

# The Platform Scripture

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*The Platform Scripture Preached by the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng, in the Ta-fan Temple in Shao-chou, the Very best Perfection of Great Wisdom Scripture on the Sudden Enlightenment Doctrine of the Southern School of Zen, one book, including the Giving of the Discipline that Frees One from the Attachment to Differentiated Characters for the Propagation of the Law. Gathered and recorded by disciple Fa-hai.*

(1)

Great Master Hui-neng ascended the high seat in the lecture hall of the Ta-fan Temple to preach the Law of the Perfection of Great Wisdom and to give the discipline that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters. There were present more than ten thousand monks, nuns, disciples who had renounced their families, and laymen. The prefect of Shao-chou, Wei ch'u, more than thirty government officials, and over thirty Confucian scholars jointly requested the Great Master to preach the Law of the Perfection of Great Wisdom. Thereupon, the prefect ordered the disciple, Monk Fa-hai, to record the lecture so that it would prevail in future generations. It was to enable seekers of the Way to have something to rely on and to follow when they in turn transmitted and taught the Law according to this fundamental doctrine, that this *Platform Scripture* was spoken.

(2)

Great Master Hui-neng said: Good and learned friends, think of the Law of the Perfection of Great Wisdom with a pure mind.

Then the Great Master remained silent, concentrated in mind and tranquil in spirit. After a long while he said: Good and learned friends, listen quietly. My deeply loving father was originally a native of Fan-yang. After his demotion from office, he was banished to Ling-nan and became a citizen of Hsin-chou. My father passed away when I was very young. My aged mother and I, an orphan, moved to Nan-hai. We were poor and life was hard. I peddled firewood in the city. Once a customer bought some fuel and led me to a government store. The customer took the fuel-wood and I received

the money. As I withdrew toward the door, I suddenly saw a customer reading the *Diamond Scripture*. As soon as I heard it, I understood and was immediately enlightened. Thereupon I asked the customer, "From what place did you bring this scripture?"

The customer answered, "I paid reverence to priest Hung-jen, the Fifth Patriarch, in the Fen-mu Mountain in the eastern part of Huang-mei district in Ch'i-chou. I found there more than a thousand disciples. There I heard the Great Master exhort both disciples who have renounced their families and laymen, saying that if they would only hold on to this one book, the *Diamond Scripture*, they would be able to see their own nature and immediately would be enlightened and become Buddhas." After I heard what he said and due to causes operating in my previous lives I begged leave of my mother and went to Feng-mu Mountain in Huang-mei to pay reverence to priest Hung-jen, the Fifth Patriarch.

(3)

Priest Hung-jen asked me, "Whence have you come to this mountain to pay reverence to me? What do you wish from me?"

I answered, "Your disciple is a native of Ling-nan, a citizen of Hsin-chou. I have purposely come a great distance to pay you reverence. I seek nothing other than to practice the Law of the Buddha."

The Great Master reproved me, saying, "You are from Ling-nan, and furthermore, you are a barbarian. How can you become a Buddha?"

I answered, "Although people are distinguished as northerners and southerners, there is neither north nor south in the Buddha-nature. The physical body of the barbarian and [that of] the monk are different. But what difference is there in their Buddha-nature?"

The Great Master intended to argue with me further, but, seeing people around, said nothing more. He ordered me to attend to duties, among the rest. Then a lay attendant ordered me to the rice-pounding area to pound rice. This I did for more than eight months.

(4)

One day the Fifth Patriarch suddenly called his disciples to come to him. When we had already assembled, he said, "Let me say this to you: Life and death are serious matters. You disciples are engaged all day in making offerings, going after fields of blessings only, and you make no effort to achieve freedom from the bitter sea of life and death. If you are deluded in your own nature, how can blessings save you? Go to your rooms, all of you, and think for yourselves. Those who possess wisdom use the wisdom (*prajna*) inherent in their own nature. Each of you must write a verse and present it to me. After I see the verses, I will give the robe and the Law to be the one who understands the basic idea and will appoint him to be the Sixth Patriarch. Hurry, hurry!"

(5)

After the disciples had received these instructions, they each retired to their own rooms. They said to each other, "There is no need to calm our minds and devote our attention to composing verses to present to the priest. Head Monk Shen -hsiu is an instructor of rituals. When he acquires the Law, we can of course follow and stay with him. We do not have to write verses. They were satisfied. None dared present a verse.

At that time, there were three corridors in front of the hall of the Great Master. Offerings were made there. It was planned to paint there on the walls as records the pictures of the transfiguration of the assembly depicted in the *Scripture about the Buddha Entering into Lanka* and also pictures of the five Patriarchs transmitting the robe and the Law so that these stories might prevail in future generations. The artist Lu Chen had examined the wall. He was to begin work the next day.

(6)

Head Monk Shen-hsiu thought, "These people would not present verses to show their minds because I am an instructor. If I do not present a verse to show my mind, how can the Fifth Patriarch see whether my understanding is shallow or deep? I shall present the verse of my heart to the Fifth Patriarch to show him my ideas. It is good to see the Law, but not good to seek the patriarchate. It would be similar to that of the ordinary people and I would be usurping the holy rank. If I do not present a verse to manifest my mind, I shall never acquire the Law." He thought for a long time but found it an extremely difficult matter. He then waited until midnight and without allowing anyone to see him, went to

the wall in the middle of the southern corridor and wrote a verse to manifest what was in his mind, thus wishing to seek the Law. "If the Fifth Patriarch sees the words of this verse – the words of this verse... If they are not acceptable, it is of course because the obstruction of my past deeds is so heavy that I am not qualified to obtain the Law. The Patriarch's holy opinion is difficult to guess but I shall be satisfied in my mind.

At midnight Head Monk Shen-hsiu, holding a candle, wrote a verse on the wall of the south corridor, without anyone knowing about it, which said:

The body is the tree of perfect wisdom (*bodhi*)

The mind is the stand of a bright mirror.

At all times diligently wipe it.

Do not allow it to become dusty.

(7)

After Head Monk Shen-hsiu had finished writing the verse, he returned to his room to retire without anyone seeing him. The next morning, the Fifth Patriarch called court artist Lu to come to the south corridor to paint the pictures of the scripture about the Buddha entering into Lanka. Suddenly the Fifth Patriarch saw the verse. After reading it, he said to the court artist, "I will give you thirty thousand cash and will be much obliged to you for your coming from afar. But we will not paint the transfigurations. The *Diamond Scripture* says, 'All characters are unreal and imaginary.' It is better to keep this verse and let deluded people read it. If people practice according to it, they will not fall into the Three Evil Stages. People who practice according to the Law will enjoy great benefits.

Thereupon the Great Master called all the disciples to come and burn incense before the verse so that everyone would see it and a sense of reverence would arise in all of them. "All of you read this. Only those who understand this verse will be able to see their own nature. Those who practice according to it will not fall."

The disciple all read the verse and a sense of reverence was aroused in them. They said, 'Wonderful!'

Thereupon the Fifth Patriarch called Head Monk Shen-hsiu into the hall and asked, "Was this verse written by you? If you wrote it, you should receive my Law."

Head Monk Shen-hsiu said, "Please pardon me. In fact, I did write it. Yet I dare not seek the position of the patriarch. I hope your Holiness will be compassionate and see if your disciple possesses a small amount of wisdom and understands the basic idea."

The Fifth Patriarch said, "The verse you wrote shows some but not complete understanding. You have arrived at the front door but you have not yet entered it. Ordinary people, by practicing in accordance with your verse, will not fail. But it is futile to seek the supreme perfect wisdom while holding to such a view. One must enter the door and see his own nature. Go away and come back after thinking a day or two. Write another verse and present it to me. If then you have entered the door and have seen your own nature, I will give you the robe and the Law." Head Monk Shen-hsiu went away and or several days could not produce another verse.

(8) A boy was reciting this verse while passing by the rice-pounding area. As soon as I heard it, I knew that the author had not seen his own nature or understood the basic idea. I asked the boy, "What verse were you reciting a little while ago? The boy answered, "Do you not know that the Great Master said that life and death are important matters? He wishes to transmit the robe and the Law to someone. He told the disciples to write and present a verse for him to see. He who understands the basic idea would be given the robe and the Law as testimony of making him the Sixth Patriarch. The head monk by the name of Shn-hsiu wrote in the south corridor a verse that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters. The Fifth Patriarch told all the disciples to read it. Whoever understands this verse would immediately see his own nature, and those who practiced according to it would be emancipated."

I replied, "I have been pounding rice here for more than eight months and have not been to the front of the hall. Will you, sir, lead me to the south corridor so that I might see this verse and pay reverence to it. I also wish to recite it and to fulfill the conditions for birth in the Buddha-land in my next life."

As the boy led me to the south corridor, I immediately paid reverence to the verse. As I did not know how to read, I asked someone to read it to me. After I heard it, I immediately understood the basic idea. I also composed a verse and asked a person who could read to write it on the wall of the western corridor to manifest what was in my own mind. It is useless to study the Law if one does not understand his own mind. Once a person understands his own mind and sees his own nature, he will immediately understand the basic idea.

My verse says:

Fundamentally perfect wisdom has no tree.

Nor has the bright mirror any stand.

Buddha-nature is forever clear and pure.

Where is there any dust?

Another verse says:

The mind is the tree of perfect wisdom.

The body is the stand of a bright mirror.

The bright mirror is originally clear and pure.

Where has it been defiled by any dust?

Monks in the hall were all surprised at these verses. I, however, went back to the rice-pounding area. The Fifth Patriarch suddenly realized that I alone had the good knowledge and understanding of the basic idea but he was afraid lest the rest learn it. He therefore told them, "He does not understand perfectly after all."

