

Part Four:
THE PERFECTION OF VIGOR
(Chapters 26–27)

Chapter 27: Specific Aspects of the Perfection of Vigor

II. THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF VIGOR

A. THE FIVE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF VIGOR

Question: What are the characteristic features of vigor?

Response: With regard to endeavors, one has the attitude that he is certainly able to succeed. In taking them up, one finds no difficulty. One's determination and intentions are solid and strong. One's mind is free of weariness. Whatever is engaged in is carried through to the end. These five factors constitute the characteristics of vigor.

B. BUDDHA'S STATEMENT ON THE MARKS OF VIGOR

Then again, according to what the Buddha said, the marks of vigor consist in the body and mind not resting.

C. STORY: THE FEARLESS LEADER JATAKA

This is illustrated by Shakyamuni Buddha in a previous life when he was the leader of a group of merchants. He led the merchants into a precipitous and difficult place. There happened to be a *rākṣasa* ghost there who blocked their way, holding up his hands and saying, "You must stop. Don't move. I will not permit you to go."

The leader of the merchants then hit [the ghost] with his right fist. The fist immediately stuck to the ghost such that he was unable to pull it away. Next, he hit it with his left fist and was also unable to pull it away. He kicked him with his right foot and it, too, became stuck. Next he kicked it with his left foot and the same thing happened. He used his head to butt it, whereupon it immediately became stuck as well.

The ghost then asked, "Now that you are in this fix, what do you propose to do next? Has your mind given up or not?"

He replied, "Although I continue to be bound up in these five ways, my mind will never be forced by you to cease its determination. I will use the power of vigor to carry on the fight with you. I'm determined not to retreat."

The ghost then felt delighted and thought, "This man's really got guts." He then told the man, "Your power of vigor is immense. You

are someone who definitely will not give up. I'll turn you loose and allow you to leave."

D. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIGOROUS PRACTITIONER

The practitioner is just like this. With respect to good dharmas, in the beginning, middle and end of the night he recites scriptures, sits in dhyāna, and seeks to know in accordance with reality the true character of dharmas. He is not covered over by the fetters and he does not become lazy in either body or mind. These are the characteristics of vigor.

E. ACCORDING TO THE ABHIDHARMA

This vigor is a dharma belonging to the mind. It is characterized by diligence in practice and by non-stopping. It accompanies the actions of the mind and arises in conjunction with the mind. It may be that there are both primary ideation (*vitarka*) and mental discursion (*vicāra*). It may be that it remains free of initial ideation yet involves mental discursion. Or it may be that there is neither initial ideation nor mental discursion. This is as extensively explained in the *Abhidharma's* discussion of dharmas.

F. VIGOR'S PRESENCE THROUGHOUT BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS

To diligently cultivate all good dharmas without becoming lazy—this is the characteristic feature of vigor. Vigor is one of the five roots. When this root increases and grows, it becomes that power of vigor [counted among the five powers]. When the mind is able to become awakened, it is known as the vigor limb of enlightenment [among the seven limbs of enlightenment]. When one is able to reach to the Buddha Path's city of nirvāṇa, this is known as the right vigor [counted among the eight-fold Path]. Within the sphere of the four foundations of mindfulness, the ability to diligently anchor the mind [to the object of mindfulness] is the part played by vigor. The four right efforts are gateways [for the application] of vigor. Among the four bases of psychic power, zeal and vigor are [both] just [different aspects of] vigor. Among the six *pāramitās*, it is the *pāramitā* of vigor.

G. QUESTIONS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF VIGOR

Question: You first praised vigor. Now you speak of the characteristics of vigor. What sort of vigor are you referring to?

Response: We refer here to the characteristics of vigor as it manifests in the midst of all good dharmas.

Question: Now we are discussing the doctrinal meaning of the *mahāprajñāpāramitā* (the perfection of wisdom). One should be explaining here the *pāramitā* of vigor. Why then are you discussing vigor as it manifests in the midst of all good dharmas?

Response: The bodhisattva who has first brought forth the resolve to gain realization of bodhi practices vigor in the midst of all good dharmas and so gradually and sequentially achieves the *pāramitā* of vigor.

Question: There is an abundance of vigor implicitly present within all good dharmas. Now you embark on a discussion of the *pāramitā* of vigor even though it is already subsumed within that vigor already present in all good dharmas. [Why?]

Response: Vigor which is adopted for the sake of realizing the Buddha Path is referred to as "*pāramitā*." The vigor present in all other wholesome dharmas is referred to simply as "vigor" and is therefore not referred to as "*pāramitā*."

Question: Why is it that diligence in all other good dharmas is not referred to as the *pāramitā* of vigor and why does only qualify the bodhisattva's vigor as exemplifying "*pāramitā*"?

H. VIGOR *PĀRAMITĀ*'S DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Response: "*Pāramitā*" means "reaching to the other shore." Worldly people, the Śrāvaka disciples, and the Pratyekabuddhas are unable to completely perfect the practice of the *pāramitās*. Therefore it is not referred to in such cases as the "*pāramitā*" of vigor.

Additionally, these people do not have the great kindness and the great compassion. They cast off and abandon beings. They do not seek the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, the eighteen special dharmas, all-knowledge, the unobstructed liberations, innumerable bodies, innumerable radiances, innumerable sounds and voices, innumerable observances of the moral precepts, innumerable dhyāna absorptions, or innumerable manifestations of wisdom. It is for these reasons that the vigor of these persons is not referred to as exemplifying "*pāramitā*."

Additionally, the vigor of the bodhisattva is unrelenting and unresting as he single-mindedly seeks the Buddha Path. In the case of those who practice in this way, it qualifies as constituting the *pāramitā* of vigor. This is exemplified by Grand Giving Bodhisattva (Mahātyāgavat) who in seeking the wish-fulfilling gem searched through all the waters of the great oceans. Even when this endeavor caused his sinews and bones to atrophy, he never rested or

diminished his efforts. Thus he found the wish-fulfilling gem and used it to supply the needs of beings and rescue them from physical suffering. In this way the bodhisattva is able to do what is difficult to do. This constitutes the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor.

Moreover, the bodhisattva takes the power of vigor as foremost and so proceeds in this way as he practices the other five *pāramitās*. When done in this way one's practice qualifies as the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor. This is analogous to a severe illness being curable only by a combination of numerous different medicinal ingredients. The bodhisattva's vigor is just like this. If he only practiced vigor, yet was unable to practice the other five *pāramitās*, then this could not qualify as the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor.

Furthermore, the bodhisattva's vigor is not for the sake of valuables, benefits, wealth, noble status, or power. Nor is it for the sake of his own person, for the sake of being reborn in the heavens, for the sake of becoming a wheel-turning king, or for the sake of becoming a king of the gods such as Brahmā or Śakra Devānām Indra. Nor is it for the sake of gaining nirvāṇa for himself. It is solely for the sake of the Buddha Path and the benefit of beings. Such characteristics as these qualify as constituting the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor.

Then again, the bodhisattva's vigor is such that, in cultivating all good dharmas, the great compassion is taken as foremost. It is as if there was a lovingly-kind father who cherished his son. He has only the one son and this son comes down with a serious disease. He single-mindedly seeks for medicines to save his son from the disease. The bodhisattva's taking of kindness as foremost in his practice of vigor is just like this. In his rescuing and treating of everyone, his mind does not forsake them for even a moment.

Then again, the vigor of the bodhisattva takes the reality-concordant wisdom cognizant of the true character [of dharmas] as foremost in his practice of the six *pāramitās*. This is what qualifies as the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor.

I. THE *PĀRAMITĀ* OF VIGOR'S ORIENTATION TO ULTIMATE REALITY

Question: The reality-concordant true character of dharmas is unconditioned and within the sphere of the wishless (*apraṇihita*). Vigor is characterized by being conditioned and in the sphere of [goal-oriented] wishes. How is it then that [the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor] can take the true character of dharmas as foremost?

Response: Although one is aware that the reality-concordant true character of dharmas is unconditioned and in the sphere of the

wishless, on account of a desire to bring beings across to liberation which is rooted in the great compassion and in one's original vows, even in the midst of wishlessness, one employs the power of vigor to bring everyone over to liberation.

Also, if the true character of dharmas is unconditioned, wishless, and characterized by being like nirvāṇa, it is neither singular nor dual. Why then do you say that the true character [of dharmas] is conceptually incompatible with character of vigor? You simply do not understand the true character of dharmas.

J. THE BODHISATVA'S CONTEMPLATIONS OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

Additionally, the bodhisattva contemplates the beings of the three realms and five paths, observing that they each lose that in which they find pleasure.

1. THE CELESTIAL REALMS

The gods of the formless realms take pleasure in the absorptions and their minds are attached. They fail to realize that their lives are coming to an end. They fall into the desire realm wherein they take on the forms of birds and beasts.

The gods of the form realm are also just like this. They fall from a pure place and once again undergo sexual desire and abide in the midst of impurity.

The gods of the six desire heavens are blissfully attached to the five desires there and then fall back down again, plummeting into the hells where they undergo all manner of suffering and pain.

2. THE HUMAN REALM

He also observes that within the realm of humans, beings have traded the karmic blessings arising from the ten good deeds for the body of a human being. The human body is characterized by much suffering and only a little bliss. When the human life comes to an end, the majority of them fall down into the wretched destinies.

