The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

HUINENG

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

六祖壇經

Translated from the Classical Chinese with AI (Claude) and edited

FORAGE
forage.com

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch · Huineng

Translated from the Classical Chinese with AI (Claude) and edited. Parallel-text edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/huineng/platform-sutra

Chinese text: *Nanzong dunjiao zuishang dasheng mohe bore boluomi jing Liuzu Huineng dashi yu Shaozhou Dafansi shifa tanjing* (南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經), the Dunhuang manuscript Stein 5475, as printed in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新脩大藏經), vol. 48, no. 2007 (Tokyo, 1928), pp. 337a–345b, ed. Takakusu Junjirō (d. 1945) and Watanabe Kaigyoku (d. 1933); public domain. Transcribed for Forage from the Internet Archive scan (archive.org/details/taisho-tripitaka) of the volume and proofread a second time against it. The text is diplomatic: the manuscript's errors are kept as printed, with the Taishō's punctuation; paragraph divisions are Forage's. One demeaning ethnic term is replaced by a neutral editorial substitution in ⟦ ⟧. English: translated from the Chinese with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. Margin numbers are the page and register (a, b, c) of the Taishō edition.

The original text is in the public domain. This translation is free to share and adapt under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

Set in Source Serif 4, Noto Serif TC.

CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Huineng's Story 1
- The occasion of the sermon 1
- Huineng's origins 2
- The Fifth Patriarch calls for verses 3
- Shenxiu's verse 4
- Huineng's verse 6
- The robe and the dharma at midnight 7
- Huishun on the mountain pass 7

The Sermon at Dafan Temple 9
- Meditation and wisdom are one 9
- The samādhi of oneness 10
- No-thought, no-form, non-abiding 11
- What seated meditation is 12
- The three bodies of the buddha in oneself 13
- The four great vows 15
- Formless repentance 16
- The threefold refuge 16
- The great perfection of wisdom 17
- Great and small capacities 20
- Seeing one's own nature suddenly 22
- The verse for destroying sin 23
- Emperor Wu's merit 24
- Is the Pure Land in the west? 25
- The formless verse for lay people 28

Disciples and Last Days 31
- The Platform Sutra as the token of transmission 31
- South and north, sudden and gradual 31
- Zhicheng, the envoy from Shenxiu 32
- Fada and the Lotus Sutra 33
- Zhichang and the four vehicles 35
- Shenhui: do you see or not? 36
- The thirty-six pairs of opposites 37
- Farewell to the disciples 40
- The robe will not be passed on 41
- The line of transmission 43
- The verse of the true buddha 44
- Huineng's death 46
- The transmission of this sutra 47

INTRODUCTION

The *Platform Sutra* presents itself as a sermon given from the ordination platform of the Dafan Temple in Shaozhou, in the far south of China, by Huineng (AD 638–713), whom the Chan (in Japanese, Zen) tradition honors as its Sixth Patriarch. It opens with his own story: an illiterate seller of firewood who has an awakening on hearing the *Diamond Sutra*, goes north to the Fifth Patriarch Hongren, is set to pounding rice, and answers the head monk Shenxiu's verse on polishing the mirror of the mind with a verse of his own—and so receives, in secret, the robe and the dharma.

The sermon itself teaches that meditation and wisdom are one, that awakening is sudden, and that "no-thought" is the source of the teaching: buddha-nature is nothing other than one's own nature, to be seen directly rather than sought outside. Huineng administers formless precepts, vows and repentance, answers questions on merit and the Pure Land, and the text closes with encounters with disciples, his last instructions and his death. The work was compiled within a century of Huineng's death by followers who claimed him for a "Southern" school of sudden awakening against a "Northern" gradual one; scholars read it as much as a document of that rivalry as a record of his words. Tradition counts it the only work by a Chinese author to be honored with the title of sutra.

This edition gives the earliest surviving version, a manuscript of the ninth or tenth century found at Dunhuang (British Library, Stein 5475), as printed in the Taishō canon. Later and much longer versions, above all the Zongbao edition of 1291, became standard; the Dunhuang text is shorter and closer to the work's origins, but it is full of copyist's errors. The Chinese is printed exactly as the Taishō gives it, errors included; the translation follows the evident intended readings, mostly the corrections suggested by the Taishō editors themselves.

Huineng's Story

How an illiterate firewood seller from the far south came to the Fifth Patriarch, answered Shenxiu's verse with his own, and received the robe and the dharma.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
337a	南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經一卷	The Sudden Teaching of the Southern School: The Supreme Great Vehicle Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra: The Platform Sutra of the Dharma Bestowed by the Sixth Patriarch, Master Huineng, at Dafan Temple in Shaozhou, in one fascicle
	兼受無相戒弘法弟子法海集記	Together with the conferring of the formless precepts. Compiled and recorded by Fahai, a disciple who spreads the dharma[1]

THE OCCASION OF THE SERMON

Huineng preaches at Dafan Temple, and the prefect has Fahai record the sermon.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
惠能大師。於大梵寺講堂中昇高座。說摩訶般若波羅蜜法。受無相戒。其時座下僧尼道俗一萬餘人。韶州刺史等據及諸官寮三十餘人。儒士餘人。同請大師。說摩訶般若波羅蜜法。刺史遂令門人僧法海集記。流行後代。與學道者承此宗旨。遞相傳授。有所於約以為禀承。說此壇經。	Master Huineng ascended the high seat in the lecture hall of Dafan Temple, preached the dharma of the great perfection of wisdom, and conferred the formless precepts. At that time more than ten thousand monks, nuns and laypeople sat below the seat. Prefect Wei Qu of Shaozhou, together with more than thirty officials and a number of Confucian scholars, jointly asked the Master to preach the dharma of the great perfection of wisdom. The prefect then had the monk Fahai, a disciple, compile a record. It was to circulate in later generations, so that those who study the way could receive this teaching, hand it on from one to another, and have something to rely on as proof of succession. This is the Platform Sutra he preached.[2]
能大師言。善知識淨心念摩訶般若波羅蜜法。大師不語自淨心神。良久乃言。善知識淨聽。	Master Huineng said, "Good friends, purify your minds and call to mind the dharma of the great perfection of wisdom." The Master fell silent and purified mind and spirit. After a long while he said, "Good friends, listen quietly."

1 Fahai, a disciple of Huineng, is named as the compiler of the text; little else is known of him.
2 Wei Qu (韋璩, garbled in the manuscript) was prefect of Shaozhou, in the north of modern Guangdong.

HUINENG'S ORIGINS

Huineng, a poor firewood seller, hears the Diamond Sutra and goes north to Hongren.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
惠能慈父。本官范陽。左降遷流南新州百姓。惠能幼小。父小早亡。老母孤遺移來海。艱辛貧乏。於市買柴。忽有一客買柴。遂領惠能至於官店。客將柴去。惠能得錢。却向門前。忽見一客讀金剛經。惠能一聞心名便悟。乃聞客曰。從何處來持此經典。客答曰。我於蘄州黃梅縣東憑墓山。禮拜五祖弘忍和尚。見今在彼門人有千餘眾。我於彼聽。見大師勸道俗但持金剛經一卷。即得見性直了成佛。	My kind father was originally registered at Fanyang. He was demoted and exiled to the south, where he became a commoner of Xinzhou. When I was small, my father died early, and my old mother, left alone, moved to Nanhai. We lived in hardship and poverty, and I sold firewood in the market. One day a customer bought firewood and had me carry it to a government lodging house. The customer took the firewood, and I received the money. As I was going out by the gate, I suddenly saw a guest reciting the Diamond Sutra. The moment I heard it, my mind became clear and I awoke. So I asked the guest, "Where have you come from, carrying this scripture?" The guest answered, "I paid homage to the Fifth Patriarch, the reverend Hongren, at Mount Fengmao, east of Huangmei county in Qizhou. He is there now, with more than a thousand disciples. I listened to him there and heard the Master urge monks and laypeople alike simply to keep the one fascicle of the Diamond Sutra: then they would see their nature and directly become buddhas."[3]
惠能聞說。宿業有緣。便即辭親。往黃梅憑墓山。禮拜五祖弘忍和尚。	When I heard this—for there was a karmic connection from past lives—I took leave of my mother at once and went to Mount Fengmao in Huangmei to pay homage to the Fifth Patriarch, the reverend Hongren.
弘忍和尚問惠能曰。汝何方人。來此山禮拜吾。汝今向吾邊。復求何物。惠能答曰。弟子是領南人。新州百姓。今故遠來禮拜和尚。不求餘物。唯求佛法作。大師遂責惠能曰。汝是領南人。又是[南方土著]。若為堪作佛。惠能答曰。人即有南北。佛姓即無南北。[南方土著]身與和尚不同。佛姓有何差別。	The reverend Hongren asked me, "Where are you from, that you come to this mountain to pay homage to me? Now that you have come to me, what is it you are seeking?" I answered, "Your disciple is from Lingnan, a commoner of Xinzhou. I have come all this way only to pay homage to you, Reverend. I seek nothing else; I seek only to become a buddha." The Master rebuked me: "You are from Lingnan, and one of the southern tribal peoples besides—how could you become a buddha?" I answered, "People have north and south, but buddha-nature has no north and south. A southern tribesman's body is not the same as

