

The Philosophical Meaning of *Manomaya-kāya*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the process of interpreting the Buddhist doctrinal and exegetical tradition, we come across discussions on how special mental capacities are obtained through meditative practices. Such discussions may lead their modern interpreter to assume that Buddhist meditation and its practitioner's uncommon capacities are of a mystical or magical nature. The relation between meditation and mysticism needs to be explained more, given that we cannot seriously regard (dismiss?) certain capacities as "mystical" simply because they transcend degrees of understanding or modes of consciousness we have grown accustomed to, as if by force of inertia: the deficiencies of short-sighted inquiry need not be projected onto inquiry's object, with the result that the latter is branded as simply incomprehensible. Even though meditators' peculiar mental capacities are beyond our ordinary perception, they may be given a philosophical account capable of making overall sense of the capacities in question.¹

In the Buddhist tradition, certain meditative stages are said to be attainable by individual practitioners endowed with a correct philosophical understanding concerning the conditions of possibility of knowledge. In this sense, Buddhism's alleged "mysticism" differs from other forms of shamanistic mysticism, depending as it does on rational deliberation rather than on material or spiritual authority (external forces).

This paper is an attempt to define *manomaya-kāya* 意生身, "a body made by mind",

¹ Paul J. Griffiths, *On being Mindless: Buddhist meditation and the mind-body problem*. La Salle: Open Court, 1986: x iv.

not only in an ascetic, but also a philosophical sense. *Manomaya-kāya* is presented as a meditator's new body that is created in the process of meditation. Distinguished from the mortal body, the "body made by mind" is described as performing supernormal activities such as penetrating walls, and leaping across spatial distances. These activities may be qualified as supernormal in that they remain empirically unverifiable—a fact that has led to the representation of *manomaya-kāya* as belonging to a mystical or magical (read, "irrational") dimension of Buddhism.²

However, were it possible to give an intelligible account of a particular meditative stage and of meditation in general in a systematic way, relying on theoretical terminology peculiar to Buddhist doctrines, we might reconsider *manomaya-kāya* in the context of theoretical discussions, thereby resisting the temptation of dismissing *manomaya-kāya* as the product of sheer fancy.

Even though meditation and the meditator's mental capacities corresponding to specific meditative stages are not self-evident on the basis of sensory experience, a logical account of *manomaya-kāya* may be drawn from Buddhist sources. A similar case presents itself with *saṃsāra* 輪廻, a notion that is not empirically derived—why, no single fact of experience informs us of another life after or before our present life—but which is one of the fundamental categories of the Buddhist vocabulary. Again, the notion of *skandhas* 五蘊 is at once empirically indemonstrable and conceptually/logically sound. Notions such as *saṃsāra* and *skandha* are not assumed to be hindrances to understanding Buddhism in a philosophical way—a way that is not opaque to reason—even though they are unobservable realities.³ In the same way, *manomaya-kāya* and extra-empirical mental capacities achieved through it can also be explicated within the context of Buddhist philosophy.

One of the attempts to make sense of the unobservability of *manomaya-kāya* without denying the reality of *manomaya-kāya* is made by psychology. According to

² The empirically verifiable turns out to be opaque to reason, if what is meant by empirical certainty is the apparent continuity of phenomena—the superficial consistency of mutually reinforcing appearances.

³ On the question of observability, see Agazzi, Evandro and Massimo Puri, eds. *The Reality of the Unobservable: Observability, Unobservability and their Impact on the Issue of Scientific Realism*. Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000: 1-8.

Shengman bāoku 勝鬘寶窟 [Room of Treasures of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*], *manomaya-kāya* is the repository of the unlimited freedom of the Bodhisattva, extending throughout the totality of meditative spheres of consciousness—the so-called ten stages of the Bodhisattva’s meditative consciousness.⁴ Thus according to its “psychological interpretation,” *manomaya-kāya* is not a real entity, but a metaphor for the unlimited mental capacities of the practitioner of meditation. Here, the ontological status of *manomaya-kāya* is that of a *concept*, so that no discussion arises as to the nature of the *reality* of *manomaya-kāya*; interpretation defines the meaning of *manomaya-kāya* as depending on the way it can be cognized psychologically—by reducing *manomaya-kāya* to one or another “conceptual framework.”⁵ Now, such a reduction entails the limitation of ontology to psychology, at least as far as *manomaya-kāya* is concerned.

An interpretation that does not rely on metaphysical entities, while rejecting the reduction of *manomaya-kāya* to the domain of either psychology or sensory experience, is most notable in the Buddhist doctrine of “the coincidence of the sagely/sacred and the mundane/profane” 聖俗不二. According to this doctrine, no separate substance is explained apart from our phenomenal life, with the result that mental constructs and empirical data are regarded as sharing the same ontological soil. Every truth is apprehended in this present world and without need of any metaphysical reduction. The sacred can be found in the midst of the phenomena of this life, provided that the mundane as profane is not defined as its own ground. Most, if not all, discussions in the Buddhist tradition establishing the fundamental coincidence of the supra-mundane (sacred) and the mundane (profane) have been understood without need of referring to any special metaphysical entities, but on the sole basis of a philosophical and/or psychological “interpretation.”⁶

⁴ *Shengman bāoku* 勝鬘寶窟 [Room of Treasures of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*] 卷中末. Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 121a.

⁵ The unreality of a concept is here defined as lack of substance: understood strictly psychologically, *manomaya-kāya* would be the *mere* illusion of a sentient subject.

⁶ By the term “mundane,” I intend the “observable reality,” as distinguished from “unobservable reality”—the latter having either a conceptual basis (psychology), or a purely mental/consciousness-like basis (philosophy). “Observable reality” can correspond to what Husserl describes as “the straightforwardly given life-world taken initially as it is given perceptually: as ‘normal,’ simply there, unbroken, existing in pure ontic certainty (undoubted).” According to Husserl, philosophy as a scientific discipline is distinguished from psychology.

Many Buddhist scriptures seem to account for *manomaya-kāya* without reducing its ontological status to that of either a concept or an object of experience, at the same time refraining from raising *manomaya-kāya* to the status of a permanent substance independent of consciousness. The present paper aims at clarifying the psychological and/or ontological dimensions of *manomaya-kāya*.

2. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF *MANOMAYA-KĀYA*

Manomaya-kāya is described as a body obtained by the practitioner at the stage of the fourth *Jhāna* of four *Jhānas*:

“With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to creating *manomaya-kāya*. From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, made of the mind, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties. Just as if a man were to draw a reed from its sheath. The thought would occur to him: ‘This is the sheath, this is the reed. This sheath is one thing, the reed another, but the reed has been drawn out from the sheath.’ Or as if a man were to draw a sword from its scabbard. The thought would occur to him: ‘This is sword, this is the scabbard.’ Or as if a man were to pull a snake out from its slough. The thought would occur to him: ‘This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake is one thing, the slough another, but the snake has been pulled out from the slough.’”⁷

In relation to the doctrine of “all dhammas are derived from consciousness” 諸法有識 of the school of *Yogācāra* 有識學派, there has been the tendency to understand

Edmund Husserl. David Carr, tr. *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology; an introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1970: 172. For Husserl’s characterization of mere psychology, cf. ibid. 207 (“as a psychologist I set myself the task of knowing myself as the ego already made part of the world, objectified with a particular real meaning, *mundanized*, so to speak [...] the task of knowing myself precisely in the manner of objective, naturally *mundane* knowledge (in the broadest sense), myself as a human being among things, among other human beings, animals, etc;” emphasis added).

⁷ Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. *Samaññaphala Sutta* [The Fruits of the Contemplative Life]. At <http://www.accesstonight.org/canon/sutta/digha/dn02.html>

manomaya-kāya just as a metaphor of the condition of the meditator's unrestricted mind, not as an *existing* entity. In the passage quoted above, the account of *manomaya-kāya* following right after the discussion on the purification of mind through meditative practice, as well as the subsequent metaphorical expressions (such as sheath and reed, sword and scabbard and snake and slough), could be regarded as constituting an indirect representation of the pure mind.

