**Chapter II**: The *Kāyas* in MahāyānaTradition

2.1) The *Nirmāṇakāya* or *Nairmāṇikakāya*: The emanation body.

The *Nirmāṇakāya* doctrine originated from the early Buddhist theory of the mind-made body formed through the supernatural power of *Rddhi*[[1]](#footnote-1). It had been conceived by the *Mahāsāṃghikas* when they idealized the Buddha as transcendental. The Mahāyānists accepted this concept in its entirety and further developed it into that of the *Nirmāṇakāya*. Many scholars believe that the development of the concept of the Buddha mainly driven by faith in Gautama, but their study of the subject shows that philosophical thought also shows a significant role (Williams 1989).

There was a propensity to see the Buddha as more than just a purely human being in all Buddhist traditions. He believed to have various miraculous powers and the eighty minor and thirty-two significant marks of a superman. The physical body of the Buddha bestowed with eighty minor marks, such as copper-coloured, glossy and prominent nails. The thirty-two significant marks that outspread a considerable distance and immeasurable physical strength are the characterizing feature of a Buddha—referring to Siddhārtha Gautama, once he had become the Buddha the enlightened one, as purely another human being (Williams 1989). The general fact, The Buddha died in a small village, his dead body incinerated, and the remains were put in several Stūpas, for many Stūpas contain an adherents relic of the Buddha‘s body worship, which is the central cult of relics to all Buddhisms. The distribution of these relics after the incineration of the Buddha‘s body is a vital part of Buddhism (Skilling 2005). In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* maintains that the relics of the Buddha divided into eight portions that placed in eight different *Stūpas*. Later tradition holds that Emperor Aśoka made a further division of the bodily relics into 84,000 portions placed in as many different *Stūpas* (Strong 1983) (Strong, Relics of the Buddha 2004)

Nonetheless, the Buddha had discovered truths unknown to the general people and their gods. In a Buddhist living world where human beings who completed virtuous deeds can become gods, and gods completed the exhaustion of their merit, fall to the deepest hells, the Buddha had gone beyond the cycle of transmigration, beyond humans and god. Whether he referred to as having specific divine accredits, as a Buddha, an enlightened being, he against both gods and human beings. However, He denied that he was a god, but he was a Buddha who attained a fully enlightened one.

In two ways, firstly, the Buddha as a Buddha outspreads beyond the physical human being. On the other hand, he is not a separated individual in history but rather exemplifies in his person which he has discovered the Truth. A saying repeated in Buddhist texts that whether a Buddha appears or does not appear, the true nature of things remains forever. There is the Buddha as a physical human being who exemplifies this true nature of things that he created, or rather in the sense that it exists as realized in him and therefore is conducted as realization through his others. Secondly, in the context of meditative attainment and therefore magical involvement, the physical Buddha completed his attainments can provide all about him and himself, other than they appear to be. He is a being of power, an overlord of magical emanations. He can create mind-made bodies of himself to visit other realms and be in more than one place simultaneously.

There seems no reason to doubt that Śākyamuni Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama, was a being who lived and died at a specific time in Indian history. His influence on his followers was presumably profound and life-transforming, although his wider influence during his lifetime on the regions of north India where he lived and preached was maybe slight. It is attractive to think that over centuries, following the death of the Master, Śākyamuni‘s sorrow followers, losing sight of the historical individual, moderately deified the Buddha until he took his place alongside the teeming innumerable of India‘s other gods and goddesses. This process by which a historical individual deified sees him as more than he was. It is essentially a process of falsification and the creation of a massive delusion. The Buddha is never seen as simply an ordinary human being by any Buddhist tradition. He consistently embodies our three dimensions as physical, spiritual and magical. After the Buddha‘s death, interest in the physical to the spiritual and magical is only natural and embodies a substitute of emphasis rather than growing alteration. Thus the Buddha has three dimensions on his physical presence as a saffron-robed monk; his exemplification of the true nature of things necessitates that he is truly free, an enlightened being, and his compassionate ability and desire to take part in supernatural interventions for the benefit of others. These three dimensions designate the incarnation of perfect wisdom and compassion[[2]](#footnote-2), the two definitive constituents of Buddhahood, in the physical body of the monk whom followers have been fortunate enough to meet. However, followers become enlightened not through the encounter with the Buddha as such but through following his teachings until persons embody them in their physical presence. The Buddha‘s physical body and his supernatural interventions are tools subservient to the cognition by others of the Truth.

2.2) *Dharmakāya* or *Dhammakāya*: The Dharma (Sanskrit) or Dhamma (*Pāli*) Body

2.2.1) In the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition

The *Sarvāstivāda* tradition embraces that the Buddha through his magic power, his magical emanations, but followers could scarcely see these as the object of the Buddha Refuge. Instead, when followers take refuge in the Buddha, followers take refuge in his enlightenment and

Dharma body, *Dharmakāya*. The word ‗Dharma‘ in *Dharmakāya* refers here to Dharmas, the ultimates that form the Abhidharma subject matter. The *Dharmakāya* characterizes the Buddha as Buddha that is the collection (*Kāya*) of pure elements (Dharmas) possessed according to the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition exclusively at least in their highest degree by the Buddha. These described as the ten powers of penetrating awareness, the four kinds of intrepidity or fearlessness, the three bases of mindfulness, and great compassion (*Mahākaruṇā*). They are pure because they are without any combined moral and cognitive taints. One takes refuge in the Buddha‘s *Dharmakāya* in the same way that one might respect a monk because he is a physical being who possesses the qualities of a monk.

The Buddha‘s Dharmabody is the flow of Buddha qualities, and in taking refuge in the Buddha, one takes refuge in impartial this *Dharmakāya*, those qualities which the Buddha‘s Doctrine sets forth and teaches. The *Dharmakāya* is here set over and against the ordinary physical body of the Buddha, which the Buddha attribute to his followers. The Mahāyāna stress on the *Dharmakāya* is in its origins not a radical metaphysical departure or a simple case of deification but a continuation of this trend. It becomes oriented towards the final Truth itself, as cognized in a Buddha‘s direct, unmediated gnosis (*Jñāna*). The bodies of the Buddha (P. Harrison 1992b) has suggested that in early and even relatively late Mahāyāna Sūtra literature such as the