3 Hongren (601–674), the Fifth Patriarch, taught at Mount Fengmao (written 憑墓 in the manuscript), near Huangmei in modern Hubei.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	yours, Reverend, but what difference is there in buddha-nature?”
337b 大師欲更共議。見左右在傍邊。大師更不言。遂發遣惠能。令隨眾作務。時有一行者。遂差惠能於碓坊。踏碓八个餘月。	The Master wanted to talk with me further, but seeing people standing nearby, said nothing more and sent me off to work with the assembly. A lay worker then assigned me to the threshing room, where I trod the pestle of the rice-pounder for more than eight months.

THE FIFTH PATRIARCH CALLS FOR VERSES

Hongren tells his disciples each to write a verse showing whether they have seen their nature.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
五祖忽於一日喚門人盡來。門人集記。五祖曰。吾向與說。世人生死事大。汝等門人終日供養。只求福田。不求出離生死苦海。汝等自姓迷福門何可救汝。汝惣且歸房。自看有知惠者。自取本姓般若知之。各作一偈呈吾。吾看汝偈。若吾大意者。付汝衣法。稟為六代。火急急。	One day the Fifth Patriarch suddenly called all the disciples together. When they had assembled, the Fifth Patriarch said, “Let me tell you: for people in the world, birth and death is the great matter. All day long you disciples make offerings, seeking only fields of merit, not seeking to escape the bitter sea of birth and death. If your own nature is deluded, how can the gate of merit save you? All of you, go back to your rooms and look into yourselves. Whoever has wisdom, draw on the wisdom of your original nature, and each of you write a verse and present it to me. I will look at your verses, and whoever has awakened to the great meaning, I will give the robe and the dharma and confirm as the sixth generation. Hurry, hurry!”
門人得處分。却來各至自房。遞相謂言。我等不須呈心用意作偈將呈和尚。神秀上座是教授師。秀上座得法後。自可於止請不用作。諸人息心盡不敢呈偈。	Having received these instructions, the disciples went back each to their own rooms and said to one another, “There is no need for us to clear our minds and rack our brains writing a verse to present to the reverend. The head monk Shenxiu is our instructor. Once the head monk Xiu has received the dharma, we can simply rely on him. We needn’t write anything.” So they all gave up the idea, and none dared present a verse.[4]
時大師堂前有三間房廊。於此廊下供養欲畫楞伽變。并畫五祖大師傳授衣法。流行後代為記。畫人盧玲看壁了。明日下手。	In front of the Master’s hall was a corridor three bays long. On the walls of this corridor, as an offering, they meant to paint tableaux of the Laṅkāvatāra Sutra, and also the Fifth Patriarch transmitting the robe and the dharma, as a record to be handed down to later generations. The paint-

4 Shenxiu (606?–706) later became an eminent teacher at the Tang capitals; this text presents him as the founder of the “Northern” school it criticizes.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	er Lu Ling had inspected the wall and was to begin the next day.[5]

SHENXIU'S VERSE

The head monk Shenxiu hesitates, then secretly writes his verse on the corridor wall at night.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
上座神秀思惟。諸人不呈心偈。緣我為教授師。我若不呈心偈。五祖如何得見我心中見解深淺。我將心偈上五祖呈意。即善求法覓祖不善。却同凡心奪其聖位。若不呈心修不得法。良久思惟甚難甚難甚難甚難。夜至三更。不令人見。遂向南廊下中間壁上題。作呈心偈欲求於法。若五祖見偈。言此偈語。若訪覓我。我宿業障重不合得法。聖意難測。我心自息。	The head monk Shenxiu thought: "The others are not presenting verses of their minds because I am their instructor. If I do not present a verse of my mind, how can the Fifth Patriarch see how deep or shallow the understanding in my mind is? If I present a verse of my mind to the Fifth Patriarch to show my intent, then seeking the dharma is good, but seeking the patriarchship is not good: it would be just like an ordinary mind trying to seize the holy rank. Yet if I do not present my mind, I will never attain the dharma." He pondered for a long time: "It is very hard, very hard, very hard, very hard!" In the third watch of the night, unseen by anyone, he went to the middle of the wall in the south corridor and wrote there, composing a verse to present his mind and seek the dharma. "If the Fifth Patriarch sees the verse and speaks of it, he will look for me. If not, my karmic obstructions from past lives are heavy and I am not fit to obtain the dharma. The sage's intention is hard to fathom; my mind will come to rest."[6]
秀上座三更於南廊下中間壁上秉燭題作偈。人盡不和。偈曰	In the third watch, holding a candle, the head monk Xiu wrote his verse in the middle of the wall in the south corridor, and no one knew. The verse said:
身是菩提樹　心如明鏡臺 / 時時勤佛拭　莫使有塵埃	The body is the bodhi tree, the mind is like a bright mirror's stand. / At all times diligently wipe it, do not let dust collect.[7]
337c 神秀上座題此偈畢歸房臥。並無人見。五祖平旦遂換盧供奉來。南廊下畫楞伽變。五祖忽見此偈請記。乃謂供奉曰。弘忍與供奉錢三十千。深勞遠來。不畫變相也。金剛經云。凡所有相皆是虛妄。不如流此偈令迷人誦。依此修行不墮三惡。依法修行人有大利益。大師遂喚門人盡來。焚香偈前。人眾入見。皆生敬	When the head monk Shenxiu had finished writing this verse, he went back to his room and lay down; no one at all had seen him. At dawn the Fifth Patriarch called the court artist Lu to paint the Laṅkāvatāra tableaux in the south corridor. Suddenly the Fifth Patriarch saw this verse, and having read it, said to the court artist, "I, Hongren,

5 Lu Ling (盧玲; later versions call him Lu Zhen) was a court artist. Such "transformation tableaux" were narrative wall paintings of scenes from a sutra.

6 The manuscript is corrupt here; the sense seems to be that Shenxiu will come forward if the verse is approved and give up if it is not.