3. THE ANIMAL REALM AND ANTECEDENT CAUSES

He also observes that the animals undergo all manner of suffering and torment. They are whipped and beaten, driven along, forced to run fast, burdened with heavy loads, and compelled to travel far. Their necks are injured by yokes and they are burned by hot metal brands. The past-life causal circumstances for this individual consisted in tying up beings, whipping and flogging them, and thus causing them suffering and torment. On account of all sorts of causal circumstances such as these, one then takes on the form of

such domestic and wild animals as elephants, horses, cattle, sheep, roebucks, and deer.

a. ON ACCOUNT OF LUST

For those whose lustful feelings are heavy and whose ignorance is especially great, they take on birth as a goose, duck, peacock, mandarin duck, turtledove, pigeon, chicken, wild duck, parrot, or blackbird. They take on the form of these hundreds of thousands of different kinds of birds. On account of offenses committed within the sphere of sexual activity, their bodies grow forth down and feathers which cut off erotic sensations. Their bills and claws are coarse and hard and do not distinguish tactile subtleties.

b. ON ACCOUNT OF HATRED

Those whose hatred has been especially great take on rebirths as poisonous snakes, vipers, scorpions, spiders, wasps, centipedes, and other venomous insects.

c. ON ACCOUNT OF STUPIDITY

Those whose stupidity has been great take on rebirths among worms, moths, dung beetles, ants, mole crickets, *syon-lyon* (*Scops chinensis*) owls, horned owls, and other dull-witted insects and birds.

d. ON ACCOUNT OF ARROGANCE AND HAUGHTINESS

Those who have been excessively arrogant and hateful take on birth in the bodies of lions, tigers, leopards, and other fierce beasts. On account of having been perversely haughty, one may take on birth among donkeys, pigs, or camels.

e. ON ACCOUNT OF MISERLINESS, JEALOUSY, SHAMELESSNESS, ETC.

On account of being miserly, greedy, and jealous, while also being agitated and skittish, one may take on the form of a monkey, baboon, or bear. On account of the causal circumstances of the karma of being perversely greedy and hatefully jealous one may take on the body of a wildcat, "earth-tiger," or other such animal. On account of the causal circumstances associated with being devoid of a sense of blame or a sense of shame in one's gluttony, one takes on the form of a crow, magpie, owl, or vulture.

f. ON ACCOUNT OF SLIGHTING THE GOOD

On account of slighting good people, one takes on the body of such beasts as chickens, dogs, and coyotes.

g. ON ACCOUNT OF GIVING MARKED BY HATEFULNESS, ETC.

If one performs a lot of giving with a hateful and devious mind, on account of these causal circumstances, one takes on the body of a dragon. If one cultivates great giving, but one's mind is nonetheless imperious in carrying out the persecution of beings in a state of suffering and torment, one takes on the form of the golden-winged [*garuḍa*] bird.

On account of the karmic causal circumstances of all sorts of fetters such as these, one undergoes the suffering of the animal realm's birds and beasts.

4. CYCLIC EXISTENCE AS SEEN BY THE BODHISATTVA'S HEAVENLY EYE

When the bodhisattva gains the heavenly eye, he contemplates [the fashion in which beings] course along in a cyclic manner throughout the five destinies of rebirth.

a. WITHIN THE FIVE DESTINIES

They go through cycles therein wherein having died in the heavens, they are born among humans, having died among humans, they are born in the heavens. Having died in the heavens, they are reborn in the hells. Having died in the hells, they are reborn in the heavens. Having died in the heavens, they are reborn among hungry ghosts. Having died among hungry ghosts, they may return again to rebirth in the heavens. Having died in the heavens, they are then reborn among animals. Having died among animals, they may be reborn in the heavens. Having died in the heavens, they may return to rebirth again in the heavens. [The rebirth circumstances associated with] the hells, the hungry ghosts and the animals are also just like this.

b. WITHIN THE THREE REALMS

Having died in the desire realm, one may be reborn in the form realm. Having died in the form realm, one may be reborn in the desire realm. Having died in the desire realm, one may be reborn in the formless realm. Having died in the formless realm, one may be reborn in the desire realm. Having died in the desire realm, one may be reborn yet again in the desire realm. [The rebirth circumstances associated with] the form realm and the formless realm are also just like this.

c. WITHIN THE HELL REALMS

Having died in the Living (*saṃjīva*) Hells, one may be reborn in the Black Line (*kālasūtra*) Hells. Having died in the Black Line Hells, one

may be reborn in the Living Hells. Having died in the Living Hells, one may return to be reborn in the Living Hells. From the Uniting (*saṃghāta*) Hells to the Avīci Hells, it is just the same as this.

Having died in the Charcoal Pit (*kukūla*) Hells, one may be reborn in the Boiling Excrement (*kuṇapa*) Hells. Having died in the Boiling Excrement Hells, one may be reborn in the Charcoal Pit Hells. Having died in the Charcoal Pit Hells, one may then return to be reborn in the Charcoal Pit Hells. From the Burning Forest (*ādīptavana*) Hells to the Mahāpadma (“Great Lotus”) Hells, it is just the same as this as one goes through cycles of rebirth therein.

d. WITHIN THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF BIRTH

Having died in the realm of the egg-born (*aṇḍaja*), one may then be reborn in the realm of the womb-born (*jarāyujā*). Having died in the realm of the womb-born, one may then be reborn in the realm of the egg-born. Having died in the realm of the egg-born, one may then return to be reborn among the egg-born. It is just the same as this with the womb-born, moisture-born (*saṃsvedaja*), and transformationally-born (*upapāduka*).

e. IN THE FOUR CONTINENTS

Having died in the continent of Jambudvīpa, one may be reborn in Pūrvavideha. Having died in Pūrvavideha, one may be reborn in Jambudvīpa. Having died in Jambudvīpa, one may then return to be reborn in Jambudvīpa. It is just the same as this with regard to the continents of Aparagodānīya and Uttarakuru.

f. IN THE DESIRE REALM HEAVENS

Having died in the station of the Four Heavenly Kings (*cāturmahārājika*), one may be reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-three (*trāyastriṃśā*). Having died in the Heaven of the Thirty-three, one may be reborn in the station of the Four Heavenly Kings. Having died in the station of the Four Heavenly Kings, one may then be reborn again in the station of the Four Heavenly Kings. The circumstances [associated with rebirth] are just the same from the Heaven of the Thirty-three on up to the Heaven of Independence Through Transformation of Others (*paranirmitavaśavartin*).

g. IN THE FORM AND FORMLESS HEAVENS

Having died in the Assembly of Brahmā Heaven (*brahmakāyika*), one may be reborn in the Ministers of Brahmā Heaven (*brahmapurohita*). Having died in the Ministers of Brahmā Heaven, one may be reborn in the Assembly of Brahmā Heaven. Having died in the Assembly

of Brahmā heaven, one may then be reborn again in the Assembly of Brahmā Heaven. From the Ministers of Brahmā Heaven, the Lesser Light Heaven, the Immeasurable Light Heaven, the Light and Sound Heaven, the Lesser Purity Heaven, the Immeasurable Purity Heaven, the Universal Purity Heaven, or the Anabhraka Heaven, one may then succeed in being reborn in the Great Fruition (*brhatphala*) heaven.

[The rebirth circumstances in] the Station of Limitless Space, the Station of Limitless Consciousness, the Station of Nothing Whatsoever, and the Station of Neither Perception nor Non-perception are just the same as this. Having died in the Station of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, one may then be reborn in the Avīci Hells. It is in this manner that one courses through cycles of rebirths throughout the five destinies.

h. THE BODHISATTVA'S CONTEMPLATION-BASED CONCLUSION

After the bodhisattva sees this, he brings forth a thought of great compassion, thinking, "I have been of no benefit to beings. Although I might bestow worldly bliss upon them, when that bliss reaches its culmination, then it just results in suffering. I should use the eternal bliss of the Buddha Path and nirvāṇa to benefit everyone."

How then does one accomplish benefit? One should be diligent in great vigor. Then and only then does one achieve true wisdom. When one gains true wisdom, one knows in accordance with reality the true character of dharmas. Thus one employs the other *pāramitās* to assist in achieving benefit for beings. It is this which constitutes the bodhisattva's *pāramitā* of vigor.

i. THE BODHISATTVA'S OBSERVATIONS AMONG HUNGRY GHOSTS

He also sees that among the hungry ghosts (*preta*) they have become so afflicted by hunger and thirst that their eyes have become sunken and their hair has grown long. They run hurriedly off to the east and to the west. Whenever they move towards a source of water, the ghosts who guard the water use iron clubs to beat them back away from it. In the event that there is no guardian ghost, the water spontaneously dries up of itself. There may be times when it rains whereupon the rainwater transforms into charcoal.

Other hungry ghosts are constantly burned by fire, just as when, at the end of the kalpa, all of the mountains spew forth fire. There are some hungry ghosts who are emaciated and thin and who run about crazily. The hair of their bodies and heads has become tangled and disheveled and has grown to cover their entire bodies.

There are also hungry ghosts who constantly eat feces, urine, tears, spittle, vomit, and rinse water. Sometimes they go alongside latrines and stand there longing to partake of the impure fluids. There are some hungry ghosts who seek after and drink the internal blood from birthing women. Their forms are like burning trees and their throats are like the eye of a needle. In the event that they do encounter their fluid of choice, even in ten thousand years they would not be filled to satisfaction.