*Prajñāpāramitā* and *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* in India, the idea of the *Dharmakāya* was not one of any kind of metaphysical or cosmic ultimate. The highest and most important Buddha body is either the ‗body of doctrine‘, his teachings (Dharma), or the ‗body of Dharmas.‘ Also, the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition, the *Dharmakāya,* refers to all factors (Dharmas), the possession to differentiate a Buddha from one who is not a Buddha. Regularly in these sources, Harrison argues, the expression *Dharmakāya* should take truly, the Buddha possessed a body of Dharma, his teachings, perhaps a body of Dharmas, his Buddha qualities. Thus it contrasts the physical body of the Buddha, which has now passed away and anyway was a physical body with all its physical infirmities with the Buddha‘s truth body. This truth body is either his teachings that remain and lead to enlightenment or the qualities the possession of which to their most entire degree made him a Buddha and can still be attained by his followers. These are the truth body of the Buddha, and of course, the Buddha‘s truth body has not passed away but remains. Thus, Harrison‘s view certainly reflects that of the earlier Perfection of Wisdom literature, the extant Sanskrit text of the

*Aṣṭasāhasrika* (eight thousand verse). The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra makes a clear distinction between the physical body of the Buddha (*Rūpakāya*) and his *Dharmakāya*:

‗[b]ecause a *Tathāgata* is not to see through his physical body;

*Tathāgatas* have the Dharma as their body [*Dharmakāyās Tathāgatāḥ*].‘

(P. Harrison 1992b) (Conze 1973a)

2.2.2) In the *Yogācāra* tradition

The basis referred to as ‗*Tathāgatagarbha*‘ or ‗*Dharmakāya*‘ depending on whether the scholars call unenlightened beings with obscurations or enlightened beings. The *Tathāgatagarbha* said to be a permanent, steadfast, and eternal basis and the basis for *Saṃsāra*, the round of rebirth. Using the *Tathāgatagarbha* rather than a conventional perspective, undergo a rebirth, although neither is born nor does it die. The *Tathāgatagarbha* is the domain of the Buddha only that not realized by the non-Mahāyāna saints and is not within the realm of logic and reasoning. Whoever does not hesitate that the *Tathāgatagarbha* is bundled-up all the defilement accumulation does not hesitate that the *Dharmakāya* of the *Tathāgata* liberated from the whole defilement accumulation. Generally, in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, the *Dharmakāya* is the ‗Dharmabody‘ of the Buddha in himself, the Truth and the final, actual, ultimate, reality or state of things. The *Dharmakāya* is beginningless, uncreate, embryonic, abiding, free from death; permanent, dedicated, calm, endless; virtually pure, liberate from all the defilement-store; and accompanied by Buddha natures more countless than the sands of the Ganges, which are non-distinct, knowing as liberated, and inconceivable. This *Dharmakāya* of the *Tathāgata* not free from the store of defilement as the *Kleśas* (passions), which referred to the *Tathāgatagarbha* (Wayman and

Wayman 1974). Therefore, ‗*Tathāgatagarbha*‘ is the name given to the *Dharmakāya*, which in reality, permanent and unchanging, when defilements obscure it in the unenlightened person. Moreover, this *Dharmakāya*, far from being a characterless absolute, is possessed of innumerable good qualities. In a crucial passage, the *Śrīmālā Sūtra* explains that the

*Tathāgatagarbha* is empty, void, but not empty in the *Mādhyamika* sense of lacking intrinsic existence. Rather:

‗[T]he *Tathāgatagarbha* is void of all the defilement stores, which are distinct and knowing as

not liberated or apart from knowledge which does not lead to liberation;

 (Chang 1983)

the *Tathāgatagarbha* not revoked of the Buddha Dharmas (knowing as liberated), which are nondistinct, inconceivable, more countless than the sands of the Ganges.

Moreover:

‗[I]f there were no *Tathāgatagarbha*, there would be neither aversion towards suffering nor longing, eagerness, and aspiration towards *Nirvāṇa*.‘

The *Tathāgatagarbha* is the basis of aspiration towards *Nirvāṇa* because it is the *Tathāgatagarbha* which experiences suffering.

There can be no experience and no learning from experience in the case of an impermanent flow of everyday consciousness. However, this *Tathāgatagarbha* is no Self, and there is no actual Self within the realm of impure *Saṃsāra*, and the *Tathāgatagarbha* is the very basis of *Saṃsāra*:

‗[T]he *Tathāgatagarbha* is neither Self nor sentient being, nor soul, nor personality.

The *Tathāgatagarbha* is not the domain of beings that fall into the belief in real nature, who

adhere to wayward views, whose thoughts are distracted by voidness‘;

 (Wayman and Wayman 1974)

However, the *Dharmakāya* ‗has the perfection of permanence or ―transcendent permanence‖,

 the perfection of delight, Self, and perfection of purity.

Whatever sentient beings discern the *Dharmakāya* of the *Tathāgata* that way, see correctly.‘

Since the *Tathāgatagarbha* is only the name given to the same ‗thing‘ which in enlightenment is the *Dharmakāya*, and the *Dharmakāya* has the perfection of Self, so the *Tathāgatagarbha* is not Self only in as much as it is *Saṃsāric*, egoistic. The *Śrīmālā Sūtra* makes it clear this substratum, the appearance of which as defiled entails *Saṃsāra*, the realization of the inherent purity of which is *Nirvāṇa*, is in reality intrinsically pure, radiant consciousness. This consciousness is intrinsically pure, never defiled, and yet its apparent defilement is the cause of bondage. It is a mystery understandable only to the Buddhas and advanced Bodhisattvas, and approachable only through faith:

‗It is difficult to understand the meaning of the intrinsically pure consciousness in a condition of defilement.... [T]he consciousness intrinsically pure is difficult to understand, and the defilement of that consciousness is difficult to understand.‘ (Alex Wayman 1990)

The *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* [[3]](#footnote-3) It is a long *Sūtra* that exists in several versions, the textual history of which is exceptionally complicated. This *Sūtra* is particularly noteworthy in the present context for two reasons. The latest sections of the *Sūtra* with a relatively obscure original teach the universality of enlightenment, the presence of the *Tathāgatagarbha* and eventual Buddhahood even in the case of evil people who have no spiritual basis whatsoever in the *Yogācāra* tradition. All sentient beings, without exception, possess the Buddha nature according to the *Tathāgatagarbha* doctrine and the Self teachings of non-Buddhists lie in the Buddha‘s intention in giving the *Tathāgatagarbha* teaching. However, Buddha taught the *Tathāgatagarbha* teaching, which intends to be taken in its prima facie form as it stands[[4]](#footnote-4) As a true doctrine, when the Buddha taught the *Tathāgatagarbha* what he was referring to, the Truth behind his teaching was none other than emptiness (*Śūnyatā*) understood in its *Mādhyamika* sensation as simply a negation, absence of intrinsic Existence (Thurman 1984). After all, the *Tathāgatagarbha* is said to be that within sentient beings, enabling them to attain Buddhahood. It is emptiness, the absence of intrinsic existence, which authorizes sentient beings to substitute into Buddhas. Recollect that emptiness is an implication of dependent origination, and dependent origination entails impermanence and change. In other words, once they are correctly understood, then take the *Tathāgatagarbha* texts as Mādhyamika texts teaching emptiness in the *Mādhyamika* sense. However, the *Tathāgatagarbha* is not just any emptiness; instead, it is precisely the emptiness of intrinsic existence when an appeal to a sentient being‘s mind, his or her mental continuum. That emptiness here is the emptiness of the intrinsic existence of the mind, which entails that it is a changing mind, a mental flow.