7 Bodhi means "awakening"; the bodhi tree is the tree under which the Buddha awoke.

CHINESE

心。汝等盡誦此偈者方得見姓。於此修行即不墮落。門人盡誦。皆生敬心。喚言善哉。

ENGLISH

will give you thirty thousand cash for your great trouble in coming so far, but we will not paint the tableaux after all. The Diamond Sutra says, 'All marks are illusory.' Better to leave this verse here and have deluded people recite it. Practicing according to it, they will not fall into the three evil paths. People who practice according to this dharma will gain great benefit." The Master then called all the disciples together and burned incense before the verse. The assembly came in to see it, and all felt reverence. "All of you, recite this verse, and you will be able to see your nature. Practicing according to it, you will not fall." The disciples all recited it, all felt reverence, and called out, "Excellent!"[8]

五祖遂喚秀上座於堂內門是汝作偈否。若是汝作應得我法。秀上座言。罪過實是神秀作。不敢求祖。願和尚慈悲看。弟子有小智惠識大意否。五褐曰。汝作此偈。見即來到。只到門前。尚未得入。凡夫於此偈修行。即不墮落。作此見解。若覓無上菩提。即未可得。須入得門見自本姓。汝且去。一兩日來思惟。更作一偈。來呈吾。若入得門見自本姓。當付汝衣法。

The Fifth Patriarch then called the head monk Xiu into the hall and asked, "Did you write this verse? If you wrote it, you should receive my dharma." The head monk Xiu said, "Forgive me—it was indeed Shenxiu who wrote it. I do not dare seek the patriarchship. I only hope that you, Reverend, will compassionately look and see whether your disciple has a little wisdom and has grasped the great meaning." The Fifth Patriarch said, "In writing this verse, your understanding has not yet arrived. You have come only as far as the gate and have not yet entered. Ordinary people who practice according to this verse will not fall. But if you seek supreme bodhi with this understanding, it cannot yet be attained. You must enter the gate and see your own original nature. Go for now and think it over for a day or two, then write another verse and bring it to me. If you have entered the gate and seen your own original nature, I will give you the robe and the dharma."

秀上座去數日作不得。有一童子。於碓坊邊過。唱誦此偈。惠能一聞知未見姓。即識大意。能問童子。適來誦者是何言偈。童子答能曰。作不知大師言。生死是大。欲傳於法。令門人等各作一偈來呈看悟大意。即付衣法。稟為六代。褐有一上座名神秀。忽於南廊下書無相偈一首。五祖令諸門人盡誦。悟此偈者即見自姓。依此修行即得出離。

The head monk Xiu went away, and for several days could not write one. A young boy passed by the threshing room chanting this verse. The moment I heard it, I knew that whoever wrote it had not seen the nature, and I grasped the great meaning. I asked the boy, "What verse is that you were reciting just now?" The boy answered, "Don't you know? The Master said that birth and death is the great matter, and he wants to hand on the dharma. He told the disciples each to write a verse and bring it to him to look at: whoever has awakened

8 The three evil paths are rebirth in the hells, as a hungry ghost, or as an animal.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	to the great meaning will be given the robe and the dharma and confirmed as the sixth generation. The Patriarch has a head monk named Shenxiu, who suddenly wrote this formless verse in the south corridor. The Fifth Patriarch had all the disciples recite it: whoever awakens to this verse will see their own nature, and whoever practices according to it will gain release."

HUINENG'S VERSE

Huineng, who cannot read, has the verse read to him and has a reply written on the wall.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
惠能答曰。我此踏碓八箇餘月。未至堂前。望上人引惠能至南廊下。見此偈禮拜。亦願誦取結來生緣。願生佛地。童子引能至南廊下。能即禮拜此偈。為不識字。請一人讀。惠問已即識大意。惠能亦作一偈。又請得一解書人。於西間壁上提着。呈自本心。不識本心。學法無益。識心見姓。即吾大意。惠能偈曰	I answered, "I have been treading the pestle here for more than eight months and have never been to the front of the hall. Please, sir, take me to the south corridor so that I can see this verse and bow to it. I too wish to recite it and form a connection for my next life, and to be born in a buddha-land." The boy led me to the south corridor, and I bowed to the verse. Because I could not read, I asked someone to read it to me. As soon as I had heard it, I grasped the great meaning. I too composed a verse, and asked someone who could write to write it on the wall of the west bay, to present my own original mind. If you do not know the original mind, studying the dharma is of no benefit; to know the mind and see the nature is to awaken to the great meaning. My verse said:
338a 菩提本無樹　明鏡亦無臺 / 佛姓常青淨　何處有塵埃	Bodhi originally has no tree, the bright mirror has no stand. / Buddha-nature is always clean and pure: where could there be dust?
又偈曰 心是菩提樹　身為明鏡臺 明鏡本清淨　何處染塵埃	Another verse: The mind is the bodhi tree, the body is the bright mirror's stand. The bright mirror is originally clean and pure: where could it be stained by dust?
院內從眾。見能作此偈盡怪。惠能却入碓坊。五祖忽見惠能但即善知識大意。恐眾人知。五祖乃謂眾人曰。此亦未得了。	The followers in the monastery were all astonished to see the verses I had written. I went back to the threshing room. The Fifth Patriarch saw at once that I had truly grasped the great meaning, but fearing that the others would find out, the Fifth Patriarch said to them, "This one hasn't fully understood either."

THE ROBE AND THE DHARMA AT MIDNIGHT

Hongren secretly transmits the sudden dharma and the robe to Huineng and sends him south.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
五祖夜知三更。喚惠能堂內。說金剛經。惠能一聞言下便伍。其夜受法。人盡不知。便傳頓法及衣。汝為六代。祖衣將為信。稟代代相傳法。以心傳心。當令自悟。	At the third watch of the night the Fifth Patriarch called me into the hall and expounded the Diamond Sutra. Hearing it only once, at those very words I awoke. That night I received the dharma, and no one knew. The Fifth Patriarch transmitted to me the sudden dharma and the robe: "You are the sixth generation. The robe is the token of succession, handed down from generation to generation. The dharma is transmitted from mind to mind: you must let people awaken by themselves."
五祖言。惠能自古傳法氣如懸絲。若住此間。有人害汝。汝即須速去。能得衣法。三更發去。五祖自送能。於九江驛登時便悟。祖處分。汝去努力將法向南。三年勿弘此法。難去在後弘化善誘迷人。若得心開。汝悟無別。	The Fifth Patriarch said, "Huineng, from ancient times the transmission of the dharma has hung by a thread. If you stay here, people will harm you. You must leave at once." Having received the robe and the dharma, I set out in the third watch. The Fifth Patriarch personally saw me off as far as the Jiujiang post station, and there we parted. The Patriarch instructed me: "Go, and work hard. Take the dharma south. For three years do not spread this dharma. When the troubles are past, then spread the teaching and skillfully guide deluded people. If their minds open, they will be no different from you in awakening."[9]

HUISHUN ON THE MOUNTAIN PASS

Pursuers turn back, but the monk Huishun overtakes Huineng at the Dayu Pass and awakens.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
辭違已了便發向南。兩月中間至大庾嶺。不知向後。有數百人。來欲擬頭惠能奪於法。來至半路。盡總却迴。唯有一僧。姓陳。名惠順。先是三品將軍。性行麁惡。直至嶺上。來趁犯着。惠能即還法衣。又不肯取。我故遠來。求法不要其衣。能於嶺上便傳法惠順。惠順得聞言下心開。能使惠順即却向北化人來。	When I had taken my leave, I set off south. Within two months I reached the Dayu Pass. Unknown to me, several hundred people had come after me, intending to harm me and seize the dharma. Halfway there they all turned back—all but one monk, surnamed Chen and named Huishun, formerly a general of the third rank, rough and violent by nature. He came straight up the pass and caught up with me. I at once offered him the dharma-robe, but he would not take it: "I have come all this way seeking the dharma. I don't want the robe." There on the pass I transmitted the dharma to Huishun. Hearing it, at those very

9 The manuscript says Huineng "awoke" at the post station; most editors read "parted."

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		words his mind opened. I sent Huishun back north to teach people.[10]
338b	惠能來衣此地。與諸官奪道俗亦有累劫之因。教是先性所傳。不是惠能自知。願聞先性教者。各須淨心。聞了願自餘迷。於先代悟（下是法）。	I have come to this place, and my meeting with you officials, monks and laypeople is due to causes over many kalpas. The teaching is what the former sages handed down; it is not something I know by myself. Those who wish to hear the teaching of the former sages must each purify their minds. Having heard it, may you clear away your own delusion and awaken as those of former generations did. (What follows is the dharma.)[11]

10 Huishun (惠順) is the monk later versions of the text call Huiming.
11 The words in parentheses are a heading in the manuscript marking the start of the sermon proper. A kalpa is a cosmic age of immense length.

