization of incomparable full enlightenment (*anuttaram sammāsambodhim abhisambuddho*). and the achievement of full liberation from further existence. (*akuppā cetō vimutti, antimā jāti, natthidāni punabbhavo*).

Dissemination of findings

When research findings were delivered, at that very moment, at that very instant the sound reached up to the brahmā realms, and this ten-thousandfold world system trembled, and heaved, and shook, and an incomparable radiance arose in the world, even surpassing the radiance of all the deities. (*tena khanena tena muhuttana yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhuggacchi. Ayañca dasasahassilokadhātu sankampi sampakampi sampavedhi, appamāno ca ulāro obhāso loke pāturahosi atikkamma devānam devānubhāvanti*). Perhaps, this could be the first example in mass communication through word by mouth in the entire history of mankind.

Conclusion

Buddhist research methodology is a subject that has not yet been fully studied. An investigation of Pali tipitaka literature would yield much result in this regard.

Keywords: Buddhist Research Methodology, Research methods, Buddhism, Western Research Methodology.