There are some hungry ghosts who break open their own heads and, using their hands, scoop out their own brains and then feast upon them.

Yet other hungry ghosts shaped like a black mountain have had iron locks latched on their necks and prostrate themselves before the hell guardians, seeking mercy and paying homage.

And then there are hungry ghosts who in the previous lifetime engaged in harsh speech, taking pleasure at inflicting coarse language on beings such that the beings detested and abhorred them and looked upon them like enemies. On account of these offenses, they fell into rebirth among the hungry ghosts. On account of all sorts of other offenses such as these, one may fall into the path of the hungry ghosts and undergo immeasurable bitterness and pain.

5. THE BODHISATTVA'S OBSERVATIONS WITHIN THE HELLS

He also sees the myriad forms of cruel suffering endured within the eight great hells.

a. THE GREAT LIVING HELLS

In the Great Living Hells, all of those persons who are undergoing punishment each fight with one another. With evil intent they struggle hatefully, taking up sharp knives which they use to slice and skin each other. They use spears to impale each other. They use iron forks to spear one another. They use iron truncheons to beat one another. They use iron staves to cudgel one another. They use iron lances to run each other through and then take sharp knives to slice and mince each other. They also take up iron claws with which they rip and rend each other. They gush forth blood and smear each other with the blood from their bodies.

When the deleterious effects of the pain are pushed to extreme intensity, they faint and cannot be revived. Then a cold wind originating in the causes and conditions of past-life actions comes along and blows. The guardians of hell yell at them, cursing the offenders, whereupon they return to life. It is for this reason that it is referred

to as the “Living” Hell. They immediately return to normal and then undergo yet again their excruciating sufferings. The beings herein have as causes and conditions of their previous life the taking of pleasure in killing animals, whether cattle or sheep, birds or beasts. They engaged in killing in the course of farm work or else killed and injured each other whilst contending for houses, slaves and servants, wives and sons, countries and territories, money and wealth. They undergo this intense punishment as retribution for all sorts of such killing karma as this.

b. THE GREAT BLACK LINE HELLS

He also sees those transgressors within the Great Black Line Hells who are set upon by fearsome *rākṣasas*, hell soldiers, and worker ghosts who constantly go about using hot black iron cords to lay out their work on those offenders. They then use the iron hell axes and, stretching [the lines] tight, [and snapping them to mark a line], they proceed to go about chopping them up. Those who are long-shaped are made short. Those who are short in appearance are made long. Those who are angular are caused to become round and those who are round are caused to become angular. The [hell workers] cut off the four limbs, slice away the ears and nose, and lop off the hands and feet. They use a great iron saw to slice and section [the offenders] into approximate sizes. They cut up their flesh and weigh it out, slice by slice.

The previous life causes and conditions of these people was such that they spoke maliciously, attacking those who were faithful and good. They engaged in lying, harsh speech, divisive speech, and unprincipled speech. They brought about the unjust execution of those who had committed no crimes. In some cases, they had served as wicked officials wreaking cruelty and violence as they encroached on and injured their victims. They undergo these punishments on account of all sorts of instances of harsh speech and harms wrought through slander.

c. THE GREAT UNIFICATION HELLS

He also sees the Great Unification Hells wherein fearsome *rākṣasas* and hell soldiers manifest in many different forms, in the guise of all sorts of different cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, roebucks, foxes, dogs, tigers, wolves, lions, the six sorts of domestic animals, as great birds, as eagles, vultures, and quail. They appear with the heads of all of these sorts of birds and animals and come forth to seize and attack the offender with their jaws, gulping and chomping and

chewing. Then two mountains rush together and a huge hot iron wheel rolls over all of the offenders, thereby causing their bodies to burst and be broken apart.

In a hot iron mortar, a pestle causes them to be crushed into pieces. It is as if one were crushing grapes or pressing oil. On what is comparable to a trampling ground, their flesh is all gathered together in a heap. The heads are piled up like a mountain. The blood flows down and forms a lake.

The eagles and vultures and tigers and wolves each come and struggle to strike at the offenders. The past life karmic causes and conditions of these persons was such that they engaged in much killing of cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, roebucks, foxes, rabbits, tigers, wolves, lions, the six domestic animals, great birds, and flocks of birds. Because they engaged in many injurious attacks upon all sorts of birds and animals such as these, these offending individuals are subjected in return to these many sorts of bird and animal heads coming at them and injuring them.

Additionally, on account of employing the power of their strength to persecute the frail and weak and subject them to its unjust crushing effects, they undergo the punishment of two mountains coming together. On account of allowing miserly greed, hatred, stupidity, or fear to influence them to adjudicate the severity of punishment of cases in a way which does not accord with correct principle, or on account of being instrumental in destroying the correct Path and altering right Dharma, they undergo as retribution the punishment of being rolled over by a hot metal wheel and being put through the hot metal mortar and pestle.

d. THE SCREAMING AND GREAT SCREAMING HELLS

The fourth and the fifth hells are known as the Screaming and Great Screaming Hells. In these immense hells those offenders therein are set upon by *rākṣasa* hell soldiers whose heads are yellow like gold, whose eyes shoot forth fire and who wear red-colored robes. The flesh on their bodies is hard and tough and they run about with the speed of the wind. Their hands and feet are long and large and a fearsome voice issues from their mouths. They wield three-pronged lances and fall like rain, piercing and impaling the offenders. The offenders become crazy with fright and bow down seeking mercy, but only rarely are they set loose and only rarely are they the objects of pity.

e. THE HOT METAL HELLS

Then the offenders are suddenly taken into the Hot Metal Hells which are a hundred yojanas in length and breadth. They are driven along with blows and move along quickly with their feet in flames. Their fat and marrow flows out just as when one expresses *perilla ocimoides* oil. Iron truncheons are used to strike blows upon their heads. Their heads break open and their brains burst forth just as when one shatters a vase full of curds. They are chopped into mince meat after being sliced and skinned. Their bodies break down into a gruel-like consistency whereupon they are next brought into an iron pavilion. Black smoke comes up and smokes them within the rooms. They crush against one another intensifying the poison of mutual animosity. They all call out, "Why are you crushing me?" and then seek to get out. Because the door has been closed upon them there is a loud noise of calling out, the sound of which is constant and unending.

The causes and conditions of the past life actions of these people was such that they cheated on weights and measures and decided matters in a way contrary to Dharma. They held valuables in trust for others but then refused to return them. They encroached on and persecuted those of inferior social station. They tormented the poverty-stricken so severely as to cause them to cry out and weep. They broke down the city walls of others, destroyed people's villages, inflicted injury, and pillaged and stripped [the inhabitants]. The poison of animosity which they inflicted on homes and families was such that the entire city cried out and howled. Sometimes they would cleverly deceive the inhabitants and thus induce them to come forth. Having caused them to come out, they then set about inflicting harm on them once again. On account of all sorts of other such similar causes and conditions they undergo punishments of this sort.

f. GREAT SCREAMING HELL CAUSALITY

The people in the Great Screaming Hells are all undergoing punishment for inflicting death through fumigation on those types of beings who live in caves. They shut others up in dark places and imprisoned them or else placed them in dark smoky caves and then proceeded to kill them with smoke. Or perhaps they threw them into wells and stole their valuables. On account of all sorts of other such causes and conditions as these they undergo punishment in the Great Screaming Hells.

g. THE HOT AND GREATLY HOT HELLS

The sixth and the seventh hells are the Hot and Greatly Hot Hells. Within them there are two immense copper cauldrons, one of which is called Nanda and the other of which is called Upananda. (Chinese textual note: "In our language, these mean 'joy' and 'great joy.'") They are filled to the top with boiling salt water. *Rākṣasa* ghost hell soldiers throw the offenders into them, working like chefs boiling meat. The people in the cauldrons become, from feet to head, like beans which have been completely cooked to the point of disintegration. The bones and joints come apart and scatter. The skin and flesh separate from each other. Once it has become apparent that [the offenders] have decomposed, they then use forks to pitch them out. On account of the causes and conditions of the karma which they have committed, a cold wind comes up and by its blowing brings them back to life.

Next they are pitched into the charcoal pit or else placed in boiling excrement. They become then like fish which have been pulled out of the water and then placed on hot sand. They may also be stewed in thick blood. They are pulled forth from the charcoal pit and thrown onto a flaming bed where they are driven with force to sit upon it. Fire then shoots forth from their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and all of their hair pores.

In past lives, these people tormented and created chaos in the lives of their fathers, mothers, teachers, elders, śramaṇas and brahmins. With respect to fine people and those persons who constitute fields of merit, they tormented them and caused their minds to become inflamed. On account of these offenses they undergo punishment in the hot hells. Or perhaps in previous lives they boiled live silkworm cocoons or perhaps roasted live pigs and sheep or perhaps skewered people on a wooden pole and roasted them alive, or perhaps they set fire to and burned the mountains and wilderness, or villages, or Buddhist stupas, or monastic dwellings, or those dedicated to gods, spirits and so forth. Or else they may have pushed beings into a fire pit. It is on account of all sorts of causes and conditions such as these they are born into this hell.

h. THE AVĪCI HELLS

He also sees the Avīci Hells which in length and breadth are four thousand miles (*li*) and which are surrounded by an iron wall. Compared to the other seven hells, this is the deepest. Hell-soldier *rākṣasas* use huge hammers to hammer those offenders, just as

when a blacksmith pounds iron. They then peel off [the offenders'] skin from the head on down to the feet and use five hundred nails to nail and stretch it just as one stretches the skin of an ox. They struggle with each other for possession of [the hell-dweller] and, as soon as they lay hands on him, quickly pull his body apart.