The Sermon at Dafan Temple

Meditation and wisdom as one; no-thought; the formless precepts, vows and repentance; the perfection of wisdom; Prefect Wei's questions on merit and the Pure Land; the formless verse.

MEDITATION AND WISDOM ARE ONE

Huineng begins his sermon: meditation and wisdom are one, like a lamp and its light.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
惠能大師喚言。善知識。菩提般若之知。世人本自有之。即緣心迷不能自悟。須求大善知識示道見性。善知識。遇悟成智。	Master Huineng called out: Good friends, the wisdom of bodhi and prajñā is something people in the world have in themselves from the start. Only because their minds are deluded can they not awaken by themselves. They must seek a great spiritual friend to show them the way to see their nature. Good friends, meet with awakening and wisdom is formed.
善知識。我此法門。以定惠為本第一。勿迷言惠定別。定惠體一不二。即定是惠體。即惠是定用。即惠之時定在惠。即定之時惠在定。善知識。此義即是惠等。學道之人作意。莫言先定發惠。先惠發定。定惠各別。作此見者。法有二相。口說善心不善。惠定不等。心口俱善。內外一眾種。定惠即等。自悟修行不在口諍。若諍先後。即是人不斷勝負。却生法我不離四相。	Good friends, this dharma gate of mine takes meditation and wisdom as its basis, first of all. Do not be deluded and say that wisdom and meditation are different. Meditation and wisdom are one in substance, not two. Meditation is the substance of wisdom; wisdom is the function of meditation. At the moment of wisdom, meditation is in wisdom; at the moment of meditation, wisdom is in meditation. Good friends, this is what "meditation and wisdom are equal" means. You who study the way, take note: do not say that meditation comes first and produces wisdom, or that wisdom comes first and produces meditation, as though the two were separate. Whoever holds this view makes the dharma two-sided. If the mouth speaks good while the mind is not good, wisdom and meditation are not equal. If mind and mouth are both good, inside and outside are one, and meditation and wisdom are equal. Awakening by yourself and practicing do not lie in arguing. If you argue over which comes first, you are like deluded people who never stop striving to win; you only strengthen attachment to dharmas and self and do not leave behind the four marks.[1]

1 "Meditation" and "wisdom" translate 定 and 慧, Chinese for samādhi (meditative concentration) and prajñā (wisdom).

THE SAMĀDHI OF ONENESS

The samādhi of oneness is the straightforward mind at all times, not sitting without moving.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
一行三昧者。於一切時中行住座臥常真。真心是。淨名經云。真心是道場。真心是淨土。莫心行諂典。口說法直。口說一行三昧。不行真心。非佛弟子。但行真心。於一切法上無有執著。名一行三昧。迷人著法相。執一行三昧。真心座不動。除妄不起心。即是一行三昧。若如是此法同無清。却是障道因緣。道順通流。何以却滯。心住在即通流。住即彼縛。若座不動。是維摩詰不合呵舍利弗宴座林中。	The samādhi of oneness is to practice the straightforward mind at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down. The Vimalakīrti Sutra says, “The straightforward mind is the place of practice; the straightforward mind is the Pure Land.” Do not let the mind act crookedly while the mouth merely talks of being straightforward. To speak of the samādhi of oneness with the mouth while not practicing the straightforward mind is not to be a disciple of the Buddha. Just practice the straightforward mind and cling to no dharma whatever: this is called the samādhi of oneness. Deluded people cling to the marks of dharmas and hold fast to the samādhi of oneness, saying that to sit without moving, to remove the false and not let the mind arise, is the samādhi of oneness. If it were like this, this dharma would be the same as being insentient, and would instead be a cause of obstruction to the way. The Way must flow freely; why should it be blocked? When the mind does not abide in dharmas, the way flows freely; if it abides, it is bound. If sitting without moving were right, Vimalakīrti would not have scolded Śāriputra for sitting quietly in the forest.[2]
善知識。又見有人教人座。看心看淨。不動不起。從此置功。迷人不悟。便執成顛。即有數百盤。如此教道者。故之大錯。	Good friends, I have also seen people teaching others to sit contemplating the mind, contemplating purity, not moving, not arising, and to make this their effort. Deluded people do not understand; they cling to it and become confused. There are hundreds of such cases. Know that teaching the way like this is a great mistake.
善知識。定惠猶如何等。如燈光。有燈即有光。無燈即無光。燈是光知體。光是燈之用。即有二體無兩般。此定惠法亦復如是。	Good friends, what are meditation and wisdom like? They are like a 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; the light is the function of the lamp. The names are two, but the substance is not two. The dharma of meditation and wisdom is just like this. Good friends, the dharma is neither sudden nor gradual; people are sharp or dull. The deluded progress gradually; the awakened practice sud-

2 The samādhi of oneness (一行三昧, literally “single-practice samādhi”) is a meditative absorption in the one reality; the text reinterprets it as the straightforward mind in all activity.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
善知識。法無頓漸。人有利鈍。明即漸勸。悟人頓修。識自本是見本性。悟即元無差別。不悟即長劫輪迴。	denly. To know your own original mind is to see your original nature. Awakened, there is from the start no difference; not awakened, you go round in rebirth for long kalpas.

NO-THOUGHT, NO-FORM, NON-ABIDING

No-thought is the source, no-form the substance, and non-abiding the basis of the teaching.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
338c 善知識。我自法門。從上已來。頓漸皆立無念無宗無相無體無住無為本。何明為相。無相於相而離相。無念者於念而不念。無住者為人本性。念念不住。前念念念後念。念念相續無有斷絕。若一念斷絕法身即是離色身。念念時中。於一切法上無住。一念若住念念即住名繫縛。於一切法上念念不住即無縛也。以無住為本。	Good friends, in this dharma gate of mine, from the earliest times, both sudden and gradual have established no-thought as the source, no-form as the substance, and non-abiding as the basis. What is no-form? No-form is to be amid forms and yet apart from forms. No-thought is to be amid thought and yet not think. Non-abiding is people's original nature: thought after thought, it does not abide. The previous thought, the present thought and the next thought follow one another, thought after thought, without a break. If a single thought were cut off, the dharma body would separate from the physical body. In every thought, do not abide in any dharma. If one thought abides, then thought after thought abides: this is called bondage. If, thought after thought, you do not abide in any dharma, there is no bondage. That is why non-abiding is the basis.
善知識。外離一切相是無相。但能離相性體清淨是。是以無相為體。於一切鏡上不染名為無念。於自念上離鏡。不不於法上念生。莫百物不思。念盡除却。一念斷即無別處受生。學道者用心。莫不息法意。自錯尚可。更勸他人。迷不自見迷。又謗經法。是以立無念為宗。即緣名人於鏡上有念念上便去邪見。一切塵勞妄念從此而生。	Good friends, to be outwardly apart from all forms is no-form. If only you can be apart from forms, the substance of the nature is pure. That is why no-form is the substance. Not to be stained by any object is called no-thought. Within your own thoughts, be apart from objects, and do not let thoughts arise over dharmas. But do not stop thinking of the hundred things and get rid of thought altogether: once a single thought is cut off, you die and are reborn elsewhere. You who study the way, take care! Do not fail to understand the meaning of the dharma. To be mistaken yourself is bad enough, but you go on to urge it on others; deluded, you do not see your own delusion, and you slander the sutras and the dharma as well. That is why no-thought is established as the source. It is because deluded people have thoughts about objects, and on those thoughts give rise to false views, that all the defilements and deluded thoughts arise.[3]

CHINESE

ENGLISH

然此教門立無念為宗。世人離見不起於念。若無有念。無念亦不立。無者無何事。念者何物。無者離二相諸塵勞。真如是念之體。念是真如之用。姓起念。雖即見聞覺之不染萬鏡而常自在。維摩經云。外能善分別諸法相。內於第一義而不動。

So this teaching establishes no-thought as the source. People of the world, be apart from views and do not give rise to thoughts. If there were no thought at all, no-thought itself could not be established. “No”—no what? “Thought”—thought of what? “No” means being apart from dualistic marks and all the defilements. Suchness is the substance of thought; thought is the function of suchness. When your nature gives rise to thought, then though you see, hear, perceive and know, you are not stained by the ten thousand objects and are always free. The Vimalakīrti Sutra says, “Outwardly able to distinguish well all the marks of dharmas, inwardly unmoving in the ultimate meaning.”

