Buddhist Paradoxical Logic as an Epistemological Method to the Ultimate Knowledge: From Dharmakirti's *Svavacanavirodha* to Nishida's Logic of Absolute Self-Contradiction

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Abstract

This article comprehensively explains the structure of Buddhist logic in explaining or describing the highest knowledge. The highest knowledge (*Maha Prajñā*) in question is knowledge of *Nirvana* (Pāli: *Nibbāna*). Buddhism describes *Nirvana* through paradoxical logic which, when viewed from the perspective of deductive logic in the Western logical tradition, is certainly invalid and often even concluded to be a fallacy. Although considered invalid or even a fallacy, Buddhist paradoxical logic has a functional mode, namely as a transcendental effort to optionally remove obstacles that arise from the mind and ultimately be able to directly experience the most authentic reality. This is what is called the highest knowledge. In solving this work, a conceptual analysis method was carried out with a literature study research model. From the results of the search and analysis, it was found that paradoxical logic is often present in classical Buddhist texts such as the *Prajñā Pāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra* and *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. This logic was later structured by Dharmakirti as a method of debate and referred to as *Svavacanavirodha*. In contemporary Eastern philosophical studies, this logic influences the logic of absolute self-contradiction or concrete logic (*gutaiteki ronri*) developed by Nishida Kitarō as an attempt to understand the nature of reality. In spiritual application, this logic can be developed as a method to liberate oneself from mental disturbances that can hinder the development of the intuitive dimension, thus making enlightenment more attainable.

Keywords: Buddhist Paradoxical Logic, Dharmakirti, Nishida Kitarō, *Svavacanavirodha*, The logic of Absolute Self-Contradiction

Introduction

Logic is a word often used to justify the correctness or incorrectness of one's own way of thinking and the way of thinking of others. Some people also sometimes think that the explanation of logic is not entirely accurate. Some say that logic is a way of thinking, but on the other hand, in interpersonal conversations, there are those who justify that "he is illogical; his argument is illogical; or similar statements." This assumes that logic must have certain standards or measures to declare an argument sufficient to be considered logical, even though, if seen etymologically, the word "logic" itself comes from the Latin, namely Logos, which means "word" or "speech." If referring to the original language, then the statement that another person is illogical should not be put forward at all, because any argument put forward must be accepted as a logical thought. But in fact, many people debate about which arguments are logical and which arguments are illogical (Mundiri, 2012). In traditional logic, which refers to Aristotle's categories, it is explained that an argument can be declared valid if it follows the four laws of logic (the principle of identity, the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of excluded middle, and the principle of sufficient reason) and also has a deductive syllogistic structure (Barnes, 1975).

Historically, deductive logic initially emerged from Aristotle's idea that truth must be deduced in a reductive manner. This reductionist logic was then continued by several philosophers and logicians after Aristotle. Some Stoic philosophers, such as Zeno and Chrysippus, developed Aristotle's logic to the next stage. Zeno, as one of the Stoic philosophers, placed a strong emphasis on the importance of logic. He explained the stages of knowledge through hand illustrations, starting from a hypothetical assumption that presupposes a premise contrary to the thesis being defended. This logic is centered on reductive argumentation (*reductio ad absurdum*) (Guthrie, 1965). Zeno's logic is not a syllogistic logic like Aristotle's, but rather a simple, dialectical logic. The goal of Zeno's logic is not to prove and defend an argument as true, but rather to prove the opponent's argument wrong. Zeno did have a simple concept of logical dialectics, but he never developed a coherent formal logical system like Aristotle's. Zeno emphasized that logic plays a very central role in achieving true knowledge (Barnes, 1979).

Another Stoic philosopher, besides Zeno, who contributed to the development of logic was Chrysippus. Unlike Aristotle, who developed term-based syllogistic logic, Chrysippus developed propositional logic, also known as Stoic logic. This logic focuses on complete statements and not solely on the relationship between subject and predicate. Chrysippus's logical system also utilizes basic logical forms such as implication, conjunction, disjunction, and negation. Furthermore, Chrysippus developed five indemonstrables, basic forms of inference that cannot be proven further. These forms of inference are similar to modern logic. Here are the five indemonstrables (Mates, 1953):

- If p then q; p then q
- If p then q; not q then not p
- It is impossible for both p and q to be true; p then not q
- p or q; p then not q
- p or q; not p then q

Chrysippus emphasized causality; a proposition would follow another proposition if it were impossible for the premises to be true without the conclusion also being true. This concept is close to the concept of validity found in modern logic (Bobzien, 1998).