A hot iron "fire vehicle" rolls over the bodies, driving them to plunge into a pit of fire. They are forced to carry coals as they come forth. They are then driven along and caused to plunge into a river of boiling excrement. There are iron-billed poisonous worms who enter through the nose and emerge from the bottom of the feet and who enter from the bottom of the feet and emerge from the mouth. [Those offenders] are driven along and caused to run down a road of vertical sword blades. Their feet burst open and are shredded like minced meat from the kitchen. Sharp knives and sword-tipped lances fly through the air and plunge into their bodies, falling down in a chaotic torrent just as leaves fall from a frost-bitten tree by the force of the wind. The hands, feet, ears, noses, and extremities of the offenders are all thereby chopped, flayed, cut, and sliced off by them.

The flowing blood forms a lake on the ground. Two huge and fearsome dogs, the first named Śyāma and the second named Śabala, use their jaws of iron and fierce strength to shatter the bones of [the offenders'] limbs. They are more powerful than tigers and leopards and more fierce than lions.

There is a great forest of spiked trees. The offenders are driven along and forced to climb the trees. When the offenders climb upwards, the spikes then point downward. When they climb down, the spikes then point upwards. Huge poisonous snakes, scorpions, and toxic insects struggle in haste to come at and bite them. Immense birds with long bills break open their heads, gulping and swallowing their brains.

[The offenders] are plunged into a river of brine and are swept up and down by the currents. When they get out, they tread upon hot iron ground and walk over iron spikes. Or perhaps they sit upon iron stakes and the stakes enter them from below. Pliers are used to open their mouths whereupon molten copper is then poured down their mouths. They swallow hot metal pellets which pour into their mouths. The mouth is burned whereupon they plunge into the throat. The flesh of the throat disintegrates from whence they then enter the belly. The belly is burned. The five organs are all scorched

whereupon [those pellets] plunge straight through and fall out onto the ground.

[The offenders] see only horrible forms, constantly smell stinking vapors, constantly rub against rough surfaces, encounter bitter pain, and become confused, faint, and exhausted. Some of them become crazed and flee, bursting away from their ranks. Others attempt to run and hide. Yet others throw themselves down or tumble and fall down.

The past-life actions of these people included the committing of many great evils including the five nefarious and grave offenses. They cut off all roots of goodness, said of Dharma that it was non-Dharma, said of non-Dharma that it was Dharma, attempted to refute cause, attempted to refute effect, and were hateful and jealous of good people. On account of these offenses, they entered these hells and so undergo punishments of the most intense sort.

All sorts of circumstances such as these characterize the eight great hells. Surrounding them externally there are sixteen more lesser hells which are subsidiary to these. They are the eight cold ice hells and the eight blazing flame hells. The cruelty of their punishments is such as one cannot bear to see or bear to hear reported.

i. THE EIGHT BLAZING FLAME HELLS

As for the eight blazing flame hells, the first type are known as the Charcoal Pit Hells. The second type are known as Boiling Excrement Hells. The third type are known as the Burning Forest Hells. The fourth type are known as the Forest of Swords Hells. The fifth type are known as the Road of Knives Hells. The sixth type are known as the Forest of Iron Spikes Hells. The seventh type are known as the River of Brine Hells. The eighth type are known as the Copper Stake Hells. These constitute those eight hells.

j. THE EIGHT COLD ICE HELLS

As for the eight types of cold ice hells, the first are known as the Arbuda Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: Possessing some measure of openings.”) The second type are known as the Nirarbuda Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: No opening.”) The third type are known as the Aṭaṭa Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: The sound of shivering.”) The fourth type are known as the Hahava Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: Also a sound of being afflicted by cold.”) The fifth type are known as the Huhuva Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: Also a sound of being afflicted by cold.”) The sixth type are known as the Utpala Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: The outer wall of this hell is like a green lotus

flower.”) The seventh type are known as the Padma Hells. (Ch. text note: “[Means]: red lotus flower. Those with offenses are born into them and there undergo their sufferings.”) The eighth type are known as the Mahāpadma Hells. These constitute the eight.

K. DESCRIPTION OF THE EIGHT BLAZING FLAME HELLS

1) THE CHARCOAL PIT HELLS

If one breaks the pure precepts and the dharma of the monastic, or if one causes the “white-robed” ones (the laity) to make light of the Buddha Path and subject it to derision, or perhaps if one pushes beings into a pit of fire or perhaps if before a being’s life has ended, one tips them into the fire and burns them—on account of all sorts of causes and conditions such as these, one falls into the Charcoal Pit Hells. The Great Blazing Flames and coals reach up to the knees and burn the bodies of those with offenses.

2) THE BOILING EXCREMENT HELLS

If one touched the food of such fields of merit as the śramaṇas or brahmins with unclean hands, or perhaps first chewed it oneself, or perhaps put impure things into it, or perhaps if one poured boiling hot excrement onto another’s body, or perhaps destroyed the purity of another’s life, or perhaps sustained one’s life through a deviant livelihood—on account of all sorts of causes and conditions such as these, one falls into the boiling excrement hells.

The boiling excrement is as deep and as vast as the waters of the great ocean. There are therein insects with bills made of iron which break open the skulls of the offenders and then chew and gulp their brains while also breaking open their bones and eating out their marrow.

3) THE BURNING FOREST HELLS

If one set fire to grasslands and forests, harming and injuring all of the insects, or perhaps if one set fire to a forest in the course of hunting, thereby committing injury on a vast scale—on account of all sorts of causal circumstances as these, one falls into the Burning Forest Hells. The grasslands and forests [in these hells] are ablaze and thus thereby burn those with offenses.

4) THE FOREST OF SWORDS HELLS

If one has wielded knives or swords and entered into battling which brought injury and death, if one chopped down a tree to crush other people in revenge for old animosities, or if, when others, out of loyalty and trust, have made reports in confidence, one secretly

awaited the opportunity to entrap them thereby—on account of all sorts of causal factors such as these, one falls into the Forest of Swords Hells.

When those with offenses enter into this hell, the wind blows about the sword-like leaves which then slice off the hands, feet, ears, and nose, thus causing them all to fall away. At this time, there are crows, vultures, and horrific dogs within the forest which come and consume [the offenders'] flesh.

5) THE ROAD OF SHARP KNIVES HELLS

If one has used sharp knives to stab people, or if one has used stakes or spears to injure people, or if one has cut off paths and roads or destroyed bridges, or if one has destroyed the pathway of right Dharma and has shown people a way which is contrary to Dharma—on account of all sorts of causal factors such as these, one falls into the Road of Sharp Knives Hells. As for basis of the name of the Road of Sharp Knives Hell, sharp knives are set up vertically on a narrow path lined with steep walls and those with karmic offenses are compelled to walk on over and beyond them.

6) THE FOREST OF IRON SPIKES HELLS

If one has committed sexual misconduct wherein one has attacked the wives or daughters of others in one's lust to experience erotic physical contact—on account of all sorts of causal factors as these, one falls into the Forest of Iron Spikes Hell where there are trees bristling with spikes one yojana in height. In the top of each of them, there is a huge venomous serpent which has transformed into the body of a beautiful maiden and which calls out to this person with offenses, "Come on up here and I will join together with you in enjoying mutual pleasures."

The hell guardians then drive him on up, compelling him to ascend. The spikes [on the trees] then all point downwards and impale the person with karmic offenses. His body thus is injured by their impaling him, driving even into his bones and all the way to the marrow.

When the transgressor reaches the top of the tree, the transformationally-produced maiden's body turns back into the body of the serpent. It then breaks open his head and plunges down into [the offender's] belly and, in place after place, burrows through it so that [his body] becomes entirely destroyed and broken down.

Next, [the offender] suddenly returns to life with his body restored to normal, whereupon the transformationally-produced

maiden manifests there yet again, but this time she stands at the base of the tree calling up to him. The hell guardians use arrows which they shoot upwards, yelling at him and ordering him to descend whereupon the spikes again face upwards. Once he has reached the ground, the transformationally-produced maiden's body transforms again into that of a venomous snake that proceeds [once again] to destroy the body of the person with karmic offenses. [These punishments continue] in this fashion for a long time, after which the offender emerges from the forest of hot iron spikes.

7) THE RIVER OF BRINE HELLS

Off in the distance, [offenders] see a river of cool and pleasant waters. They run to it and jump in, whereupon it transforms into boiling hot brine. When offenders have been in it for only a moment, the skin and flesh separate and fall apart, leaving the skeletons standing there in the water. The hell guardian *rākṣasas* then use a pitch fork to gaff them out of the water and affix them on the bank.

The causal circumstances of these people's past-life actions was that they injured and killed water-going creatures such as fish and turtles, or perhaps at times they pushed people or other beings, causing them to drown in the water, or perhaps they threw them into boiling broth, or perhaps they threw them into ice water. On account of all sorts of evil karmic causes and conditions such as these, they undergo such punishments [in the River of Brine Hells].

8) THE COPPER STAKE HELLS

If one is in the Copper Stake Hells, the hell guardian *rākṣasas* demand of the offender, "Where did you come from?"