The following passage from *Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra* can also be considered as one of the examples of Buddhist writings where the notion of *manomaya-kāya* is adopted in a figurative sense—here as a means to convey the free condition of the Bodhisattva on a certain meditative stage.

All things are to be regarded as forms born of a vision or a dream and have never been created since there are no such things as self, the other, or bothness. [The Bodhisattvas] will see that the external world exists only in conformity with Mind-only; and seeing that there is no stirring of the Vijñānas and that the triple world is a complicated network of causation and owes its rise to discrimination.... Establishing themselves on the eighth stage of Bodhisattvahood, they will experience a revulsion [in their consciousness] by transcending the Citta, Manas, and Manovijñāna, and the five Dharmas, and the [three] Svabhāvas, and the twofold Egolessness, and thereby attain the mind-made body (*manomaya-kāya*).... Said Mahāmati, what is meant by the will-body, Blessed One? The Blessed One replied: It means that one [in this body] can speedily move unobstructed as he wills; hence the will-body, Mahāmati. For instance, Mahāmati, the will [or mind] travels unobstructed over mountains, walls, rivers, trees, etc., many a hundred thousand yojanas they may be away, when a man recollects the scenes which had previously come into his perception, while his own mind keeps on functioning in his body without the least interruption or hindrance. The will-body is the same case.⁸

Here, by attributing the existence of the external world to the activity of

⁸ Daisetz T. Suzuki, tr. *The Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999: 71-72.

consciousness, the author suggests that the *manomaya-kāya* is obtained by revulsion in the consciousness of the Bodhisattva on the eighth stage of his meditative practice. Accordingly, in its description as traveling unobstructed over mountains, *manomaya-kāya* comes to be considered just as a metaphoric expression of the agility and unlimitedness of the Bodhisattva's mind, in the aftermath of revulsion in his consciousness. *Manomaya-kāya* obtained by the revulsion of the mind of the Bodhisattva on his eighth meditative stage seems to presuppose the meditator's recognition that everything is nothing but mind. In other words, the meaning of *manomaya-kāya* has been considered within the limits of a psychological interpretation by ascribing the supernatural characteristics of *manomaya-kāya* to the meditator's conscious condition. Freed from the rough material elements constituting the mortal body, and made to coincide with the attainment of a purified consciousness, *manomaya-kāya* is defined as non-material or mental being, in order to indicate the boundlessness of the meditator's mind, in contrast with his physical body 肉生身.⁹

If *manomaya-kāya* is interpreted only in relation to the process or operations of the consciousness of a meditator and, thus, regarded as a mental entity separated from physical/material reality, it can be said to be treated in a psychological sense, as a phenomenon of subjective consciousness, without an existence of its own. However, outside

⁹ Beyond utilizing the notion of *manomaya-kāya* as a metaphor of the purified or free mental condition of the meditator, fixing *manomaya-kāya* to mental being in contrast to physical being may give rise to the suspicion of a dichotomy between the mental and the physical. This dichotomy may reinforce the impression that *manomaya-kāya* possesses a mysterious existence, since the body (*kāya*), which cannot be conceived of aside from physical characteristics, cannot be made from the non-material/non-physical mind in common condition. Even though the writer of the quoted sutra further suggests that the physical body originally had a mental existence, and that only because of the attachment to self it was subsequently subjected to material/physical limitations, the reader is not given a ready-made solution to theoretical difficulties arising from the dichotomizing of the mental and the physical, and contributing to the *manomaya-kāya*'s mysterious aura.

杜保瑞, “楞伽經的知識意義探究 [The study of the Buddhist knowledge in *Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra*].” 第十二屆國際佛教教育文化研討會 Special Edition of the 12th International Conference on Buddhist Education and Culture. Taipei: Huafan UP, 2002: 138-156.

Examples of psychological interpretations of *manomaya-kāya* can also be seen in *Shengman bāoku* 勝鬘寶窟 [Room of Treasures of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*] 卷中末 and *Huayan jingshu* 華嚴經疏 [Commentary on the *Huayan Sūtra*] 第二十八 respectively as follows: “*Manomaya-kāya* represents the unrestrictedness of the life of the Bodhisattva on the meditative stages of the first stage and more, and the name of ‘to be born from the will’ is like the mind and like the will. There are three meaning, one is ‘blissful’, the second is ‘speedy’, the third is ‘unlimited’. Thus it is called by *manomaya-kāya*” (勝鬘寶窟). “*Manomaya-kāya* is, if compared, like the proceeding of the mind which is speedy and unlimited, so it is called by *manomaya-kāya*.” (華嚴經疏) Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 121a.

of the psychological interpretation of *manomaya-kāya*, we can find the explanation of *manomaya-kāya* as a concrete entity (not dispossessed of physical reality), which conducts various supranormal activities—thus, not just as a sort of figment of the imagination. Here we are called to understand *manomaya-kāya* in a new way—while falling short of retracing it to mysterious causes—since its psychological interpretation is no longer helpful in the case we wish to account for *manomaya-kāya*, not simply as a mental process or a phenomenon of consciousness, but as a concrete existent in its own right.

3. THE ONTOLOGICAL MEANING OF *MANOMAYA-KĀYA*

The detailed explanation of *manomaya-kāya* in the chapter on “Impermanency” of *Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra* requires our reconsideration of the existential dimension of *manomaya-kāya*, which is inexplicable on the basis of a merely psychological interpretation:

There are three kinds of will-body (*manomaya-kāya*), Mahāmati. What are the three? They are: (1) the will-body obtained in the enjoyment of the Samādhi; (2) the will-body obtained by recognizing the self-nature of the Dharma; (3) the will-body which is assumed [by Bodhisattva according to] the class of beings [to be saved] and which perfects and achieves [without a thought of its own achievement]. By realizing the higher stages successively after the first is attained, the Yogin will experience them [all].

Now, Mahāmati, what is the will-body attained in the enjoyment of the Samādhi? It is this: when [the Yogin] in the third, fourth, fifth stages removes the various discriminations going on in his mind and is at rest, the waves of consciousness are no more stirred in the Mind-ocean and the Vijñāna functions are quieted, the bliss of which is enjoyed by him; and when he thus recognizes the non-existence of the external world, which is no more than his own mind, he is said to have the will-body.

What is the will-body obtained by recognizing the self-nature of the Dharma? When [the Yogin] of the eighth stage has a thoroughgoing penetration into the nature of things which is like Māyā and not image-producing, he experiences a revulsion at the seat of

consciousness and obtains the Samādhi known as Māyā-like and other Samādhis. *By entering upon the Samādhis he gains a body which exhibits various powers of self-mastery and supernatural activity, which moves according to his wish as quickly as a flower opens up, which resembles Māyā, a dream, and a reflected image, and which is not a product of the elements but has something analogous to what is produced of the elements, which is furnished with all the differences appertaining to the world of forms and yet is able to follow up all the assemblages in the Buddha-lands [...]*

Now what is the will-body which is born in accordance with the class and which perfects and achieves? When [the Yogin] is thoroughly conversant with all the characteristics of self-realization and its bliss which pervades the teachings of the Buddha, he is said to have the body which is will-made, born with [the class], perfecting and achieving.¹⁰

According to the passage, in the third, forth and fifth stages, the meditator reaches the condition where conscious discrimination is removed from his mind. Here, *manomaya-kāya* is considered in relation to the meditator's recognition that the external world is no more than his own mind.

By retracing *manomaya-kāya* to the practitioner's meditative activity, we are likely to regard it as a metaphor describing the mental condition of the meditator, and not as a real existent—such is the account of *manomaya-kāya* given in its psychological interpretation. Yet, beyond its metaphorical interpretation, the *manomaya-kāya* attained in the eighth stage of meditation has various concrete/specific properties—exhibiting, as it does, supernormal faculties, such as that of moving quickly at the meditator's will. The *manomaya-kāya* performing powerful activities cannot be interpreted merely in the sphere of psychological phenomena. The psychological interpretation as one of several possible viewpoints utilized to explain the operation of consciousness, cannot explain the concrete activities that *manomaya-kāya* accomplishes, since these include characteristics of physical reality that are usually excluded from mere psychological phenomena.