2.2.3) In the *Mādhyamika* tradition

The *Mādhyamika* is empty, and causes are the same so that if the mind changes, it must be empty of intrinsic existence. Thus when it says that all sentient beings have within them, the Buddha essence of the Buddha-nature scholars mean that all sentient beings have minds which can change and become Buddha‘s minds (Hopkins 1983). Moreover, this emptiness is referred to when scholars speak of the mind‘s ‗intrinsic purity.‘ When the mind defiled in the unenlightened state, this emptiness is called the *Tathāgatagarbha*. Those who would oppose the ‗alteration‘ of the *Mahāyāna*, the introduction of teachings not taught by the ‗historical‘ Buddha, were in that accused of attaching with unjustifiable rigidity to the physical Buddha rather than to the *Dharmakāya* which the Buddha himself had said He would lead the community after his death.

Furthermore, it is argued in an article by Yuichi Kajiyama (Y. Kajiyama 1985) that particular concern of the *Aṣṭasāhasrika* was the criticism of Stūpaworship. The physical body of the Buddha was in the centuries after the death of the Lord was parallel to worshipping the Stūpas accommodating the Buddha‘s relics. Discredit and devaluation of the Buddha‘s physical body, Kajiyama argues, was criticism of Stūpa worship; praising the Buddha‘s *Dharma* body replaced *Stūpa* worship with a new cult, the worship of the Perfection of Wisdom itself. Followers know that many early *Mahāyāna Sūtras* such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrika* and the Lotus Sūtradid indeed advocate the importance of elevating the actual Sūtra and its worship. Kajiyama highlights the practical basis of the Sūtra‘s praise of the *Dharmakāya* and the Perfection of Wisdom and its disparagement of the physical body enshrined in a Stūpa. It also follows that the first dimension of the meaning of *Dharmakāya* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrika* is the Perfection of Wisdom precisely the

Sūtra itself, the *Dharmakāya* as *Dharma* as the Doctrine. It harmonizes with Harrison‘s work and Lewis Lancaster‘s study of the oldest versions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrika* (Lancaster 1975). Lancaster suggests the references to the *Dharmakāya* in the Sanskrit text are later interpolations. The Sūtra grew over several centuries, and one direction of growth was elaborating its treatment of the *Dharmakāya*. However, the Buddha‘s truth body is a perfect, conditioned physical body, while the expression *Dharmakāya* refers simply to the collection of the Buddha‘s Sūtras. If devotees follow Kajiyama, then the specific reference is to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* themselves. As Kajiyama points out, the term *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrika* has a diversity of meanings, including the true nature of things (*Dharmatā* equal to *Śūnyatā*) and its cognition. Thus while the expression *Dharmakāya* in the oldest Perfection of Wisdom literature used to equal the Buddha‘s teaching, since the Buddha‘s spiritual body, his teaching is his body because, like him, it exemplifies the true nature of things, that true nature of things itself is that which is to realize.

Mentioned above to the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition *Dharma* in *Dharmakāya* was taken to equal the fundamental elements (Dharmas), which possessed to a full degree, make up the Buddha‘s realization. In the Perfection of Wisdom literature, the *Dharmakāya* gradually refers not only to the Doctrine, which attributes the true nature of things but also to the realization and true nature of things. The *Dharmakāya* is the body or collection of ultimate truths (*Śūnyatā*: emptinesses), or it is the mental Dharmas apprehending the ultimate Truth (*Prajñā*). The Buddha has died. However, there remains the Truth that he designated, and its realization is still possible. Those whose apprehension is with historical issues of scriptural authenticity, or bodily relics, when the important thing is realization. There are three interconnected dimensions to the *Dharmakāya* in *Prajñapāramitā* texts:

* First, the *Dharmakāya* is the collection of teachings, particularly the *Prajñāpāramitā* itself;
* Second, it is the assembly of pure *Dharmas* own by the Buddha, exactly pure mental Dharmas cognizing emptiness;
* Third, it comes to emptiness itself, the true nature of things.

The *Dharmakāya*, in all these senses, is contrasted with the Buddha‘s physical body, which lived and died and preserved in Stūpas. The familiar later three bodies (*Trikāya*) approach not found explicitly asserted in the early Perfection of Wisdom texts, or is it found in the works of *Nāgārjuna*.

2.2.4) The second body in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (MPPS)

The terms used for the second body in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (MPPS) are two: *Nirmāṇakāya* and *Rupakāya*, representing a transitional period in the development of the *Trikāya* doctrine as follows:

First, the MPPS has developed the *Rupakāya* as an Emanation body following the philosophical idea of the *Mahāsāṃghikas* while assimilating attributes the *Rupakāya* concept in both

*Sarvāstivādins* and *Mahāsāṃghikas*. Thus, the *Dharmakāya* in the MPPS is the true nature of all things (Dharmas), which is empty; it has no mark and does not come and does not go. That is the true Buddha. This aspect of the *Dharmakāya* concept in the MPPS has developed based on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, the central theme of which is emptiness.

Second, concerning its characteristics, the *Dharmakāya* is described as pervading the space of the ten directions with a majestic and marvellous form, limitless rays of light and a boundless voice. *Dharmakāya* always teaches the Dharmato liberate living beings, but sentient beings do not perceive the majestic form or hear the marvellous voice because they have much defilement accumulated through numerous Kalpas. It is only the great Bodhisattvas who can see the

*Dharmakāya* and listen to its preaching. The *Dharmakāya*‘s Buddha is described in MPPS as follows: ―The body of the Buddha is limitless, and so are his rays of light and voice. The merits of moral discipline (*Sila*), concentration (*Samadhi*) and wisdom (*Prajñā*) of the Buddha are also immeasurable. It means that the Buddha has a marvellous body with attributes of limitless rays of light and a boundless voice because of gathering great merit by practising the six *Pāramitā* for countless Kalpas. This aspect of the *Dharmakāya* developed based on the philosophical ideas of the true Buddha of the *Mahāsāṃghikas* through the assimilation of doctrinal teachings in other *Mahāyāna* sutras such as the *Prajñāpāramita*.