After the classical period, deductive logic continued to dominate the history of philosophy and science. In the medieval period, deductive logic was further developed, one of the contributors being Thomas Aquinas. The logic developed by Aquinas was heavily influenced by Aristotle. Aquinas understood logic as a thinking instrument that helps humans discover the truth (*instrumentum scientiarum*). Logic, for Aquinas, was not a practical science but rather a normative science that provides rules for correct thinking.

Structurally, Aquinas essentially adopted Aristotle's syllogism as the main form of deductive reasoning. Aquinas's deduction is based on reasoning regarding cause and effect, which is divided into two types: propter quid demonstration (from cause to effect) and quia demonstration (from effect to cause). Aquinas's deductive logic (often referred to as scholastic logic) is a logical construction that forms the basis of the cosmological argument developed by Thomas Aquinas himself (Aquinas, 1964).

Aristotle's logic has a very strong influence even on logicians in the modern period. George Boole is a modern logician who was influenced by Aristotle's syllogistic logic. In contrast to logicians or thinkers of the previous period who focused on syntactic structures, Boole focused on symbolic logic and a mathematical approach, especially algebra, because using this approach made Boole's deductive reasoning model appear like a mathematical operation. This symbolic logic model or system was first explained by George Boole in his work entitled *The Mathematical Analysis of Logic* published in 1847 and refined in his next work entitled *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought* published in 1854. The characteristic of this Boolian logic system is the use of letters (x, y, and z) as symbols that represent logical statements, the implication being that there is an equation between logical operations and algebraic operations. The deductive operations in Boolian logic consist of conjunction (algebraic multiplication “xy”), disjunction (algebraic addition “x + y”), and negation (complement (1 – x), while the basic laws of reasoning consist of the identity principle (x2 = x), the principle of non-contradiction (x (1 – x) = 0), and finally the principle of duality which explains that every logical statement can be rewritten in the form of a duality (for example conjunction ↔ disjunction) (Boole, 1854). The Boolean deductive logic system is carried out by manipulating algebraic symbols, for example (Burris, 2012):

- Premise 1: All humans (H) are mortal (F) → Symbolized as $H \subseteq F$
- Premise 2: Socrates (s) is human (H) → Symbolized as $s \in H$
- Deductive Inference: Socrates is mortal → Symbolized as $s \in F$

This deduction is treated like solving an algebraic equation, not just a verbal syllogism. In modern science, Boolean logic is the foundation of modern mathematical logic and digital computing. George Boole's system of deductive logic emphasizes the role of deductive logic in the development of science and technology.

Besides George Boole, another contemporary philosopher who was influenced by Aristotle and developed symbolic logic to a further stage was Gottlob Frege. Before Frege, deductive logic was still limited to Aristotelian syllogisms and George Boole's algebraic logic. Frege himself introduced a system of deductive logic called predicate logic. This logical model revolutionized existing deductive logic. Predicate logic replaced the Aristotelian logic system that only discussed terms. The main characteristic of Frege's deductive logic is its treatment of logic as not only a rule of language but also as a symbolic system. Frege introduced a formal notation that resembles mathematical calculus; he also introduced the universal quantifier (∀) and the existential quantifier (∃). Examples of the applications of these quantifiers are as follows (Calvert & Kneale, 1962).

- Aristotelian Logic: All humans are mortal
- Frege's Logic: $\forall x\ (\text{human}(x) \rightarrow \text{mortal}(x))$

If observed closely, Frege's logic is a form of logic that simplifies Aristotelian logic into symbols and quantifiers. It can even be said that Frege's logic is simpler than George Boole's symbolic logic.

Frege's predicate logic was further developed by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead in their work *Principia Mathematica*. This book attempted to show that mathematical principles could be reduced to logical principles (logicalism). Russell and Whitehead developed an advanced symbolic logic using a system of axioms, formal inference, and type theory to avoid logical paradoxes. The deductions they constructed were expressed in precise symbolic notation, using the universal quantifier (∀), the existential quantifier (∃), and modern logical notation (¬, ∧, ∨, →). The entire mathematical system was reduced to a number of basic axioms, and deductions were then carried out using formal inference rules, especially modus ponens. To avoid logical paradoxes, Russell used a theory called type theory, which groups objects, functions, and sets into a hierarchy of types, with deductions valid only if they conform to the type rules. In mathematical deduction, Russell demonstrated how elementary arithmetic can be proved through pure logical deduction (Whitehead & Russell, 1910).