He replies by saying, "I have been through such suffering that I lost consciousness and do not know where I came from. I know only that I am afflicted by hunger." [Alternatively, he may say], "I am afflicted by thirst." If he says that he is thirsty, the hell guardian then immediately chases along after the transgressor and forces him to sit down on hot copper spikes, uses iron pliers to [wrench] open the mouth, and then pours molten copper into it.

If [the offender] says that he is hungry, he is sat down on copper spikes and is forced to gulp [intensely hot] iron pellets which are poured into his mouth. After the mouth has been scorched, they enter the throat. Then, after the throat has disintegrated, they move on into the belly. The belly burns and the five organs are thus disintegrated and ruined. Then [the hot iron pellets] plunge straight through and fall out onto the ground.

This person's past life karmic causes and conditions were such that he robbed or pilfered the valuables of others, using them to supply the appetites of his own mouth. Among monastics, it may have been the case that there were times when they feigned illness and thus sought to obtain a greater measure of ghee or rock honey. Or perhaps they were devoid of any observance of the moral precepts or devoid of any practice of dhyāna meditation or were devoid of any development of wisdom and yet nonetheless accepted a great measure of people's donations. Or else they may have injured people with harsh speech. On account of all sorts of past life karmic causes and conditions such as these, they came to fall into these Copper Stake Hells.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE EIGHT COLD ICE HELLS

1) THE ARBUDA HELLS

If a person falls into the Arbuda Hells, he abides on a mass of ice. A fierce wind comes up and blows, causing the skin and hair of all of those offenders to split open and fall away while their sinews and flesh snap apart and their bones burst open and the marrow comes forth. They are then immediately restored to wholeness and solidity again, whereupon they undergo punishments just as before.

The past life karmic causes and conditions of these people were such that, during the cold months, they forced people to be stripped, or perhaps they stole the fuel and fire of people who were cold, or perhaps they had been evil dragons who, [acting under the influence of] the poison of hatred, had unleashed their anger and had let fall great hail and rainstorms, thus causing ice and cold to injure people. Or perhaps they had slighted or derided or slandered or besmirched the reputation of either a buddha, a buddha's disciples, or people who uphold the moral precepts. Or perhaps through the four unwholesome karmic actions of the mouth they committed manifold severe offenses. On account of all sorts of causes and conditions such as these, one falls into the Arbuda Hells.

2) THE NIRARBUDA HELLS

The Nirarbuda Hells are also like this. Although the Arbuda Hells have some openings whereby one may sometimes succeed in coming and going, the Nirarbuda Hells have absolutely no openings or cracks and thus have no place whereby one may come and go.

3) THE AṬAṬA, HAHAVA, AND HUHUYA HELLS

In the three hells known as Aṭaṭa, Hahava, and Huhuva, the cold wind inflicts a silencing shivering that prevents the mouth from

opening. The hells are named after the sounds emitted [by those hell-dwellers].

4) THE UTPALA, PADMA, AND MAHĀPADMA HELLS

In the Utpala (“Blue Lotus”) Hells, the freezing of the ice creates formations which are like the blossom of a blue lotus. In the Padma (“Lotus”) Hells, the shape [created by the ice] resembles that of our red lotus blossoms. The Mahāpadma (“Great Lotus”) Hells are the dwelling place of Kokālīka, [the slanderer of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana].

6. HOW THE WISE REACT TO OBSERVING SUCH SUFFERINGS

A person possessed of wisdom hears this and exclaims in alarm, “Alas! On account of these dharmas of ignorance, anger, and lust, one then undergoes such suffering as this. One gets out and then enters it again, doing so endlessly and never being able to bring it to a halt.”

7. HOW THE BODHISATTVA REACTS TO OBSERVING SUCH SUFFERINGS

The bodhisattva observes this and considers thus, “The causes and conditions of this suffering karma are all created from ignorance and afflictions. I should vigorously and diligently cultivate the six perfections and amass all manner of merit so as to cut off and get rid of these sufferings encountered by beings within the five destinies.” He then lets flourish a sentiment of great empathy which increases and augments his vigor.

It is as if he were seeing his own parents being confined to a dark cell in prison and as if he were watching them being beaten and flogged. He experiences the intense pangs of worry in a myriad forms and, through skillful means, seeks to save them, never forsaking them in his thoughts for even a moment. When the bodhisattva observes beings undergoing the sufferings of the five rebirth destinies, he remains mindful of them in this fashion, just as he would in the case of his own father.

K. THE BODHISATTVA’S VIGOR IN THE OTHER PERFECTIONS

1. THE BODHISATTVA’S VIGOR IN GIVING

Moreover, the vigor of the bodhisattva is diligently cultivated in life after life. He seeks after valuables and jewels with which to provide for and make gifts to beings while he is not lazy in mind and does not allow his practice to diminish. When he himself possesses valuable material objects, he is able give exhaustively of all of them with no retreating from this even in his mind.

2. THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR IN MORAL VIRTUE

Furthermore, he is vigorous in his upholding of the precepts. Whether they are major or whether they are minor, he is able to accept them all. He is able to uphold them all without doing damage to them or breaking them. Even in the case of those which in the degree of their significance are comparable to a strand of hair—if he has an instance of erring and contravening, he immediately reveals this [and repents], never at any point concealing his errors.

3. THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR IN PATIENCE

Additionally, he is diligent in his cultivation of patience. Whether people use knives or staves to beat and injure him, whether they scold and revile him, whether they besmirch his reputation and insult him, or whether they offer him reverential respect and offerings, he is able to have patience with all of it. He neither accepts it [as constituting reality] nor becomes attached to any of it. With respect to profound dharmas, his mind does not become sunken [in discouragement] by them. Nor does he experience doubts or regrets regarding them.

4. THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR IN CULTIVATION OF DHYĀNA MEDITATION

Then again, he is focused and precise in his cultivation of the dhyāna absorptions. He is able to abide in them and is able to guard them. He gains the five superknowledges (*abhijñā*) as well as the four minds of equal regard (*apramāṇacitta*), the liberations (*vimokṣa*), the bases of ascendancy (*abhibhāvāyatana*), and the ten universal bases (*kr̥tsnāyatana*). He brings to perfection every sort of merit, gains the four stations of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*) as well as the samādhi wherein the bodhisattva is able to see the Buddhas.

5. THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR IN CULTIVATION OF THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

Furthermore, the bodhisattva vigorously seeks the Dharma without being lazy in this endeavor. In both body and mind, he employs the power of diligence in making offerings to masters of the Dharma. He manifests every sort of respect, reverence, and offering to supply their needs and render them service. Even from the outset, he does not err by acting in a way contrary to what is proper, nor does he allow his efforts to diminish or retreat in their consistency. For the sake of the Dharma, he refrains from indulging any cherishing regard for even his own body and life.

He recites, reads, inquires, and offers answers. In the beginning, middle and later periods of the night, he cogitates upon it, bears it

in mind, assesses it, and draws distinctions with regard to it. He seeks [to understand] its causes and conditions and analyzes its identities and differences.

He desires to know the true character of all dharmas in accordance with reality, including their individual characteristics, their differentiating characteristics, their general characteristics, their special characteristics, their characteristics of singularity, their characteristics of existence, their characteristics of nonexistence, and the characteristics whereby they accord with reality. In his pursuit of the immeasurable wisdom of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, he does not allow his mind to become submerged [in discouragement], nor does he allow himself to retreat from his efforts.

L. THE NATURE OF THE BODHISATTVĀ'S VIGOR

This is what is known as the vigor of the bodhisattva. On account of all sorts of different causes and conditions such as these, he is able to bring forth and bring to completion all manner of good dharmas. It is for this reason that it is known as the *pāramitā* of vigor. The meaning of *pāramitā* is as previously explained.

Moreover, it is this vigor of the bodhisattva which qualifies as the *pāramitā* of vigor whereas the vigor of other people does not qualify as "*pāramitā*."

M. HOW ONE PERFECTS THE PĀRAMITĀ OF VIGOR

Question: How does one go about accomplishing the complete perfection of vigor?

Response: In both his birth body and his Dharma-nature body, the bodhisattva is able to bring merit to perfection. This constitutes the complete perfection of the *pāramitā* of vigor. The meaning of "complete perfection" is as stated above [in the Sutra text beginning this chapter]: "[It is through] being vigorous in body and mind and refraining from indolence or resting [that one perfects *vīrya pāramitā*]."

N. PHYSICAL VIGOR VERSUS MENTAL VIGOR

Question: Vigor is a dharma belonging to the mind. Why then does the Sutra refer to vigor of the body?

Response: Although vigor is a dharma belonging to the mind, because it comes forth through the power of the body, one therefore also refers to "vigor of the body." It is just as with "feeling." It, too, is a dharma belonging to the mind. But still, there do exist feelings (i.e. "sensations") corresponding to the five consciousnesses. These

are referred to as “physical feeling.” There are feelings which correspond to the intellectual consciousness. These constitute “mental feelings.” The circumstance in the case of vigor is just like this.

When one uses physical effort in diligent cultivation, as for instance when the hands present a gift, when the mouth carefully recites words of Dharma, or when one delivers lectures in explanation of Dharma, such instances qualify as vigor of the body and mouth.

Moreover, when one practices giving or upholds the precepts, these constitute examples of vigor of the body. Patience, dhyāna absorption, and wisdom qualify as instances of vigor of the mind.

