The triple mystery of Buddha’s embodiment
JUST BEFORE LEAVING WÜRZBURG, H.P. Blavatsky had sent a MS of the Secret Doctrine to Adyar seeking the opinions of H.S. Olcott and T. Subba Row. In a letter to her friend, Countess Constance Wachtmeister, expressing grave doubts whether her deteriorating health will allow her to complete the writing of the Secret Doctrine, Blavatsky gives the first hint about a Triple Mystery:

Ever since you went away, I have felt as though either paralysis or a split in the heart would occur. I am cold as ice and four doses of digitalis in one day could not quit the heart. Well, let me only finish my Secret Doctrine. Last night, instead of going to bed I was made to write until 1 o’clock. The triple Mystery is given out — one I had thought they would never have given out — that of . . . [sic]¹

What this triple mystery might be?

Says a Commentary:

Having reached the Path of Deliverance [Thar-lam] from transmigration, one cannot perform Tulpa² any longer, for to become a Parinirvāṇi is to close the circle of the Septenary Ku-Sum.³ He has merged his borrowed Dorjesempa [Vajrasattva] into the Universal and become one with it.⁴

. . . the seven ku-sum, or triple form of the Nirvānic state and their respective duration, and relate to doctrines of which Orientalists know absolutely nothing.⁵

Witness the Nirmānakāya — the sublime doctrine which no Orientalist understands to this day but which Dr. Hübbe-Schleiden can find in the IInd and IIIrd Treatises in The Voice of the Silence. Naught else shows forth the eternal; and in no other way than this can any mystic or occultist truly reach the eternal, whatever the Orientalists and the vocabularies of Buddhist terms may say, for the real meaning of the Trikāya, the triple power of Buddha’s embodiment, and of Nirvāna in its triple negative and positive definitions has ever escaped them.⁶

² Tulpa is the voluntary incarnation of an Adept into a living body, whether of an adult, child or new-born babe. [Tulpa is the magical process; Tulku is the result; although they are often used interchangeably.]
³ Ku-sum is the triple form [trikāya] of the Nirvāna state and its respective duration in the “cycle of Non-Being.” The number seven here refers to the seven Rounds of our septenary System. [Cf. p. 392 fn., on triple form.]
⁴ Blavatsky Collected Writings, (“REINCARNATIONS” OF BUDDHA) XIV p. 401 & fn.
⁵ ibid., (SĀKYA MUNI’S PLACE IN HISTORY) V p. 255
⁶ Blavatsky Collected Writings, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW MEN?) XI p. 470
Related occult terms

Dharmakāya (Sanskrit). Lit., “the glorified spiritual body” called the “Vesture of Bliss.” The third, or highest of the Trikāya (Three Bodies), the attribute developed by every “Buddha,” i.e., every initiate who has crossed or reached the end of what is called the “fourth Path” (in esotericism the sixth “portal” prior to his entry on the seventh). The highest of the Trikāya, it is the fourth of the Buddhakshetra, or Buddhist planes of consciousness, represented figuratively in Buddhist asceticism as a robe or vesture of luminous Spirituality. In popular Northern Buddhism these vestures or robes are:

- Nirmānakāya,
- Sambhogakāya, and
- Dharmakāya,

the last being the highest and most sublimated of all, as it places the ascetic on the threshold of Nirvāṇa. (See, however, The Voice of the Silence, page 96, Glossary, for the true esoteric meaning.)

Ku-sum (Tibetan).

Trailokya (Sanskrit).

Trikāya (Sanskrit). Lit., three bodies, or forms. This is a most abstruse teaching which, however, once understood, explains the mystery of every triad or trinity, and is a true key to every three-fold metaphysical symbol. In its most simple and comprehensive form it is found in the human Entity in its triple division into spirit, soul, and body, and in the universe, regarded pantheistically, as a unity composed of a Deific, purely spiritual Principle, Supernal Beings — its direct rays — and Humanity. The origin of this is found in the teachings of the prehistoric Wisdom Religion, or Esoteric Philosophy. The grand Pantheistic ideal, of the unknown and unknowable Essence being transformed first into subjective, and then into objective matter, is at the root of all these triads and triplets. Thus we find in philosophical Northern Buddhism

- Ādi-Buddha (or Primordial Universal Wisdom);
- The Dhyāni-Buddhas (or Bodhisattvas);
- The Mānushi (Human) Buddhas.

