

## Chapter 5: The Adamantine Body

[622c] At that time, the World Honored One again addressed Kāśyapa, "Good son, the Tathāgata's body is an eternally abiding body. It is an indestructible body, a body of adamant. Not being a body of sundry foods, it is the essential body."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, I do not see at all such a body of which the Buddha has just spoken. I see only an impermanent, destructible body of sundry food and earth. And why? Because the Tathāgata is about to enter into parinirvāṇa!"

The Buddha addressed Kāśyapa, "You should not say that the body of the Tathāgata is infirm and destructible like a ordinary man's body. Good son, you now should know that the body of the Tathāgata over the course of measureless tens of millions of aeons is firm, steady, and difficult to destroy. It is not a human or deva body, not a fearful body, nor a body of sundry foods. The body of the Tathāgata is not a body. This body does not arise or cease, not continuous, and not cultivated. Measureless and boundless, it leaves no footprints. It is imperceptible, without appearance, and absolutely pure. It has no motion, no sensation, and no activity. It neither abides nor is created; it has neither flavor or ingredients. Nor is it conditioned; neither by deeds nor their results. Not active, not ceasing, not mental, nor numerable, it is inconceivable and eternally not discussible. Lacking consciousness, it is free of mentality, and yet it does not part with mentality. Its mentality is equanimity, not existent and yet existent. There is nothing [in it] gone or coming, and yet it goes and comes. It is not broken or destroyed; not temporary or ending. It is not produced and it does not cease. It is not a master, and yet it is the master. It is neither existent or non-existent, neither sensible or observable. It is not a word, and yet it is not wordless. It is neither established or not established. [623a] Invisible and entirely seen, it is without location and yet dwells. It is without an abode and yet it has an abode. Neither dark nor illuminated, it has no tranquillity, and yet it is tranquil. It exists nowhere, is neither received or given, and its purity is without defilement or purity, it is the end of purity. Abiding by not abiding anywhere, it neither is apprehended or lost. It is neither a thing or not a thing. It is neither a field of merit nor not a field of merit. Inexhaustible, it is not exhausted, parting with all exhaustion. Being empty, it parts with emptiness. Although it does not eternally abide, it does not cease from thought to thought, and has no sullyng defilements. Having no words, it parts with words. It is neither heard nor expressed, and also is not cultivated. Not appraised or measured, not same or different, it has no image and no appearance adorning characteristics. Neither courageous nor fearful, without peace or non-peace, without obsession or non-obsession, it cannot be looked upon since it lacks any appearance or countenance.

"The Tathāgata liberates all the sentient beings. Because none are liberated, he is able to free the sentient beings. Because there are none freed, he enlightens the sentient beings. Because there are none enlightened, he explains things as they really are. Because there is no duality, it cannot be measured and is unparalleled. Even like empty space, it has no image or countenance. Equally of an unborn nature, it is neither temporary or permanent. While always practicing the one vehicle, sentient beings see three. Not reversing or turning back, it ends all bondages. Not hostile or offensive, it is not of a nature nor abides in a nature. He is not unified or scattered, not long or short, not round or square. He is not the aggregates (skandhas), senses, or elements and yet is the aggregates, senses, and elements. It is not increasing or decreasing, won or lost. The body of the Tathāgata is thus the consummation of measureless virtue.

"Having no perceiver or non-perceiver, having no seer or non-seer, it is neither conditioned nor unconditioned. It is not worldly or unworldly, neither created nor not created, not dependent or independent. It is neither the four gross elements nor not the four gross elements. It is not caused nor uncaused, neither a sentient being nor not a sentient being, neither a *ramaōa* or a *brāhmaōa*. The Lion, the Great Lion, is neither a body or not a body. It is inexpressible. Remove a single thing or characteristic and it is incalculable. And at the time of *parinirvāōa* it does not enter *parinirvāōa*. The Tathāgata's essential body is the complete consummation of all these immeasurable and minutely fine virtues.