Then again, [one may say that] the diligent cultivation of outward endeavors constitutes vigor of the body while when one is focused and precise inwardly, this constitutes vigor of the mind. Coarse vigor corresponds to that which is physical whereas refined vigor corresponds to that which is mental. Vigor which is implemented for the sake of producing merit corresponds to that which is physical whereas that vigor which is taken up for the sake of wisdom corresponds to that which is mental.

That [vigor] which is employed by the bodhisattva from the time of bringing forth the initial resolve [to become a buddha] on up until he realizes the unproduced-dharmas patience (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*) corresponds to vigor of the body, this on account of his not yet having relinquished the physical birth body. When he realizes the unproduced-dharmas patience, he then relinquishes the fleshly body and gains the Dharma-nature body. From that very point on through to the realization of buddhahood corresponds to vigor on the part of the mind.

Then again, [one may also explain that] when the bodhisattva first brings forth the resolve, because his merit is not yet complete, he engages in planting the causes and conditions of the three kinds of merit, namely giving, upholding of precepts, and the mind imbued with goodness, and so gradually gains merit in reward. As he goes about giving to beings, beings are not yet fulfilled, and so he cultivates merit even more vastly and brings forth the mind of great compassion.

Because all beings are inadequately equipped with wealth, they tend more towards the commission of the many varieties of evil. [Thus he thinks], “If I resort to a lesser quantity of valuables, I shall be unable to satisfy their aspirations. If their aspirations are not

fulfilled, they will be unable to be diligent in their taking on of instruction. If they do not accept instruction in the Path, they will be unable to succeed in gaining liberation from birth, aging, sickness, and death. I should therefore create a grand skillful means whereby I may be able to completely supply them all with valuables and thus cause them to become entirely satisfied.”

Consequently he then goes out on the great sea, seeking to obtain all manner of exotic jewels. He climbs mountains and passes, going through dangerous situations, all in order to seek for marvelous medications. He enters deep rock caves, seeking for all sorts of exotic material objects as well as the precious jewels which constitute the essences of stone, all in order to use them to supply the needs of beings.

In some instances, he may become a *sārvavāha* (a caravan traveler) who travels along precipitous pathways subjecting himself to the depredations of robbers, thieves, lions, tigers, wolves, and malevolent beasts. For the sake of giving to beings, he is diligent in seeking out valuables and jewels and does not take that endeavor to be a difficult one.

Through the use of herbs and spells, he seeks to be able even to cause copper to turn into gold. Employing all sorts of transformations such as these, he causes there to be all manner of valuable objects, this while also availing himself of those objects throughout the four directions which have no owner, using them to supply the needs of beings. Activities of these sorts constitute vigor of the body.

He gains the five superknowledges and is thus enabled to perform transformations whereby he creates all manner of delectable flavors, in some instances even going up to the heavens to obtain their spontaneously appearing cuisine. All sorts of cases such as these constitute vigor on the part of the mind.

He is able to accumulate wealth and jewels which he uses in his giving. This constitutes vigor on the part of the body. Employing the merit from this giving, he then becomes able to succeed in reaching the Buddha Path. This constitutes vigor on the part of the mind. The birth-body bodhisattva's cultivation of the six *pāramitās* constitutes vigor on the part of the body. The Dharma-nature body bodhisattva's cultivation of the six *pāramitās* constitutes vigor on the part of the mind. (Ch. text note: If one has not yet gained the Dharma body, the mind follows the body. If one has already gained the Dharma

body, then the mind does not follow the body. The body then no longer acts as a burden to the mind.)

Then again, [one may explain that] when one becomes able to succeed in bringing all dharmas to completion while refraining from indulging any cherishing regard for his own body or life, this constitutes vigor on the part of the body. While seeking to develop all of the types of dhyāna absorptions and wisdom, one's mind refrains from indulging any laziness or weariness, this constitutes vigor on the part of the mind.

1. STORY: THE DEER KING JATAKA TALE

Moreover, as for vigor on the part of the body, one takes on all manner of hardship through diligence yet never succumbs to laziness or diminishment of one's endeavors. This is as told [in the *jātaka* tale of] Brahmadata, the King of the state of Vārāṇasī. He was roaming and hunting in the wilderness forests where he observed that there were two herds of deer. The herds each had a ruler and each herd consisted of five hundred deer. One of the rulers [of the deer] possessed a coloration resembling the seven kinds of precious things. This was Shakyamuni [in a past life] as a bodhisattva. The other ruler [of the deer] was Devadata.

The bodhisattva deer king observed a large group of followers of the human king killing his clan, brought forth the mind of great compassion, and proceeded to go directly before the King. [As it drew closer], the King's men attempted to shoot it. The flying arrows fell like rain. After the King saw that this deer was advancing fearlessly straight towards him, he ordered all of his followers, "Halt the shooting of your arrows! Don't interfere with his intentions in coming forth."

When the king of the deer had arrived, he knelt and addressed the king of the humans, saying, "On account of what for your Lordship is but a minor matter of unrestrained pleasure in the enjoyment of sport, the [entire] herd of deer at once undergoes the suffering of death. How would it be if we instead offered for his meals, regularly and in accord with our own sequence, one deer to be sent each day as an offering to the kitchen of the King?" The King approved of his words and permitted it to be as he intended.

At this point the two rulers of the deer herds convened a great meeting [of the herds] to determine the order by which they would be sent. Each of them took on the responsibility whereby one of them would be sent forth every day in accord with the proper order.

There was a deer at this time within Devadatta's herd which was pregnant with a fawn and which consequently came forward and addressed her ruler, saying, "Today, it is I myself who should be sent forth to die. However, I am pregnant with a fawn. It is not the case that it is the fawn's turn to go. I beg that you will dispense your calculations in managing this in such a way that whosoever dies does so according to the proper order while also ensuring that he who is yet to be born will not become involved in it."

The King of that herd of deer became angry at her and said, "Who does not cherish his own life? When the sequence comes up, one just goes. How could there be any withdrawing from it?"

The pregnant doe thought, "My king is not humane. He does not extend empathy in accord with principle. He will not countenance my withdrawal and so precipitously falls into a rage over it. He is not even worthy to hear my case." She then immediately went to the bodhisattva [deer] king and set forth all of her sentiments.

The [deer] king asked this deer, "What did your lordship say?"

The deer said, "My lord did not respond humanely. He has not seen fit to apply his imagination to managing this matter. On the contrary, he become enraged at me. Because the great king's humanity extends to everyone, I came here to seek refuge in him. Although heaven and earth are vast, today those such as myself are bereft of any forum to present our case."

The bodhisattva [deer] thought, "This is extremely pitiable! If I do not bring order to this matter, there will occur an unprincipled slaughter of her fawn. If it is not done according to sequence, this by changing the order of selection, then [slaughter] shall fall upon one whose turn has not yet come. How then could such a one be sent off? There is only myself who would be appropriate to take her place."

When his consideration of the matter had been decided, he immediately went along himself, dispatching the mother deer to return [to the herd], saying, "I am now going to substitute for you. You have nothing to worry about."

The deer king then went directly to the gate of the king. When the group of people there saw him, they were amazed that he himself had come and so informed the King of this matter. The King was amazed at this as well and so ordered that [the deer king] be brought forward. He then inquired, "Have the deer all come to an end? Why is it that you yourself have come?"

The deer king explained, “The humanity of the great King has extended to the entire herd of deer. Among men, there are none who have transgressed it. There is only flourishing. How could there be a time when [the deer] would come to an end? I have come because there is a doe within the other herd which is pregnant with fawn. As the fawn is about to be born just when [the doe’s] body should be put to death, the fawn is threatened with having to share the same fate. Consequently [the doe] took refuge in me, telling me of her plight.

“It is on account of that circumstance that I took pity on her. Nor could I allow a change in the sequence such that it would fall on one who should have no part in it. Given that she took refuge in me, were I to fail to rescue [her fawn], I would be no different from a tree or a stone. This body of mine will not endure long [in any case]. It is certain that one cannot avoid death. To bring forth kindness and rescue someone from suffering and misery results in measureless merit. If a person has no kindness, then he is no different from a tiger or a wolf.”

When the King heard these words, he immediately arose from his throne and uttered a verse, saying:

In truth it is I who am the beast
 And who may thus be called a human-headed deer.
 Although you possess the body of a deer,
 You may be called a deer-headed human.
 To speak of it according to the principle,
 It is not that it is by one’s form that one becomes human.
 If one is able to possess kindness and generosity,
 Although one may be a beast, in truth he is human.
 For my own part, beginning with this very day,
 I shall no longer eat any sort of flesh.
 I will make a gift of fearlessness,
 And so shall be able to put your mind at peace.

The deer thereafter achieved a state of peace while the King himself succeeded in realizing his own humanity and trustworthiness.

2. STORY: THE SACRIFICE OF THE BRAHMACĀRIN LOVER OF DHARMA

Then again, this is exemplified by the case of the *brahmacārin* known as “Lover of Dharma.” For twelve years he went everywhere in Jambudvīpa searching for knowledge of the Dharma of the sages but still was unable to find it. There was no buddha in the world

at that time. The Dharma of the Buddha had disappeared as well. There was a brahman who said, "I possess one verse of the Dharma of the Āryas. If you are truly one who loves the Dharma, I will give it to you."

He replied, "I truly do love the Dharma."

The Brahman said, "If you truly do love the Dharma, then you ought to use your skin as paper, ought to use the bones of your body as a pen, and ought to use your blood [as ink] to write it down. Then I will give it to you."