Third, concerning its retinue, the *Dharmakāya* has the retinue of countless great Bodhisattvas who have one more birth to Bodhi. These great Bodhisattvas are the audience listening to the preaching of the *Dharmakāya* and who can comprehend the Dharma. These Bodhisattvas, in turn, save sentient beings with skilful means by taking birth in different lands, under various forms with different names. According to the MPPS, there are two kinds of Bodhisattvas: the

*Dharmakāya* Bodhisattvas and the ordinary Bodhisattvas, born of karma. The *Dharmakāya* Bodhisattvas can manifest themselves in different forms and take birth in the world of their own will in order to save sentient beings. The ordinary Bodhisattvas take birth in the human world on account of karma, while the *Dharmakāya* Bodhisattvas come from either other Buddha-lands or Tusita heaven. The *Dharmakāya* Bodhisattvas have the merit of the Buddha, so they are the retinue of the true Buddha.

Moreover, the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* (MPPŚ) mentions to the Buddha‘s body emitted light on various occasions that there are two kinds of light of the Buddha as the physical light (*Rūpa*

*Prabhā*) and the light of wisdom (*Prajñā Prabhā*). For the physical light can again be divided into two categories:

* Firstly, the light emitted from the physical body‘s Buddha, such as the one-fathom halo, radiates from his body.
* The second is the light that appears through the supernatural power of the Buddha on certain occasions, such as the preaching of important Sūtras.

Thus, the light‘s Buddha can further classify into three types: the physical light, the light of the supernatural power, and the light of wisdom.

According to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra*, there are two kinds of the retinue of the Buddha.

They are:

The first retinue belongs to the *Rūpakāya* and the second belongs to the *Dharmakāya*. The MPPŚ discusses only the two Buddha bodies, but if we apply these two kinds of retinue to the threebody theory, the worldly retinue would belong to the *Nirmāṇakāya*, and the excellent

Bodhisattva retinue would belong to the *Saṃbhogakāya*. It is because the *Saṃbhogakāya* enjoys the Dharma only with great Bodhisattvas and not with others, according to the

*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*. In other words, the *Saṃbhogakāya* would have only the great Bodhisattvas as retinue, while the *Dharmakāya* in the three-body theory is the support and base of the other two bodies.

2.3) *Aṣṭasāhasrika* and *Tathāgatāḥ Sūtra*: *Rūpakāya* and *Dharmakāyās*

In conformity with the *Aṣṭasāhasrika*, *Nāgārjuna* speaks of a physical body and a *Dharmakāya*.

The Buddha‘s physical body (*Rūpakāya*) results from his ‗collection of merit‘, his compassionate deeds performed throughout infinite past lives. It is the incarnation of his compassion as the physical body of a Buddha exists for others. On the other hand, the Buddha‘s *Dharmakāya* arises from his collection of wisdom from the Buddha‘s insight into emptiness. These two collections, *Nāgārjuna* explains, are the causes of Buddhahood (Ratnāvalī 1975). Assembling merit and wisdom is the essence of the *Mahāyāna* path, the path to full Buddhahood. *Nāgārjuna* describes almost devotional terms the wonders of the Buddha and his understanding of emptiness. And then *Nāgārjuna* raises his praises to a new and higher level:

‗Even if you not seen in a physical sense,

it is said that you see. By seeing the Dharma, you have indeed good seen.

(And yet) there is no seeing the precise nature of things (Dharmatā).‘

The precise nature of things cannot be seen with the physical eyes, as was the physical body of the Buddha. Yet the Buddha manifests himself following the requirements of others, preaching, for instance, three vehicles, although in Truth, there is only one (Tucci 1932)

And:

‗Your body is permanent, stable, and earliest tranquil. It is the nature of the Dharma.‘

Nonetheless, the Buddha demonstrates an apparent death (a final Nirvāṇa), although those who have believed in the Buddha can indeed see him in the innumerable realms of the cosmos.

There is no clear distinction in *Nāgārjuna*‘s hymn between the Buddha in some sense transcendent to this world (*Lokottara*) who manifests worldly activity out of his skill-in-means, remaining (perhaps in a Pure Land). After his apparent death to inspire his followers (Lotus *Sūtra*), and the truth body of the Buddha, which indicated by his teachings, the true nature of things (*Dharmatā*), and emptiness. Instead, *Nāgārjuna* plays the contrasting notion with the Buddha‘s authentic physical appearance.

A distinction between these two eventually gives rise to the three-body model. *Nāgārjuna*‘s failure to make the distinction is doctrinally confusing, perhaps, but poetically rather pleasing. In another of *Nāgārjuna*‘s hymns,[[5]](#footnote-5) *Nāgārjuna* speaks of the Buddha in his ultimate aspect, to all intents and purposes emptiness, the ultimate authentic way of things, itself. The Buddha is neither non-being nor being, neither annihilation nor permanence, not non-eternal, not eternal. He is no category of duality (Tucci 1932), has no colour, no size, no spatial location, etc. He cannot, therefore, praised.

The *Svātantrika Mādhyamika Bhāvaviveka* speaks of the *Dharmakāya* as beyond language and conception, neither existent nor nonexistent. It is the calming of all verbal differentiations. Scholars know from elsewhere in the same text that this is an exact characterization of the actual state of things (reality: *Tattva*), that is, emptiness.

For the *Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas* also, *Prajñākaramati* writes of the *Dharmakāya* as having the nature of the ultimate reality. The contrast of physical body and *Dharmakāya* in the *Aṣṭsāhasrikā* and *Nāgārjuna* scholars find a reasonably consistent pattern among later *Mādhyamika* theorists in using the term *Dharmakāya* as an equivalent for emptiness, the ultimate Truth. Nevertheless, since the *Dharmakāya* referred to within the context of Buddhology, the *Dharmakāya* is simply a personification of emptiness set forth or exemplified in the Buddha‘s being. Since the *Dharmakāya* is the actual being of others, as well as *Mādhyamikas* all, are empty of intrinsic existence through having the *Dharmakāya* within, it can embody the *Dharmakāya* that is all can become fully-enlightened Buddhas. The entitled ―*Dharmakāya*‖ describes Buddhahood by reference to multiple Buddha *Kāyas*. *Dharmakāya* is an exalted term, used with the most profound reverence for a Buddha‘s supramundane, nondual realization of reality as it is. The fundamental sense of the Sanskrit word *Kāya* is ―body‖, meaning the physical body of a living being. The term *Kāya* in *Rupakāya* in pre-*Mahāyāna* and *Mahāyāna* texts generally referred to a

Buddha‘s his *Śarīra* ―body‖ or ―physical form‖ as with the English word ―body‖ the term also came to possess several derivational meanings. *Kāya* often refers to a collection of things (corpus) that can refer to a substratum or a basis of qualities or to the ―embodiment‖ of those qualities in one‘s understanding and way of being.