¹⁰ Daisetz T. Suzuki, tr. *The Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999: 118-119.

The specific properties of *manomaya-kāya* making it possible to give *manomaya-kāya* an existential/ontological meaning beyond that of a sheer psychological phenomenon, can be found in several texts. According to *Digha Nikaya*, *manomaya-kāya* could be seen as a kind of “subtle body,” for a being with it is said to feed on joy (D.I.17), not on solid nutriment (D.I.195): it thus lacks the four great elements of the physical body (solidity, cohesion, heat and motion: D.I.195). Bodies relate to the “realm of (pure) form;” the subtle matter composing them can only be visible and audible matter (Vibh. 405). However, the *manomaya-kāya* is invisible to the normal eye (Pati. II .209). It occupies space, but does not impinge on gross physical matter, for the “self” of a certain god with *manomaya-kāya* is said to be as large as two or three fields, but to cause no harm to anyone. (A.III.122) With such a body, a person can exercise psychic-like powers, such as going through solid objects, being in many places at once, or flying (D.I.78).¹¹

As noted above, it is impossible to fully account for *manomaya-kāya* only through its psychological interpretation—which remains that one of several perspectives, through which *manomaya-kāya* indicates the mental conditions of the meditator—given that *manomaya-kāya* is found depicted as having a real existence with physical characteristics. Both the ontological/existential and the psychological meanings of *manomaya-kāya* are to be retained if we wish to avoid falling back onto a mysterious/magical cause beyond our understanding.

In general, the term ‘*manomaya*’ denotes a being made or formed by the mind, particularly as though magically made.¹² *Manomaya-kāya* has been regarded as some *magical* power of the mind due to its relation with the mythological realms of Buddhism, which cannot be confirmed by our common perception.¹³ However, it should be noted that

¹¹ Quoted in Peter Harvey. “The Mind-Body Relationship In *Pali Buddhism: A Philosophical Investigation*.” At <http://www.buddhistinformation.com/mind.htm>

¹² Rhys Davids, T. W. and Stede, *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*. London: Luzac & Co., 1959: 521.

¹³ *Brahmajāla Sutta* refers to the evolution of the world system to the point where most beings have been reborn in the “World of Radiance” and “there they dwell made of mind (*manomaya*), feeding on joy, radiating light from themselves, traversing the air [and] continuing in glory....” (D. I .17) Similarly, *Apāṇṇaka Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* states that the corporeal gods are a product of *manomaya*.(M. I .410) Quoted in Donald K. Swearer. “Control and freedom: The structure of Buddhist meditation in the Pāli suttas.” In *Philosophy East and West* vol. X X III (1973), 447-448.

the meaning of the term ‘*manomaya-kāya*’ can be accessed in several different ways. The existential/ontological meaning of *manomaya-kāya* (the body made by mind) can be analyzed as follows: (1) the body being made up of mind (where mind is a constituent of the body); (2) the body, which did not exist previously, and is created newly by mind (where mind is a subject which makes the body, not the body’s constituent) (3) the body made under the supervision of mind (mind is a sort of ruler over the body.)

(1) holds that mind operates as a material/constituent of the body. Here, mind is a kind of basis (substratum) for the constitution of the body, even though the body has a variety of concrete properties as examined before. The implication is that a body having concrete physical characteristics may derive from mental/non-material substance. The difficulty involved in demonstrating a direct relation between the mental and the material—¹⁴ a relation over which we find continuous discussions in the development of Western thought—is likely to have a connection with the fact that *manomaya-kāya* is understood in the field of the *magic*. The inexplicability of the interrelationship between the mental and the physical when regarding one as a direct source of the other, cannot help lending *manomaya-kāya* a magical aura.

Following (2), *manomaya-kāya* can be considered as the body that is newly created by mind. Here, mind is a subject that makes the body and the body is an object made by mind. The body created by mind did not exist before mind made the body. When it is said that mind makes the body *newly* without using mind itself as a constituent (actually mind cannot be used as a constituent as long as it is conceived of as a phenomenon or as the process of mental activity discriminated on the basis of physical/material existence), mind can be interpreted as simply creating the body from *nothing*. The fact that the newly created body is an completely distinct entity with respect to the pre-existing physical body also induces us to interpret *manomaya-kāya* as magical, especially given that *manomaya-kāya* is

¹⁴ In the discussion on the interrelationship between the mental and the physical in connection with the Buddhist meditation, Paul J. Griffiths concludes that certain kinds of causal interaction between the mental and the physical are envisaged, but no event of one class may ever come into existence solely as the result of the occurrence of an event of another class. He states that the mental and the physical are categories of event which are phenomenologically irreducibly different. For further details, see Paul J. Griffiths. *On being Mindless: Buddhist meditation and the mind-body problem*. La Salle: Open Court, 1986: 112.

an uncommon existent possessing several supernatural abilities—a fact that may lead us to accept fallacies that may be derived from the claim that a body is *newly* created by mind.

With (3), the meaning of “made by mind” can be understood as “made under the supervision/regulation of mind.” If the meaning of “made” is limited to the activity of “supervision/ regulation” and the body has other constituents besides mind, the mind’s newly made body will neither have to adopt the mind as its only constituent (as in the case of (1)), nor have to be made out of nothing (as in (2)). The process of creation of the body need not have a direct relationship with mind any more: the body is neither an entity made of the substance of mind, nor an object of the activity of mind. If the creation of the body does not have any direct relationship with mind, *manomaya* can be considered only as a “body directed/regulated by mind.”

When the body is ruled by mind, the mind does not need to be altogether separated from the body in order to avoid being identified with it. In (1) and (2), the original being of the mind, prior to its participating in making the body, cannot be accounted for by the newly made body: in (1), the original being of mind is not properly accounted for because the mind is considered merely as a material for the body, while mind as mental substance is completely different from the body—the latter being understood as that which has physical elements. By identifying mind with some mysterious/unobservable substratum of matter, (1) contributes to the relegation of *manomaya-kāya* to magic. With (1), mind and the body are separated, respectively as a material and its product (particular form).

With (2), the mind considered only as a subject making the body, remains external to (transcending) the newly made body, inasmuch as the mind acts upon the body, as if some mysterious hand, from outside the body. In this case, mind and the body are separated respectively as a subject and its object, leaving us in the dark as to the medium through which they interact.

On the other hand, with (3), the mind does not have to exist apart from the newly made body, even while the body, which has other constituents besides mind, is not made from mind/the mental. In other words, because the newly made body has constituents other

than mind, where the mind operates only as a supervisor/director, the mind need not deliberately change its original shape in order to make *manomaya-kāya*, while it can remain intrinsic (immanent) to the newly made body. As a result, *manomaya-kāya* would not be a physical body divided from mind, but a “whole being” including mind as a ruling element within it.¹⁵

Even though the third interpretation of *manomaya* can be free of the logical ambiguities faced by (1) and (2), the creation/origin of *manomaya-kāya* requires further explanation, given that the ruling agency of mind over body remains unaccounted for: through what medium does the mind act upon the body? Why, if *manomaya-kāya* is not directly made from/of mind while being directed by mind, it would seem that the constituent/origin of *manomaya-kāya* should to be found outside of mind.

In seeking the non-mental constituent of the body, we can refer to *Samyutta Nikaya*. Here we find a statement relating *manomaya-kāya* to the notion of *antarā-bhava* 中有, one of the four existential modes of sentient beings in Buddhism¹⁶: “when one dies and discards his body, he lives in the remaining place riding on *manomaya-kāya*.”¹⁷ Here, what one is rid of is not a mortal body separated from mind, but *antarā-bhava*, “the intermediate being” obtained after one dies and before one is born in the next life.¹⁸ In place of *antarā-bhava*, *manomaya-kāya*—a product of the meditative process—is introduced.

¹⁵ In fact, the detailed description of *manomaya-kāya* in several Buddhist texts corresponds to this hypothesis.

¹⁶ One of 四有 *catvāro bhavāḥ*. 四有 refers to the fact that sentient beings go through four kinds of existences 有 from the time they construct their lives relying on the placenta to the time when the next life is constructed: 中有 *antarā-bhava*, 生有 *upapatti-bhava*, 本有 *kāla-bhava*, 死有 *marāṇa-bhava*. Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 1717a.