(9)

The Fifth Patriarch waited till midnight, called me to come to the hall, and expounded the *Diamond Sutra*. As soon as I heard this, I understood. That night the Law was imparted to me without anyone knowing it, and thus the method of sudden enlightenment and the robe were transmitted to me. "You are now the Sixth Patriarch. This robe is the testimony of transmission from generation to generation. As to the Law, it is to be transmitted from mind to mind. Let people achieve enlightenment through their own effort."

The Fifth Patriarch said, "Hui-neng, from the very beginning, in the transmission of the Law one's life is as delicate as hanging by a thread. If you remain here, someone might harm you. You must leave quickly."

**(10)**

After I received the robe and the Law, I left at midnight. The Fifth Patriarch personally saw me off at the courier's station as Chiu-chiang. I then understood the instructions of the Patriarch. "Go and work hard. Carry the Law to the south. Do not preach for three years, for it is not easy for this Law to flourish. Later when you spread the Law and convert people, when you skillfully guide deluded people and open up their minds, you will not be different from me."

Having said goodbye, I started south.

**(11)**

In two months I reached the Ta-yu Mountain. I did not realize that there were several hundred people coming after me. They wanted to follow me and to snatch the robe and the Law. But half way they all withdrew, except one monk whose family name was Ch`en and whose private name was Hui-shun. He was formerly a general of the third rank. His nature and disposition were crude and evil. He got straight to the peak, rushed forward and grabbed me. I immediately gave the robe of the Law to him but he refused to take it. "I purposely came this long way to seek the Law; I do not need the robe." Thereupon I transmitted the Law to him on the peak. As he heard what I said, his mind was opened. I told him to go to the north to convert the people there immediately.

**(12)** Then I came and stayed in this place and associated with government officials, disciples who have renounced their families, and lay folk. This, after all, was due to causes operating over many long periods of time. The doctrine has been handed down from past sages; it is not my own wisdom. Those who wish to hear the teachings of past sages must purify their hearts. Having heard them, they must vow to rid themselves of delusions and thereby to become enlightened, as the former sages. (This is the method described below.)

Great Master Hui-neng declared: Good and learned friends, perfect wisdom is inherent in all people. It is only because they are deluded in their minds that they cannot attain enlightenment by themselves. They must seek the help of good and learned friends of high standing to show them the way to see their own nature. Good and learned friends, as soon as one is enlightened, he attains wisdom.

**(13)** Good and learned friends, calmness and wisdom are the foundations of my method. First of all, do not be deceived into thinking that the two are different. They are one substance and not two. Calmness is the substance of wisdom and wisdom is the function of calmness. Whenever wisdom is at work, calmness is within it. Whenever calmness is at work, wisdom is within it. Good and learned friends, the meaning here is that [calmness and] wisdom are identified. Seekers of the Way, arouse your minds. Do not say that wisdom follows calmness or vice versa, or that the two are different. To hold such a view would imply that the dharmas possess two different characters. In the case of those whose words are good but

whose hearts are not good, wisdom and calmness are not identified. But in the case of those whose hearts and words are both good and in whom the internal and the external are one, calmness and wisdom are identified. Self-enlightenment and practice do not consist in argument. If one is concerned about which comes first, he is a [deluded] person. If he is not freed from the consideration of victory or defeat, he will produce the dharmas and the self. He cannot become free from the Four Characters.

**(14)**

Calmness in which one realizes that all dharmas are the same means to practice [attaining] a straightforward mind at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining. The *Scripture Spoken by Vimalakirti* says, "The straightforward mind is the holy place. The straightforward mind is the Pure Land." Do not be crooked in the activities of your mind and merely talk about straightforwardness. One who merely talks about calmness in which one realizes that all dharmas are one and does not practice a straightforward mind is not a disciple of the Buddha. To practice a straightforward mind only and to be unattached to any dharma is called calmness in which one realizes that all dharmas are the same. Deluded people attached to the characters of dharmas hold that calmness, in which one realizes that all dharmas are the same, means simply to sit unperturbed and to remove erroneous thoughts without allowing others to arise in the mind; that to them is calmness in which one realizes that all dharmas are the same. If this were the case, this Law would [render us] equivalent to insentient beings and would be a cause of hindrance to the Way.

The Way must be in operation. Why should it be impeded instead? When the mind is not attached to dharmas, then the Way is in operation. When it is attached then it is in bondage. If it were correct to sit without motion, Vimalakirti would not have reprimanded Sariputra for sitting silently in the forest.

Good and learned friend, I also know some who teach people to it and look into the mind as well as to look at purity, so that the mind will not be perturbed and nothing will arise from it. Devoting their efforts to this, deluded people fail to become enlightened; consequently they are so attached to this method as to become insane. There are several hundred such cases. Therefore I know that to teach people this way is a great mistake.

**(15)**

Good and learned friends, in what way are calmness and wisdom the same? They are like the lamp and its light. With the lamp there is light. Without the lamp there is no light. The lamp is the substance of the light while the light is the function of the lamp. In name they are two but in substance they are not different. It is the same with calmness and wisdom.

**(16)**

Good and learned friends, in method there is no distinction between sudden enlightenment and gradual enlightenment. Among men, however, some are intelligent and others are stupid. Those who are deluded understand gradually, while the enlightened achieve understanding suddenly. But when they know their own minds, then they see their own nature, and there is no difference in their enlightenment. Without enlightenment, they remain forever bound in transmigration.

(17) Good and learned friends, in this method of mine, from the very beginning, whether in the sudden-enlightenment or gradual-enlightenment tradition, absence-of-thought has been instituted as the main doctrine, absence-of-characters as the substance, and non-attachment as the foundation. What is meant by absence-of-characters? Absence-of-characters means to be free from characters while in the midst of them. Absence of thought means not to be carried away by thought in the process of thought. Non-attachment is man's original nature. Thought after thought goes on without remaining. Past, present, and future thought continue without termination. But if we cut off and terminate thought for one instant, the Law-body is freed from the physical body. At no time should a single instant of thought be attached to any dharma. If one single instant of thought is attached to anything, then every thought will be attached. This is bondage. But if in regard to dharmas no thought is attached to anything, that is freedom. This is the meaning of having non-attachment as the foundation.

Good and learned friends, to be free from all characters means the absence of characters. Only if we can be free from characters will the substance of our nature be pure. That is the meaning of taking absence-of-character as the substance. Absence-of-thought means not to be defiled by external object. It is to free our thoughts from external objects and not to have thoughts arise over dharmas. But do not stop thinking about everything and eliminate all thought. As soon as thought stops, one dies and is reborn elsewhere. Take heed of this, followers of the Way. If one does not think over the meaning of the Law and becomes mistaken himself,

that is excusable. How much worse is it to encourage others to be mistaken! Deluded, he does not realize that he is so, and he even blasphemes the scripture and the Law! That is the reason why absence-of-thought is instituted as the doctrine. Because people who are deluded have thoughts about external objects, perverse views arise in them, and all sorts of afflictions resulting from passions and erroneous thoughts are produced.

However, this school has instituted absence-of-thought as the doctrine. When people of the world are free from erroneous views, no thoughts will arise. If there are no thoughts, there will not even be an absence-of-thought. Absence means absence of what? Thought means thought of what? Absence-of-thought means freedom from the character of the duality [existence or non-existence of characters] and from all afflictions resulting from passions. [Thought means thought of the true nature of True Thusness.] True Thusness is the substance of thought and thought is the function of True Thusness. It is the self-nature that gives rise to thought. Therefore in spite of the functioning of seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing, self-nature is not defiled by the many spheres of objects and always remains free and at ease. As the *Scripture Spoken by Vimalakirti* says, "Externally it skillfully differentiates the various dharma-characters while internally it abides immovably in the First Principle."

**(18)**

Good and learned friends, according to this method, sitting in meditation is at bottom neither looking at the mind nor looking at purity. Nor do we say that there should be

imperturbability. Suppose we say to look at the mind. The mind is at bottom false. Since being false is the same as being illusory, there is nothing to look at. Suppose we say to look at purity. Man's nature is originally pure. It is by false thoughts that True Thusness is obscured. Our original nature is pure as long as it is free from false thoughts. If one does not realize that his own nature is originally pure and makes up his mind to look at purity, he is creating a false purity. Such purity has no objective existence. Hence we know that what is looked at is false. Purity has neither physical form nor character, but some people set up characters of purity and say that this is the object of our task. People who take this view hinder their original nature and become bound by purity. If those who cultivate imperturbability would ignore people's mistakes and defects, their nature would not be perturbed. Deluded people may not be perturbed physically themselves, but whenever they speak, they criticize others and thus violate the Way. Thus looking at the mind or at purity causes a hindrance to the Way.

**(19)**

Now, this being the case in this method, what is meant by sitting in meditation? In this method, to sit means to be free from all obstacles, and externally not to allow thoughts to rise from the mind over any sphere of objects. To meditate means to realize the imperturbability of one's original nature. What is meant by meditation and calmness? Meditation means to be free from all characters externally; calmness means to be unperturbed internally. If there are characters outside and the inner mind is not disturbed,

Original nature is naturally pure and calm. It is only because of the spheres of objects that there is contact, and contact leads to perturbation. There is calmness when one is free from characters and is not perturbed. There is meditation when one is externally free from characters, and there is calmness when one is internally undisturbed. Meditation and calmness means that external meditation is attained and internal calmness is achieved. The *Scripture Spoken by Vimalakirti* says, "Immediately we become completely clear and recover our original mind." The P`u-sa-chieh ching (*Scripture of Disciplines for Bodhisattvhood*) says, "We are originally pure in our self-nature." Good and learned friends, realize that your self-nature is naturally pure. Cultivate and achieve yourselves the Law-body of your self-nature. Follow the Way of the Buddha yourselves. Act and achieve Buddhahood for yourselves.