In European conceptions we find the same: God, Angels and Humanity symbolized theologically by the God-Man. The Brāhmanical Trimūrti and also the three-fold body of Shiva, in Shaivism, have both been conceived on the same basis, if not altogether running on the lines of Esoteric teachings. Hence, no wonder if one finds this conception of the triple body — or the vestures of Nirmānakāya, Sambhogakāya and Dharmakāya, the grandest of the doctrines of Esoteric Philosophy — accepted in a more or less disfigured form by every religious sect, and explained quite incorrectly by the Orientalists. Thus, in its general application, the three-fold body symbolizes

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1 Theosophical Glossary
Buddha’s statue, his teachings and his stupas; in the priestly conceptions it applies to the Buddhist profession of faith called the *Triratna*, which is the formula of taking “refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.” Popular fancy makes Buddha ubiquitous, placing him thereby on a par with an anthropomorphic god, and lowering him to the level of a tribal deity; and, as a result, it falls into flat contradictions, as in Tibet and China. Thus the exoteric doctrine seems to teach that while in his Nirmānakāya body (which passed through 100,000 kotos of transformations on earth), he, Buddha, is at the same time a Lochana (a heavenly Dhyāni-Bodhisattva), in his Sambhogakāya “robe of absolute completeness,” and in Dhyāna, or a state which must cut him off from the world and all its connections; and finally and lastly he is, besides being a Nirmānakāya and a Sambhogakāya, also a Dharmakāya “of absolute purity,” a Vairocana or Dhyāni-Buddha in full Nirvāṇa\(^1\) This is the jumble of contradictions, impossible to reconcile, which is given out by missionaries and certain Orientalists as the *Philosophical* dogmas of Northern Buddhism. If not an intentional confusion of a philosophy dreaded by the upholders of a religion based on inextricable contradictions and guarded “mysteries,” then it is the product of ignorance. As the Trailokya, the Trikāya, and the Triratna are the three aspects of the same conceptions, and have to be, so to say, blended in one, the subject is further explained under each of these terms. (See also in this relation the term “Triśarana.”)\(^2\)

**Triratna** (Sanskrit).

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**Food for thought**

**The key to Trai-vidyā is Yajña-Compassion/Sacrifice**

Yajña . . . is “Sacrifice,” whose symbol or representation is now the constellation Mrigashiras (deer-head), and also a form of Vishnu. “The Yajña,” say the Brahmans, “exist from eternity, for it proceeded from the Supreme, in whom it lay dormant from no beginning.” It is the key to the *Trai-Vidyā*, the thrice-sacred science contained in the *Rig-Veda* verses, which teaches the Yajña or sacrificial mysteries. As Haugh states in his *Introduction to the Aitareya Brahmana* — the Yajña exists as an invisible presence at all times, extending from the Āhavaniya or sacrificial fire to the heavens, forming a bridge or ladder by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of devas, “and even ascend when alive to their abodes.” It is one of the forms of Ākāśa, within the mystic *WORD* (or its underlying “Sound”) calls it into existence. Pronounced by the Priest-Initiate or Yogi, this *WORD* receives creative powers, and is communicated as an impulse on the terrestrial plane through a trained *Will-power*.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) See Eitel’s Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary.

\(^2\) *Theosophical Glossary*: Trikāya

\(^3\) *ibid.*, Yajña. Probably excerpted from *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, *(OCCULTISM VERSUS THE OCCULT ARTS)* IX pp. 251-52 fn.
The Lover of the Song of Solomon

Figure 1039 [above] represents a Yale as it was conceived in A.D. 1200. It has a tail of fire, the snout of a boar, the flexible horns of a unicorn, and is leaping hart-like over a five-fold mountain. By Christian mystics, the Lover of The Song of Solomon, leaping upon the mountains of Bether, is identified with Christ. At CHRIST’s College, Cambridge, according to Dr. Shipley, who writes without any suspicion of the animal’s symbolism, “by some lucky chance the yale has been preserved pure and undefiled.”¹ It appears upon the gateways, and a single yale occurs as the seal of the Master of Christ’s.²

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¹ *Country Life*, March 23rd, 1912
² *Lost Language of Symbolism, (THE SIGN OF THE CROSS)* II xiv, p. 139