Among them, 中有 is also called 中陰 or 中蘊. It is created with consciousness 意識 and corresponds to the period from the moment of death (死有) to the time when the next life begins (生有) and have so-called “soul body” 靈魂身. And from the doctrine that this period is for forty nine days, the convention came up that chanting a sutra for seven days after one's death and praying for the repose of the dead on the forty-ninth day (multiplication of seven by seven) after death. Nakamura Hajime. 佛教語大辭典 *Bukkyogo daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhist Terms] 縮刷版. Tōkyō: Tōkyō hōseki kabushiki kaisha, 1975: 967c.

¹⁷ Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 120c.

¹⁸ In ancient Buddhism, existence after death is not denied, but accepted as an invisible phenomenon. Peter Harvey, in discussing the relationship between mind and body, suggests that one who is proficient in meditation is aware of a kind of existence after death in the form of consciousness (perhaps with some accompaniments). He also quotes D. II.332 ff to present the early Buddhist understanding of existence after death. Here, the materialist prince Payasi feels that he has disproved rebirth when, having put a criminal in a sealed jar to die, he saw no life-principle

Explanation of *antarā-bhava* through reference to *manomaya-kāya* is also given in *Abhidharmakośa* 阿毘達磨俱舍論:

“Buddha taught that *antarā-bhava* has five names. What are the five? The first is *manomaya*, because *antarā-bhava* comes from mind [*mano*] and it is not made according to exterior causes such as blood. The second [name] is *desiring life* because *antarā-bhava* always investigates the locus of the present life with pleasure. Third, it is eating incense because it keeps living by being nourished by incense. The forth name is *antarā-bhava* because it is *skandha* taken between the two worlds (the death world and the birth world). Fifth, it is *arising* because it arises temporarily in the present life.”¹⁹

Evidently, *manomaya-kāya* is one of the names of *antarā-bhava*.

Why, then, is the name *manomaya-kāya* distinguished from *antarā-bhava*? It is because *antarā-bhava* is created from and relies on mind (*mano*).²⁰ When *antarā-bhava* has the characteristics of being created through and relying on mind, it is called *manomaya-kāya*. In other words, *manomaya-kāya* is a kind of *antarā-bhava* that is directed/regulated by mind. The otherwise inescapable peril of *manomaya-kāya*’s unaccountability—whereby the physical body is equivocally sought as deriving from (made of) either mind or nothing at all; the blind-spot that has induced many to reduce the notion of *manomaya-kāya* to the sphere of mysticism—such problems no longer constitute a threat to the understanding. When *antarā-bhava*, not mind, is indicated as the existential form of *manomaya-kāya*, the doctrine of *manomaya-kāya* does not meet philosophical dilemmas arising on the basis of the dichotomy of the mental and the physical. The body made by mind—*manomaya-kāya*—is neither an

leaving the jar when it was opened. In order to show that this “experiment” does not disprove rebirth, Mahā-Kassapa argues that, just as the prince’s attendants do not see his life-principle “entering or leaving” his body when he dreams, so too can he not expect to see the life-principle of a dead person “entering or leaving” a jar (D. II.332ff).

For the details, see Peter Harvey. “The Mind-Body Relationship In Pali Buddhism: A Philosophical Investigation.” At <http://www.Buddhistinformation.com/mind.htm>.

¹⁹ 阿毘達磨俱舍論 *Abhidharmakośa* 第十. Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p’ing hsien ch’u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 3648b.

²⁰ 大毘婆沙論 *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra* 第七十. Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p’ing hsien ch’u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 120c-121a.

entity that is created by using mind as a constituent, nor an object created from nothing, but a sort of *antarā-bhava* that relies on mind in its being guided/ruled by it. What constitutes the substratum of *manomaya-kāya* is not mind, but elemental *antarā-bhava*.

However, further explanation is still necessary in order to clarify the relationship between *antarā-bhava* and *manomaya-kāya*, since they have domains of being distinct from one another: in Buddhism, *antarā-bhava* indicates one or another of several “existential modes,” while *manomaya-kāya* is a specific being derived out of *skandhas* through the process of meditative practice. What are the signs of the mind-mediated conversion of *antarā-bhava* into *manomaya-kāya*? What “evidence” accompanies the mind-mediated conversion of *antarā-bhava* into *manomaya-kāya*? In the following discussion, the relationship between these two notions will be examined in the context of Buddhist ascetics and cosmology.

4. THE ASCETIC MEANING OF *MANOMAYA-KĀYA*

Manomaya-kāya as One Form of Saṃsāra

Manomaya-kāya can be obtained in the forth and last/highest stage of *jhāna*. In the *Samaññaphala Sutta* 沙門果經, the explanation of the four *jhānas* is followed by a discussion on the overcoming of the five hindrances and, later, on the acquisition of “supernormal powers” *iddhi* and “supernormal knowledge” *abhiññā*. Ascendancy through the four *jhāna* stages is possible on the basis of attainment of lower *jhānas*, until with the attainment of the forth *jhāna*, consciousness or mind is concentrated, purified, unblemished, undefiled, pliant, malleable. With such a purified mind, the meditator has the mental power to make (*maya*) a body other than the mortal body.²¹

The process of acquisition of *manomaya-kāya* throughout a series of meditative stages is explained in more detail and variously in Mahayana texts. Aside from the

²¹ Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. *Samaññaphala Sutta* [The Fruits of the Contemplative Life]. At <http://www.accesstonight.org/canon/sutta/digha/dn02.html>.

aforementioned three categorizations of *manomaya-kāya* found in the *Lan'kāvatāra Sūtra*, in the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* 法華經 we find reference to *manomaya-kāya* as received by Bodhisattva who is from the first stage. According to this *sūtra*, “the position before the stages [of Bodhisattva] corresponds to that of an ordinary person and the person in this position receives a mortal body, and by discarding the mortal body, he enters the first stage [of Bodhisattva] and is called “Bodhisattva of great power” having “transformed *saṃsāra*” 變易生死.”²²

Discarding a mortal body means transcending the condition of an ordinary person and entering the first stage of the Bodhisattva's mode of being, often explained in terms of “transformed *saṃsāra*.” Let's examine the notion of *manomaya-kāya* that is undergoing “transformed *saṃsāra*” in contrast with a mortal body.

In *Śrīmālādevī-siṃha-nāda-sūtra* 勝鬘經, “transformed *saṃsāra*”, in which *manomaya-kāya* is to be found, is mentioned in contrast with “mortal *saṃsāra*” 分段生死: two types of *saṃsāra* are distinguished—“a mortal *saṃsāra*” and “a transformed *saṃsāra*.” “Mortal *saṃsāra*” is the *saṃsāra* in which sentient beings of “three realms” *trailoka* or *triloka* 三界²³ are to be found. Here the mortal body is given with “contaminated action” *sāsrava-karman* 有漏業 as “a primary cause” *hetu* 因 and “afflictive hindrances” *kleśa-āvaraṇa* 煩惱障 as “a secondary cause” *pratyaya* 緣. “Transformed *saṃsāra*”, on the other hand, is the locus of saints, or *arhat* 阿羅漢, *pratyekabuddha* 緣覺, “Bodhisattva of great power” 大力菩薩, all of whom preserve a “delicate body” outside of “three realms”—*manomaya-kāya*—arising out of “uncontaminated action” *anāsrava-karman* 無漏業 as *hetu* and “cognitive hindrances” *jñeya-āvaraṇa* 所知障 as *pratyaya*.²⁴ In other words, *manomaya-kāya* is the body of the saints in “transformed *saṃsāra*” (one of the two kinds of

²² 法華經 *Śrīmālādevī-siṃha-nāda-sūtra*. Quoted in Yoshiaki Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 121c.

²³ The realm of sensuous desire *kāmadhātu* 欲界, the realm of form *rūpadhātu* 色界 and the formless realm of pure spirit *arūpadhātu* or *ārūpyadhātu* 無色界.

