



Dhammakāya in the Pali Canon

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In the long history of academic research regarding the term *dhammakāya*, the term has been connected exclusively with the Buddha, while its import to Buddhist nobles of other types has been neglected. Previous studies refer to a number of Pali passages in order to trace the early origin of the conception of the Buddha's bodies. However, it may be observed that most of the Pali passages being referred to do not really contain the word '*dhammakāya*' but only the word '*dhamma*.' Thus, to refer to those passages means to confuse the term '*dhammakāya*' with '*dhamma*.' Besides, some other Pali references to *dhammakāya* have never been mentioned.

The present paper documents all the references to *dhammakāya* that are to be found in the Pali canon. It demonstrates that the term *dhammakāya* as present in those passages, including the *Aggañña-sutta* which is claimed by some scholars to be the sole Pali reference to *dhammakāya*, does not carry the same connotation as previously interpreted in the academic mainstream. Indeed, the term *dhammakāya* is significant to Buddhist nobles of all types. Thus, the paper argues that to relate the term with the Buddha exclusively, as has often been performed within the academic arena, is misleading.