Deduction is a type of logical reasoning believed by philosophers and scientists to have the highest degree of certainty in guaranteeing the accuracy and validity of logical truth. Beyond deductive logic, there are actually other types of logic, such as induction, but these types of logic are considered forms of logical reasoning that cannot guarantee accurate logical truth in their conclusions. In modern science, deductive logic plays a crucial role in the development of positivistic science. Due to the importance of deductive logic, some scientists completely reject other logical reasoning models besides deductive reasoning because they cannot guarantee as much certainty as deduction. Compared to deduction, which draws conclusions based on specific empirical facts, induction is perceived as having a significant chance of being proven wrong or invalid. For example (Copi & Cohen, 2002):

- Fact 1: Humans have hair
- Fact 2: Humans in Surakarta have black hair
- Fact 3: Humans in Wonogiri Regency have black hair
- Fact 4: Humans in Bandung have black hair
- Conclusion: All humans have black hair

Based on premises grounded in reality, the syllogism's conclusion is legally valid. However, even though it is based on reality, the conclusion drawn could be wrong because there may be people with hair other than black elsewhere who have not been checked. Therefore, even though the syllogism is legally valid, the generalization made still has the potential to be incorrect. Consequently, most scientists believe in deductive logic rather than inductive logic. Although often considered not to guarantee certainty, induction is useful as a logical method in scientific observation, especially for confirming research subjects that lack established or standardized measurement tools.

The reason why the introduction of this article discusses deduction more than other types of logic, such as induction, is that deduction has a very strong influence on modern logicians such as Alan Turing and Alfred Tarski. Deduction always bases truth on the conclusions it produces; in other words, truth is something that can be constructed by the mind or reasoning. The question that arises from this fact is, "Is what is called knowledge only that which is accessible and limited by the mind?" Furthermore, "Is there a possibility that there is knowledge that can be accessed without logic?" Then, "Does the logical system rely solely on established logical standards (Western logic)?" To test and answer these questions, this paper presents alternative answers using one of the Eastern philosophical traditions, namely Buddhism, which has a unique concept of paradoxical logic. This concept of logic was developed by two philosophers: Dharmakirti from the classical tradition and Nishida Kitarō from the modern-contemporary tradition. Dharmakirti has a logical method called *svavacanavirodha*, which is applied in debate to demonstrate contradictions to the debate opponent (Bogacz & Tanaka, 2023). On the other hand, Nishida Kitarō has a logical system called the logic of absolute self-contradiction (*zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu*), which attempts to understand the unity of the self in contradictory identities (Kitarō, 1987). Nishida's logical system was indirectly influenced by the core doctrines of Buddhism, which also influenced Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha*.

Methods

This article will examine whether Western logical tendencies, particularly deductive logic, are present in Buddhist paradoxical logic (Dharmakirti and Nishida), or if they are completely different. Is the position of conclusions still as important as in deductive or inductive logic? Finally, is the axiological purpose of Buddhist paradoxical logic the same as that of Western logic, particularly deductive logic? To support the comparison and analysis of the results, a philosophical hermeneutic method is used in the form of a comparison, with the following methodological steps (Bakker & Zubair, 1990):

- Determine the object of comparison
- Describe each object systematically
- Make comparisons
- Conduct critical evaluations

After completing all the methodological stages, the final step is to draw conclusions and recommendations as outputs.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Dharmakirti and the Paradox Logic in *Svavacanavirodha*