**(20)**

Good and learned friends, you must all go through the experience yourselves and receive the discipline that frees you from the attachment to differentiated characters. Follow me at the same time and repeat my slogans. They will enable you, good and learned friends, to see that the Three Bodies of the Buddha are within you: "We take refuge in the pure Law-body of the Buddha with our own physical bodies. We take refuge in the Myriad Transformation-body with our own physical bodies. We take refuge in the Perfect Reward-body with our own physical bodies." (The above to be chanted three times.) The physical body is like an inn and cannot be spoken of as a refuge. It has always been the case that the Three Bodies lie in one's own nature. Everyone has them;

yet because they are deluded they do not see, and they seek the Three Bodies of the Tathagata externally, without realizing that the Three Bodies are inherent in one's own physical body. Good and learned friends, listen to your good friend. If you, good and learned friends, now see in your own physical bodies the self-nature that involves the Three Bodies of the Buddha, these Three Bodies will arise from your nature.

What is meant by the Pure Law-body of the Buddha? Good and learned friends, our nature is originally pure. All dharmas lie in this self-nature. If we think of all kinds of evil deeds, we will practice evil. If we think of all kinds of good deeds, we will do good. Thus we know that all dharmas lie in one's self-nature. Self-nature is always pure, just as the sun and moon are always shining. IT is only when they are obscured by clouds that there is brightness above but darkness below and the sun, the moon, and the stars cannot be seen. But when suddenly a gentle wind blows and scatters all clouds and fog, all phenomena are abundantly spread out before us, all appearing together. The purity of people's nature is comparable to the clear sky, their wisdom comparable to the sun, and sagacity comparable to the moon. Their sagacity and wisdom are always shining. It is only because externally people are attached to spheres of objects that erroneous thoughts, like floating clouds, cover the self-nature so that it is not clear. Therefore when they meet a good and learned friend who reveals to them the true method and scatters away delusions and falsehoods, then they are thoroughly illumined both internally and externally, and all dharmas reveal the free and easy character in their own nature. This is called the Pure Law-body. By taking refuge in the Pure Law body we remove evil deeds. This is called taking refuge.

What is meant by the Myriad Transformation-body? When there is no thought, one's nature is empty of differentiated characters and is tranquil, but when there is thought, that is self-transformation. When one thinks of evil dharmas, the transformation becomes hell, but when one thinks of good dharmas, the transformation becomes Paradise. What is poisonous and harmful is transformed into beasts. What is compassionate is transformed into bodhisattvas. What is sagacious and wise is transformed into the higher realm. What is ignorant and deluded is transformed into the lower region. The transformations of self-nature are many, but deluded people themselves do not know this. If one has a single good thought, sagacity and wisdom arise. This is called the Transformation-body of self-nature.

What is meant by the Perfect Reward-body? One light can illuminate the darkness of a thousand years, and one bit of wisdom can destroy the ignorance of ten thousand years. Never mind looking back to the past; always consider the future, and always make future thoughts good. This is called the Reward-body. The reward of one evil thought will remove the good of a thousand years, and the reward of one good thought will destroy the evil of a thousand years. At all times make the next thought a good one. This is called the Reward-body. Thinking on the basis of the Law-body is the same as the Transformation-body, and making every thought good is the same as the Reward-body. Achieving enlightenment oneself and practicing the Law oneself is called taking refuge. Skin and flesh constitute the physical body. It is an inn and cannot be spoken of as a refuge. If a person understands the Three Bodies, he will recognize my basic idea.

**(21)** Now that we have taken refuge in the Three Bodies of the Buddha, let me and you, good and learned friends, take the Four Very Great Vows. Good and learned friends, please all follow me and say at the same time:

I vow to save an infinite number of beings. I vow to cut off an infinite number of afflictions resulting from passions. I vow to study an infinite number of gates to the Law. I vow to attain Supreme Buddhahood. (This is to be chanted three times.)

Good and learned friends, when we make our vows to save an infinite number of living beings, it does not mean for me to save them. Good and learned friends, all living beings are in the mind, each must save itself in its own body and through its own nature. What is meant by saving oneself through one's own nature? In one's own physical body there are perverse views, afflictions resulting from passions, ignorance, delusion, and erroneous thoughts. Everyone possesses the nature of original enlightenment. Everyone can save himself with correct views. When there is understanding through correct views, wisdom will remove the ignorance, delusion, and error. Thus all beings can save themselves. When perversion comes, one saves himself through correctness. When delusion comes, one saves himself through understanding. When ignorance comes, one saves himself through wisdom. When evil comes, one saves himself through goodness. And when afflictions resulting from passions come, one saves himself through perfect wisdom. Salvation in this way is true salvation. By vowing to cut off an infinite number of afflictions resulting from passions is to remove illusions and erroneous thoughts in one's own mind. By vowing to study an infinite number of gates to

the Law is meant to study the supremely correct Law. And by vowing to attain Supreme Buddhahood is meant always to behave humbly, to respect and reverence everything, to get far away from delusion, attachment, sensation, and knowledge, to cause wisdom to arise and to cut off delusions and erroneous thoughts. One will then achieve Buddhahood through self-enlightenment and will be practicing the power of vows.

**(22)**

Now that we have made the Four Very Great Vows, let me tell you, good and learned friends, about repentance that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters in order to destroy the sins and obstructions of the past, the present, and the future.

The Great Master said: Good and learned friends,

If a person does not allow a single thought, whether past, present, or future, to be contaminated by ignorance or delusion, and if he removes his previous evil deeds from his own nature all at once, that is repentance. Not to let any thought, whether past, present, or future, be contaminated by ignorance and delusion and to remove previous insincerity and dishonesty so that they are forever cut off is called repentance by one's own nature. Not to allow any thought, whether past, future, or present, to be contaminated by delusion and to remove previous jealousy so that jealousy is eliminated from one's nature is repentance. (The above to be chanted three times.)

Good and learned friends: What is repentance? To repent means never again to do evil in one's life time. To regret means to realize the evil of previous deeds and not to

allow that realization ever to slip from the mind. It is useless merely to say so before the Buddhas. In my method, forever to cut off evil and never again to do it is called repentance.

**(23)**

Now that we have repented, let me give you, good and learned friends, the discipline of the Three Refuges that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters.

The Great Master said: Good and learned friends. Take refuge in enlightenment, which is the Supreme Twofold Sufficiency. Take refuge in the correct doctrine, which is supreme freedom from desire. Take refuge in purity, which is supreme among the myriad things. From now on call the Enlightened One your teacher. Take no longer any refuge in various perverse people, deluded people, or heretics. Vow to testify with compassion to our own Three Treasures. Good and learned friends, I exhort you to take refuge in the Three Treasures – The Buddha, who is enlightenment; the Law, which is the correct doctrine, and the Order, which is purity. When your own minds take refuge in enlightenment, perversion and delusion will not arise. You will have few desires and will be contented, free from greed and lust. This is called the supreme twofold sufficiency. When your own minds take refuge in the correct doctrine, because every thought is free from perversion, there is no more craving or attachment. Because there is no more craving or attachment, it is called supreme freedom from desire. When your minds take refuge in purity, although afflictions resulting from passions and erroneous thoughts are present in your own nature, your own nature will not be contaminated. This is called being supreme among the myriad things. Ordinary people do not understand; yet they receive

the discipline of the Three Refuges from morning to evening. If they say they take refuge in the Buddha, where is He? If the Buddha is not to be seen [outside], it means there cannot be any refuge. If there is no refuge, to say so would be erroneous. Good and learned friends, please examine this yourself and do not misdirect your attention. The scripture merely says to take refuge in the Buddha within the self; it does not say to take refuge in another Buddha. If we do not take refuge in our own nature there is no place in which to take refuge.

**(24)** Now that we have taken refuge in the Three Treasures ourselves, each of you please pay close attention. I shall speak to you, good and learned friends, about the method of salvation through great wisdom. Good and learned friends, although you recite the term, you do not understand. Let me explain. Everyone listen, each of you.

The word *mahaprajnaparamita* is Sanskrit and means in Chinese the great wisdom by which to reach the Other Shore. This Law must be put into practice and does not depend on its recitation. If we do not put it into practice, it amounts to an illusion and a phantom. If one practices it, his Law-body will be the same as that of the Buddha.

What does *maha* mean? It means great. The capacity of the mind is as great as that of empty space. If one sits with an empty mind, however, one will be attached to the emptiness characterized by indifference. Empty space can embrace the sun, the moon, stars, plants, the great earth, mountains, rivers, all trees and plants, good and evil people, good and evil dharmas, heavens and hells. They are all within this emptiness. The emptiness of human nature is the same.

LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE CHINESE CHARACTERS:

One

Moment, cut

Time

Center

Thought,

Thought

Not negation

Ignorance.

Always

Constant

*Do (Tao)*

Wisdom

Named

Wisdom

(25)

The self-nature is great because it embraces all dharmas. All dharmas are nothing but the self-nature. It sees all men and all things other than men, good or evil, and good dharmas or evil dharmas, and it does not renounce any of them nor is it contaminated by them or attached to them. It is like empty space. This is called great and is what *maha* means. Deluded people recite the words with their mouths but wise people put it into practice with their minds. There are also deluded people who keep their minds empty without thought and call it great. That is also wrong. The capacity of the mind is great, but if it is not put into practice, it becomes small. Do not just talk about it and then fail to practice it. Such people are not my disciples.

(26)

What is meant by *prajna*? *Prajna* means wisdom. If at all times one is not ignorant but always acts wisely, that is practicing wisdom. One foolish thought will cut off wisdom, whereas one wise thought will produce it. People in the world are always ignorant in their mind and yet say to themselves that they practice wisdom. *Prajna* is without physical form or character. It is the nature of wisdom.