"Kāśyapa, it is only the Tathāgata who arrives at the knowledge of its appearance. Neither voice hearers nor condition perceivers know of it. Kāśyapa, thus is the merit of achieving the body of the Tathāgata. It is not the body that has been long nourished with sundry foods. Kāśyapa, the merit of the Tathāgata's real body is so. How could it be subject to disease, anxiety, distress, fear, fragility, infirmity, or be like a clay vessel? Kāśyapa, the Tathāgata manifests illness and distress because he wishes to harmonize and discipline the sentient beings. Good son, you now should [623b] know that the body of the Tathāgata is an adamantine body. From this day forwards, you should concentrate your mind and consider, having no thought of it as a food body. And you should explain for others that the Tathāgata's body is the essential body."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, the Tathāgata having consummated these merits of his body, how is it that it shall be subject to illness, distress, impermanence, injury, or destruction? From this day forwards, I shall always consider the body of the Tathāgata as being the eternal essential body, the body of peaceful happiness. Also, I shall widely explain of it for others. Verily, World Honored One, the Tathāgata's essential body is adamantine and indestructible. However, I am still unable to know what its origin is."

The Buddha addressed Kāśyapa, "It is because of being able to protect and uphold the true Dharma's causes and conditions that one consummates the adamantine body. Kāśyapa, I in the remote past have protected the Dharma's causes and conditions, and so now I have consummated the adamantine body that is eternally abiding and indestructible. Good son, one who protects and maintains the true Dharma, who has not received the five precepts or cultivated the majestic deportment, should carry knife, sword, bow and arrow, spear, or lance, defending and upholding the precepts of the pure monk."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, suppose a monk leaves such protection to dwell alone in unoccupied and peaceful mountains and forests. Let us say that this person is a genuine monk. Suppose there is another who follows him and seeks to be the protector of this monk's practice. It should be known that this person is a comrade of that head-shaven worthy."

The Buddha addressed Kāśyapa, "You should not say this about that head-shaven worthy. Suppose this monk, whom the other person follows to his dwelling, reads and recites the Sūtras and considers them in seated meditation. If questions are put to him about the Dharma, then he gives thorough discourses on it. This is called the generous upholding of the precepts, the blessed virtue with little desire, and satisfaction. Although he is able to give various discourses on the Dharma, this is the very reason he is unable to perform the lion's roar. He is not acting as a lion who is encircled, and so he is unable to discipline evil people who are not of the Dharma. Thus, this monk is incapable of benefiting himself and sentient beings. You should know that this sort is negligent and lazy. Although he is able to uphold the precepts and protect the pure practice, you should know that he has no ability to do more.

"Now, suppose there is a monk who is provided with supplies and who is always comfortable. Again, he is able to protect and uphold the commandments and precepts he has received and is able to widely proclaim the lion's roar of the wondrous Dharma. This refers to the Sūtras, Geyas, predictions, verses, Udānas, Ityuktas, Jātakas, Vaipulyas, and Abhūtdharmas. Using these nine divisions of the scriptural canon, he gives thorough explanations for others. Because he blesses sentient beings with peace and happiness, he calls out, 'In the Nirvāṇa Sūtra, the restrained monk should not be supported with things that are not of the Dharma such as servants, maids, [623c] oxen, and sheep.'

"Suppose there is a monk who is supported with such things of impurity and is nurtured by them. The Tathāgata has previously in other Sūtras said that when there are monks supported with such things not of the Dharma, they will drive out a kingdom's monarch who accords with the Dharma and is nourished by it, and that will lead to the reversion to baseness. Suppose there is that monk who then is able to perform thus the Lion's Roar. And there is one who breaks the precepts who, having heard his words, responds by becoming angry and offended and injures that Dharma teacher. This teacher of the Dharma continues to promote it until his life ends. Therefore, he is famed for upholding the precepts, benefiting himself, and benefiting others. Because of these conditions, we should listen closely to the kingdom's ruler, people, scholars, ministers, and laymen who are protectors of the Dharma. If someone wishes to be a defender of the true Dharma, then they should thus train themselves.