2.4) *Sambhogakāya* or *Sāmbhogikakāya*: The Bliss body

The *Sambhogakāya* theory arose as a result of the debate on the *Rupakāya* of the Buddha. Initially, the *Sarvāstivādins* and the *Mahāsāṃghikas* debated on the transcendental qualities of the Buddha. It later led to the problem of the short lifespan of *Śākyamuni* when *Mahāyānists* increasingly focused on the great merit of the Buddha gained through Bodhisattva practice. The formulation of the *Sambhogakāya* was arguably a solution to the complex problem, basing itself as the pattern on the teachings of the early and middle *Mahāyāna Sūtras.*

The term *Sambhogakāya* denotes the body of bliss of the Buddha, first appeared in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (MSA). In the earliest systematic explanation of the *Trikāya* doctrine, they have formulated. The introduction of the concept of the *Sambhogakāya* was most probably a solution to the complex problem concerning the physical body (*Rupakāya*) of the Buddha. The *Rupakāya* has become the central point of contention between the *Mahāsāṃghikas* and the *Sarvāstivādins* when the former idealized the Buddha and attributed many supernatural qualities to him over time. The *Sarvāstivādins* disagreed with the *Mahāsāṃghikas* over the purity of the *Rupakāya* of the Buddha. These supernatural qualities had been further developed in the *Mahāyāna* sutras when the *Mahāyānist* attributed to the Buddha immeasurable merit as a result of Bodhisattva practice. The Buddha‘s *Rupakāya* for the *Mahāyānists* themselves as the contradiction between the short *Śākyamuni* lifespan and his immeasurable merit. The controversial points from the early Indian Buddhist schools up to the *Mahāyāna* revolved around the supernatural qualities of the *Rupakāya*, which not found in the physical body of the historical Buddha and which not described in the *Nikāyas* and the *Āgamas*. It was intending to solve controversies that the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (MSA) formulated the *Trikāya* theory after having summarized the developments regarding the concept of the Buddha in the early and middle *Mahāyāna* *Sūtras* and *Śāstras*:

* + 1. Ruben Habito, who has conducted a brief survey of the bodies of the Buddha, thinks that the appearance of the *Sambhogakāya* is the result of a complex development involving the

*Jātakas*; the Bodhisattva ideal; the concept of the Buddha‘s merit; the idea of the Existence of many Buddhas; Pure Land Buddhism and other factors.

* + 1. Takeuchi takes a similar approach to Habito but places more emphasis on the Bodhisattva ideal. He asserts that the concept of the *Sambhogakāya* closely associated with the Bodhisattva ideal, which in his view released concurrently with the concept of the Buddha. The critical aspect of the Bodhisat relates to Bodhisattva‘s vow at the beginning of his spiritual training until the attainment of Buddhahood. In this connection, *Amitābha* Buddha is considered as a *Sambhogakāya* for he bliss the blessings in the Pure Land as the award for deeds ensuring his vows in front of *Lokeśvararāja Tathāgata* when he was Bhiksu Dharmakara. However, the exact origin and development of the theory of the *Sambhogakāya* remain unanswered.

2.4.1) The concept of merit (*Puṇya*)

The concept of *Sambhogakāya* originated with the concept of merit (*Puṇya*) as a reward for the meritorious deeds of Bodhisattva practice. It is said in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (MPPS) that good as well as great causes result in great rewards when referring to the superior light and great power that the Buddha possesses. Thus the merit of the Buddha connected with his qualities and attributed that the Buddha possesses the merits, the more numerous the attributes he attains, including superhuman attributes. Eventually, the image of the historical Buddha gradually moved further away from the real world, so much so that the superhuman character slowly overtook the memory of him as a human being. More and more emphasis on the merit of the Buddha became apparent, as it thought that the appearance of the Buddha in the living world was a rare event. Consequently, the merit attributed to the Buddha gradually increased, which, in turn, led to the increase of his attributes that pertain to physical and supernatural qualities.

The *Jātaka* marks are the first concept of merit and aggregation by the Buddha during his career as a Bodhisattva. It was the Bodhisattva career of *Siddhārtha Gautama* that became expanded with new dimensions. The *Jātaka* contains five hundred and forty-seven stories that portray the Buddha as a Bodhisattva practising the *Pāramitā* in many lives and different forms such as king, Brahmin, farmer and even animals such as a monkey, all before his Buddhahood. As a result of all such meritorious deeds, the Buddha acquired the reward of the thirty-two significant marks and eighty minor characteristics of a great man. The Bodhisattva career was assumed to require practice for three *Mahdsamkhyeya Kalpas* before attaining enlightenment. During this long period, the Bodhisattva has acquired a great heap of merit. The *Sarvāstivādins* stated that in order to gain each of the significant marks, the Buddha represented one hundred meritorious acts; and in order to emanate all the merits required for all the thirty-two significant marks, the Buddha diligently practised the *Pāramitā* for a further ninety-one *Mahdkalpas*. Thus it is evident that the merit gathered during the three *Mahdsamkhyeya Kalpas* is immeasurable. However, the Mahāsāṃghika school took a significant step in enhancing the merit of the Buddha.

The *Lokdnnvartana Sūtra* in the *Mahāsāṃghikas* that is ―the wisdom, the merits and the power of the Buddha are immeasurable.‖ As a result of this assumption, the *Mahāsāṃghikas* attributed many supernatural qualities to the Buddha and assembled him as a transcendent being (*Lokottara*). It was a significant development in the concept of the Buddha during the period of the early Buddhist schools. Following the line of thought of the *Mahāsāṃghikas*, the *Mahāyānists* further proliferated the merit of the Buddha that assembled immeasurable merit during three *Mahdsamkhyeya Kalpas* by practising the six *Pāramitā* while ascending the ten stages of the Bodhisattva career. As stated in the *Avataṃsaka*, it is in this way that the Buddha obtained the *Dharmakāya*, a state of eternal and blissful quiescence in Buddhahood. As discussed above, the *Mahāyānists* considered the *Dharmakāya* as the Buddha. However, in its function as a teacher to the great Bodhisattvas who have one more birth to bodhi, it is named the *Sambhogakāya*.