What does it mean by *paramita*? This is a Sanskrit word. In Chinese, it is "to reach the Other Shore." It means to be free from birth and extinction. If one is attached to any sphere of objects, birth and extinction will arise, like waves in the sea. This means the shore on our side. If one is free from spheres of objects, there will be no birth or extinction. It is like water running forever. For this reason it is called reaching the Other Shore, or *paramita*. Deluded people recite the word with their mouths but wise people practice it with

their minds. When they merely recite it they have erroneous thoughts. To have erroneous thoughts means not really to have it. If they practice it every moment, they will really have it. He who understands this method understands the method of wisdom and practices it. He who does not practice it is an ordinary man. He who practices it even for one moment is in his own body equal to the Buddha.

Good and learned friends, afflictions resulting from passions are the same as wisdom. To hold on to a previous deluded thought makes a person an ordinary man, but the next thought, if enlightened, makes one a Buddha. Good and learned friends, the *mahaprajnaparamita* is the most supreme, the highest, and the best. It neither remains, nor goes, nor comes. The Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future come from it; use this great wisdom to reach the Other Shore, and destroy the Five Aggregates and the afflictions resulting from passions. The most supreme, the highest, and the best! Praise this very best method. If you practice it you will surely achieve Buddhahood. Being neither remaining, nor coming, nor going, this state is the same as calmness and wisdom, with no contamination by any dharma. The Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future come from it and change the Three Poisons into discipline, calmness, and wisdom.

**(27)**

Good and learned friends, in this method of mine, one *prajna* produces 84,000 wisdoms. Why? Because there are in the world 84,000 afflictions resulting from passions. If there were no afflictions, wisdom would always be present and

would not be separated from the self-nature. Those who understand this method will be without [erroneous] thoughts, recollection, or attachment. Dishonesty and erroneous thoughts will not arise. This is the nature of true Thusness. When all dharmas are examined in the light of wisdom and a person is neither attached to nor renounces them, he will see his own nature and will attain Buddhahood.

(28)

Good and learned friends, if you wish to enter deeply into the Realm of Law and the calmness of wisdom, you should forthwith practice the wisdom of salvation. If only you hold on to this one book, the *Diamond Scripture*, you will be able to see your own nature and will enter into the calmness of wisdom. You should realize that such a person has an infinite number of merits. The scripture clearly praises him. I cannot go into details.

This is the very best method and is intended for people of great wisdom and high intelligence. People of little wisdom or intelligence will not believe it when they hear it. Why? Suppose the great dragon causes a heavy rain to fall and the rain spreads over Jambudvīpa. Cities, towns, and villages would be drifting in the flood as if they were drifting grass and leaves. But if the rain falls and spreads over the great ocean, the ocean is neither increased nor decreased by the rain. When followers of Great Vehicle hear the *Diamond Scripture*, their minds are opened up and enlightened. Therefore we know that one's own nature possesses wisdom. If we examine things in the light of wisdom, we do not depend on any writing. It is like the rain which does not really come from nothing. Originally the Dragon King himself draws

this water from the ocean, thus enabling all people, and all plants, along with sentient or insentient beings to enjoy its benefit. When rivers and streams all flow into the great ocean, the vast ocean receives them and merges them into one body. The same is true of the wisdom inherent to the original nature of all people.

(29)

When people of little intelligence hear this doctrine of sudden enlightenment, they are like plants with weak roots. When such plants are soaked by a heavy rain, they collapse and can no longer grow. It is the same with people of little intelligence. People with the wisdom of *prajna* are not different from those with great wisdom. Why, then, do they not understand when they hear the Law? It is because they are completely obstructed by perverse views. Their roots of affliction are deep. It is like a thick cloud blocking the sun. Unless the wind blows the cloud away, the sun cannot be revealed.

Wisdom does not vary in degree with different persons. It is because people are deluded in their minds and are seeking Buddhahood by external practice, without understanding their own nature, that they are called people of small intelligence. When people hear the doctrine of sudden enlightenment and do not depend on external practice, but simply find correct views in their own nature, all these afflicted people are at once enlightened. It is like the great ocean receiving the rivers and streams. The big body of water and the small bodies of water merge to form one body. This is seeing [one's own] nature. IF one is not attached either to the internal or the external, is free in coming and going, removes his attachment, and understands things without impediment – he who can do this will not differ from the *prajna* scripture.

**(30)**

All scriptures and writings, both the Great Vehicle and the Small Vehicle, and the twelve sections of the scripture are provided for men. It is because man possesses the nature of wisdom that these were instituted. If there were no men in the world, there would naturally not be any dharmas. We know, therefore, that dharmas exist because of man and that there are all these scriptures because there are people to preach them.

The reason is that among men some are wise and others are stupid. The stupid are inferior, whereas the wise are superior. The deluded consult the wise and the wise explain the Law to the stupid and enable them to understand and to open up their minds. When deluded people understand and open up their minds, they are no longer different from the superior and the wise. Hence we know that without enlightenment, a Buddha is no different from other living beings. With enlightenment, even in a single instant of thought, all living beings become the same as a Buddha. Hence we know that all dharmas are immanent in one's mind and person. Why not seek in one's own mind the sudden realization of the original nature of True Thusness? The *Scripture of Discipline for Bodhisattvahood* says, "We are originally pure in our self-nature. If we understand our minds and see our nature, we shall achieve Buddhahood ourselves." [The *Scripture Spoken by Vimalakirti* says], "Immediately we become completely clear and recover our original mind.

**(31)**

Good and learned friends, when I was at Priest Hungjen's place, I understood immediately as soon as I heard him, and suddenly realized the original nature of True Thusness.

For this reason I propagate this doctrine so that it will prevail among later generations and seekers of the Way will be able to achieve perfect wisdom through sudden enlightenment, each to see his own and to become suddenly enlightened through his own original nature. If they are not able to enlighten themselves, they should see good and learned friends of high standing to show them the way to see their nature.

What is meant by a good and learned friend of high standing? A good and learned friend of high standing is one who can explain to people the very best method and can directly show them the correct way. That is a good and learned friend of high standing. That is a great cause. That is to say, he will teach and direct people so they can see their own nature. For all good dharmas arise because of him. [The wisdom] of the past, present, and future Buddhas as well as the twelve sections of the scripture are all immanent in human nature. It originally possesses them to the fullest extent. Those who cannot enlighten themselves should have good and learned friends to show them the way to see their nature. Those who can enlighten themselves, however, need not depend on good and learned friends. If they seek outside for good and learned friends and hope for emancipation, they will get nowhere. Understanding coming from the good and learned friend inside a person's own mind, however, will lead him to emancipation. But if one's own mind is perverse and deluded, [full of] erroneous thoughts and perversions, even if good and learned friends from the outside offer instruction, no salvation can be attained. IF you have not been able to enlighten yourselves, you should arouse your wisdom illuminatingly to examine [facts and principles]. Then in an instant all erroneous thoughts will vanish. This is your true and really

good and learned friend who as soon as he is enlightened immediately realizes Buddhahood.

When in your own nature and in your mind you use wisdom for an illuminating examination of things, you will become illumined within and without, and know your own mind. To know your own mind is to be emancipated. To be emancipated is wisdom. To have obtained wisdom means absence-of-thought.

What is meant by absence-of-thought? By the method of absence-of-thought is meant to see all dharmas but not to be attached to them, and [for the mind] to be everywhere but not to be attached anywhere. Let your own nature always remain pure, so that the Six Consciousnesses in passing through Six Gates will neither be separated from nor be attached to the Six Qualities produced by the objects and sense organs and will be able to come and go freely. That is wisdom. It is freedom and ease. It is emancipation. It is called the practice of absence of thought. If one does not think of anything in order to stop all thought, that is bondage by dharmas. That is called a one-sided view. Those who understand the method of absence-of-thought will penetrate all dharmas and will experience the spheres of all Buddhas. Those who understand the method of sudden enlightenment through absence-of-thought will reach the stage of the Buddha.

**(32)** Good and learned friends, people in future generations who receive my method will always see my law-body by your side. Good and learned friends, those who apply this method of sudden enlightenment, who share similar views and similar practice, who take a vow of devotion as in serving the Buddha, and who devote their whole lives without retreating,

will surely enter Nirvana. But when the Law has to be transmitted, they should transmit the Law silently handed down from one patriarch to another. They should transmit it to various people so long as they make a great vow not to retreat from seeking perfect wisdom. To people who do not share similar views and have no desire for it, do not foolishly publicize it at all. Else it will do them harm and will in the end be useless. If it should happen that they do not understand and if they should slander this method, they will go through hundreds of thousands of long periods of time and a hundred rebirths, and their seed of Buddha-nature will be annihilated.

**(33)**

The Great Master said: Good and learned friends, listen to me recite the verse that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters. It enables you deluded people to destroy your sins. It is also called the verse that destroys sin. It says:

Ignorant people cultivate blessing. Instead of cultivating the Way.

They say that the cultivation of blessings is the way.

Although merits for alms-giving and offerings are infinite, the Three Evils are, after all, produced in the mind.

If it is hoped that cultivating merit will destroy sin,

Sin will still remain in future lives even if merits are obtained.

If people understand that destruction of the cause of sin must be sought in their own minds,

They will in their own nature truly repent.

If they understand the true repentance of the Great Vehicle, they will remove the perverse, will practice the correct, and will thus be free from sin.

If seekers of the Way examine themselves, they will be similar to the enlightened.

The Great Master decrees that this doctrine of sudden enlightenment be transmitted.

All who are willing to learn will form one body. If you wish to come and look for your law-body, you must remove the evil causes of the Three Poisons from your mind.

Make vigorous efforts to cultivate the Way, without relaxation.

Sudden relaxation means the end of a whole life.

When you encounter the Great Vehicle doctrine of sudden enlightenment,

Reverently put your palms together and seek it with all your heart.

When the Great Master had finished explaining the Law, the Imperial Delegate Wei, government officials, monks, disciples who had renounced their families, and lay folk all praised him endlessly, saying that they had never heard this before.