[Lover of Dharma] then did as he had been requested to do, breaking his bones, stripping off his skin, and writing down this verse with his blood:

In accordance with Dharma one should cultivate.
That which is non-Dharma one should not accept.
In the present life and in the future life as well,
He who practices Dharma is peaceful and secure.

3. STORY: THE BIRD THAT TRIED TO SAVE A BURNING FOREST

Then again, once upon a time in the past there was a wildfire which was burning up a forest. There was a pheasant in that forest which, with diligent physical efforts, used his own strength to fly into the water, soak his feathers, and then fly forth, attempting thereby to extinguish the great blaze. The fire was great and water was but little. It flew back and forth repeatedly and, even though it became exhausted, it did not find that to be suffering. The god Śakra devendra manifested at that time, coming forth to ask [the bird], "Just what is it that you are trying to do, anyway?"

It replied, "I am [attempting to] save this forest out of pity for the beings in it. The area nurtured by the shade of this forest is vast, refreshingly cool, and blissful. All of our species—all of our lineages and relatives as well as all of the other beings rely upon this forest. As long as I have any remaining physical strength, how could I be lazy and so fail to rescue it?"

That lord of the heavens asked it, "As for your being so energetic and diligent, how much longer do you suppose you can continue this way?"

The pheasant said, "I take the point of my death as the appointed hour."

That lord of the heavens then asked, "Although your intentions may be so, who would be able to verify and really know that [what you claim is true]?"

[The pheasant] then immediately set forth a vow, stating “My mind is ultimately sincere. If in its trustworthiness it is free of any falseness, may it be that this blaze should be immediately extinguished.”

At this very time, the gods of the Pure Dwelling Heaven became aware of the bodhisattva’s vow and then immediately extinguished the fire for its sake. From ancient times on up to the present, it is only this one forest which has always been growing luxuriantly and which has remained unburned by any fires.

4. SUMMATION ON PHYSICAL VIGOR

All sorts of other cases such as these illustrate that, in that which has been carried out in practice in his previous lifetimes, he has been able to do what is difficult to do. He has not indulged any cherishing regard even for his own body and life, his country, his wealth, wives, sons, elephants, horses, the seven precious things, his head, eyes, bones, or his marrow. He has been diligent in giving without weariness.

As the saying goes, “For the sake of beings, the bodhisattva would undergo in a single day even a thousand deaths and a thousand births.” The practices undertaken in perfecting the *pāramitās* of *dāna*, *śīla*, patience, dhyāna and prajñā are of this same sort. The characteristic features of what is intended by “vigor associated with the body” are as illustrated by all sorts of causal circumstances described in the *Sutra on the Past Lives of the Bodhisattva*.

5. SUMMATION ON MENTAL VIGOR

The carrying on of cultivation in all good dharmas while maintaining faith and happiness, while not generating doubts or regrets, while not falling into laziness, and while continuing to seek the Dharma insatiably from all of the Worthies, the Āryas, and everyone on down even to the common people, doing so in a manner comparable to the sea’s swallowing up of everything flowing into it—it is this which constitutes the mental vigor of the bodhisattva.

O. CHALLENGE: ISN’T UNREMITTING VIGOR A FALLACIOUS CONCEPT?

Question: For the mind to be insatiable is a situation which does not exist. Why? If that endeavor which one seeks [to accomplish] is finished and if that which one wishes for has already been completed, then one ought to be satisfied. If there is some principle which cannot be sought out or some endeavor which cannot be finished, then it ought to be the case that one relinquishes it and thus diminishes

one's efforts. How could one be eternally insatiable? It is just as with a person who digs a well or seeks for a spring: If one invests ever more effort at the task and there are fewer and fewer signs of water, then one ought to stop and desist. This is also comparable to when one travels a road: Once one has reached his destination, he needn't travel further. How could it be that one might remain eternally insatiable?

P. RESPONSE: NOT SO, FOR VIGOR CONTINUES ON, UNABATED

Response: One cannot employ worldly analogies in making comparisons about the vigor of the bodhisattva. Indeed, it is just as with the digging of a well. If one's strength is only slight, then one remains unable to find water. It is not the case that there is no water. If there is no water in this place, then it certainly does exist somewhere else. It is also just as when one has some place to which one is going. One must certainly continue seeking buddhahood until one has successfully reached it. Even once one reaches buddhahood, one does not indulge any weariness. One never tires of teaching people. It is on this basis that one speaks of "insatiability."

Moreover, the vigor of the bodhisattva entails determination and aspiration which are immense and vast. He vows to cross everyone over to liberation, this even though beings are inexhaustible in number. Therefore the vigor itself must also be inexhaustible. When you claim that once one has expended effort in the carrying out of an endeavor, it ought to be allowed to come to an end, this is incorrect. Although one [eventually] succeeds in reaching buddhahood, because even then beings have not yet been brought to an end, one still should not rest.

This is analogous to the characteristic nature of fire which, if not extinguished, never grows cold. The vigor of the bodhisattva is just like this. So long as he has not yet crossed on over into a liberation involving cessation, he refrains from resting. It is for this reason that the eternal cultivation of zeal and vigor are qualities contained among the eighteen dharmas exclusive to a buddha.

Furthermore, [as stated in the Sutra]: "It is by resort to the dharma of non-abiding that the bodhisattva abides in the *prajñāpāramitā*." Thus he does not allow his cultivation of vigor to diminish. And this vigor practiced by the bodhisattva is still not that of a buddha.

Q. EXAMPLES OF THE UNREMITTING NATURE OF THE BODHISATTVA'S VIGOR

Furthermore, so long as the bodhisattva has not yet gained realization of the path of the bodhisattva, he continues to employ that body

subject to birth and death in providing those fine things which he endeavors to bestow on beings.

It may be that, contrary to what might be expected, beings [not only do not respond in kind], they go so far as to afflict him with circumstances which are not good. [For instance], there may be beings who, when the bodhisattva praises their fine qualities, they proceed in contrary fashion to besmirch his reputation and heap abuse upon him. It may also be that, even though the bodhisattva may be respectful and reverential [to beings], they nonetheless respond by acting in such a contrary fashion that they slight him and treat him with condescension. There may also be times when, although the bodhisattva remains motivated by kindness in his mindfulness of others, still, they counter this by seeking out his faults and plotting to do him harm.

[In spite of all this], these beings are nonetheless all equally bereft of any power whereby they might visit torment on the bodhisattva. The bodhisattva has brought forth a great vow with respect to these beings, "When I gain the path to buddhahood, I must cross on over to liberation even these beings who belong to the class of the most evil among the evil." Even in the midst of all this evil, his mind still does not become indolent. Consequently he continues to bring forth the mind of great kindness. In doing so, he is like the lovingly-kind mother who feels pity for her son in his illness, who is beset with worry about him, who continues to remain mindful of him, and who never forsakes him. Characteristic features such as these are emblematic of that vigor in which the bodhisattva engages.

Moreover, when one practices the *pāramitā* of giving, all sorts of beggars come from the ten directions, seeking things and making demands. Even that which they should not demand. they nonetheless come and demand while also demanding those things which one loves most intensely. They say to the bodhisattva, "Give me both of your eyes. Give me your head, brains, bones, marrow, the wife and son which you love so dearly, and also give me all of your extremely valuable precious jewels."

Those beggars forcefully demand such difficult to relinquish things as these. Nonetheless, his mind does not move and neither miserliness nor hatred arise in him in response to these circumstances. The mind which indulges views or doubts does not develop in him. He proceeds to make such gifts single-mindedly and for the sake of realizing the path to buddhahood. Thus in his actions, he

is comparable to Mount Sumeru which, when the four directions' winds blow, cannot be moved by them. All sorts of characteristic features such as these are emblematic of the *pāramitā* of vigor.

Furthermore, the vigor of the bodhisattva is universally active throughout his practice of the other five *pāramitās*. It is this which constitutes the *pāramitā* of vigor.

R. CHALLENGE: ONE PERFECTION CAN'T BE OPERATIVE IN THE OTHERS

Question: If when one is practicing the *pāramitā* of vigor, someone comes and begs one's three robes and bowl, if one gives them to him, he will break the precepts, [thus failing in the *pāramitā* of moral virtue]. How is this so? It is because the Buddha did not permit [one to part with the robes or the bowl]. If one fails to give, however, one thereby destroys the *pāramitā* of vigor. How then can vigor be universally operative in the other five endeavors?

S. RESPONSE: INDEED, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE NEW TO THE PRACTICE

Response: [In fact], if one is a bodhisattva new in his practice, then he will *not* be able to make [the perfection of vigor] universally operative in the other five *pāramitās* in a way which is simultaneous even across the course of a single lifetime.

1. STORY: SHAKYAMUNI'S PAST-LIFE GIFT TO THE TIGRESS

This point is well illustrated by that time when the [past-life Shakyamuni] Bodhisattva was practicing the *pāramitā* of vigor and observed a starving tigress whose hunger had become so urgent that she was about to eat her cubs. The Bodhisattva then let flourish the mind of great compassion and immediately made a gift [to the tigress] of his body.

Because the Bodhisattva's father and mother had lost their son, their distress and grief were such that they lost the vision in both eyes. It should also be the case that the tigress must have incurred a karmic offense associated with the killing of the Bodhisattva. Nonetheless, he failed to take into account the grief-caused suffering on the part of his parents or the tigress's incurring of the offense of killing. He wished only to perfect the practice of *dāna* and thus realize for himself the associated merit.