"Kāśyapa, one who thus breaks the precepts is not a protector of the Dharma. Such a head-shaven worthy is called 'One who does not uphold the precepts'. He obtains such a reputation. Good son, in the distant past beyond an measureless and boundless number of asaī khya aeons, in this city of Kuśinagara, there was a Buddha who appeared in the world with the name Joyful Increase of Blessings. He was a Tathāgata, Worthy, Completely Enlightened One, perfect in wisdom and conduct, well gone, a knower of the world, unsurpassed, a tamer of men, a teacher of men and gods, and a World Honored One. At that time, the world was widely adorned in purity, abundantly happy and peaceful, and the people flourished without any hunger or thirst. Those of that peaceful and happy land were like bodhisattvas. That Buddha, that World Honored One, stayed in the world and had transformed an measureless number of sentient beings. And so afterwards he entered parinirvāṇa beneath a pair of sāla trees. After that Buddha's Nirvāṇa, the neglected Dharma remained in the world for measureless tens of millions of years. For the last forty years before the Buddha Dharma perished, there was at that time a monk who upheld the precepts. His name was 'Awakened Virtue'. Many were the multitudes of disciples and their retinues who surrounded him. He was able to proclaim the lion's roar, promulgating widely and explaining the nine divisions of the scriptural canon. He restrained the monks so they would not be supported by servants, oxen, sheep, and things not of the Dharma.

"At that time, there were many of precept-breaking monks who, upon hearing that their activities had been proclaimed to be born of an evil mentality, took up blades and sticks and menaced that Dharma teacher. At this point, the nation's king was named 'Having Virtue'. Hearing of this happening, he then promptly went to the Dharma preachers' dwelling and did battle with the evil precept-breaking monks, in order to protect the Dharma and allowing the Dharma preacher to flee and escape from injury. At that point, the king had suffered wounds that he bore all over his body. At that time, Awakened Virtue immediately praised the king, saying, 'Excellent, excellent! This king now is a genuine defender of the true Dharma. In future lives this person shall be a measureless Dharma vessel.' When the king's mind heard the Dharma, he was greatly elated. Immediately, then, when his life ended, he was born into the land of the Buddha Akṣobhya. And he became that Buddha's best disciple. [624a] The king's general and the people who had fought under him according were joyful. All their minds being of the irreversible bodhi, at the end of their lives they were also born into the land of the Buddha Akṣobhya. That monk Awakened Virtue after his life ended also was reborn into the land of the Buddha Akṣobhya's and for that Buddha became the second disciple among his voice hearer congregation. When there is a desire for the true Dharma to be destroyed, it is then that it must be received, upheld, embraced, and protected.

"Kāśyapa, at that time, the king was myself and that Dharma-preaching monk the Buddha Kāśyapa. Kāśyapa, the defender of the true Dharma attains thus such a measureless reward. By means of such causes and conditions have I, on this day, attained the various marks adorning myself and brought to fruition the essential body, the indestructible body."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa again said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, the Tathāgata's eternal body is just like a stone statue."

The Buddha replied to Kāśyapa, "Good son, because of these causes and conditions, the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen must aid, promote, protect, and uphold the true Dharma. The reward for protecting the Dharma is vast and measureless. Good son, this is why the Dharma-protecting laymen should take up blades and sticks to defend such a Dharma-keeping monk. If

there are those who take and uphold the five precepts, they are not called people of the Mahāyāna. Those who do not take the five precepts in order to defend the true Dharma, they are called Mahāyānists. The protectors of the true Dharma shall take up swords and weapons of war and act as guards for Dharma preachers."

Kāśyapa said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, what if monks and such laymen who take up swords become the companions for a teacher who has no teacher? Is this keeping the precepts or breaking the precepts?"

The Buddha replied to Kāśyapa, "They would not be the equal of a person who breaks the precepts. Good son, after my Nirvāṇa the world will go uncultivated and be confused, the lands turgid and corrupt. People will rob and cheat one another and they will go hungry and thirsty. At that time, because many will be hungry and thirsty, and it will occur to them to leave home. Such people will be known as shaven people. The shaven people as a group will protect and uphold the true Dharma upon seeing that there are monks who uphold the precepts with majestic comportment and perfected purity. They will chase away those who might kill or harm them."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa again said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, the person who upholds the precepts is a defender of the true Dharma. How will they travel through the villages, towns, cities, and metropolises, teaching and transforming others?"

"Good son, this is why I now acknowledge that person who upholds the precepts and depends on the companionship of the white-robed swordsmen. If the rulers of countries, great ministers, elders, and laymen wield swords in order to protect the Dharma, [624b] I call this equal to upholding the precepts. Even though the swords they carry should not be used to end a life, if they are able to act thus, then this is called the supreme upholding of the precepts.