**(34)** The imperial delegate paid reverence to the Master and said, "The Law Your Holiness has expounded is really wonderful. Your disciple has, however, some doubts and wishes to consult Your Holiness. I beg your Holiness, with your great compassion, for further explanation."

The Great Master said, "If you have any doubts, please ask. Why hesitate?"

The imperial delegate asked, "Is not the Law the fundamental doctrine of the First Patriarch from the West, Bodhidharma?" The Great Master said, "Yes." The imperial delegate asked, "I have heard that when the Great Master Bodhidharma tried to convert Emperor Wu [reigned 502-549], the emperor asked him, 'During my entire life I have built temples, given alms, and made offerings. Is there any merit [achievement and virtue] for these deeds?' "Bodhidharma answered and said, 'No merit at all.' "The emperor was disappointed and thereupon sent Bodhidharma out of his state. I do not understand Bodhidharma's words. I beg your Holiness to explain."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "There is really no merit. Imperial Delegate, please do no doubt the words of Great Master Bodhidharma. Emperor Wu was attached to perverse ways and did not understand the correct doctrine." The imperial delegate asked, "Why is there no merit?"

The priest said, "Building temples, giving alms, and making offerings are only cultivating blessings. Blessings should not be considered as merit. Merit lies in the law-body, not in the field of blessings. There is merit in one's own dharma-nature. Not to make any differentiation but to be straight-forward is virtue. [Internally see] the Buddha-nature, and externally practice respect and reverence. If one looks down on others and does not get rid of the idea of the self, he will have no merit. If his self-nature is unreal and imaginary, his law-body will have no merit. One should practice virtue at every moment, entertain no differentiation and be straight-forward in the mind; then his virtue will not be slight. Always practice reverence. To cultivate one's personal life is achievement, and to cultivate one's own mind is virtue. Merit is the

product of one's own mind. Blessings are different from merit. Emperor Wu did not know the correct principle. The Great Patriarch was not mistaken.

(35)

The imperial delegate paid reverence and asked again, "I observe that monks, disciples who have renounced their families, and lay folk always recite the name of Amitabha with the hope of going to and being reborn in the Western Region (Pure Land, Paradise). Will Your Holiness explain whether it is possible to be born there or not? Please remove my doubts."

The Great Master said, "Imperial Delegate, please listen. I will explain it to you. According to the scripture spoken by the World-honored One in Sravasti about leading people to the Western Region, it is quite clear that it is not far from here. It is said to be far away for the benefit of people of low intelligence, but it is said to be near for the benefit of people of high intelligence. People are of two kinds, but the Law is only one. Because men differ according as they are deluded or enlightened, some understand the Law quicker than others. Deluded people recite the name of the Buddha hoping to be born in the Pure Land, but the enlightened purifies his own mind, for, as the Buddha said, 'As a result of purity of mind, the Buddha Land becomes pure. Imperial Delegate, if people of the Eastern Region are pure in heart, they will be free from sin, and if people of the Western Region are not pure in heart, they are sinful. Deluded people want to be born in the Western Region, but the locations of the two regions do not differ. If the mind is absolutely pure, the Western Region is not far away. But if one's mind is not pure, it will be difficult to go and be born there through reciting

the name of the Buddha. If one has removed the Ten Evils, he will have traveled a hundred thousand miles, and if one is free from the Eight Perversions, he will have traveled eight thousand miles. One has only to be straight-forward in his actions and he will reach the Pure Land in a moment. All Your Honor should do is to practice the Ten Good Deeds. What is the need for wanting to go and be born there? If one does not get rid of the Ten Evils from his mind, what Buddha will come to welcome him? If one understands the doctrine of sudden enlightenment leading to the ending of the cycle of birth and death, it takes only an instant to see the Western Region. If one does not understand the Great Vehicle doctrine of sudden enlightenment, the way to go and be born there through reciting the name of the Buddha is very far. How can one ever get there?"

The Sixth Patriarch further said, "Suppose Your Honor and I move to the Western Region. In an instant it will appear before our eyes. Do you wish to see it?"

The imperial delegate paid reverence and said, "If it can be seen here, what is the need of going to be born there? Will Your Holiness be compassionate and reveal the Western Region here? It will be perfect."

The Great Patriarch said, "No doubt you see the Western Region in the passage way." It immediately disappeared. The congregation were astonished, not knowing what was what. The Great Master said, "Will all of you please be alert and listen. Our own physical body is a city. Our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are the gates. There are five external gates. Inside there is the gate of the mind. The mind is the ground and the nature is the king. With the nature, there is king. Without the nature, there is no king. When the nature

remains, our body and mind exist. When the nature is gone, our body and mind are destroyed. The Buddha is the product of one's own nature. Do not seek it outside of our body. If the self-nature is deluded, even a Buddha becomes an ordinary human being. If their self-nature is enlightened, all living beings are Buddhas. Compassion is the same as Avalokitesvara. Happiness in alms-giving is the same as Mahasthama. The ability to be pure is the same as Sakyamuni. And not to make differentiation but to be straightforward is the same as Maitreya. The view that the self exists is the same as Mount Meru. A perverse mind is the same as a great ocean. Afflictions are the same as waves. A malicious mind is the same as an evil dragon. Afflictions are the same as fish and turtles. Falsehood and erroneous thoughts are the same as spiritual beings. The Three Poisons are the same as hell. Ignorance and delusions are the same as beasts. And the Ten Good Deeds are the same as Heaven. When there is no view of the self, Mount Meru will crumble of itself. When the perverse mind is eliminated, the waters of the ocean will be exhausted. When there are no afflictions, waves will be annihilated. And when poisonous harms are removed, fish and turtles will be extinct. The Tathagata of Enlightenment within the domain of our mind extends the light of His wisdom to shine through the Six Gates and purifies them. It shines and pierces its way through the Six Heavens of Desire. When the self-nature shines within, and when the Three Poisons are removed, hell disappears at once. When one is enlightened both within and without, his position is no different from that of the Western Region. If one does not practice this way, how can he reach there?"

When the congregation heard this, the sound of praise penetrated the heavens. No wonder deluded people understand

thoroughly and immediately. The imperial delegate paid reverence and praised him, saying, "Excellent! Excellent! May all beings in the realm of dharmas hear this and understand at once."

**(36)**

The Great Master said, "Good and learned friends, if you wish to practice, you can do so at home, not necessarily in a monastery. Those in a monastery who do not practice are like people of the Western Region who are evil at heart. If one practices at home, he is like a person of the Eastern Region who practices the good. So long as one is willing to cultivate purity, that is the Western Region for him."

The imperial delegate asked, "Your Holiness, how does one practice at home? Please instruct us."

The Great Master said, "Good and learned friends, I have composed a verse that frees one from the attachment to differentiated characters for [officials], disciples who have renounced their families, and lay folk. Let us all recite it. Those who practice according to it will be the same as if they were with me all the time. The verse says:

Both understanding gained from listening to teaching and understanding gained by the mind are like the sun in empty space. Transmitting only the doctrine of sudden enlightenment, [The Buddhas] appear in the world to demolish the heretical schools. In doctrine there is neither sudden nor gradual enlightenment. Because of delusion or understanding, some attain enlightenment more quickly or more slowly than others.

To study the method of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment is beyond the comprehension of the ignorant. It is necessary to explain in ten thousand ways, but all of them, after all, are traced back to one principle.

In the dark room of affliction, we should constantly bring forth the light of wisdom. Perverse views arrive because of afflictions. When correct views arrive, all afflictions are removed. When both perverse and correct views are discarded, purity is absolute. Perfect wisdom is originally pure.

To allow the mind [of distinctions] to rise is erroneous. Our pure nature lies in the erroneous mind. So long as the mind is correct, the Three Hindrances are removed. If we practice the Way in this world, nothing will hinder us. If we always see our own mistakes, we will always be in accord with the Way.

The various species have their own ways of salvation. If one departs from one's own way to seek another way, he may keep seeking but he will not find it, and will have regret at the end. If one wishes to see the True Way, to practice correctly is the same as the Way.

If one does not have the correct mind, walking in the dark will not enable him to see the Way.

One who truly practices the Way will not find fault with the world. If one finds fault with the world, he is evidently at fault himself. When other people are wrong, I have committed a sin. When I am wrong, I am sinful myself. If only we can do away with the mind to find fault, all afflictions will be shattered to pieces.

Those who wish to convert the ignorant should have convenient means. Do not allow them to have any doubt, it means that perfect wisdom is realized. The Law is, after all, in the world, the world should be transcended right in this world. Do not depart from this world to seek the transcendent world outside.

Perverse views are called worldly correct views are called transcendent. When correct and perverse views are both thrown away, the nature of perfect wisdom becomes perfectly clear.

This alone is the doctrine of sudden enlightenment, also called the Great Vehicle. Delusion may last for many infinitely long periods of time. Enlightenment comes in an instant.

(37)

The Great Master said, "Good and learned friends, all of you recite this verse. If you practice according to this verse, even if you are a thousand li away from me, you will always be at my side. If you do not practice according to it, even when we are face to face, we will be a thousand li apart. Let each of you practice by himself. The Law waits for no one. You may disperse. I am going back to Ts`ao-his Mountain. If you have serious doubts, come to this mountain and ask me. I will remove your doubts.

Together we will enter the Buddha World."

Officials, disciples who have renounced their families, and lay folk in the assembly paid reverence to the priest. All expressed their praise, "Excellent! We are greatly enlightened. We have heard something that we had never heard before. People in the Ling-nan region are blessed to have the Buddha born here. Anyone, no matter who, can attain wisdom." At once the assembly scattered.