Dharmakirti was a Buddhist philosopher (especially in logic and epistemology) who lived around the 7th century CE. He was born in Tamil Nadu to a Hindu Brahmin family. From his early life, Dharmakirti was known as a highly intelligent person, especially in *mīmāṃsā* (Hindu hermeneutics), *nyāya* (logic), and the Vedas. Although born into a Hindu Brahmin family, Dharmakirti later developed an interest in Buddhism and became a disciple of the Buddhist teacher Dharmapāla of Nālandā, though some sources state that he was an intellectual disciple of Dignāga. Under the influence of his teacher, Dharmakirti developed a keen interest in *hetuvidyā* (logic) and *pramāṇa* (epistemology). Dharmakirti was Dignāga's successor and is often considered the first to formulate a classical Buddhist system of logic. Dharmakirti's major works include the *Pramāṇavārttika (Commentary on Epistemology), the Pramāṇaviniścaya (Determination of the Means of Knowledge), the Nyāyabindu (Essence of Logic), the Hetubindu (Essence of Syllogism), the Saṃtānāntarasiddhi (Proof of the Consciousness of Others), the Vādanyāya (Logic of Disputation), and the Hetubindunāmaṭīkā (Commentary on the Essence of Syllogism)*. Of all of Dharmakirti's major works, the *Pramāṇavārttika* is considered the most important; it explains that true knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is obtained through two means, namely *pratyakṣa* (direct knowledge/perception) and *anumāna* (inference). To this day, Dharmakirti's logical system is applied as the basis of Tibetan Buddhist epistemology and logic (Dunne, 2004).

In the first chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika* (*pramāṇasiddhi*), there is a debate method that uses a contradictory logic model; the method is *svavacanavirodha*. Literally, *svavacanavirodha* means "contradicting one's own statement." This method is a way to refute the views of the debating opponent by showing that the statement or argument put forward by the opponent contradicts the logical consequences of the statement or argument itself. In practice, this is a debate strategy to refute arguments from within the system that the debating opponent has built himself by showing internal inconsistencies. If an argument produces a contradiction that is acknowledged by the arguer himself, then the argument is logically invalid (*asiddha*) (Dunne, 2004). The application of *svavacanavirodha* in debate is as follows:

Let's suppose someone states, "There are no absolute arguments."

- If the statement is true, then the statement itself is logically invalid because it is also an "argument."
- Thus, this is what is called *svavacanavirodha*, a self-refuting statement.

Svavacanavirodha in debate is essentially used to test the consistency of a system of thought. This test is carried out to determine whether a statement is founded on correct awareness and knowledge or, conversely, on confusion and doubt. In Buddhist spiritual practice, this method is used to undermine wrong views (Skt: *mithyādṛsti*; Pāli: *micchādiṭṭhi*) so that a closer understanding of enlightenment can be achieved (Dreyfus, 1997).

At first glance, Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha* is very similar to Hegel's dialectical method, which posits that everything in this reality, from the real, such as material objects, to the abstract, such as statements, has something else that is its opposite. Unlike Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha*, which shows the opposite as something that stops the process, Hegel's dialectic actually makes opposites or contradictions a new foothold toward a higher synthesis. Hegel's dialectic is conducted by proposing:

- Thesis: A statement or initial position (e.g., black)
- Antithesis: A negation or opposite that appears as a contradiction (e.g., white)
- Synthesis: A union that overcomes opposites, producing a new, higher level (e.g., gray, which is a combination of black and white)

In debate, Hegel's method tends toward conclusions, meaning that a question opposed to another statement must produce an answer that contains a combination of the statements being debated (Hegel, 1968). This is what differentiates it from Dharmakirti's *svavacananirodha*, which uses contradiction not to draw conclusions from the premises or propositions that are constructed, but only to test whether the statements put forward are logically valid or not valid. Tillemans (2000) notes that classical logic, from "if A then ¬A," can be reduced to ¬A (the tautology $(A \rightarrow \neg A) \rightarrow \neg A$), so that statements containing contradictions are certainly logically false. Tillemans also found that Dharmakirti did not focus on the conclusions that result from the inferential process (*pramāṇa*), but only on the proposed statement and its obstacles (*pratibandha*), and not on its negators (*bādhaka*). This logic was historically used by Dharmakirti to refute non-Buddhist views (*Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā*) and to defend core doctrines of Buddhism such as *Anātman* (Pāli: *Anattā*, "No-self") and *Śūnyatā* (Pāli: *Sūññātā*, "Emptiness") (Franco, 1997).

Dharmakirti's *Svavacanavirodha*, built on the logic of contradiction, is not a baseless logical system. This contradictory tendency actually has philosophical roots in classical Buddhist texts. Dharmakirti, a Buddhist philosopher from the Yogācāra tradition, was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. This Sūtra, the most important text of the Yogācāra tradition, contains the following quote:

> *"Objects are neither born nor unborn; they neither cease nor do they cease; they are like illusions and dreams; this is how the wise see."*

The word "unborn" is used to deny absolute origin; the phrase "neither unborn" is used to deny nihilism; the term "non-cessation" is used to deny absolute destruction; and the phrase "neither cease" is used to deny absolute permanence. These four types of denial serve the purpose of the logic of contradiction. In the Japanese Zen tradition, contradictory logic is used as a *koan* method to destroy attachment to dualistic categories of thought (Suzuki, 1932).