"Kāśyapa, being a 'Dharma protector' means having the right view and ability to widely promulgate and explain the Mahāyāna Sūtras. In the end, he does not seize upon the sovereign's precious canopies, oil flasks, rice, grain, and various other fruits and berries. It is not for benefit and support that he associates himself with kings, great ministers, and elders. His mind transcends their gifts and he does not curry favor or corruption. Perfecting the majestic deportment, he defeats the precept-breakers and corrupt people. This is called a teacher who upholds the precepts and protects the Dharma, who is able to be a true and good friend to sentient beings. His mind is broad and extensive, like the ocean.

"Kāśyapa, suppose there is a monk who explains the Dharma for others in order to be given benefits and support. And this person possesses a retinue of disciples who also exploit this teacher, coveting and seeking benefits and support. This person's flattering of himself thus destroys the congregation.

"Kāśyapa, there are three kinds of congregations: 1) the mixed Saṃgha of precept violators, 2) the ignorant and deluded Saṃgha, and 3) the pure Saṃgha. The mixed Saṃgha with precept violators can easily be destroyed, while the pure precept-upholding Saṃgha beneficially supports the causes and conditions of that which cannot be destroyed.

"What is a mixed saṃgha of precept violators? Suppose there is a monk who while upholding the commandments and precepts in order for benefits and support, associates himself with precept breakers, sitting, rising, walking, and returning with them, being a close companion, and equaling their deeds. This is called breaking the precepts and is also a mixed Saṃgha.

"What is an ignorant and deluded Saṃgha? Suppose there is a monk who stays in an Aranya dwelling. His faculties are not beneficial, dark, dull, of poor vision, and he has little desire to beg for food. From the day of reciting the precepts to the end of the retreat, he teaches the disciples who are pure and repentant. Seeing non-disciples who numerously violate the commandments and precepts, he is unable to teach and lead them to be pure and repentant when coming together to recite the precepts to the end of a retreat. This is called an ignorant and deluded Saṃgha.

"What is called a pure Saṃgha? Suppose there is a Saṃgha of monks who the hundreds of thousands of tens of millions of māras are unable to destroy. The nature of this bodhisattva congregation's myriad roots is pure. They are able to harmonize congregations like the two mentioned above and lead all to peacefully abide in a pure congregation. These is called the Dharma protecting, unsurpassed, great teachers; those who well uphold the vinaya. Because they wish to pacify and bless sentient beings, they know the precepts' marks, whether light or grave.

Those who are not of the vinaya therefore do not realize this knowledge. If one is of the vinaya, then he readily realizes it.

"What is the pacification of sentient beings? Suppose bodhisattvas are transformed into sentient beings, always entering hamlets and villages and not missing an occasion. Some go into the homes of widows and maidens and similarly remain to establish the Sūtras over the course of many years if the voice hearers do not do so. This is called [624c] the pacification and blessing of sentient beings.

"What is knowing the grave? Suppose one sees the Tathāgata's causes and events of the restraining precepts. You from this day forwards should be honest and not further transgress them, such as the four grave commandments that those who have left the household are not to do. So it is because of violating them, that they are not 𑖀ramaṃas nor the Śākya clan. This is called the grave.

"What is the light? If one transgresses in trifling matters, thus one performs the three admonishments. If one is able to forsake it, this is called the light.

One who does not follow the vinaya and does not realize it, he may praise impure things, saying they should be accepted and used. It is one who is of the vinaya and realizes it who well studies the vinaya and does not come near to breaking the precepts. Seeing that there are those who practice in conformance to the precepts and vinaya, one's mind becomes elated. Thus is one able to know the Buddha's Dharma, who performs the good and is able to understand the discourses. This is called a vinaya teacher. One who well understands each word and upholds the Sūtras is also so.

"So it is, good son. The Buddha's Dharma is measureless and inconceivable. The Tathāgata is also so. He is inconceivable."

Bodhisattva Kāśyapa said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, so it is, so it is. Sincere is the Noble One who says, 'The Buddha's Dharma is immeasurable and inconceivable. The Tathāgata is also so. He is inconceivable.' Therefore, knowing that the Tathāgata is eternally abiding, indestructible, and without any change, I now will well study it and also will promulgate this doctrine to others."

At that time, the Buddha praised Bodhisattva Kāśyapa, "Excellent, excellent! The Tathāgata's body then is adamant and an indestructible body. The bodhisattva must thus well train himself, rightly viewing and rightly knowing this. If he is able to clearly know and see, then this is seeing the Buddha's body of adamant, the indestructible body. It is like seeing forms and images in a mirror."