(38)

The Great Master lived in the Ts`ao-hsi Mountain. For more than forty years he went around to convert people in Shao-chou and Kwang-chou. With respect to disciples, there were at least three to five thousand, including both monks and lay disciples. With respect to the fundamental doctrine, he transmitted the *Platform Scripture*, which served as the basis. If one has not obtained the *Platform Scripture*, it means he has received nothing. Where the scripture has gone, the year, the month, and the day, the family name and private name of the one who receives it must be in turn noted and passed on. Those who have not received the *Platform*

*Scripture* are not disciples of the Southern School. Even though they expound the method of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment, those who have not received the scripture do not know the fundamentals and cannot finally avoid argument. Those who obtain the Law should simply exhort people to practice it. Arguing results from the awareness of victory and defeat and is contrary to the Way.

**(39)**

Everyone says that Hui-neng represents the Southern School while Shen-hsiu represents the Northern School. They do not know the fundamental facts. Furthermore, Zen Master Shen-hsiu lived and practiced in the Yu-ch`uan Monastery, Tang-yang District, Nan-ching Prefecture. The Great Master Hui-neng lived in the Ts`ao-hsi Mountain thirty-five li east of the capital city of the Shao-chou Prefecture. The Law is only one although people differ as southerners and northerners. It is for this reason that two different schools, Northern and Southern, have been instituted. Why are there sudden and gradual enlightenments? In reality there is only one Law, but people's understanding of it may be quick or slow. Those who understand it slowly become enlightened gradually while those who understand it quickly become enlightened suddenly. In the Law there is neither gradual nor sudden enlightenment, but people are distinguished as sharp or dull in intelligence. Therefore enlightenment is called sudden or gradual.

**(40)**

For a long time Shen-hsiu had heard that Hui-neng's method could quickly and directly point to the way of salvation. He called in his disciple Chih-ch`eng and said, "You are intelligent and very wise. Go to Hui-neng's place in Ts`ao-hsi Mountain for me.

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Pay reverence and listen to him; that is all. Do not say that I sent you. Remember the ideas and doctrines you hear and come back to tell me so that I can understand whether his views or mine lead more quickly to understanding. Come back as soon as possible; do not cause me to reprimand you."

Chih-ch`eng accepted the order and was very happy. In about half a month he reached Ts'ao-hsi Mountain and saw Hui Neng the priest. He paid reverence and immediately began to listen, without saying where he was from. As he listened, he comprehended the words immediately and understood his own mind. HE stood up, paid reverence, and said, "Your Holiness, your disciple has come from the Yu-ch'uan Monastery, Master Shen-hsiu's place, where I could not achieve any understanding. When I heard Your Holiness, I became enlightened immediately. Your Holiness, please be compassionate and instruct me."

Great Master Hui-neng said, "Since you have come from there, you must be a spy."

Chih-ch'eng said, "Before I spoke, I was. Having spoken, I am no more."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "That is the same as afflictions being identical with perfect wisdom."

(41)

The Great Master said to Chih-ch'eng, "I hear that in teaching people your Zen Master only transmits the methods of discipline, calmness, and wisdom. What are the discipline, calmness, and wisdom taught by your priest? Please tell me."

Chih-ch'eng said, "Priest Shen-hsiu said that discipline means not to do any evil, wisdom means to practice all good deeds, and calmness means to purify one's own mind. These are called discipline, calmness, and wisdom. That is what he teaches. I do not know what the views of Your Holiness are."

Answered Priest Hui-neng, "This doctrine is wonderful but my views are different."

Chih-ch'eng asked, "What is the difference?"

Hui-neng answered, "Some people realize more quickly than others"

Chih-ch'eng begged the priest to explain the discipline, calmness, and wisdom according to his views. The Great Master said, "Please listen to me and see what my views are. When the mind is free from evil, that is the discipline of one's own nature. When the mind is free from disturbance, that is the calmness of one's own nature. When the mind is free from delusions, that is the wisdom of one's own nature."

Great Master Hui-neng further said, "The discipline, calmness, and wisdom of your Master are meant to exhort people of small intelligence, whereas my discipline, calmness, and wisdom are for people of high intelligence. But if one understands his own nature, there is no need to set up the doctrine of discipline, calmness, and wisdom."

Chih-ch'eng said, "Please, Great Master, explain why it is not necessary to set it up?"

The Great Master said, "When one's own nature is free from evil, disturbance and delusion, when he examines his mind in the light of wisdom at every instant, and when he is constantly free from attachment to the characters or dharmas, what is there to set up? The cultivation of self-nature is sudden but setting up the doctrine is gradual. Therefore there is no need to set it up."

Chih-ch'eng paid reverence. He did not leave the Ts'ao-hsi Mountain but immediately became a disciple and never left the Great Master.

(42)

There was another monk by the name of Fa-ta who for seven years had constantly recited the *Lotus Scriptures*. His mind being deluded, he did not know where the correct Law was and thought there was something doubtful in the scripture. Because the Great Master's wisdom was great and extensive, he wanted to resolve his doubts for him.

The Great Master said, "Fa-ta, the Law is very clear; it is only your mind that is not clear. There is nothing doubtful in the scripture. Your mind is itself perverse, and you seek the correct Law! When one's mind is correct and calm, that is the same as holding on to the scripture. For my entire life I have not known how to read. Suppose you bring the *Lotus Scripture* here, read it once for me. As soon as I hear it, I shall understand."

Fa-ta took the scripture and read it once to the Master. As soon as the Sixth Patriarch heard it, he understood the idea of the Buddha. Thereupon he talked to Fa-ta about the *Lotus Scripture*.

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Fa-ta, the *Lotus Scripture* does not say much. All seven chapters are parables and explanations

of the causes of the Buddha's appearance. The Tathagata spoke at length about the Three Vehicles only because people of the world are dull in intelligence. The scripture is quite clear that there is no other vehicle than the One Vehicle.

The Great Master continued, "Fa-ta, listen to the One Vehicle and do not seek two vehicles, or your nature will be deluded. Where does the scripture talk about the One Vehicle? Let me tell you. The scripture says, "The various Buddhas and the World-honored Ones appeared in the world simply because of one great event." (This sentence represents the correct Law.) How do we explain this Law? How do we practice it? Listen to me.

"When the human mind is free from thoughts, its original source will be empty of differentiated characters and be tranquil, and perverse views will be gone. That is the same as causing the great event. When one is free from delusions both internally and externally, he is free from both extremes. When externally deluded one is attached to the characters of dharmas and when internally deluded one is attached to emptiness. When he is free from characters while in the midst of characters and free from emptiness while in the midst of emptiness, that means not being deluded either internally or externally. If one understands this principle, in one instant his mind is opened up and this thing appears in the world. What is that to which the mind is opened? It is opened to the Buddha-knowledge."

"The word *buddha* means enlightenment, which may be divided into four phases, namely, to open our minds to the enlightening knowledge, to show us the enlightening knowledge, to make us understand the enlightening knowledge, and to enable us to enter into the way of the enlightening knowledge.

When we enter through any of these four, we shall immediately achieve the enlightening knowledge, and see our own nature, and be free from the bondage of the world.”

The Great Master continued, “Fa-ta, I have ever wished that all people would open their minds to the Buddha-knowledge but not to the knowledge of the common people. When people’s minds are perverse, they are ignorant, deluded, and do evil. They open their minds to the knowledge of the common people. When their minds are correct, it is aroused to examine things in the light of wisdom and they themselves open their minds to the Buddha-knowledge. Do not open our mind to the knowledge of the common people. If you open your mind to the Buddha-knowledge, you will be free from the bondage of the world.”

The Great Master further said, “Fa-ta, this is the doctrine of the One Vehicle in the *Lotus Scripture*. At first it was divided into three vehicles for the sake of deluded people. But you should follow only the One Vehicle.”

The Great Master said, “Fa-ta, if in your mind you practice the Law, your mind will turn the *Lotus Scripture* around. If it does not, the *Lotus Scripture* will turn it around. If your mind is correct, it will turn the *Lotus Scripture* around. If it is perverse, the *Lotus Scripture* will turn it around. If you open your mind to the Buddha-knowledge, it will turn the *Lotus Scripture* around. If you open your mind to the knowledge of common people, it will be turned around by the *Lotus Scripture*.

The Great Master continued, “If you make an effort to practice according to the Law, that is turning the *Lotus Scripture* around.”

As soon as Fa-ta heard this, he understood profoundly and was moved to tears. He said, "Your Holiness, I have in fact never turned the *Lotus Scripture* around. For seven years I have been turned around by the *Lotus Scripture*. Hereafter I shall turn it around and at every instant I shall practice the way of the Buddha."

The Great Master said, "To practice the Way of the Buddha is no different from being a Buddha."

At that time none of those who heard failed to be enlightened.

**(43)**

Once a monk by the name of Chih-ch'ang came to the Ts'ao-hsi Mountain to pay reverence to the priest and ask about the doctrine of Four Vehicles.

He asked the priest, saying, "The Buddha expounded the Three Vehicles and yet he talked about the Very Best Vehicle. Your disciple does not understand. Please teach me and explain it to me.

Great Master Hui-neng said, "Try to find out in your own mind and your body. Do not be attached to the characters of dharmas outside. Originally there were not four vehicles. But because the capacity of the human mind is divided into four levels, therefore there are four vehicles in the Law. To see, to hear, and to recite the scriptures is the Small Vehicle. To understand the Law and comprehend its meaning is the Middle Vehicle. To practice according to the Law is the Great Vehicle. To understand all dharmas, to have them all completely, to be free from all impurities, even to be free from the characters of dharmas, and not to possess anything –

that is the Very Best Vehicle. The Very Best Vehicle means the very best practice. This does not depend on any argument. You must yourself practice it. Do not ask me.”

**(44)**

There was another monk named Shen-hui who was a native of Hsiang-yang. He came to the Ts-ao-hsi Mountain to pay reverence. He asked, “Your Holiness, when you sit in meditation, do you see [your mind] or not?”