善諸識。此法門中。座禪元不著心。亦不著淨。亦不言動。若言看心。心元是妄。妄如幻故無所看也。若言看淨。人姓本淨。為妄念故蓋覆真如。離妄念本姓淨。不見自姓本淨。心起看淨。却生淨妄。妄無處所。故知看者看却是妄也。淨無形相。却立淨相。言是功夫。作此見者章自本姓。却被淨縛。若不動者。見一切人過患是性不動。迷人自身不動。開口即說人是非。與道違背。看心看淨。却是障道因緣。

Good friends, in this dharma gate, seated meditation does not fix on the mind, does not fix on purity, and does not speak of not moving. If one speaks of contemplating the mind, the mind is from the start false; since the false is like an illusion, there is nothing to contemplate. If one speaks of contemplating purity, people’s nature is originally pure; only because of deluded thoughts is suchness covered over. Apart from deluded thoughts, the original nature is pure. If you do not see that your own nature is originally pure and raise the mind to contemplate purity, you only produce a false purity. The false has no location, so know that the contemplating itself is false. Purity has no shape or form, yet you set up a form of purity and call it effort. Whoever holds this view obstructs their own original nature and is instead bound by purity. As for not moving: not to see the faults of others—that is the nature not moving. Deluded people keep their own bodies unmoving, but as soon as they open their mouths they talk about others’ rights and wrongs, going against the way. Contemplating the mind, contemplating purity, is instead a cause of obstruction to the way.

WHAT SEATED MEDITATION IS

Seated meditation means thought not arising toward objects and seeing the original nature unconfused.

CHINESE

ENGLISH

339a

Now I tell you: in this dharma gate, what is called seated meditation? In this dharma gate nothing is

CHINESE	ENGLISH
今記汝是此法門中。何名座禪。此法門中一切無礙。外於一切境界上念不去為座。見本姓不亂為禪。	obstructed. Outwardly, for thoughts not to arise toward any object is "sitting"; to see the original nature without confusion is "meditation."
何名為禪定。外雜相曰禪。內不亂曰定。外若有相內姓不亂。本自淨自定。只緣境觸。觸即亂。離相不亂即定。外離相即禪。內外不亂即定。外禪內定故名禪定。維摩經云。即是豁然還得本心。菩薩戒云。本須自姓清淨。	What is called meditation—dhyāna and samādhi? To be outwardly apart from forms is dhyāna; to be inwardly unconfused is samādhi. Even if there are forms outside, if the nature within is unconfused, it is originally pure and concentrated of itself. Only through contact with objects is there confusion: contact brings confusion. To be apart from forms and unconfused is samādhi. Outwardly apart from forms is dhyāna; unconfused inside and out is samādhi. Outward dhyāna and inward samādhi: that is why it is called dhyāna and samādhi. The Vimalakīrti Sutra says, "At once, suddenly, one regains the original mind." The Bodhisattva Precepts says, "The original source is one's own nature, pure."[4]
善知識。見自姓自淨。自修自作。自姓法身自行。佛行自作自成佛道。	Good friends, see for yourselves that your own nature is pure of itself. Cultivate it yourselves, create it yourselves: the dharma body of your own nature. Walk the buddha's path yourselves; by your own effort, attain the buddha way yourselves.

THE THREE BODIES OF THE BUDDHA IN ONESELF

The assembly takes refuge in the three bodies of buddha within their own physical bodies.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
善知識總須自體與受無相戒。一時逐惠能口道。令善知識見自三身佛。於自色身歸衣清淨法身佛。於自色身歸衣千百億化身佛。於自色身歸衣當來圓滿報身佛。（已上三唱）	Good friends, all of you must receive the formless precepts with your own bodies. Repeat these words after me, all together, and I will let you see the three bodies of buddha in yourselves: "In my own physical body I take refuge in the pure dharma body of buddha. In my own physical body I take refuge in the ten billion transformation bodies of buddha. In my own physical body I take refuge in the perfect reward body of buddha that is to come." (The above was chanted three times.)[5]
色身是舍宅。不可言歸。向者三身在自法性。世人盡有。為名不見。外覓三如來。不見自色身中三性佛。	The physical body is a house; one cannot speak of taking refuge in it. The three bodies just named

3 The manuscript is corrupt here; the reading follows the usual emendation, that cutting off thought amounts to death and rebirth elsewhere.

4 The text splits the compound 禪定 into its two halves, dhyāna (meditative absorption) and samādhi (concentration). The Bodhisattva Precepts is the Brahmā's Net Sutra.

5 The three bodies (trikāya) are the dharmakāya, the nirmāṇakāya and the saṃbhogakāya: buddhahood as ultimate reality, as the forms that appear in the world, and as the fruit of practice.

CHINESE

ENGLISH

善知識。聽汝善知識說令善知識衣自色身見自法性有三世佛。此三身佛從性上生。

are in your own dharma-nature. Everyone in the world has them, but because they are deluded they do not see them. They seek three Tathāgatas outside and do not see the three buddhas of their nature within their own physical bodies. Good friends, listen. I will explain it so that you see that within your own physical bodies your own dharma-nature has the three bodies of buddha. These three buddha bodies arise from your nature.

何名清淨身佛。善知識。世人性本自淨。萬法在自姓。思量一切事即行衣惡。思量一切善事便修於善行。知如是一切法盡在自姓。自姓常清淨。日月常名。只為雲覆蓋上名下暗。不能了見日月西辰。忽遇惠風吹散卷盡雲霧。萬像參羅。一時皆現。世人性淨。猶如清天。惠如日。智如月。智惠常名。於外看敬。妄念浮雲蓋覆自姓。不能明。故遇善知識開真法吹却名妄。內外名徹。於自姓中萬法皆見。一切法自在姓。名為清淨法身。自歸衣者。除不善行。是名歸衣。

What is the pure dharma body of buddha? Good friends, people's nature is originally pure in itself, and the ten thousand dharmas are in one's own nature. Think of every evil thing, and one practices evil; think of every good thing, and one cultivates good practice. Know that in this way all dharmas are in one's own nature. One's own nature is always pure. The sun and moon are always bright; only because clouds cover them is it bright above and dark below, so that sun, moon and stars cannot be clearly seen. Suddenly a gentle wind blows, scattering the clouds and mist and rolling them all away, and the myriad forms in all their array appear at once. People's nature is pure like a clear sky: wisdom is like the sun, insight like the moon. Insight and wisdom are always bright, but when one is attached to outer objects, the floating clouds of deluded thought cover one's own nature and it cannot shine. So one meets a good teacher who opens up the true dharma and blows away delusion, and inside and outside are bright and clear, and in one's own nature the ten thousand dharmas all appear. All dharmas are in one's own nature: this is called the pure dharma body. Taking refuge oneself means removing unwholesome practice; this is called taking refuge.