²⁴ 勝鬘經 *Śrīmālādevī-siṃha-nāda-sūtra* 一乘章. Quoted in Yoshiaki Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 121a.

saṃsāra), distinguished from the mortal body of sentient beings in the “three realms”. The “transformed *saṃsāra*” of the saints is entered where *manomaya-kāya* is obtained by discarding the mortal body through the meditative practice: the meditator enters the stage of the saint just at the moment he discards his mortal body and receives *manomaya-kāya*.²⁵

In sum, we have made access to the meaning of *manomaya-kāya* in a different way from the previous investigation: *manomaya-kāya*, which had earlier been defined as *antarā-bhava* directed by mind, is here identified with the body of saints in “transformed *saṃsāra*”; while *manomaya-kāya*, in the former case, corresponds to one of the four existential modes of mortal sentient beings within “realm of form” *rūpadhātu* 色界 and “of formless” *arūpadhātu* 無色界, when it is dealt with as a kind of *antarā-bhava*, it can be also explained in terms of one kind of *saṃsāra*, found outside of the “three realms”, where *manomaya-kāya* indicates the body of saints.

How is *manomaya-kāya*, understood as *antarā-bhava* guided by mind, related to *manomaya-kāya* as the body of saints attained through meditative practice? I seek to clarify the meaning of *manomaya-kāya*, not only as *antarā-bhava* directed by mind, but also as the body of saints attained by the meditative practice. How are the *manomaya-kāya* within “three realms” and the *manomaya-kāya* out of the “three realms” related? Can *manomaya-kāya* be understood comprehensively, in relation to both mortal sentient beings and immortal saints?

A few questions may arise in this context: how can saints above the first meditative stage reside in “three realms” of sentient beings if *manomaya-kāya* transcends such realms? Or is it possible for *manomaya-kāya* to be obtained by sentient beings practicing in “three realms”, even while *manomaya-kāya* is defined as a body acquired in “transformed *saṃsāra*”, or outside of “three realms”? In what sense can there be a departing from the three realms? Does the saint endowed with *manomaya-kāya* exist in the empirical world? What is the relation between the event of death and *saṃsāra* as considered within “three realms”, or between the event of death and the event of departing from “three realms”, the latter event

²⁵ From the viewpoint of “transformed *saṃsāra*”, *manomaya-kāya* is also called “transformed body” *nirmāṇa-kāya* 變化身.

occurring where a Bodhisattva attains “uncontaminated wisdom” *āsrava-kṣaya-jñāna* 無漏智 through meditative practice? In the following chapter, I shall discuss in further details the position of *manomaya-kāya* in the context of Buddhist meditative practice and cosmology.

The Position of Manomaya-kāya in the Context of Buddhist Meditative Practice

In Mahayana Buddhism, meditative practice covers a path of fifty-two stages 五十二位, through which the meditator is said to become a Buddha.²⁶ Of such stages, those above the forty-first correspond to the stages of sainthood, though views differ as to the stage in which a practitioner obtains *manomaya-kāya*. As noted earlier, *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* divides the stages of *manomaya-kāya*’s obtainment into three parts, while *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* holds that the *manomaya-kāya* may be obtained by a Bodhisattva at any of his ten meditative stages.

In *Shengman bǎoku* 勝鬘寶窟, *Jizang* 吉藏 presents various discussions on the determination of the time when *manomaya-kāya* is obtained by the three kinds of saints—*arhat*, *pratyekabuddha*, “Bodhisattva of great power”. Here, *Jizang* shows that the three saints do not always enter “transformed *saṃsāra*” with *manomaya-kāya*. Such an assertion would seem to contradict the definition of *manomaya-kāya* as the body of the saints in “transformed *saṃsāra*”. Here is the passage from *Jizang*.

Arhat and *pratyekabuddha* correspond to the duration from the time they enter the nirvana of the “two vehicles” [of *arhat* and *pratyekabuddha*] before the time they reform their mind and enter the Mahayana [Buddhism]. *There are two kinds of “two vehicles” who reform to the Mahayana: ones reform their minds within “ [three] realms” and so they retain mortal [bodies], and the others reform their minds “outside of the realms” and retain*

²⁶ Of these stages, the first fifty-one lead to Bodhisattvahood, while the fifty-second leads directly to Buddhahood. The stages are as follows: Ten 十信, or stages of faith; thirty of the 三賢 or three grades of virtue, i.e. ten 十住; ten 十行; ten 十廻向; and twelve of the three grades of 聖 holiness, or sainthood, i. e. ten 地; plus 等覺 and 妙覺. There exist other categorizations, where the number and character of the stages varies according to the school. Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p’ing hsien ch’u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 1214a.

transformed [bodies]. These two kinds become “Bodhisattvas of great power” when they reform their minds and enter the Mahayana [Buddhism].

There are two kinds of “Bodhisattvas of great power”: ones are those who directly enter [the Mahayana Buddhism without passing through the process of the two vehicles] and the others are those who reform their minds and enter the Mahayana [Buddhism from the two vehicles, as mentioned above].²⁷

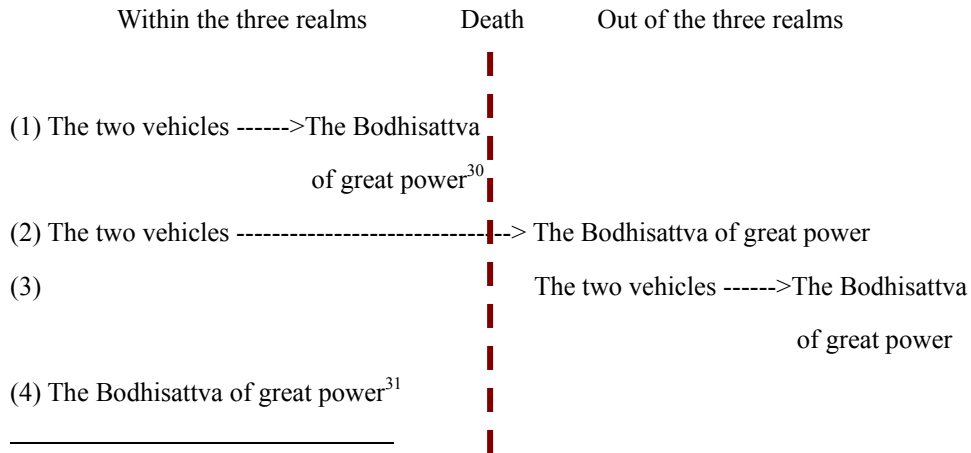
Even though the two vehicles—*arhat* and *pratyekabuddha*—are said to have *manomaya-kāya* as bodies, if we consider the bodies of the three saints referred to above, we note that they are not exclusively of the nature of *manomaya-kāya*: besides taking up “transformed bodies” (*manomaya-kāya*) outside of “three realms”, the two vehicles retain “mortal bodies” within the realms. Thus is it possible to affirm with coherence to Buddhist sources that a Bodhisattva can attain to the stage of the saint even within the realms, by acquiring “uncontaminated wisdom” *āsrava-kṣaya-jñāna* 無漏智 through meditative practice—whereby the “contaminated wisdom” *sāsrava-jñāna* 有漏智 of the Bodhisattva is gradually converted into “uncontaminated wisdom”. I conclude that the stage of the two vehicles begins from the moment *manomaya-kāya* comes into being by the generation of “uncontaminated wisdom”. Through meditative practice, “contaminated wisdom” is converted into “uncontaminated wisdom” to an ever-greater degree, and the practitioner is able to obtain *manomaya-kāya* for progressively longer stretches of time and with progressively higher frequency.