The Great Master rose and beat Shen-hui three times and asked him, “s I beat you, do you feel the pain or not?”

Shen-hui answered, “I am both pained and not pained.”

The Sixth Patriarch said, “I both see and do not see.”

Shen-hui again asked the Great Master, “How is it that you both see and do not see?”

The Great Master said, “I see means that I see my own mistakes and trouble all the time. Therefore I said I see. I do not see means that I do not see the mistakes and sins of the people in the world. Therefore I both see and do not see. How is it that you are both pained and not pained?”

Shen-hui answered, “If I were not pained I would be insensible as a piece of wood or stone. But if I were pained, I would be the same as any ordinary man, and hatred would arise in me.”

The Great Master said, “Shen-hui, a little while ago what you meant by seeing and not seeing are two extremes and your being pained and not being pained are instances of birth and extinction. You do not even see your own nature. How dare you come and insult people?”

Shen-hui paid reverence again and again and said no more.

The Great Master further said, "If your mind is deluded and cannot see, you should ask a good and learned friend to show you the way. If your mind is enlightened and you see yourself, you should practice according to the Law. Now you are yourself deluded and do not see your own mind, and yet you come and ask me if I see! If I do not know it myself, I cannot take your place by being deluded. If you can see it yourself, can you take my place by being deluded? Why do you not practice yourself? Instead you come and ask me if I can see!"

Shen-hui paid reverence and became a disciple. He did not leave the Ts'ao-hsi Mountain but always remained at the Great Master's side.

**(45)**

The Great Master thereupon called his disciples Fa-hai, Chih-ch'eng, Fa'ta, Chih-ch'ang, Chih-t'ung, Chih-ch'e, Chih-tao, Fa-chen, Fa-ju, and Shen-hui to him. The Great Master said, "You ten disciples, please come forward. You are different from the rest. After I enter Nirvana, each of you will be the head of a district. I am now going to instruct you how to expound the Law so that you will not be out of accord with our own school. Mention the Three Divisions of dharmas and utilize the Thirty-six Pairs of opposites. Then whether you go this way or that, you will always be free from the two extremes. In expounding on the various dharmas, never depart from their nature or character. Whenever people ask you about dharmas, always speak in terms of pairs and utilize the method of opposites. For example, coming and going cause each other. In the end both dharmas are eliminated and there is no longer any place to go [or to come].

“The Three Divisions of the dharmas are: the aggregates, the realms, and the entrances. The aggregates are the Five Aggregates, the realms are the Eighteen Realms, and the entrances are the Twelve Entrances. What are the Five Aggregates? They are matter, sensation, thought, disposition and consciousness. What are the eighteen Realms? They are the Six Qualities produced by the objects and sense organs, the Six Gates, and the Six Consciousnesses. What are the Twelve Entrances? They are the External Six Qualities and the Internal Six Gates. What are the Six Qualities? They are sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharmas. What are the Six Gates? They are the five sense organs and the mind. The nature of dharmas gives rise to the Six Consciousnesses, that is, the five sense consciousnesses and the sense-center consciousness, the Six Gates, and the Six Qualities. Since the self-nature embraces all dharmas, it is called the storehouse consciousness. As soon as deliberation takes place, the storehouse consciousness is transformed into the various consciousnesses, thus giving rise to the Six Consciousnesses, producing the Six Gates, and bringing on the appearance of the Six Qualities. Three times six makes eighteen. Because one’s self-nature is perverse, it will give rise to eighteen perverse embracements. If one’s self-nature is correct, it will give rise to eighteen correct embracements. If they function in an evil way, they are those of the common people, but if they function in a good way, they are those of the Buddha. How can the function be the same as the Buddha? It can be through one’s own nature.

**(46)**

There are five pairs concerning external objects that are insentient, namely, heaven and earth, sun and moon, light and darkness, passive element (yin) and positive element (yang), water and fire. There are twelve pairs concerning those of sentence and words and those of dharmas and characters, namely, what is produced from causes and is material and what is not produced from causes and is immaterial, that with character and that without character, that with defilement and that without defilement, matter and Emptiness, activity and tranquility, purity and impurity, the ordinary man and the sage, the monk and the layman, the old and the young, the large and the small, the long and the short, and the high and the low. There are nineteen pairs concerning the function of one's self-nature, namely perversion and correctness, delusion and wisdom, stupidity and intelligence, disturbance and calmness, discipline and evil, the straight and the crooked, reality and unreality, steep and level, afflictions and perfect wisdom, passion and injury, joy and anger, almsgiving and thrift, advance and retreat, production and annihilation, permanence and impermanence, the Law-body and the physical body, the Reward – body and the Transformation-body, substance and function, and nature and character. Thus the twelve pairs concerning sentence, words, dharmas, and characters, the five pairs concerning the external objects that are insentient, and the nineteen pairs concerning the function of the self-nature, make altogether thirty-six pairs of dharmas. If you understand how to use these thirty-six pairs of dharmas, you will understand all scriptures. Then whether you go this way or that way you will be free from the two extremes.

How are the thirty-six pairs to be used in the functioning

of one's own nature? In conversation with others, externally be free from characters while in the midst of characters and internally be free from Emptiness while in the midst of Emptiness. To be attached to Emptiness merely means to increase ignorance. To be attached to characters merely means to increase perverse views. Some people slander the Law and urge restraint from writing. Such people should not use language, since language is the same as writing and they have urged restraint from writing. If one speaks of Emptiness on the basis of his own nature, his language will be correct. However, if one's self-nature is not empty, he will himself be deluded because his language will be perverse. Darkness does not become darkness by itself; it is dark because there is brightness. Darkness is manifested by brightness, and brightness is revealed by darkness. One is the cause of the other. It is the same with the thirty-six pairs."

(47)

The Great Master said, "My ten disciples, hereafter when you transmit the Law, hand on and teach this one book, the *Platform Scripture*, and then you will not be out of accord with our school. If you do not transmit the *Platform Scripture*, you will not be teaching my fundamental doctrine. Now that you have received this scripture, you must make it prevail from generation to generation, so that anyone who comes into contact with it will, as it were, be receiving instructions from me personally."

Having received this instruction, the ten monks had the *Platform Scripture* written down so that it would prevail from generation to generation, enabling everyone who obtained it to see his own nature.

(48) The Great Master entered Nirvana on the third day of the eighth month in the second year of the Hsien-t'ien period [713]. On the eighth day of the seventh month he called his pupils in to say goodbye. Then in the first year of the Hsien-t'ien period the Great Master had a pagoda built in the Kuo-en Temple at Hsin-chou. In July of the following year, he said goodbye. The Great Master said, "Will you please come forward. I wish to leave the world in the eighth month. If you have any doubts please ask me now so I may remove for you. I will eliminate all your delusions and make you happy. After I leave, there will not be anyone to teach you."

When Fa-hai and the other monks heard this, they all cried sorrowfully. Shen-hui alone remained unperturbed. Nor did he shed any tears. The Sixth Patriarch said, "Young monk Shen-hui alone has attained the state of indifference to good and evil and is not affected by praise or blame. The rest of you have not been able to do so. You have been here on this mountain for several years. What Way have you practiced? For whom are you now crying so sorrowfully? Are you worrying because I do not know where I am going? If I did not know where I am going, I would never part from you. You cry sorrowfully because you do not know where I am going. If you knew where I am going, you would not cry so sorrowfully. The substance of our nature is neither produced nor annihilated; it neither comes nor goes. Please sit down all of you. I will give you a verse, a verse on truth and falsehood and on activity and tranquility, so that all of you may recite it. If you understand these ideas, it will be the same as understanding my own ideas. If you practice according to it, you will be in accord with my fundamental doctrine." The monks paid reverence, asked the Great Master to leave the verse with them as they might reverently devote themselves to it.

The verse says:

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All things are unreal.

We should not regard what we see as real.

If we view them as real, such a view is entirely false.

If one is to discover reality himself, he must be free from falsehood and his mind will then be reality itself.

If one's own mind is not free from falsehood,

There will be no reality and where can one find it?

Sentient beings know to be active.

Insentient beings are the same as inactivity [immovability].

If you cultivate the practice of inactivity,

You will be as inactive as insentient objects.

If you want to see true inactivity,

You must be inactive in your activity.

Therefore there are no Buddha seeds in insentient objects.

One who skillfully differentiates the various dharma-characters,

Abides immovably in the First Principle.

If one is enlightened and adopts this view,

It will mean that True Thusness is at work.

Tell seekers of the Way to be attentive when they make effort,

And in the Great Vehicle school

Not to cling to the views of birth and death.

When people before you respond sympathetically, forthwith discuss Buddhist doctrines with them.

If they do not really respond, bring your palms together to pay them respect and make them happy.

At bottom there are no quarrels in this doctrine.

Do not quarrel and be out of accord with the idea of the Way.

If you cling to delusions and quarrel over the Law,

Your own self-nature will enter into the cycle of birth and death.

**(49)**

Having heard the verse, the monks understood the Great Master's ideas. They dared not quarrel any further but practiced according to the Law. Together they paid reverence and knew right away that the Great Master would not remain in the world forever.

Head Monk Fa-hai looked to the Great Master and said, "Great Master, after you leave, to whom should the robe and the Law be given?"

The Great Master said, "The Law has already been given. You do not need to ask. Twenty years or more after my death, perverse systems will create disorder and will confuse my fundamental doctrines. Someone without any care for his own life will come to determine the right and wrong in Buddha's teaching and to firmly establish the fundamental doctrine. That will be my correct Law. The robe should not be transmitted. If you do not believe me, let me recite to you the verses of the past five patriarchs on the manner in which the robe should be transmitted. According to the idea of the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, the robe should not be transmitted.