A similar nuance can also be found in the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra*, which uses the logic of contradiction to demonstrate the *Śūnyatā* nature of reality. The *sutra* contains a quote:

> *"Form is emptiness, emptiness is form; emptiness is not different from form, form is not different from emptiness; that which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness is form."*

The statements in the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra* are deliberately contradictory to destroy dualism. For a Buddhist practitioner, this verse leads to the understanding that all apparent phenomena are void of essence (*Śūnyatā*) and that logical discrimination against this reality will only hinder one's path to enlightenment (Pine, 2004).

Dharmakirti's *Svavacanavirodha* is a debate method inspired by the logic of contradiction in the Buddhist literature of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra*, as described above. This form of logic has greatly influenced the logical and philosophical styles of other classical Buddhist philosophers such as Nāgārjuna and Śāntideva. *Svavacanavirodha* is essentially used only to determine whether the arguments put forward by the opponent are based on a logically correct view or not. It can be said that *svavacanavirodha* only contains epistemological aspects and minimal metaphysical aspects. Philosophers contemporary with Dharmakirti, for example, Nāgārjuna, further developed this Buddhist logic of contradiction by creating a system of *catuṣkoṭi* logic to explain *Śūnyatā*. This logic was later refined by a modern-contemporary Japanese philosopher named Nishida Kitarō, who developed a system of contradictory logic called *zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu* (absolute self-contradiction logic). This logic is part of Nishida's metaphysical explanation of the concept of basho (place), for further explanations in the next sub-discussion.

Nishida Kitarō and the Logic of Absolute Self Contradiction

Nishida Kitarō was a modern Japanese thinker and philosopher and the founder of the Kyoto School. Nishida was born in Mori Village, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, on May 19, 1870, to a humble middle-class samurai family. Since childhood, Nishida was known as a quiet person who loved to study and was very interested in classical Japanese and Chinese literature and philosophy. Beyond that, Nishida also had an interest in foreign literature and Western philosophy, which he studied at Tokyo Imperial University. In his studies, Nishida was particularly interested in Greek philosophical thought (especially Aristotle and Plato), Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel. He was also interested in Indian philosophy and Buddhism (especially Madhyamaka and Zen). The philosophy developed by Nishida has characteristics of Eastern logic (especially the logic of contradiction) along with the categorization of Western logic. Nishida's philosophical character cannot be separated from the spirit of the Meiji era, with the motto "*a Japanese spirit with Western intelligence (wakon yōsai)*" (Koft, 2009).

Nishida began his philosophical journey by paying special attention to experience. For Nishida, the highest knowledge is knowledge derived from experience. Unlike some empiricists who still require cognitive abstraction as epistemic justification, Nishida views true, absolute knowledge as empirical knowledge without categorization. Nishida calls this experience pure experience (*junsui keiken*). Nishida's epistemology is significantly influenced by Buddhism, especially Madhyamaka (Nāgārjuna) and Zen. This influence is evident when Nishida places his concept of pure experience strictly, namely by separating experience from various forms of abstraction and logical fragmentation. To enrich his explanation of the epistemology of pure experience that he developed, Nishida added William James's views to explain how pure experience occurs. Throughout his career, Nishida has internalized various Buddhist philosophical constructs into his philosophy, from classical Buddhist philosophy to modern Zen Buddhism. Nishida's philosophy was initially a response to Western philosophy, which he considered to have many inconsistencies. His criticism focused on neo-Kantianism but later evolved into a philosophical formulation that aimed to overthrow the dualistic philosophical construction that was the main paradigm of Western philosophy at that time. Nishida's philosophy is actually a non-dualistic philosophical system, rooted in the logic of Eastern contradiction, especially Buddhism. Nishida's logical system is known as the logic of absolute self-contradiction (*zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu*) (Fattah & Tangrestu, 2024).

