

## The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra, “The Three Bodies.”

Translated by the Buddhavacana Translation Group under the patronage and supervision of 84000.

Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling on Vulture Peak Mountain in Rājgṛha. He was accompanied by his entire retinue, by immeasurable, countless bodhisattvas, and by gods and nāgas. They paid respect to the Blessed One and made offerings to him.

1.3 At that time, the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, who was sitting among the retinue, rose from his seat and asked, “Has the Blessed One a body?” The Blessed One replied, “Kṣitigarbha, the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, has three bodies: a dharmakāya, a saṃbhogakāya and a nirmāṇakāya. Son of a noble family, the three bodies of the Tathāgata are these: the pure nature is the dharmakāya, pure meditative absorption is the saṃbhogakāya, and pure conduct is the nirmāṇakāya of all buddhas.

1.4 “Son of a noble family, the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata consists in the fact that he has no nature, just like the sky. His saṃbhogakāya consists in the fact that he comes forth, just like a cloud. His nirmāṇakāya consists in the activity of all the buddhas, the fact that it soaks everything, just like rain.”

1.5 The bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha then asked the Blessed One, “How should one view this explanation on the three bodies of the Blessed One?” The Blessed One answered the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, “Son of a noble family, you should view the three bodies of the Tathāgata in the following way. The dharmakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of the Tathāgata. The saṃbhogakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of the bodhisattvas. The nirmāṇakāya should be viewed as that which is the essence of ordinary beings who conduct themselves devotedly.

1.6 “Son of a noble family, the dharmakāya remains the same nature for all the buddhas. The saṃbhogakāya remains the same meditative absorption for all the buddhas. The nirmāṇakāya remains the same awakened activity for all the buddhas. “Son of a noble family, the basis-of-all in its pure state is mirror-like wisdom, the dharmakāya. The afflicted mind in its pure state is the wisdom of equality. Mental cognition in its pure state is discriminating wisdom, the saṃbhogakāya. The five sense cognitions in their pure state are all-accomplishing wisdom, the nirmāṇakāya.”

1.7 The bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha then exclaimed to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, the noble Dharma that I have heard from the Blessed One is excellent, Sugata, really excellent! The Blessed One then declared, “Son of a noble family, whoever fully upholds this Dharma discourse of the Blessed One will obtain merit that is immeasurable, inexpressible, incalculable and unfathomable.”

1.8 When the Blessed One had spoken, the world, including the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the teachings of the Blessed One.

1.9 *This concludes the Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra, “The Three Bodies.”*