Listen, I shall recite it to you. The verse says:

The verse of the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, says, I originally came to the state of T'ang [China] to spread the Law for the salvation of people with perverse thoughts. A flower opens with five petals. The fruit it bears will naturally be mature.

The verse of the Second Patriarch, Hui-k'o, says, from the beginning there is the causal soil. The seed is able to sprout from the soil and become a flower. If originally there were no soil, where could the flower grow?

The verse of the Third Patriarch, Seng-ts'an, says, Although when the seed is sown on the causal soil, it grows up from the soil to become a flower, if, however, the seed did not possess the nature of a flower, it would not grow from the soil.

The verse of the Fourth Patriarch, Tao-hsin, says, Although the seed has the nature to grow and on the causal soil it grows to become a flower, if, however, the prerequisite conditions were not harmoniously combined, nothing would grow.

The verse of the Fifth Patriarch, Hung-jen, says, A sentient being comes to sow a seed, the flower, insentient, will grow. But if a thing is insentient and there is no seed, even in the soil of the mind nothing will grow.

The verse of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng, says, The mind embraces all [Buddha] seeds. With the rain of the Law, they will all grow to be flowers. When one has understood, by himself, the flowers and all sentient and insentient beings, the fruit of perfect wisdom will naturally mature.”

(50)

Great Master Hui-neng said, “Listen to the two verses I have composed according to the ideas of Bodhidharma. If you, as deluded people, practice according to this verse, you will surely see your nature. The first verse says,

When an evil flower blossoms from the mind

Its five petals and its root will follow.

They will all perform deeds of ignorance,

And will be blown down by the wind of these deeds.

The second verse says, when a good flower blossoms from the mind,

Its five petals and root will follow.

They will all cultivate wisdom,

And the perfect wisdom of the Buddha will arise.”

After the Sixth Patriarch ha finished reciting these verses, the group dispersed. The disciples went out to think; they knew immediately that the Great Master would not live long in the world.

(51)

Later, on the third day of the eighth month, after he had finished his meal, the Great Master said, "Will all of you sit down. I will now bid you goodbye."

Fa-hai asked, "From the very beginning up to now, for how many generations has this doctrine of sudden enlightenment been transmitted?"

The Sixth Patriarch said, "At first it was transmitted to seven Buddhas. Sakyamuni was the seventh. The eighth was Mahakasyapa. The ninth was Ananda. The tenth was Madyhanitka. The eleventh was Sanavasa. The twelfth was Upagupta. The thirteenth was Dhritaka. The fourteenth was Buddhanandi. The fifteenth was Buddhamitra. The sixteenth was Parsva. The seventeenth was Punyayasas. The eighteenth was Asvaghosha [c. 100 AD]. The nineteenth was Kapimala. The twentieth was Nagarjuna [c. 100-200 AD]. The twenty-first was Kanadeva. The twenty-second was Rahulata. The twenty-third was Sanghanandi. The twenty-fourth was Gayasata. The twenty-fifth was Kumarata. The twenty-sixth was Jayata. The twenty-seventh was Vasubandhu. The twenty-eighth was Manorhita. The twenty-ninth was Haklenayasas. The thirtieth was Aryasimha. The thirty-first was Basiasita. The thirty-second was Upaguta. The thirty-third was Sangharaksha. The thirty-fourth was Vasumitra. The thirty-fifth was Bodhidharma, a prince, the third son of a king in Southern India. The thirty-sixth was the Chinese monk Hui-k'o. The thirty-seventh was Seng-ts'an. The thirty-eighth was Tao-hsin. The thirty-ninth was Hung-jen. And I have been given the Law in our own time as the fortieth."

The Great Master further said, "From now on in handling on the Law, there must be something to rely on. Do not disagree with the fundamental doctrine."

(52)

Fa-hai again said, "Now that you are going, what Law are you going to leave behind? How will you enable future generations to realize their Buddhahood?"

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Please listen. If deluded people of future generations only know [the nature of] sentient beings, they will realize Buddhahood. If they seek Buddhahood without knowing sentient beings, they will never attain realization even after ten thousand infinitely long periods. Now I will instruct you how to know sentient beings and realize Buddhahood. Also I will leave with you a verse on emancipation through the realization of real Buddhahood. The deluded will not realize Buddhahood, but the enlightened will."

Fa-hai expressed a wish to hear the verse as it would prevail generation after generation without end.

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Listen, I will tell you. If people of future generations who wish to attain Buddhahood recognize the Buddha-mind and sentient beings, they will know Buddhahood. [There is Buddhahood] because of sentient beings. Apart from sentient beings, there is no Buddha-mind.

If deluded, even a Buddha is the same as sentient beings.

If enlightened, sentient beings are the same as the Buddha.

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With ignorance and delusion, the Buddha is the same as sentient beings.

With wisdom, sentient beings are the same as the Buddha.

When the mind is malicious, the Buddha is the same as sentient beings.

When the mind makes no differentiations, sentient beings are the same as the Buddha.

Once His mind is made up to be malicious, the Buddha will be on the same level as sentient beings.

If for one instant of thought they make no differentiations, all sentient beings will in themselves be Buddha.

There is no Buddhahood in my own mind.

This Buddhahood in oneself is the real Buddha.

Without the Buddha-mind, where can one seek the Buddha?

**(53)**

The Great Master said, "My disciples, take good care of yourselves. I leave with you a verse, called 'Emancipation through the Realization of Real Buddhahood in One's Own Nature.' If deluded people of future generations understand the meaning of this verse, there will realize the real Buddhahood in their own mind and in their own nature. I will give you this verse and then will depart from you. The verse says:

The pure nature of True Thusness is the real Buddhahood.

Perverse views and the Three Poisons are the Real Mara [Devil].

Mara resides in people of perverse views, but the Buddha will go to those with correct views.

When the Three Poisons grow in our nature, this means that King Mara comes to reside there.

When correct views eliminate the mind of Three Poisons, Mara will be transformed into the real and not the false Buddha.

The Transformation-body, the Reward-body, and the Law-body – all Three Bodies are originally one body.

If one seeks in this body his own realization, that is the cause for the perfect wisdom to realize Buddhahood.

Basically our pure nature is produced from the Transformation-body.

Pure nature is always present in the Transformation-body.

If our nature guides the Transformation-body in following the correct Way, it will attain perfection, real and infinite.

The nature of lewdness is originally caused by purity. When lewdness is eliminated, the body of pure nature is present.

If in our own nature we can only be free from the five desires of the five senses themselves, in that instant we shall see our nature as real.

If in this light we understand the doctrine of sudden enlightenment,

We shall be enlightened and see the Buddha right in front of us.

If one wishes to follow certain practices in order to seek the Buddha [outside], I do not know where he can expect to find the real Buddha.

If one can in his own mind see the real Buddha, that will bring about his realization of Buddhahood.

He who does not seek the real Buddha in himself but seeks Him outside, is surely a man of great delusion.

I have hereby left the doctrine of sudden enlightenment for the salvation of the world; all, however, must practice it themselves.

Now tell seekers of the Way in this world in the presence of this doctrine not to fool away their time."

Having finished reciting this verse, the Great Master told the disciples, "Take good care of yourselves. I leave you now. After I am gone, do not follow the way of the world and shed sorrowful tears, accept condolence or money, or wear mourning clothes. This would not be in accord with the correct Law, and you would not be my disciples. Feel just as though I were still present. Sit still correctly for a while, so long as there is neither activity nor tranquility, neither production nor annihilation, neither coming nor going, neither right nor wrong, and neither remaining nor going away. So long as you are quiet and tranquil, that is the great Way. After I am gone, simply practice according to my teaching, just as though I were still present. Even if I were present in the world and you violated my teaching, it would do not good for me to remain."

Having said this, the Great Master ceased talking. Suddenly, at midnight, he entered Nirvana. The Great Master was seventy-six years old.

**(54)**

After the Great Master entered Nirvana, for days a rare fragrance flourished in the monastery, and for several days did not disperse. Mountains crumbled and the earth shook. The trees in the woods turned white. The sun and moon no longer shone. The wind and the clouds became lifeless. He passed away on the third day of the eighth month. In the eleventh month, the spirit shrine holding the body of the priest was taken to the Ts'ao-hsi Mountain to be buried. As the body remained in the dragon shrine, a flash of white light appeared and dashed up straight toward the sky and did not disperse until two days later. The prefect of Shao-chou, Wei Ch'u, erected a tablet. Until this day, offerings are made to it.

**(55)**

This *Platform Scripture* was put together by Head Monk Fa-hai. When he died he left it to his fellow student Tao-chi. When he died, he left it to his pupil Wu-chen. He is now spreading this doctrine in the Fa-shing Temple in the Ts'ao-hsi Mountain in Lingnan.

(56)

If this doctrine is to be left to anyone, he must be one with high intelligence and wisdom, who has faith in the Law of the Buddha, who has aroused great compassion in himself, and who holds on to this scripture as the basis. [That has been done] without interruption to this day.

(57)

The priest was originally from the Ch'u-chiang District of Shao-chou. After the Tathagata entered Nirvana, his doctrine spread to the Eastern Land (China). Let us together spread the doctrine of non-remaining [non-attachment], that is, one's own mind not remaining. This is real bodhisattva. Let our expositions reveal directly and let our practice be really instructive. Teach only those with great wisdom who will follow this doctrine. Only those who, in all their work of saving people or taking vows, in all their practices and action, do not retreat when they encounter danger, who can endure hardship, and whose merit and virtues are great, should be given this Law. Those whose intelligence is inadequate for the task and whose capacity is insufficient should seek this Law. Those who are not able to understand or to establish [their character] should not erroneously be left with this *Platform Scripture*. Tell all fellow seekers of the Way so that they may understand these subtle ideas.

*The Method of the Platform Scripture on the*

*Very Best Doctrine of Sudden Enlightenment*

*Of the Southern School, one book.*