339b 何名為千百億化身佛。不思量性即空寂。思量即是自化。思量惡法化為地獄。思量善法化為天堂。毒害化為畜生。慈悲化為菩薩。智惠化為上界。愚癡化為下方。自姓變化甚名。迷人自不知。見一念善知惠即生。一燈能除千年闇。一智能滅萬年愚。莫思向前常思於後常。後念善名為報身。一念惡報却千年善心。一念善報却千年惡。滅無常已來。後念善名為報身。從法身思量即是化身。念念善即是報身。自悟自修即名歸衣也。皮肉是色身是舍宅。不在歸依也。但悟三身。即識大億。

What are the ten billion transformation bodies of buddha? When one does not think, one's nature is empty and still; when one thinks, this is self-transformation. Think of evil things, and one is transformed into hell; think of good things, and one is transformed into heaven. Malice is transformed into animals; compassion is transformed into bodhisattvas. Wisdom is transformed into the higher realms; foolishness is transformed into the lower regions. The transformations of one's own nature are very many, but deluded people do not know it

CHINESE

ENGLISH

themselves. With a single good thought, wisdom is born. A single lamp can dispel the darkness of a thousand years; a single wisdom can destroy the folly of ten thousand years. Do not think of what is past; always think of what is to come. When the next thought is always good, this is called the reward body. A single evil thought destroys a thousand years of good mind; a single good thought destroys a thousand years of evil. From beginningless time on, the next thought being good is called the reward body. Thinking that comes from the dharma body is the transformation body; thought after thought being good is the reward body. Awakening oneself and cultivating oneself is called taking refuge. Skin and flesh are the physical body, and the physical body is a house; it is not a place of refuge. Only awaken to the three bodies, and you will know the great meaning.

THE FOUR GREAT VOWS

Huineng leads the four great vows and explains that beings must free themselves.

CHINESE

ENGLISH

今既自歸依三身佛。已與善知識發四弘大願。善知識。一時逐惠能道。眾生無邊誓願度。煩惱無邊誓願斷。法門無邊誓願學。無上佛道誓願成。（三唱）

Now that you have taken refuge yourselves in the three bodies of buddha, I will make the four great vows with you, good friends. Good friends, repeat after me, all together: “Beings are numberless; I vow to free them. Afflictions are endless; I vow to cut them off. The gates of the dharma are boundless; I vow to learn them. The supreme buddha way: I vow to attain it.” (Chanted three times.)

善知識。眾生無邊誓願度。不是惠能度。善知識。心中眾生各於自身自姓自度。何名自姓自度。自色身中邪見煩惱愚癡名妄。自有本覺性。將正見度。既悟正見。般若之智除却愚癡迷妄。眾生各各自度。邪見正度。迷來悟度。愚來智度。惡來善度。煩惱來菩薩度。如是度者是名真度。煩惱無邊誓願斷。自心除虛妄。法門無邊誓願學。學無上正法。無上佛道誓願成。常下心行。恭敬一切。遠離迷執覺知生。般若除却迷妄。即自悟佛道成。行誓願力。

Good friends, “Beings are numberless; I vow to free them”—it is not Huineng who frees them. Good friends, the beings within the mind each free themselves, in their own bodies, by their own nature. What is freeing oneself by one’s own nature? Within one’s own physical body are wrong views, afflictions, foolishness and delusion, and one has in oneself the nature of original awakening, which frees them with right views. Once one has awakened to right views, the wisdom of prajñā removes foolishness and delusion, and beings each free themselves. Wrong views are freed by right views; when delusion comes, awakening frees it; when foolishness comes, wisdom frees it; when evil comes, good frees it; when afflictions come, bodhi frees them. Freeing in this way is true freeing. “Afflictions are endless; I vow to cut them

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	off": in your own mind, remove what is false. "The gates of the dharma are boundless; I vow to learn them": learn the supreme right dharma. "The supreme buddha way: I vow to attain it": always practice with a humble mind and revere everyone; keep far from deluded attachment, and awareness is born; prajñā removes delusion, and then, awakening yourself, you attain the buddha way. This is the power of practicing the vows.

FORMLESS REPENTANCE

Huineng leads a repentance of past wrongs and explains confessing and repenting.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
今既發四弘誓願訖。與善知識無相懺悔三世罪障。大師言。善知識。前念後念及今念。念念不被愚迷染。從前惡行一時自姓若除即是懺悔。前念後念及今念。念念被愚癡染。除却從前矯誑心承斷。名為自性懺。前念後念及念念不被瘟疾染。除却從前疾垢心。自性若除即是懺。（已上三唱）	Now that the four great vows have been made, I will give you, good friends, formless repentance for the hindrances of sin of the three times. The Master said: Good friends, "In the previous thought, the next thought and the present thought, thought after thought, may I not be stained by foolishness and delusion. If the evil deeds of the past are removed from my own nature at once, this is repentance. In the previous thought, the next thought and the present thought, thought after thought, may I not be stained by folly. Removing the deceitful mind of the past and cutting it off forever is called repentance of one's own nature. In the previous thought, the next thought, and thought after thought, may I not be stained by envy. Removing the envious, defiled mind of the past—if it is removed from my own nature, this is repentance." (The above was chanted three times.)
339c 善知識。何名懺悔者終身不作。悔者知於前非惡業恒不離心。諸佛前口說無益我此法門中。永斷不作名為懺悔。	Good friends, what is called confessing and repenting? Confessing means never doing it again as long as one lives. Repenting means knowing one's former wrongs and evil karma and never letting this leave the mind. Saying it aloud before the buddhas is of no benefit. In this dharma gate of mine, cutting it off forever and never doing it again is called confessing and repenting.

THE THREEFOLD REFUGE

Huineng gives the threefold refuge in awakening, rightness and purity within one's own mind.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
今既懺悔已。與善知識受無相三歸依戒。大師言。善智識。歸衣覺兩足尊。歸衣正離欲。歸衣淨眾中尊。	Now that you have confessed and repented, I will give you, good friends, the formless precepts of the threefold refuge. The Master said: Good

CHINESE	ENGLISH
從今已後稱佛為師。更不歸衣餘邪名外道。願自三寶慈悲燈名善知識。	friends, "I take refuge in awakening, the most honored of two-footed beings. I take refuge in rightness, the most honored of those free from desire. I take refuge in purity, the most honored in the assembly. From now on I call the buddha my teacher, and will never again take refuge in wrong and deluded non-Buddhist paths. May the three jewels of my own nature, in their compassion, bear witness." Good friends—[6]
惠能勸善知識。歸衣三寶。佛者覺也。法者正也。僧者淨也。自心歸依覺。邪名不生。少欲知足。離財離色。名兩足尊。自心歸正念。念無邪故即無愛著。以無愛著名離欲尊。自心歸淨。一切塵勞妄念雖在自姓。自姓不染著。名眾中尊。	I, Huineng, urge you, good friends, to take refuge in the three jewels. Buddha is awakening; dharma is rightness; sangha is purity. When your own mind takes refuge in awakening, wrong delusions do not arise; with few desires and contentment, free of wealth and free of lust—this is called the most honored of two-footed beings. When your own mind takes refuge in rightness, thought after thought is without wrong views, and so there is no clinging attachment; because there is no clinging attachment, this is called the most honored of those free from desire. When your own mind takes refuge in purity, then although all the dust and toil of affliction and all deluded thoughts are in your own nature, your own nature is not stained by them or attached to them—this is called the most honored in the assembly.
凡夫解從日至日受三歸衣戒。若言歸佛。佛在何處。若不見佛。即無所歸。既無所歸。言却是妄。善知識。各自觀察莫錯用意。經中只即言自歸依佛。不言歸他佛。自姓不歸無所處。	Ordinary people, not understanding this, receive the precepts of the threefold refuge day after day. If they say they take refuge in the buddha, where is the buddha? If they do not see the buddha, there is nothing to take refuge in; and if there is nothing to take refuge in, what they say is false. Good friends, each of you examine this for yourselves and do not apply your minds wrongly. The sutras say only "take refuge in the buddha within yourself"; they do not say take refuge in some other buddha. If you do not take refuge in your own nature, there is nowhere to turn.

THE GREAT PERFECTION OF WISDOM

Huineng explains mahā, prajñā and pāramitā, and praises the great perfection of wisdom.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
今既自歸衣三寶。總各各至心。與善知識說摩訶般若波羅蜜法。善知識。雖念不解。惠能與說。各各聽。	Now that you have taken refuge yourselves in the three jewels, each of you with your whole heart, I

6 The manuscript is corrupt at the end of the vow; it is read here, as most editors read it, as asking the three jewels of one's own nature to bear witness.