In other words, various possibilities present themselves for the two vehicles: (1) they could retain mortal bodies until they reform their minds and enter the Mahayana within the realms; or, (2) they could discard their mortal bodies upon death, acquiring *manomaya-kāya* and entering the Mahayana in the following life. (3) Alternatively if the two vehicles are outside of the realms, having already discarded the mortal bodies, they may have

²⁷ *Shengman bāoku* 勝鬘寶窟 [Room of Treasures of the *Śrīmālā-sūtra*] 卷中末. Quoted in Yoshiaka Tsukamoto and Shinko Mochizuki. 望月佛教大辭典 *Mochizuki Bukkyo Daijiten* [The Great Dictionary of Buddhism in 10 Volumes]. Tai Pei: Ti p'ing hsien ch'u pen (The Horizon Publishing Co.), 1979: 121b.

manomaya-kāya continuously²⁸ and thereby become “Bodhisattvas of great power”, as noted in the passage quoted above.²⁹ “A Bodhisattva of great power” may directly enter the Mahayana without passing through the two vehicles. (4) Where this Bodhisattva is still endowed with a mortal body within the “three realms”, he evidently retains “contaminated wisdom”, with the result that he does not have a continuous *manomaya-kāya*. (5) According to the *Lan’kāvatāra Sūtra*, where the mortal body is eternally discarded and only *manomaya-kāya* can be adopted as the body in *saṃsāra*, it is understood that the practitioner is endowed exclusively with “uncontaminated wisdom”, corresponding to the Bodhisattva above the eighth stage.

A diagram for the above explanation follows below:



²⁸ Compared with the case where the two vehicles are considered within the realms—where they can only maintain *manomaya-kāya* intermittently, due to their still having “contaminated wisdom” that remains unconverted into “uncontaminated wisdom”—the vehicles outside of the realms can maintain *manomaya-kāya* continuously: the expression, “discarding the mortal body and residing out of the realms” indicates that their “contaminated wisdom” has been completely converted into “uncontaminated wisdom”.

²⁹ Here, obtaining *manomaya-kāya* out of the realms is not an event limited to the specific place of “out of the realms” apart from “the realms,” but it refers to the certain stage of Bodhisattva obtained through meditative practice, which is freed from all the “afflictions” *saṃkleśa* and *saṃsāra* found in the realms. If *manomaya-kāya* is defined as obtained only out of the realms, it is impossible for the sentient being who have a mortal body in the realms to exist in another place of ‘out of the realms’ at the same time. Regardless of the place where Bodhisattvas exist, if they arrive at the stage of obtaining “uncontaminated wisdom”, they come to have *manomaya-kāya*. And the reason why the Bodhisattvas cannot yet discard the mortal bodies is that “contaminated wisdom” still remains.

The “three realms”—“the realm of sensuous desire” *kāmadhātu* 欲界, “the realm of form” *rūpadhātu* 色界 and “the formless realm of pure spirit” *arūpadhātu* or *ārūpyadhātu* 無色界 are also divided according to the stages that are obtained through the practice of the Bodhisattvas.

³⁰ In this case, The discussion is also found as follows: because mortal body is not yet discarded even though the two vehicles enter the Mahayana, the name of “the Bodhisattva of great power” cannot be given to the two vehicles.

³¹ Several opinions are suggested that it is possible to give the name of “the Bodhisattva of great power” even though the Bodhisattva of this status does not retain *manomaya-kāya* continuously, as the cases of *Lan’kāvatāra Sūtra* and *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* mentioned before.

Here, we can see *death* as the dividing line between the “three realms” inhabited by mortal sentient beings and the “outside of the three realms”, where *manomaya-kāya* arises upon the discarding of “mortal *saṃsāra*”. Though the continuity of *manomaya-kāya* is contingent upon the complete discarding of the mortal body of the realms, *manomaya-kāya* can be *intermittently* obtained in the realms of mortal bodies wherever “uncontaminated wisdom” arises therein. “Transformed *saṃsāra*” is fully disclosed only to saints: it could pertain to either of the two vehicles or to “the Bodhisattva of great power”—the latter being capable of retaining *manomaya-kāya* continuously outside of the realms.

Of the “three realms”, “those of form” *rūpadhātu* 色界 and “of the formless” *arūpadhātu* 無色界 are called “heavens made by mind” 意成天³². The expression, “Heavens made by mind”, refers to the heavens that are inhabited by “bodies made by mind”—*manomaya-kāya* 意生身. In this connection we may note that the *manomaya-kāya* inhabiting the heavens must refer to sentient beings with mortal bodies, not to saints “out of the realms”, since the sentient beings belonging to the three realms are existents found within “mortal *saṃsāra*”, still entangled in “contaminated action” *sāsrava-karmāṇa* 有漏業. We may recall that *manomaya-kāya* was previously understood in two parallel senses: (1) as *antarā-bhava* directed by mind—the mortal sentient beings within the “realm of form” and “of the formless”—and (2) as the immortal body of saints out of the realms. So we can now see that *manomaya-kāya* as “*antarā-bhava* directed by mind” refers to the sentient beings of the heavens of the two realms, ontologically distinct from the *manomaya-kāya* identified with the body of saints.

³² “Realm of form” is composed of the first *dhyāna* heavens 初禪天, the second *dhyāna* heavens 二禪天, the third *dhyāna* heavens 三禪天 and the fourth *dhyāna* heavens 四禪天, and “formless realm” is composed of 四空天 *Catūrūpabrahmaloka* given as: 空無邊處 *Ākāśānantyāyatana*, 識無邊處 *Vijñānānantyāyatana*, 無所有處 *Akiñcanyāyatana*, 非想非非想處 *Naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana*.

Mortal sentient beings in the three realms³³ experience death, or *maraṇa-bhava* 死有—one of the four modes of existence to which they are exposed—during the process of “mortal *saṃsāra*”. If the sentient being experiencing *maraṇa-bhava* entered the four *jhānas* while living in the “realm of sensuous desire,” his *antarā-bhava*, which is obtained after death as the existential mode following *maraṇa-bhava*, could be born in the four heavens of the “realm of form”. Similarly, if the sentient being who experiences *maraṇa-bhava* entered the “four formless *jhānas*” while living in the “realm of sensuous desire”, his *antarā-bhava* could be born in the four heavens of the “realm of the formless”. And such *antarā-bhava*, born in the “realm of form” and “of the formless” and resulting in the sentient beings of those realms, is called *manomaya-kāya* inasmuch as it is directed by mind through meditative practice conducted in previous realms. However, we should not forget that these *manomaya-kāya* born in the heavens of “realm of form” or “of the formless” are no more than mortal bodies within “mortal *saṃsāra*”.

In conclusion, the notion of *manomaya-kāya* may be considered on three ascending planes: (1) as *antarā-bhava*, (2) as *antarā-bhava* directed by mind, and (3) as transformed *antarā-bhava*. In (1), *antarā-bhava* is not yet called *manomaya-kāya*, being only an “intermediate existent” found immediately after death and prior to reaching the next realm of rebirth or *rebecoming*—one of the four existential modes of the sentient beings of the “realm of sensuous desire or of form”.

In (2), where *antarā-bhava* can conduct several supernormal activities according to the mind’s intent (e.g. it can move through space according to its will) it is called *manomaya-kāya*. However, strictly speaking, it is still not entirely coextensive with *manomaya-kāya*: in (2), *antarā-bhava* directed by mind refers to celestial sentient beings—beings existing in the heavens of “realm of form” and “of the formless”. Such *antarā-bhava* may be called *manomaya-kāya* to the extent that it is an existent directed by mind, as the result of a prior meditative practice; but it is still a temporal body, even though it is freed from the physical

³³ The sentient beings refer to those who are from the six heavens of “realm of sensuous desire”, the four heavens of “realm of form” and the four heavens of “formless realm”, besides “five destinies” 五道 of “realm of sensuous desire”—hell 地獄, hungry ghost 餓鬼, animal 畜生, asura 修羅, human 人間.

body that is received by physical parents, because it has not attained through “uncontaminated wisdom”.

In (3), the mortal body is transformed into the body of a saint—*arhat*, *pratyekabuddha*, or “Bodhisattva of great power”.³⁴ This transformation occurs when the practitioner attains “uncontaminated wisdom” through meditative practice. In fact, as made evident earlier in my diagram positioning beings in relation to the three reals, the three saints do not always have transformed bodies, and so they do not always enjoy “transformed *samsāra*”, which is entered only by continuously maintaining *manomaya-kāya*—a circumstance arising with the complete conversion of “contaminated wisdom” into “uncontaminated wisdom”. Thus, as a result of not having extinguished their “contaminated wisdom”, saints may retain mortal bodies.