Furthermore, this *Sambhogakāya* has all the supernatural attributes of the Buddha as a reward for Bodhisattva practice. However, the progressive rumination on the merit of the Buddha and his attributes did not follow an easily traceable path. Some many problems and challenges posed by the Sthaviras, who held the view of a human Buddha. All such considerations and counteraction contributed to the evolution and establishment of the concept of the *Sambhogakāya*. The debate between *Sarvāstivāda* and *Mahāsāṃghika* Schools on the physical body of the Buddha during the period of the early Indian Buddhist schools. All schools shared a common understanding of the attainments of the Buddha, namely the *Dharmakāya,* which consisted of pure *Dharmas*. However, regarding the physical body of the Buddha, they were divided in opinion as to whether the Buddha was transcendental (*Lokottara*), or in other words, whether the Buddha was physically pure or not. This central point involved the *Mahāsāṃghikas* and their sub-schools as the *Lokottaravāda*.

On the one hand, and the *Sarvāstivādins* representing the *Sthaviravada* on the other. The *Mahāsāṃghikas* asserted that the Buddha is transcendental and that his physical body is pure while the Sarvāstivādins maintained that the Buddha is a human being and as a result, his physical body is not pure. The *Vibhāṣā*, the encyclopedia of the *Sarvāstivāda* School, provides us with information the contents of their debates with the *Mahāsāṃghikas*.

2.4.2) *Lokottara*: the Buddha is pure and transcendental

According to the *Vibhāṣā*, the *Mahāsāṃghikas* held the opinion that the physical body (*Rupakāya*) of the Buddha is pure and without defilements. They gave three reasons in support of their assertion:

* First, the *Sūtras* state that the *Tathāgata* was born globally abided in the world and not defiled by the worldly Dharmas.
* Second, the Buddha had forever eradicated, without exception, all the *Kleśa* and habitual forces.
* Third, the Buddha had cultivated both his mind and body and if the mind is pure after completion of mental cultivation, then so is the physical body.

Therefore the Buddha is pure and transcendental (*Lokottara*). However, the *Sarvāstivādins* disagreed with them concerning the physical body of the Buddha and asserted its impurity. They also found passages from the early sutras in support of their statement. They argued that the foolish obtain their physical bodies with consciousness based on ignorance and attachment, and so do the wise. The Buddha included in the wise category, and his physical body resulted from ignorance and attachment and therefore impure. The *Sarvāstivādins* further argued that if the physical body of the Buddha were pure without defilement, then women would not have loved, not have hated, not have been ignorant, and not have looked down upon the Buddha. Here the *Sarvāstivādins* argue that a pure body would not give rise to worldly passions such as hatred, love or ignorance, but since the physical body of the Buddha had been the source of these emotions, it was not pure. When they asked to explain the *Mahāsāṃghika* quotations from the sutras, the *Sarvāstivādins* interpreted them differently.

The *Sarvāstivādins* interpreted the *Mahāsāṃghikas* that refer to the *Dharmakāya*, ‗The *Tathāgata* was born and abided in the world means the *Rupakāya* appearing in the world, ‗but not being defiled by the world means the pure *Dharmakāya*. Concerning the second point of the *Mahāsāṃghikas*, the *Sarvāstivādins* explained that although the Buddha eradicated all the *Kleśa*, the *Rupakāya* could still cause *Kleśa* in others and hence it is impure. Concerning the third point, the *Sarvāstivādins* explained that the phrase ‗the body cultivated is said about the practice opposing physical defilement (*Rupa Kleśa*). When the body cultivated, the practitioner enters the path and progresses uninterruptedly until liberation. The disagreement between the

*Sarvāstivādins* and the *Mahāsāṃghikas* about the Buddha‘s physical body based essentially on the transcendental qualities of the *Rupakāya* attributed to the Buddha by the *Mahāsāṃghikas*. The *Sarvāstivādins* argued that the physical body of the *Tathāgata* born of parents is not pure and hence not an object of refuge. Instead, the *Dharmakāya* that consists of the Buddha‘s fully accomplished qualities (*Aśaikṣa-Dharma*) is the object of refuge. So the basic argument of the two schools still concerns the qualities of the Buddha‘s physical body.

2.4.3) The eight kinds of wind

The *Sarvāstivāda* concept of the Buddha met with challenges from other schools, primarily from the *Mahāsāṃghikas*. In an attempt to maintain and strengthen their doctrinal position on the concept of the Buddha, the *Sarvāstivādins* found further support in the *Nikāyas*. It consisted of the eight kinds of wind mentioned four times in the *Vibhāṣā* connection with the Buddha‘s body.

The eight kinds of wind are 1. Gain, 2. Loss, 3. Praise, 4. Ridicule, 5. Eulogy, 6. defamation, 7. Joy, and 8. Sorrow. The *Sarvāstivādins* asserted that sentient beings go after the eight kinds of wind, and the eight kinds of wind go after sentient beings. The *Tathāgata* did not pursue the eight kinds of wind, as He was not attached to any of them, although the eight kinds of wind did pursue the *Tathāgata*. The worldly Dharmas did not defile the *Tathāgata.* The *Sarvāstivādins* disputed that the Buddha neither became delighted, attached to, happy or high spirited when he encountered the beneficial winds such as gain, nor was he worried, hateful, angry or low spirited confronted with the damaging winds such as defamation. He was not defiled by the world because he did not become attached to any of the eight kinds of wind, but not because his physical body was pure and without defilement.

Eventually, the debate between the *Sarvāstivādins* and the *Mahāsāṃghikas* about the Buddha‘s *Rupakāya* began on the Buddha‘s life. These incidents were the manifestations of what some deemed to be the bad Karma of the Buddha. It was later classified into a group with ten subdivisions, with all probability by the *Sarvāstivādins*.

2.5) *Svabhāvikakāya* or *Vajrakāya*: The Nature body

The *Svabhāvikakāya* or Nature Body solid a *Dharmatā* body and possesses the two purities.

1. *Dharmatā* means ‗actual nature‘ or ‗sphere of reality.‘
2. *Dharmatā* means a synonym of emptiness.