Nishida strongly rejects all forms of dualistic and pluralistic metaphysical views regarding reality. For him, this reality is a unity, and nothing exists outside of it. The plurality that arises in this reality is the subject's failure to see the world as a single unity. What is seen as diversity is essentially the result of a limited abstraction of language, which has limitations in explaining the whole of reality or in perceiving reality as it is. Furthermore, Nishida explains that to see its particular qualities, humans must first be placed ontologically within a concept of space called *basho* (place). This concept of space is a place where all contradictory things gather and become a unity. Nishida's logic of absolute self-contradiction operates within it (Matsumoto, 1974).

The logic of absolute self-contradiction is essentially the logic Nishida uses to describe absolute nothingness (*zettai mu*). This understanding of absolute nothingness is based on a non-dualistic metaphysics between subject and object. The relationship between subject and object is a unified whole within the order of reality or the cosmos. This implies the fact that nothing exists outside of reality itself. This reality is the fact of what it is. Simply put, understanding absolute nothingness can be achieved by negating it. Nishida explains that negation is a method that allows one to understand the essence of the universe, namely nothingness. Nishida states that "this reality is a negation composed of a series of negations," in other words, "a negation of a negated negation." In mathematical structure, a negated negation will necessarily return to its affirmative form; if negated again, it will always return to its starting point. This proves that nothing actually happens (Fattah, 2025).

Everything experienced now is temporary and moving toward a starting point. This consciousness arises from nothingness and will end in nothingness. This reality, too, begins from nothingness and will return to nothingness. Nothingness is both a state of "pre-existence" and a state of "post-existence." In human reality, life proceeds from nothingness to existence. Human substantial existence does not end; it continues to move in its natural process: birth, growth, maturity, aging, and ultimately death. Death is the final phase of "being," which was originally "nothing" and returns to "nothing." The chronology begins with nothingness (pre-existence), existence, and a return to nothingness (post-existence). This process occurs repeatedly in every type of existence (Heisig et al., 2011). This logic is based on the absorption of knowledge gained in reality and used as "self-expression based on reality." It can also be called "concrete logic," which is neither empty nor devoid of content. It is something that is definitely experienced in this reality. Based on this, Nishida distinguishes three types of discrimination or exclusion (Kozyra, 2008):

- Irrational exceptions (*higōriteki mufunbetsu*), which are declared illogical. In certain cases, when an irrational statement is found, it cannot be justified as true or false. Essentially, irrational statements are not bound by the laws of logic; they can simply be ignored without further logical analysis.
- Rational exceptions (*gōriteki funbetsu*), which conform to the principle of non-contradiction in formal logic ("A" is not "non-A"). It is important to understand that to refer to formal logic, Nishida uses several terms such as "abstract logic" (*chūshōteki ronri*) and "abstracted logic" (*taishōteki ronri*). In the case of formal logic, both affirmative and negative true judgments are considered. Therefore, this logic is also often referred to as "two-valued logic."
- Unqualified exceptions (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*), which conform to the principle that truth can be achieved through both affirmation and negation simultaneously. Therefore, this logic is also often referred to as the logic of one value of a completely contradictory self-identity.

The formal logic principle of non-contradiction ("A" is not "non-A") is only one aspect of the logic of absolute self-contradiction ("A" is not "non-A" and "A" is "non-A"). This is why the "rationality" of formal logic is included in this form of logic. The logic of absolute self-contradiction does not contradict the formal logic of rationality because it is part of that form of logic from the beginning. The formal logic that Nishida draws on is not entirely wrong, as long as it is used to see each part of self-determination in reality. Delusion will arise if someone becomes attached to formal logic or the logic of objectification, making that person unable to properly understand the structure of absolute self-contradiction and its relationship to this reality (Fattah & Tangrestu, 2024). Nishida's adoption of Aristotle's deductive logic as part of his own set of absolute self-contradictory logics is a clever way to avoid contradictions within his own logical assertion that "reality is a composite of contradictory things," and his logical construction is no exception. Had Nishida lived in the same era as Dharmakirti and they met in a debate, he would have easily avoided Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha*. This is not surprising, as Nishida likely read Dharmakirti's work while developing his logical system.