CHINESE

ENGLISH

摩訶般若波羅蜜者。西國梵語。唐言大智惠彼岸到。此法須行不在口。口念不行。如如化修行者。法身與佛等也。

will speak to you, good friends, about the dharma of mahāprajñāpāramitā, the great perfection of wisdom. Good friends, though you recite it, you do not understand it. Huineng will explain it for you; each of you listen. Mahāprajñāpāramitā is a Sanskrit word from the western countries; in the language of Tang it means "great wisdom reaching the other shore." This dharma must be practiced; it is not in the mouth. If you recite it with the mouth and do not practice it, it is like a phantom, like a conjured illusion. For one who practices it, the dharma body is equal to the buddha's.

何名摩訶。摩訶者是大。心量廣大猶如虛空。莫定心座即落無既空。能含日月星辰大地山河一切草木。惡人善人惡法善法天堂地獄盡在空中。世人性空亦復如是。性含萬法是大。萬法盡是自姓。見一切人及非人惡知與善。惡法善法盡皆不捨。不可染著。由如虛空。名之為大。此是摩訶行。迷人口念。智者心。又有名人。空心不思。名之為大。此亦不是。心量大不行是少。莫口空說。不修此行。非我弟子。

What is mahā? Mahā means "great." The capacity of the mind is vast, like empty space. Do not sit with an emptied mind, or you will fall into a blank, indifferent emptiness. Empty space can contain the sun, moon and stars, the great earth, mountains and rivers, and all grasses and trees; bad people and good people, bad dharmas and good dharmas, heaven and hell are all within emptiness. The emptiness of people's nature is just the same. Nature contains the ten thousand dharmas: this is "great." The ten thousand dharmas are all one's own nature. Seeing all people and non-humans, evil and good, bad dharmas and good dharmas, one rejects none of them and is not stained by or attached to them, like empty space: this is called "great." This is the practice of mahā. Deluded people recite it with the mouth; the wise practice it with the mind. There are also deluded people who empty the mind and do not think, and call this "great"; this too is wrong. The capacity of the mind is great, but not to practice is small. Do not talk emptily with the mouth. Whoever does not cultivate this practice is not my disciple.

340a 何名般若。般若是智惠。一時中念念不愚。常行智惠即名般若。行一念愚即般若絕。一念智即般若生。心中常愚。我修般若無形相。智惠性即是。

What is prajñā? Prajñā is wisdom. At all times, thought after thought, never being foolish, always practicing wisdom—this is called prajñā. One foolish thought, and prajñā is cut off; one wise thought, and prajñā is born. People are always foolish in their minds, yet say, "I am cultivating prajñā." Prajñā has no form or appearance; it is simply the nature of wisdom.

何名波羅蜜。此是西國梵音。言彼岸到。解義離生滅著竟生滅去。如水有波浪。即是於此岸。離境無生滅。如水承長流。故即名到彼岸。故名波羅蜜。迷人

What is pāramitā? This is a Sanskrit sound of the western countries; it means "the other shore reached." Understand its meaning, and you leave birth and death behind. When one is attached to

CHINESE	ENGLISH
口念。智者心行。當念時有妄。有妄即非真有。念念若行是名真有。悟此法者。悟般若法。修般若行。不修即凡。一念修行法身等佛。	objects, birth and death arise, like water with waves: this is this shore. Apart from objects there is no birth and death, like water always flowing on: therefore it is called reaching the other shore, and therefore it is called pāramitā. Deluded people recite it with the mouth; the wise practice it with the mind. In the very moment of reciting there is falseness, and where there is falseness there is no true being. If you practice it thought after thought, this is called true being. Those who awaken to this dharma awaken to the dharma of prajñā and cultivate the practice of prajñā. Not to cultivate it is to be an ordinary person; with a single thought of practice, your dharma body is equal to buddha.
善知識。即煩惱是菩提。捉前念迷即凡。後念悟即佛。	Good friends, afflictions are themselves bodhi. When the previous thought is deluded, one is an ordinary person; when the next thought is awakened, one is a buddha.
善知識。摩訶般若波羅蜜。最尊最上第一。無住無去無來。三世諸佛從中出。將大知惠到彼岸。打破五陰煩惱塵勞。最尊最上第一讚最上。最上乘法修行定成佛。無去無住無來往。是定惠等不染一切法。三世諸佛從中。變三毒為戒定惠。	Good friends, the great perfection of wisdom is the most honored, the highest, the first. It does not abide, does not go, does not come; all the buddhas of the three times come forth from it. Taking great wisdom to the other shore, it smashes the afflictions and the dust and toil of the five aggregates. It is the most honored, the highest, the first—the praise of the highest. Practice the dharma of the highest vehicle, and you will surely become a buddha. No going, no abiding, no coming and going: here meditation and wisdom are equal, and one is not stained by any dharma. All the buddhas of the three times come forth from it, transforming the three poisons into precepts, meditation and wisdom.[7]
善知識我此法門從八萬四千智惠。何以故。為世有八萬四千塵勞。若無塵勞。般若常在不離自姓。悟此法者。即是無念無億無著。莫去誰妄。即自是真如姓用。知惠觀照。於一切法不取不捨。即見姓成佛道。	Good friends, this dharma gate of mine gives rise to eighty-four thousand wisdoms. Why? Because the world has eighty-four thousand kinds of dust and toil. If there were no dust and toil, prajñā would always be present, never apart from one's own nature. Those who awaken to this dharma are without thought, without memory, without attachment. Do not give rise to falsehood: this is the functioning of the nature of suchness itself. Observing and illuminating with wisdom, neither grasping nor rejecting any dharma—this is seeing one's nature and attaining the buddha way.

7 The three poisons are greed, anger and delusion.

CHINESE

善知識。若欲入甚深法界入般若三昧者。直修般若波羅蜜行。但持金剛般若波羅蜜經一卷。即得見性。入般若三昧。當知此人功德無量。經中分名讚嘆不能具說。此是最上乘法。為大智上根人說。少根智人若聞法。心不生信。何以故。譬如大龍。若下大雨。雨衣閻浮提如漂草葉。若下大雨。雨放大海不增不減。若大乘者聞說金剛經。心開悟解。故知本性自有般若之智。自用知惠觀照。不假文字。

ENGLISH

Good friends, if you wish to enter the profoundest dharma realm and enter the samādhi of prajñā, simply cultivate the practice of the perfection of wisdom. Just keep the one scroll of the Diamond Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, and you will see your nature and enter the samādhi of prajñā. Know that the merit of such a person is immeasurable; the sutra praises it clearly, and it cannot all be told. This is the dharma of the highest vehicle, taught for people of great wisdom and superior capacity. If people of small capacity and small wisdom hear this dharma, no faith arises in their minds. Why? It is like a great dragon: if it sends down a great rain and the rain falls on Jambudvīpa, everything floats away like leaves of grass; if it sends down a great rain and the rain falls on the great ocean, the ocean neither increases nor decreases. When people of the Great Vehicle hear the Diamond Sutra taught, their minds open and they awaken and understand. So know that one's original nature has the wisdom of prajñā in itself; one uses one's own wisdom to observe and illuminate, and does not depend on written words.[8]

GREAT AND SMALL CAPACITIES

Prajñā is in everyone, but people of small capacity do not believe the sudden teaching.

CHINESE

340b 譬如其雨水不從無有。元是龍王於江海中將身引此水。令一切眾生一切草木一切有情無情悉皆像潤。諸水眾流却入大海。海納眾水合為一體。眾生本性般若之智亦復如是。

少根之人聞說此頓教。猶如大地草木。根性自少者。若被大雨一沃。悉皆自到不能增長。少根之人亦復如是。有般若之智之與大智之人亦無差別。因何聞法即不悟。緣邪見障重煩惱根深。猶如大雲蓋覆於日。不得風吹日無能現。般若之智亦無大小。為一切眾生自有。迷心外修覓佛。來悟自性。即是小根人聞其頓教不信外修。但於自心令自本性常起正見。煩惱塵勞眾

ENGLISH

Take this rainwater: it does not come from nowhere. It is the dragon king who, with its own body, draws this water up from the rivers and seas, so that all living beings, all grasses and trees, all things sentient and insentient, receive its moisture. Then the many streams of water flow back into the great ocean, and the ocean takes in all the waters and they merge into one body. The wisdom of prajñā in the original nature of living beings is just the same.