Since the Nature body not only refers to emptiness, *Dharmatā* here means ‗that which its natural state without being altered by causes and conditions.‘ *Svabhāvikakāya* is one of the four *Kāyas* of a Buddha. The *Svabhāvikakāya* defined as an enlightened form distinguished by two-fold purity, the natural purity of essential space of reality, and all temporary stains‘ purification. It is the ultimate Buddha *Kāya* which the wisdom aspect is called the wisdom *Dharmakāya* and its appearance as a form *Kāya* complete with fivefold certainty in the perception of pure beings is the Sambhogakāya. Its appearance as a form of *Kāya* to impure beings is the *Nirmāṇakāya*.

The *Svabhāvikakāya* or *Vajrakāya* in *Mahāyāna* Teachings named either the third or fourth *Kāya*, sometimes described as the sum of the other ones, sometimes as the basis for the other ones:

1. Receiving the Four Empowerments: This fourth or word initiation is the introduction to the natural state of all phenomena; through it, we become a proper vessel for the practice of the Great Perfection. It is the ultimate Buddhahood, the indivisibility of the three

*Kāyas*, or the *Svabhāvikakāya*, the body of the true nature.

1. *Mahāmudrā* and related instructions: The *Svabhāvikakāya* is great peace and is the nature of all phenomena. It attained through the power of the *Dharmakāya*, through realization. Sometimes, it calls this the body of great bliss (*Mahāsukhakāya*) because its distinctive quality is supreme, unchanging bliss.
2. The *Svabhāvikakāya* is the *Dharmakāya* of the *tathāgatas* because it is the locus of power over everything.
3. The treasury of knowledge: The *Svabhāvikakāya* is the uncommon transformation that the physical channels transform into the *Nirmāṇakāya*, the channel syllables into *Sambhogakāya*, the constituent elixir into *Dharmakāya* and great bliss, and the core energy current of pristine awareness transforms into the *Svabhāvikakāya*.
4. *Svabhāvikakāya* characterized as emptiness, which is to say, the nature of all phenomena, a nature free of all elaboration and completely pure.

There are four *Kāyas* when one adds the *Svabhāvikakāya* enlightened dimension of the very essence of being itself of innate presence, or *Mahāsukhakāya*, to the three *Kāyas*.

The Nature Body can divide into two:

1) Nature body free of the defilement of inherent existence

I was referring to the emptiness of inherent existence (the ultimate Truth) of the mental consciousness. Therefore, the emptiness of the inherent existence of the omniscient mental consciousness is a Nature body free of the defilement of inherent existence. Previously, the ultimate truth of the mental consciousness of the sentient being, which preceded that Buddha, is the Buddha-nature of that sentient being. Shortage of inherent existence of the mental consciousness of a sentient being Buddha-nature.

2) Nature body free of adventitious defilement

The Nature body, free of adventitious defilements, mentions eliminating adventitious defilements, eliminating distressing and cognitive hindrances. The afflictive hindrances are the hindrances to liberation, whereas the cognitive hindrances are the hindrances to omniscience. These hindrances are the adventitious defilements this type of Nature body is free. Therefore, *Nirvāṇa* or Truth of termination in the continuity of a Buddha is the Nature body free of adventitious defilements. The Nature body accumulated because it is not impermanent. However, since the Nature Body is attained independence on the accumulation of method and wisdom during training, it qualifies to be called *Kāya.*

Furthermore, it called the natural body because it is unaltered by causes and conditions; its natural circumstances without being changed by causes and conditions. The Nature body left in its natural state without being changed by causes and conditions because it is permanent. Even though the Nature body is everlasting and therefore not produced depending on causes and conditions, it does not mean that it is not attained independence on particular meditational techniques. It is attained independence on the practice of great compassion and of the wisdom that directly realizes emptiness.

According to the Nature body has three attributes in Maitreya‘s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*:

1. The attribute of possession is that the Nature body possesses the twenty-one sets of uncontaminated exalted wisdom.
2. The attribute of separation is the Nature body separated from the afflictive and cognitive obstructions.
3. The entity‘s attribute is the Nature body shortage inherent Existence: According to Nature body has five characteristics in Maitreya‘s Uttaratantra.6 and five qualities7.

6 The five characteristics are:

* 1. The Nature body is everlasting.
	2. The Nature body is impenetrable from the ten powers and enlightened qualities.
	3. The Nature body has eliminated the deploring and superimposing misapprehensions.

2.6) *Jñānakāya*: The Wisdom Truth Body

A *Jñānakāya* or the wisdom truth body refers to the omniscient, mental consciousness that directly realizes all phenomena. The meaning of a Wisdom Truth body is a pearl of final exalted wisdom that directly realizes suchness, ultimate truths, and the conventional truths. The

*Jñānakāya* categorized as a ―body‖ in the *Kālacakra* tradition, which is the body imagery applied to ultimate reality within this tradition. Although conceptions of the Wisdom Truth Body (*Jñānakāya*) as a particular category of the Buddha body, they are most extensively elaborated upon in the *Kālacakra* literature. It will bring forth the evaluative and classificatory usages of the term *Jñānakāya* in the sources mentioned above, and the analysis is concerned with both the heuristic and provocative functions of their discourses. It also addresses the interpretative framework through which the *Kālacakra* tradition constructs the notions of embodiment and suggests that Buddhist esoteric discourse can help demonstrate that the concept of a body can be understood as a broader category that extends from a physical body to an immaterial perceptible form, and the pure nondual awareness. An analysis of the Wisdom Truth body (*Jñānakāya*) multileveled constructions concerning critical assessments of the rubric of the ‗body‘ while bringing to light new models of embodiment.

There are three different paths of classifying the wisdom body:

1) The most expansive of the three classifications are the category of the twenty-one sets of uncontaminated exalted wisdom. The twenty-one groups of uncontaminated superior wisdom are:

 4) It is liberated from the three hindrances afflictive obstructions, cognitive obstructions, and obstructions to meditative stabilization. 5) It is naturally pure.

7 The five qualities are:

* 1. The Nature body is immeasurable: it is expansive.
	2. The Nature body is innumerable: its qualities are infinite.
	3. The Nature body is inconceivable: it cannot express verbally.
	4. The Nature body is unequalled: only Buddhas can perceive it directly.
	5. The Nature body is pure: it has dispelled the afflictive and cognitive obstructions.