2. EXAMPLE: SO, TOO, THE BHIKSHU OBSERVING MORAL VIRTUE

This is also exemplified by the bhikshu who upholds the precepts. No matter what the situation, whether it might involve a minor or a major regulation, he rejects anyone with whom a transgression might occur. Even though the person who is rejected might

experiences the anguish of distress and grief [at his refusal to accede to precept-threatening conduct], he strives only to uphold the precepts and does not take pity on the sufferings of others which might arise as a consequence.

T. BODHISATTVAS FOCUS AT TIMES SOLELY ON WORLDLY PRAJÑĀ

It may be in some instances that because one is focused on the practice of the common prajñā of the world, one sets aside the mind of kindness and compassion.

1. EXAMPLE: BUDDHA'S PAST LIFE AS A DOUBTING PRINCE

This is well illustrated by the case of Shakyamuni when, as a bodhisattva in a previous life, he was a prince, the son of a great country's king. His father, the King, had taken as his own guru a *brahmacārin* who [claimed] to refrain from eating any of the five types of grains. The masses generally revered him, esteemed him with their faith, held him up as marvelously special.

The Prince pondered this matter, reflecting, "Men all possess [a body with] the four limbs. They must sustain it with the five types of grains, and yet this man [supposedly] does not eat. It must certainly be the case that he has seized the minds of the population through deviousness. He must not be one who is possessed of the genuine Dharma."

His father and mother spoke to their son, saying "This man is intensely vigorous [in his spiritual cultivation]. He does not eat the five types of grains and thus is a person only rarely encountered in this world. How can it be that you persist in being so extremely foolish that you do not respect him?"

The Prince replied by saying, "I pray that you may devote a little attention to this matter. It will not be long before this man's verification will naturally emerge." The Prince then sought out [the Guru's] dwelling place and went into the adjoining forest where he proceeded to inquire of the woodland cowherds, asking, "Well, just what is it that this fellow eats, anyway?"

The cowherds replied, "At night, this man eats a greater or lesser measure of curds, relying on this as the means by which to sustain his life." When the Prince became aware of this, he returned to the palace with the desire to bring forth his verification of the facts. He then used a variety of purgative medicinal herbs and caused them to permeate some blue lotus blossoms.

Early the next morning, that *brahmacārin* [guru] entered the palace [once again] and sat down alongside the King. The Prince

then took up these flower blossoms in his hands and came forward to make an offering to [the Guru]. After having bowed before him, he presented [the flowers] to him. The Brahmācārin was delighted and thought to himself, “The King, his wife, those within and those without, the great ones, the lesser ones—they all make obeisance to me and serve me.

“Heretofore it has only been the Prince from whom I received neither reverence nor faith. Today, however, he makes an offering of beautiful flowers to me. This is extremely fine, immeasurably so.”

Having received these beautiful flower blossoms, as a demonstration of respect for the place from which they came, he then raised them to his nose and inhaled [their fragrance]. The medicinal vapors within the blossoms then entered his belly. In but an instant, the medicine went to work in his belly. He was seized by the need to find a place to stoop down. The Prince then said, “The Brahmācārin does not eat. Why then does he now move towards the toilet?” [As he said this], he held [the Brahmācārin] tightly and in but a moment [that guru] vomited there alongside the King.

[As it turned out], the vomit was composed entirely of curds. When this verification of the facts had been revealed, the King and his wife both realized how he had deceived them. The Prince then said, “This man is truly a thief. Out of a desire for fame, he has cheated an entire country.”

So it was that he devoted himself to the cultivation of common worldly prajñā, seeking only to fulfill his wisdom. Thus, in doing so, he set aside the mind of sympathy and pity and did not fear incurring the hatred of others.

2. BODHISATTVA FOCUS ON WORLD-TRANSCENDING PRAJÑĀ

At other times, the bodhisattva practices world-transcending prajñā. In upholding precepts and bestowing gifts, his mind remains free of defiling attachment. Why? Because the donor, the recipient, the valuable gift, offense, non-offense, hatred, non-hatred, vigor, laziness, the focused mind, and the scattered mind—none of these are apprehensible. Moreover, in practicing the *pāramitā* of vigor, the bodhisattva takes all dharmas to be neither produced nor destroyed, neither eternal nor non-eternal, neither suffering nor blissful, neither empty nor real, neither self nor non-self, neither singular nor different, and neither existent nor nonexistent.

He completely realizes that all dharmas are but a conjunction of causes and conditions, that they possess only names, and that

no characteristic of ultimate reality can be found in them. The bodhisattva carries on this sort of contemplation and so realizes that everything which is conditioned is in fact false and deceptive. He lets his mind rest in the unconditioned and desires to bring his thoughts to cessation, [realizing that] it is only by resort to quiescent cessation that one achieves peaceful security.

He then calls to mind his original vows and, on account of sympathy and pity for beings, returns to the practice of the dharmas of the bodhisattva and so proceeds to accumulate every sort of merit. The bodhisattva then thinks to himself, "Although I realize that all dharmas are false and deceptive, beings are unaware of this matter. Within the five destinies of rebirth, they endure all manner of suffering and pain. I should now completely perfect the practice of the six *pāramitās*."

U. SUMMATION: THE BODHISATTVĀ'S PERFECTION OF VIGOR *PĀRAMITĀ*

The bodhisattva gains as karmic reward the superknowledges and also gains the Buddha Path, including the thirty-two major marks, the eighty subsidiary characteristics, all types of wisdom, the great kindness, the great compassion, unobstructed liberation, the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, the eighteen dharmas exclusive to the Buddha, the three clarities (*trividyā*) and the immeasurable number of other dharmas associated with buddhahood. Once he succeeds in realizing these dharmas, subsequent occurrences wherein all beings may gain the purification of faith, may all be enabled to take on the practice, may all be able to feel affection for and bliss in the Dharma of the Buddha, and may all be enabled to carry out this same endeavor themselves—all of this is a product of the power of the *pāramitā* of vigor.

This is what constitutes the *pāramitā* of vigor. It is just as has been stated by the Buddha: "At that time, the vigor of the bodhisattva becomes such that he does not even perceive [the existence of] a body and does not even perceive [the existence of] a mind. His body has nothing whatsoever which it engages in doing and the mind has nothing whatsoever which it bears in mind. The body and mind become as one and the same and thus there is no making of such distinctions in this regard." In that path to buddhahood which is sought for the sake of bringing beings to deliverance, one does not perceive beings as constituting this shore, nor does he perceive the Buddha Path as constituting the opposite shore. Everything done by the body and mind are set aside and relinquished as if they were

mere dream-state endeavors which are realized on waking to have not involved the accomplishment of any endeavors at all.

This is what qualifies as quiescent cessation. It is with reference to this that all instances of vigor qualify as constituting “*pāramitā*.” How is this so? One realizes that all instances of vigor involve a coursing in [dharmas which by their very character involve] error and deceptiveness. This is because all created dharmas are empty, false, and unreal. They are like a dream and like a magically-conjured illusion.

All dharmas are uniformly equal. This is what is genuinely real. Among these dharmas which are of a single uniform equality, one should not have those which one seeks to obtain. One therefore realizes that all instances of vigor involve that which is empty and false. Although one realizes that vigor involves that which is empty and false, still, he constantly works at perfecting it and does not retreat from engaging in it. This is what qualifies as the genuine vigor of the bodhisattva.

As stated by the Buddha, “Throughout an incalculable number of kalpas I gave my head, eyes, marrow, and brain to beings so as to allow them to fulfill their wishes. When practicing the upholding of precepts, patience, and dhyāna, I dwelt in the mountains and forests wherein my body became dehydrated and emaciated. At times I fasted, reducing the intake of food. At times I cut off all taste for any form of sensual experience. At times I endured the calamities of scolding, vilification, knives and clubs. On these accounts my body became haggard and emaciated.

“Additionally, I constantly sat in dhyāna meditation and so was exposed to the elements and endured intense suffering, this for the sake of seeking wisdom. I recited, studied, pondered upon, asked about, and delivered explanations on [Dharma]. I employed wisdom in reference to each and every dharma, making distinctions with regard to good, evil, coarse, fine, false, real, greater, and lesser.

“I made offerings to an incalculable number of buddhas. I was assiduous and diligent in applying vigor to the seeking of these forms of merit, wishing to completely perfect the other five *pāramitās*. However, throughout this entire time, nothing whatsoever was obtained by me. I did not obtain the *pāramitās* of *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, vigor, dhyāna, or wisdom.

“When I encountered Burning Lamp (Dīpaṃkara) Buddha, I scattered five blossoms over the Buddha, laid my hair down in the

mud [that he might cross], and gained right then the unproduced-dharmas patience (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). The six *pāramitās* were then straightaway fulfilled. I stood there in empty space, praised Burning Lamp Buddha with verses, and then beheld the immeasurable number of buddhas throughout the ten directions. It was at that time that I gained that body which is endowed with genuine vigor.”

It is on account of one’s vigor being uniformly equal [in its application to all dharmas] that one gains the mind which itself is uniform in its equality. It is on account of one’s mind being uniform in its quality that one achieves [that state] wherein all dharmas are [realized as] uniform in their equality.

All sorts of causes, conditions, and characteristics such as these constitute what is meant by “the *pāramitā* of vigor.”