

# On the *Tri-Kaya*: Introduction

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This is an introduction to the three tapes on the subject of the *Tri-Kaya* to be delivered on August 8, 1971.

I maintain that thought has the right to challenge any thesis whatsoever, in any field whatsoever, be it religious, philosophical, scientific, political, sociological, economic, aesthetic, or whatnot. But, at the same time, it becomes the obligation of the thinker to give proportionate support to any thesis that successfully meets that challenge in whatever degree it succeeds in accomplishing this. Therefore, there being nothing that is to be held beyond challenge, it follows that all dogmatic statements, either as affirmations or negations, which claim to stand superior to the review of thought are rejected. This is a fundamental principle in all that I present to you. And as I understand it, it reflects exactly the spirit of the philosophical Buddhism.

Now, two years ago, I delivered here a thesis that from the standpoint of orthodox Brahminism, and probably from the standpoint of certain Buddhist philosophers, would have been regarded as heretical.<sup>1</sup> This material, however, was of such a technical sort, that the heretical implications were probably missed by most of those who heard what was then said. Nonetheless, there are those who understood, and I received a very gratifying support from sources that were competent and articulate. The three tapes that are prepared for this Sunday are supplementary to that which was produced two years ago. In that case, we dealt with a thesis concerning the possible interrelationship or interaction between three zones, or worlds, or planes of function, namely, the universe of objects, the evolution, or the *Sangsara*, that which surrounds us in our ordinary consciousness, *Nirvana*, and *Paranirvana*. The thesis then put forward was that it is in principle possible that the energies, or consciousness values, or feeling values of the *nirvanic* level could be, in some sense, combined with the values that belong to the *sangsaric* plane instead of being radically separated therefrom as it is generally so viewed; and that thereby the process of redemption could be carried out much more effectively than otherwise would be the case.

This has a very great practical bearing upon the world problem. After a lifetime of observation, study, reflection, and meditation, I have been forced to the conclusion that all efforts by *sangsaric* man to resolve the wrongness in the *sangsaric* domain—and that means the domain of our common life here—using only the resources of the *sangsaric* domain, is doomed to failure; that the so-called revolutionary efforts are almost inevitably doomed to producing an enhancement of suffering rather than an alleviation of suffering. This we have witnessed during the last seventy years or so; and it confirms a formulation by Sri Aurobindo. Therefore, if there is to be a resolution, it must be in terms of bringing in elements of consciousness that are not to be found in the *sangsaric* zone.

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<sup>1</sup> See the audio recordings “On the Meaning of Redemption” and “Sangsara, Nirvana, and Paranirvana,” parts 1 and 2.

Heretofore, the most profound offering that has been made for the resolution of *sangsaric* suffering, has been the *nirvanic* withdrawal offered by Buddha and Shankara, modified to the extent of a renunciation of that withdrawal upon the part of those who had reached the place where they could achieve it, to serve as far as possible the needs of suffering humanity. What was proposed is that it would be possible by a blending of *nirvanic* consciousness with *sangsaric* consciousness to bring about an ordering and illuminating of the latter in such a way that the resolution of the problem of suffering could be achieved without *nirvanic* withdrawal. In this respect, the thesis paralleled that of Sri Aurobindo, who approached the problem from a different angle.

Today, we propose to present material that is supplementary to what was said two years ago. We there dealt with three fields, zones, or worlds, or states, namely, *Sangsara*, *Nirvana*, and *Paranirvana*. Today we will deal with the instrument of action, or function, that are appropriate to those zones and are actually instruments of those who have attained to Buddhahood. This is the relevance of the subject of the *Tri-Kaya* to the large problem of *sangsaric* redemption. I know of no other way for the resolution of world suffering.

We will now proceed to the tapes.