―1. The thirty-seven consonances with enlightenment; 2. The four immeasurables; 3. The eight meditative liberations; 4. The nine meditative absorptions; 5. The ten totalities; 6. The eight magnificences; 7. The superior knowers of states of prayer wishes; 8. The unafflicted meditative compensations; 9. The six extrasensory perceptions; 10. The four individual correct pieces of knowledge; 11. The four purities of the body; 12. The ten powers; 13. The ten toughness; 14. The four courageousness; 15. The three non-preservations; 16. The three close positionings of mindfulness; 17. The nature of not having amnesia of sentient beings' welfare; 18. Complete conquest of the inclinations of the three gates; 19. Great compassion for all sentient beings; 20.

The eighteen indivisible qualities of a buddha; 21. The three exalted knowers.‖

* + 1. The middling classification is the category of the five exalted pearls of wisdom. The five exalted pearls of wisdom are 1. Mirror-like Wisdom; 2. Wisdom of Equality; 3. Wisdom of Individual Discernment; 4. Accomplishing Wisdom; 5. Wisdom of *Dharmatā* or Wisdom of the Sphere of Reality.

* + 1. The briefest category is the two exalted pearls of wisdom. The two exalted pearls of wisdom are:

―1. The omniscient knower that obtains ultimate truths; 2. The omniscient knower that perceives varieties (conventional truths).‖

2.7) The ‗Non-abiding *Nirvāṇa*‘ and the lifespan of the Buddha

In the meanings of *Nirvāṇa* in the *Mahāyāna*, it mentioned the supreme and compassionate *Apratiṣṭhita Nirvāṇa*[[6]](#footnote-6) of the Buddha contrasted it with the *Nirvāṇas* attained by the Arhats and *Pratyekabuddhas*. It mentioned a further point concerning whether a Buddha in the *Mahāyāna* at some points are in the unimaginable future, will attain some final *Nirvāṇa* which referred to in books as a *Parinirvāṇa* and go completely beyond recall or reference by suffering sentient beings. The expression *Apratiṣṭhita Nirvāṇa* was probably introduced as a term, although not necessarily as a concept, by the *Yogācāra tradition*. It is best to apprehend initially from the side, not of a Buddha but a Bodhisattva, an aspirant on the path to Buddhahood. It is crucial in one‘s practice that the Bodhisattva renounces *Saṃsāra*, the round of ignorant misapprehension and dishonest behaviour, and also any idea of *Nirvāṇa* as not the negation of greed, hatred and delusion but also transcendence and neglectful abandonment of the institutions and persons of *Saṃsāra*. The Bodhisattva goes beyond duality, abandons greed, hatred and delusion, but does not abandon suffering sentient beings. One attains wisdom but preserves compassion. If *Nirvāṇa* understood as not abandoning greed, hatred and delusion, however, abandoning in this life all about for the institutions and persons of ‗the world‘, and after death returning no more to help those institutions and persons (becoming an Arhat), then the Bodhisattva renounces also *Nirvāṇa*. Thus the *Nirvāṇa* that is attained by the Bodhisattva when he or she attains Buddhahood is not that type of *Nirvāṇa*.

Instead, it is a non-abiding *Nirvāṇa*, an unrestricted or not-fixed *Nirvāṇa*, which is to say that it is a *Nirvāṇa* which embodies two dimensions. The upward movement away from *Saṃsāra*, away from greed, hatred and delusion, and a downward movement is returning out of compassion to the maelstrom of samsaric institutions and persons (Nagao 1991). The Buddha abides neither in *Saṃsāra*, for he is a Buddha, nor in *Nirvāṇa* in the sense that he has abandoned suffering sentient beings. He has a foot in both camps, while he is in neither in another sense. He has gone far away from all duality and clinging, which clings neither to the world nor to transcendence. However, He will a fully-enlightened Buddha nevertheless, perhaps in the unimaginable future, eventually attain some final *Nirvāṇa*. It concerns pre-eminently the Bliss Body, the *Dharmakāya* is attaining a final *Nirvāṇa*, for the *Dharmakāya* does not attain anything at all. It is permanent, remaining forever in its nature. Things are empty of intrinsic existence; the continuum of pure radiant awareness never ceases. The Buddha‘s emanation bodies, on the other hand, in one sense can be said to attain a final *Nirvāṇa*, but in another sense do not. The Emanation body is a manifestation for the benefit of beings, and among the deeds of Emanation Bodies is the manifestation of a final *Nirvāṇa*. Thus the Emanation body can attain a final *Nirvāṇa*, however, since the manifestation is unreal, just a show, the final *Nirvāṇa* is also unreal, just a show.

The Bliss Body is the transcendent glorified Buddha, and then it can detect two theories on the eternality of the Buddha (Poussin 1928–48). According to the Lotus Sūtra and the *Suvarṇabhāsottana Sūtra*, after an enormously long period, a Buddha will eventually enter final *Nirvāṇa*, although according to the first of these, the Buddha‘s Emanation bodies will continue in order to help sentient beings. The notion is that the Buddha‘s life with all beings results from his merit gathered in the previous lives. The Buddha‘s merit, while immense, cannot be infinite; the Buddha‘s lifespan must, in reality, be finite (Sūtra 1970). Some texts view beings as infinite, and *Yogācāra* texts maintain that some beings will never attain enlightenment. Therefore, the Buddhas remain either to continue to save infinite sentient beings and provide many satisfying rebirths for whom will never put an end to the *Samsāra*. Here scholars find the extreme point of the *Mahāyāna* emphasis on compassion. The concern of the Buddhas is excellent that they resolved never to enter any final *Nirvāṇa* of complete quiescence and peace but rather to remain and help other beings. Of course, the Buddhas see things correctly, so, as the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* state, no beings saved, and there is no *Nirvāṇa* to attain. They act interminably for the sake of sentient beings, for in Buddhas, there are no negative experiences such as tiredness. Also, from the side of suffering sentient beings themselves, the bliss body Buddhas remain exerting their infinite compassionate deeds so long as a single being remains unenlightened.

 

1. *Rddhi* (Sanskrit: Rddhi; Pali: *Iddhi*) in Buddhism refers to ―psychic powers‖, one of the six supranormal powers (*Abhijñā*) attained by advanced meditation through the four *Dhyānas*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Wisdom knows the true nature of things, and compassion is a magical intervention. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Do not be confused with the non-*Mahāyāna Sūtra* of the same name, represented in the Pāli tradition by the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I am teaching some intrinsically existent immutable ultimate reality, or True Self. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Nāgārjuna*‘s hymns are the *Paramārthastava*-Hymn to the Ultimate. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The so-called ‗Non-Abiding‘ or ‗unrestricted‘, or ‗not fixed *Nirvāṇa*.‘ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)