It can be understood that the truth in the logic of absolute self-contradiction, which contains affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same aspect, can be described as a "point of view without a point of view" (*tachiba naki tachiba*). Therefore, Nishida wrote about this in his logic of absolute self-contradiction as the logic of paradox/paralogism (*hairi no ri*). The word "paradox," in Greek, is understood as the opposite judgment to declare an opinion true (*gyakusetsu*), and this is related to the problem of self-contradiction. Since the principle of non-contradiction is limited by formal logic, paradoxical logic is considered absurd. On the contrary, for Nishida, it is a solution to the logic of paradox itself, which often becomes a source of confusion in philosophy and science. Absolute self-contradiction can be understood as a non-contradictory self because if the self is only understood from one dimension, it can no longer be comprehended as a whole. Self-identity is the unity of contradictory things. Therefore, the series of logic described by Nishida Kitarō can be understood as his justification for absolute nothingness (*zettai mu*) as the basis of his ontology. The way to understand ultimate nothingness is only to face this reality as pure experience (*junsui keiken*) (Fattah & Tangrestu, 2024).

Nishida's logic of absolute self-contradiction simply rejects the consistency of classical logic ($A \neq -A$) and instead views everything within a contradictory unity. Absolute nothingness (*zettai mu*), the metaphysical conclusion of Nishida's philosophy, is derived from this logic of absolute self-contradiction. In absolute nothingness, everything can be both "existent and non-existent" and "self and not-self." Applications of this logic of absolute self-contradiction in everyday life include:

- I am "me" only if there is a "not-me."
- If there is no "not-me," then "me" is impossible.
- Thus, the existence of "me" is contradictory.

This awareness is only possible if the "I" is assumed to exist within a spatial logic, which Nishida calls *basho*. For Nishida, this spatial logic stems from the concept of absolute nothingness, which understands that everything begins and ends within this nothingness (Yusa, 2002). The absolute nothingness described by Nishida in the logic of absolute self-contradiction is the highest truth, which, when associated with classical Buddhist terminology, would refer to *Nirvana* (Pāli: *Nibbāna*). Knowledge of this highest truth would be seen as the highest knowledge (*Mahā Prajñā*). That is the picture of inner enlightenment described by Nishida through his logic of absolute contradiction.

Conclusions

From the explanation of Buddhist contradiction logic in *svavacanavirodha* and Nishida Kitarō's absolute contradiction logic, it can be understood that the logical tendencies in Buddhism can be applied in different ways according to their intended use. *Svavacanavirodha* is a method of debate developed by Dharmakirti that refers to Buddhist contradictory logic. Unlike pure Buddhist logic, which aims to cut through the dichotomous or fragmentary flow of thought so that a practitioner can directly experience reality as it is, *svavacanavirodha* has a similar but not identical goal. Essentially, *svavacanavirodha* is a method of debate that aims to ensure there are no inconsistencies in an argument or proposition. If an argument has flaws in existence and consistency, then the argument is logically invalid or illogical. Unlike Aristotelian and other Western logics that seek conclusions, Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha* does not focus on conclusions (*pramāṇa*), but rather on the proposed statement and its objections (*pratibandha*), rather than on its negations (*bādhaka*). Dharmakirti uses *svavacanavirodha* as a method to refute non-Buddhist views such as *Nyāya* and *Mīmāṃsā* and to defend fundamental Buddhist doctrines such as *Anātman* (Pāli: *Anattā* "No-Self") and *Śūnyatā* (Pāli: *Sūññātā* "Emptiness").

On the other hand, Nishida's logic of absolute self-contradiction also shares a similar dimension to Dharmakirti's *svavacanavirodha* and is even more explicit in interpreting reality as nothingness. Unlike Dharmakirti, who uses Buddhist contradiction logic only in the epistemological aspect, Nishida actually uses this logic in both epistemological and metaphysical/ontological aspects. The logic of absolute self-contradiction in the epistemological aspect is used as the basis for the epistemology of pure experience (*junsui keiken*), namely by releasing perception using absolute contradiction, while in the metaphysical/ontological aspect, the logic of absolute self-contradiction is used by Nishida to describe absolute nothingness (*zettai mu*) and develop the theory of place (*basho*). Simply put, Nishida's logic of absolute self-contradiction can be described in a series of negations that will eventually return to the affirmative form. When something is negated and returns to its starting point, according to Nishida, it is nothingness or emptiness because, in essence, nothing happens. It can be assumed that something that arises from nothing will return to nothingness, meaning empty. To explain this series of negations, Nishida describes them in three types of discrimination: irrational exceptions (*higōriteki mufunbetsu*), rational exceptions (*gōriteki funbetsu*), and unqualified exceptions (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu*).

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