

Trikāya concept - Trikāyastava Sanskrit Inscription (Mihintalaya)

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ABSTRACT

Trikāya concept is a basic teaching of Mahāyāna tradition. This tradition spread in many countries for thousand years. The concept of Trikāya has introduced to glorify the Buddha's nature. According to Mahāyāna tradition, Buddhas are eternal, though they are passed away. So, the praises of Buddhas are helped to get benisons from them to attain Buddhahood. That is why "Trikāyastava" became famous. The meaning of this term is 'praise of three bodies of Buddhas'. Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmānakāya are the three bodies. In a Mihintalaya Sanskrit inscription which is written in South Indian Pallava letters 'praises of three bodies' can be seen. There are 20 lines related to 04 verses, composed in Śragdharā meter. First 03 verses are exactly Trikāyastava and the other one is self-introduction of the author and his ways of doing this great work. This Inscription is related to 7th or 8th century and it was inscribed in the period of Mahāyānic influence. It is a great evidence of that influence. Trikāyastava is a famous recitation of Mahāyāna Buddhists. Though this inscription is seriously damaged. The original text of Trikāyastava was found in Tibet. With the help of that original text it was easy to read avoiding mistakes. In this research, Trikāya concept is deeply examined with reference to Theravāda and Mahāyāna texts. In conclusion, it is emphasized that though there are some seeds of the Trikāya concept in Theravāda school, there is no room for the eternal body of Buddha in that tradition as in Mahāyāna. According to Theravāda, Buddhas are no more in this world due to they have passed away.

Keywords: Trikāya, Trikāyastava, Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, Nirmānakāya