5. CONCLUSION

Manomaya-kāya, a notion that has induced the mystical interpretation of Buddhism due to the irrational preposition or method of approach, now has been clarified as another possibility: if we can say that *manomaya-kāya*, even though it cannot be verified by our fundamental senses, finds its rational meaning in philosophical understanding of Buddhism as one of the conditions of possibility of knowledge, it can contribute in the understanding of the whole construction as another hinge to connect the seemingly unrelated doctrines. The ontological interpretation of *manomaya-kāya* is a logical consequence because the trying to understand *manomaya-kāya* only in the psychological viewpoint could not escape the mystical interpretation of Buddhism. However, it is noted that the discussion of ontology should be conducted consistently considering the existing psychological interpretation. Although the ontological meaning of *manomaya-kāya* is important in the understanding of whole context of Buddhist doctrines, the problem of psychological interpretation is still another subject in connection with philosophical and rational authentication.

³⁴ In Tibetan Buddhism, developed an account of the specific meditation in which *antarā-bhava* can be transformed into purified *manomaya-kāya*.

Abbreviations

A. Anguttara Nikaya: part of the Canonical Sutta collection.

D. Digha Nikaya: part of the Canonical Sutta collection.

M. Majjhima Nikaya: part of the Canonical Sutta collection

Pati. Patisambhidamagga: part of the Canonical Sutta collection.

Vibh. Vibhanga: part of the Canonical Abhidhamma.

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요약

의생신 *Manomaya-kāya* 意生身の 철학적 의미

이수미

불교의 명상 수행을 통해 얻어진 초일상적인 능력을 “신비적인/마법적인” 것으로나 “초자연적인” 것으로 해석하는 입장에 있어서, 이 논문은 “마음에 의해 만들어진 몸” *manomaya-kāya* 意生身 명상의 과정 중에 얻어져서 초일상적 능력을 수행한다고 묘사되는 명상자의 “새 몸”을 중심으로 하여 “신비주의”의 의미를 철학적 방식으로 재해석함을 시도하고 있다. “신비주의”가 모순과 불합리성으로 귀속되는 불가해성을 의미하는 상황에서, 명상과 신비주의의 관계는 더 많은 고찰이 필요하다. 불교에 있어서 마음의 경지는 바른 철학적 이해를 갖춘 수행자에 의해서 얻어진다는 것을 고려할 때, 탐구의 대상이 단지 현 이해의 정도와 인식의 양상을 넘어서는 이유만으로 이러한 근시안적 탐구의 한계를 반드시 대상에게 적용할 필요는 없다.

의생신 *manomaya-kāya* 意生身을 단순히 이해 불가능한 신비주의로 치부하는 경향성 외에, 의생신 意生身の 의미를 고찰하려는 다른 한 가지 시도는 그것을 단순한 심리적 상태로 보는 것이다: 장애받음 없이 산을 거침없이 다니거나 벽을 통과하는 등의 초일상적 행위들은 단지 수행자의 마음의 민첩성이나 초월성을 나타내기 위한 은유적 표현에 해당한다.

그러나, 의생신 意生身の 신체적 성질에 대한 구체적인 설명들을 고려하면 그 존재론적 지위에 대한 규명이 필요하다. 의생신 意生身 (마음에 의해 만들어진 몸)이 지닐 수 있는 의미를 분석 (1) 마음으로부터 만들어진 몸 (마음은 몸의 재료임); (2) 이전에는 존재하지 않았으나 마음에 의하여 새로이 생겨난 몸 (마음은 몸을 만드는 주체이고 재료는 아님); (3) 마음의 주관하에 만들어진 몸 (마음은 일종의, 몸의 지배자/감독자임) 하면 “신비주의적” 해석은 물리적 신체와 정신적 마음의 이분법에 바탕을 두고 있음을 알 수 있다. (1)의 경우, 정신과 육체 간의 상호연계성에 대한 설명의 불가해성으로 인해, 구체적인 물리적 성질을 가진 마음이 정신적/비물질적 기체로부터 파생됨은 불가능하다. (2)의 경우, 마음이 그 자신을 재료로 쓰지 않고 몸을 새로이 만든다고 할 때 마음은 무 無에서 몸을 간단히 만들어 내는 것으로 이해되는데, 이것 또한 불가능한 경우이다. (3)의 경우, “만들어진”의 의미가 “감독/조절”의 활동으로 제한되고 그 몸이 마음 이외에서 재료를 가질 때, 마음의 새로이

만들어진 몸은 반드시 몸과 단절되어 있을 필요가 없다.

그렇다면, 어떤 매개체를 통하여 마음은 몸에 작용하는가? 마음의 몸에 대한 조절 매개체는 설명되지 않았다. 『상유타 니까야』는 의생신 意生身을, 삼계 三界 내의 중생들의 네 가지 존재 양식 중유 中有, 생유 生有, 본유 本有, 사유 死有 중 하나인 중유 中有 사후의 순간에서 내세가 시작되기 전까지의 기간에 해당 와 연결시켜 언급한다. 중유 中有가 마음을 통해서 만들어져서 마음을 의지하는 성질이 있을 때 이를 의생신 意生身이라고 부른다. 여기서, 중유 中有와 의생신 意生身의 관계에 대한 설명이 더 필요한데, 왜냐하면 이 둘은 서로 다른 영역을 가리키기 때문이다. 전자는 여러 존재 양식들 간의 하나를 지칭하고; 후자는 명상 과정에서 나타난 특별한 존재이기 때문이다.

삼계 三界가운데, 색계 色界와 무색계 無色界는 “마음에 의해 만들어진 천 天,” 즉 의성천 意成天/의생천 意生天으로 불리운다. “마음에 의해 만들어진 천 天”이라는 표현은 “마음에 의해 만들어진 몸,” 즉 의생신 意生身이 거주하는 천 天을 말한다. 이렇게 연결해 볼 때, 색계천 色界天과 무색계천 無色界天에 거주하는 의생신 意生身은, 비록 물리적 부모에 의해 받은 물리적 신체를 가지고 있는 것은 아니지만 수명이 제한된 몸을 가진 중생들을 말하는 것임에 주목할 수 있다. 만약 중생이 욕계 欲界에 사는 동안 사선정 四禪定에 들어갈 수 있으면, 그의 중유 中有는 색계 色界의 사선천 四禪天에 태어날 수 있을 것이다. 마찬가지로, 만약 중생이 욕계 欲界에 사는 동안 사무색정 四無色定에 들어갈 수 있으면, 그의 중유 中有는 무색계 無色界의 사공천 四空天에 태어날 수 있을 것이다. 색계 色界와 무색계 無色界에 태어나서 그 영역의 중생이 된 중유 中有는 그 전 영역에서의 명상 수행을 통해 마음에 의해 조절되므로 의생신 意生身으로 불리우는 것이다.

『법화경』에는 의생신 意生身이, 삼계 三界 내 중생들에 해당하는 “수명이 제한된 (몸을 가지는) 윤회생사” 分段生死와 대조되는 “변화된 (몸을 가지는) 윤회생사” 變易生死 삼계 三界를 초월한 초지 初地이상의 보살의 단계에 해당하는 윤회생사 에서의 몸의 형태로 지칭된다. 여기서 “변화된 (몸을 가지는) 윤회생사” 變易生死는 한시적인 몸을 가지는 중생들이 아니라 성인들, 즉 무루업 無漏業에서 생기는 “미세한 몸” 意生身 을 소유하는 아라한 阿羅漢, 연각 緣覺, 대력보살 大力菩薩 의 영역이다. 그러나, 이 성인들은 항상 삼계 三界를 벗어나 있는 것은 아닌데, 왜냐하면 의생신 意生身은 제한된 수명의 몸의 삼계 三界 내에서 단속적으로 얻어질 수도 있는 것이기 때문이다.

