

The Title Buddha : A Comparative Study in Theravada and Mahayana
 Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research project was to study about the rightly self awakened Buddha with two major purposes. First was to investigate the existence of the rightly self awakened Buddha according to Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Second was to study comparatively the ideas or views of the rightly self awakened Buddha in the two Buddhist schools.

With regard to this research, it was found that Theravada Buddhism considered the rightly self awakened Buddha as an ordinary man, not a supernatural deity or a sacrosanct. But the rightly self awakened Buddha was very determined to practise himself to attain perfection and to emancipate himself from impurity by means of great wisdom, faith, patience and effort. Theravada viewed that anyone could reach Buddhahood provided that he was resolute and has sufficient effort. Therefore, the rightly self awakened Buddha was physically similar to all people in the common characteristics but he was mentally different.

With regard to the Mahayana view, the rightly self awakened Buddha was not an ordinary man although the scripture revealed that he had birth, old age, illness and death like all people. However, these are regarded as partial appearances and as means, Nirmanakaya, to teach the world creatures. In reality, the rightly self awakened Buddha had two more parts of the body, Dhammakaya and Sambhogakaya, which were immortal and unchanged like Nirmanakaya in the human world. The three parts of the body were unique but only different in the expression-conditions.

So far as the study is concerned, the two Buddhist schools laid down the foundation of their views focusing on five major points which are kinds, number, parami, body and Buddhahood after passing away (Nirvana), it revealed by Theravada Buddhism, that there were three kinds of rightly self awakened Buddha: Panyadhikabuddha, Saddhadhikabuddha and Viriyadhikabuddha regarding to the length of cultivating Parami, the level of wisdom, faith and effort. There were numerous Buddha occurrences and each had to practice following the 30 Buddhakarakadhammas or Paramis before becoming the rightly self awakened Buddha. The rightly self awakened Buddha, thus, had two body-parts: Niranmanakaya and Dhammakaya. After the Nirvana, the Buddhahood was absolutely empty without any conditions.

According to Mahayana Buddhism, there were three kinds of Buddha: Aadhibuddha, Jhanibuddha and Manusibuddha regarding to the occurrence condition to fit the teaching of outguidable persons. There were numerous Buddhas occurred and each had to perfectly practise Bodhisattavadhamma, which are 6 Paramis, 4 Appamannas, 4 Mahapanidhanas and 3 Gunnasompattis, to become the Buddha. The Buddha had 3 bodies: Niranmanakaya, Sambhogakaya and Dhammakaya. After his Nirvana, the Buddhahood was still heavenly being and would occasionally be reborn as the Buddha in the human world.

In this research, the researcher has proposed the analytical view about the two major causes of the different conceptions of the rightly self awakened Buddha between the two schools of Buddhism. One was from the outside surroundings and the other was from the incomplete study on Pariyatti, Patipatti and Pativedha. The proper way to gain the truth about the Buddhahood could be attained by completely practicing the Noble eightfold path at a certain level.

Moreover, the researcher has also proposed the idea on the proper consideration to study the rightly self awakened Buddha that all Buddhists should study about him as a model of such an excellent way of life, a person who was perfect with wisdom and purity which Buddhists should follow in all his Dhamma and teachings. The Dhamma and teachings are like frames and tools that lead the practitioners to attain perfection including the present bliss, the next life bliss and the supreme perfectioness that is the void of Nirvana.