

life is an expression of *ānanda*, “bliss,” “delight,” or “joy.” Both are true. As verses 139 and 140 say in a series of metaphors, life is both woeful and sweet, shady and sunny, parched and blossoming, smoky and bright with light.

Verse 140 introduces another metaphor, that of the “three vestures,” which is an important theme in this and the last Fragment of the book. The three vestures are identified by name in verse 141 and two glosses refer to a gloss in Fragment 3 that discusses the subject in some detail. We will come to that gloss in its proper place, but here we can consider an overview of these vestures.

The concept of the three vestures is a Buddhist one, though interpreted somewhat differently in various schools of Buddhism. Blavatsky also thought that the way Western scholars generally understood the concept was inadequate. Because it is such an important concept in the *Voice*, it is worth considering in some detail. Even the literal sense of the words is noteworthy. The general term for the concept in Sanskrit is *trikāya*, from *tri* “three” and *kāya*, literally “body” but in this context usually translated “sheath” or “vesture.” The word *kāya* also refers to the trunk of a tree, among other uses. The Buddha (not just the historical Siddhartha Gautama, but the metaphysical Buddha nature or Buddha-ness that manifests in all historical Buddhas) is said to have three bodies or vestures.

The first of these is the *nirmāṇakāya*, the body or vesture of transformation. *Nirmāṇa* as an independent word means “measuring” and hence “building,” “making,” or “creating,” and, since all acts of creation involve change, it also means “transformation.” The *nirmāṇakāya*, or body of transformation and change, is usually said to be the historical Buddha in incarnation, as ordinary human beings might see him.

The second is the *sambhogakāya*, the body or vesture of enjoyment. *Sambhoga* means basically “pleasure,” “delight,” “love leading to union.” The *sambhogakāya* is usually understood as a heavenly or archetypal manifestation of the Buddha, as Bodhisattavas or other heavenly beings might see him, that is, as an idealized form.

The third is the *dharmakāya*, the body or vesture of *dharma* — a word for which no single English equivalent exists. It is usually translated “law,” but has many meanings, all related but depending on the context. In this context, perhaps we can think of *dharma* as that which abides, the Ground of all