결론적으로, 의생신 意生身의 개념은 새 측면에서 고려되어질 수 있다: (1) 중유 中有로서, (2) 마음에 의해 지휘되는 중유 中有로서, 그리고 (3) 변화된 중유 中有로서이다. (1)에서 중유 中有는 죽음 바로 뒤 내세에 아직 이르기 전의 단지 “중간적 존재” 욕계 欲界나 색계 色界의 중생들의 네 가지 존재 양상 중 하나로서 아직 의생신 意生身이라고 불리지 않는다. (2)에서는, 마음에 의해 조절되는 중유 中有는 천 天에 거주하는 중생들 색계 色界와 무색계 無色界의 천 天의 영역의 존재들 을 말한다. 그러한 중유 中有는 이전의 명상 수행의 결과에 따라 마음이 그것을 조절하는 정도에 따라서 의생신 意生身이라고 불리울 수 있을 것이다. (3)의 경우에 있어서는, 수명이 제한된 몸은 성인, 즉 아라한 阿羅漢, 연각 緣覺, 대력보살 大力菩薩로 변화된다. 이 변화는 수행자가 명상 수행을 통하여 무루지 無漏智를 얻을 때 일어난다. 유루지 有漏智를 모두 소멸시키지 않은 결과로서 성인들은 수명이 제한된 몸을 보유할 수도 있다.

불합리한 방법론적 전제로 인해 불교의 신비주의적인 해석을 초래했던 개념인 의생신 意生身은 이제 새로운 관점에서 조명되었다: 비록 그것이 우리의 감각적 능력에 의해서는 증명될 수 없지만 앎을 가능하게 하는 조건들 중 하나로서 불교의 철학적 이해라는 틀 안에서 그 합리적 의미를 찾아 보았다; 이와 같이 이해된다면, 의생신 意生身은 관련성 없어 보이는 불교 이론들을 연결하는 하나의 고리가 될 수 있을 것이다.

[주제어] 의생신 意生身, 신비주의, 마음, 몸, 중유 中有

ABSTRACT

The Philosophical Meaning of *Manomaya-kāya*

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1. Introduction

In the light of the interpretation of Buddhist supernormal capacities obtained through meditative practices, as “mystical/magical” or “supernatural,” this paper aims at reconsidering the meaning of “mysticism” in a philosophical way, centering upon the notion of “mind-made body” *manomaya-kāya* 意生身—a meditator’s “new body” obtained in the process of mediation and described as performing supernormal activities. Given that “mysticism” connotes incomprehensibility reduced to absurdity or irrationality, the relation between meditation and mysticism is in need of further examination. Considering that certain Buddhist “stages” of mind are attained by practitioners endowed with a correct philosophical understanding, the limitations of shortsighted inquiry need not be projected onto inquiry’s object simply because this one transcends a present degree of understanding or mode of consciousness.

Aside from the habit of branding *manomaya-kāya* 意生身 as simply incomprehensible mysticism, one attempt to investigate the meaning of the “mind-made body” consists in viewing it simply as a psychological condition: supernormal activities like unobstructed traveling over mountains or going through walls amount to mere metaphoric expressions referring to the agility and unlimitedness of the practitioner’s mind.

However, considering concrete descriptions about physical properties of *manomaya-kāya*, the clarification of its ontological status is necessary. Analysis of the possible implications of *manomaya-kāya* (the body made by mind)—(1) the body being

made up of mind (where mind is a constituent of the body); (2) the body, which did not exist previously, and is created newly by mind (where mind is a subject which makes the body, not the body's constituent) (3) the body made under the supervision of mind (mind is a sort of ruler/supervisor over the body.)—shows that the “mystical” reading is based on the dichotomizing of a physical body and a spiritual mind. In the case of (1), it is impossible that a body having concrete physical characteristics derives from mental/non-material substance due to the inexplicability of the interrelationship between the mental and the physical. In (2), when it is said that mind makes the body newly without using mind itself as a constituent, mind can be understood as simply creating the body from nothing, which is also impossible. With (3), when the meaning of “made” is limited to the activity of “supervision/regulation” and the body has other constituents besides mind, the mind's newly made body needs not to be altogether separated from the body.

Then, through what medium does the mind act upon the body? The ruling agency of mind over body remains unaccounted for. The *Samyatta Nikaya* refers to *manomaya-kāya* in relation to the notion of *antarā-bhava* 中有—which corresponds to the period stretching from the moment of death to the time when the next life begins—one of the four existential modes of sentient beings in “the three realms” *triloka* 三界—*antarā-bhava* 中有, *upapatti-bhava* 生有, *kāla-bhava* 本有, *maraṇa-bhava* 死有. When *antarā-bhava* has the characteristics of being created through and relying on mind, it is called *manomaya-kāya*. Here, further explanation about the relationship between *antarā-bhava* and *manomaya-kāya* is still necessary since they have distinct domains: the former indicates one of several “existential modes”; the latter is a specific being emerging in the process of meditation.

Of the “three realms,” those of form *rūpadhātu* 色界 and of formlessness *arūpadhātu* 無色界 are called “the heavens made by mind” 意成天. The expression, “the heavens made by mind,” refers to the heavens that are inhabited by “bodies made by mind”—*manomaya-kāya*. In this connection we may note that the *manomaya-kāya* inhabiting “the heavens of the realm of form” 色界天 and “those of the formless” 無色界天 must refer to sentient beings with mortal bodies, even if not endowed with the physical body

that is received by physical parents. If a sentient being entered the four *jhānas* 四禪定 while living in “the realm of sensuous desire 欲界,” his *antarā-bhava* could be born in the four *dhyāna* heavens 四禪天 of the “realm of form.” Similarly, if a sentient being entered the four formless *jhānas* 四無色定 while living in “the realm of sensuous desire,” his *antarā-bhava* could be born in the four heavens 四空天 of the “realm of the formless.” Born in the “realm of form” and “of the formless” and resulting in the sentient beings of those realms, *antarā-bhava* is called *manomaya-kāya* inasmuch as it is directed by mind through meditative practice conducted in previous realms.

In the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* 法華經, *manomaya-kāya* is referred to as a bodily form found in “transformed *saṃsāra*” 變易生死, a type of *saṃsāra* for Bodhisattvas beginning from the first stage 初地, transcending “the three realms,” in contrast with “mortal *saṃsāra*” 分段生死 for sentient beings in “the three realms.” Here, “the transformed *saṃsāra*” 變易生死 is the locus of saints, not sentient beings with temporal bodies, or *arhat* 阿羅漢, *pratyekabuddha* 緣覺, “Bodhisattva of great power” 大力菩薩, all of whom preserve a “delicate body”—*manomaya-kāya*—arising out of “uncontaminated action” *anāsrava-karman* 無漏業. However, saints do not always transcend “the three realms” since *manomaya-kāya* can be *intermittently* obtained in the three realms of mortal bodies.

In conclusion, the notion of *manomaya-kāya* may be considered on three ascending planes: (1) as *antarā-bhava*, (2) as *antarā-bhava* directed by mind, and (3) as transformed *antarā-bhava*. In (1), *antarā-bhava* is not yet called *manomaya-kāya*, being only an “intermediate existent” found immediately after death and prior to reaching the next realm of rebirth or *rebecoming*—one of the four existential modes of the sentient beings of the “realm of sensuous desire or of form.” In (2), *antarā-bhava* directed by mind refers to celestial sentient beings—beings existing in the heavens of the realm of form and of the formless. Such *antarā-bhava* may be called *manomaya-kāya* to the extent that it is an existent directed by mind, as the result of a prior meditative practice. In (3), the mortal body is transformed into the body of a saint—*arhat*, *pratyekabuddha*, or “Bodhisattva of great power.” This transformation occurs when the practitioner attains “uncontaminated wisdom” 無漏智

through meditative practice. As a result of not having extinguished their “contaminated wisdom”有漏智, saints may retain mortal bodies.

Manomaya-kāya, a notion that has inspired a mystical interpretation of Buddhism due to the irrational methodological presuppositions, has now been clarified in a new light: though it cannot be verified by our sensory faculties, finds its rational meaning in a philosophical reading of Buddhism as one of the conditions of possibility of knowledge; thus understood, *manomaya-kāya* can constitute a hinge connecting seemingly unrelated Buddhist doctrines.

[Key Terms] *manomaya-kāya* 意生身, mysticism, mind, body, *antarā-bhava* 中有