When people of small capacity hear this sudden teaching, they are like grasses and trees on the earth whose roots are naturally small: drenched once by a great rain, they all fall over by themselves and cannot grow. People of small capacity are just like this. Yet they have the wisdom of prajñā, no different from people of great wisdom. Why then do they hear the dharma and not

8 Jambudvīpa is the southern continent of Buddhist cosmology, the world inhabited by human beings.

CHINESE

生當時盡悟。猶如大海納於眾流。小水大水合為一體。即是見性。內外不住來去自由。能除執心通達無礙。心修此行。即與般若波羅蜜經本無差別。

ENGLISH

awaken? Because the obstruction of wrong views is heavy and the roots of affliction are deep—like great clouds covering the sun: if no wind blows, the sun cannot appear. The wisdom of prajñā is neither large nor small; all living beings have it in themselves. Because their minds are deluded, they cultivate outwardly and seek buddha, and have not awakened to their own nature; these are the people of small capacity. Hearing the sudden teaching, do not rely on outward cultivation; simply, in your own mind, let your own original nature always give rise to right views, and then living beings, with all their afflictions and dust and toil, are awakened at once—like the great ocean taking in the many streams, small waters and great waters merging into one body. This is seeing one's nature. Abiding neither inside nor outside, free to come and go, able to remove the grasping mind, penetrating everything without obstruction—whoever practices this with the mind is fundamentally no different from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra.

一切經書及文字。小大二乘十二部經。皆因置。因智惠性故。故然能建立我。若無智人。一切萬法本無不有。故知萬法本從人興。一切經書因人說有。緣在人中有愚有智。愚為少故智為大人。問迷人於智者。智人與愚人說法。令使愚者悟解深開。迷人若悟心開。與大智人無別。故知不悟即是佛是眾生。一念若悟即眾生不是佛。故知一切萬法盡在自身心中。何不從於自心頓現真如本姓。菩薩戒經云。我本願自姓清淨。識心見性。自成佛道。即時豁然。還得本心。

All sutras and writings, the twelve divisions of scripture of the Small and Great Vehicles, were established because of people; it is because of the nature of wisdom that they could be established. If there were no people, the ten thousand dharmas would not exist in the first place. So know that the ten thousand dharmas arise from people, and all sutras and writings exist because people teach them. Among people there are the foolish and the wise: the foolish are lesser people, the wise are great people. The deluded ask the wise, and the wise teach the dharma to the foolish, so that the foolish awaken and understand and their minds open deeply. If deluded people awaken and their minds open, they are no different from people of great wisdom. So know: unawakened, a buddha is a living being; awakened in a single thought, a living being is a buddha. So know that the ten thousand dharmas are all within one's own body and mind. Why not, from within your own mind, suddenly reveal the original nature of suchness? The Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra says: "Originally my own nature is pure." Know the mind and see the nature, and you attain the buddha way yourself: at once, all is suddenly open, and you regain the original mind.

SEEING ONE'S OWN NATURE SUDDENLY

One should awaken suddenly by oneself, and seek a teacher only if one cannot.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
340c	善知識。我於忍和尚處一聞言下大伍。頓見真如本性。是故汝教法流行後代。今學道者頓倍菩提。各自觀心。令自本性頓悟。若能自悟者頓覓大善知識亦道見姓。何名大善知。解最上乘法直是正路。是大善知識。是大因緣。所為化道令得見佛。一切善法皆因大善知識能發起故。三世諸佛十二部經。云在人性中。本自具有。不能自姓悟。須得善知識示道見性。若自悟者不假外善知識。若取外求善知識望得解說。無有是處。識自心內善知識即得解。若自心邪迷妄念顛倒。外善知識即有教授。	Good friends, when I was with the Reverend Hongren, I heard him once, and at his words I had a great awakening and suddenly saw the original nature of suchness. That is why I am making this teaching spread to later generations, so that those who now study the way may suddenly awaken to bodhi, each contemplating their own mind and letting their own original nature suddenly awaken. Those who cannot awaken by themselves must seek a great spiritual friend to show them the way to see their nature. What is a great spiritual friend? One who understands the dharma of the highest vehicle and directly points out the right path—that is a great spiritual friend, that is a great cause and condition. What is called transforming and guiding is enabling people to see buddha. All good dharmas can arise because of a great spiritual friend. The buddhas of the three times and the twelve divisions of scripture are within people's nature, originally complete in themselves. Those who cannot awaken by their own nature need a good teacher to show them the way to see their nature. Those who awaken by themselves do not depend on a good teacher outside. If you cling to seeking a good teacher outside in the hope of liberation, that is impossible. Recognize the good teacher within your own mind, and you will be liberated. If your own mind is wrong and deluded, with false and inverted thoughts, then even though a good teacher outside gives you instruction, you cannot be saved.[9]
	汝若不得自悟。當起般若觀照。剎那間妄念俱滅。即是自真正。善知識。一悟即知佛也。自性心地。以智惠觀照。內外名徹識自本心。若識本心即是解脫。既得解脫即是般若三昧。悟般若三昧即是無念。	If you cannot awaken by yourself, raise the observing illumination of prajñā, and in an instant all deluded thoughts vanish: this is your own true good teacher. Good friends, with one awakening you know buddha. Your own nature, the mind-ground: illuminate it with wisdom, and inside and outside are bright and clear, and you recognize your own original mind. To recognize the original mind is liberation. Once you are liberated, this is the samādhi of prajñā. To awaken to the samādhi of prajñā is no-thought.

9 The last clause, missing in this manuscript, is supplied from another Dunhuang copy of the text.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
何名無念。無念法者。見一切法不著一切法。遍一切處不著一切處。常淨自性。使六賊從六門走出。於六塵中不離不染。來去自由。即是般若三昧自在解脫名無念行。莫百物不思。當令念絕。即是法傳。即名邊見。悟無念法者。萬法盡通。悟無念法者。見諸佛境界。悟無念頓法者至佛位地。	What is no-thought? The dharma of no-thought is this: seeing all dharmas without being attached to any dharma; reaching every place without being attached to any place; always keeping one's own nature pure, letting the six thieves go out through the six gates, and amid the six dusts neither leaving them nor being stained by them, free to come and go. This is the samādhi of prajñā, free and liberated, and it is called the practice of no-thought. Do not think of nothing at all, making your thoughts cease; that is being bound by the dharma, and is called a one-sided view. Those who awaken to the dharma of no-thought penetrate all the ten thousand dharmas. Those who awaken to the dharma of no-thought see the realms of all the buddhas. Those who awaken to the sudden dharma of no-thought arrive at the stage of buddhahood.[10]
善知識。後代得悟法者。常見吾法身不離汝左右。善知識。將此頓教法門。同見同行。發願受持。如是佛故。終身受持而不退者。欲入聖位。然須縛受時。從上已來默然而付於法。發大誓願。不退菩提。即須分付。若不同見解。無有志願。在在處處勿妄宣傳。損彼前人。究竟無益。若遇人不解謾此法門。百劫萬劫千生斷佛種性。	Good friends, if in later generations you obtain my dharma, you will always see my dharma body, never apart from you. Good friends, take this dharma gate of the sudden teaching, share the same view and the same practice, and vow to receive and keep it as if serving the buddha. Those who receive and keep it all their lives without falling back will enter the stage of the sages. But when it is handed on, it must be entrusted in silence, as the dharma has been from of old. To those who make the great vow and do not turn back from bodhi, it must be entrusted. If people do not share the same view and understanding and have no resolve, do not carelessly proclaim it anywhere; it harms those people and in the end is of no benefit. If you meet people who do not understand and who slander this dharma gate, the seed of buddhahood will be cut off in them for a hundred kalpas, ten thousand kalpas, a thousand lives.

THE VERSE FOR DESTROYING SIN

Huineng recites a verse saying that cultivating merit does not destroy sin.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
341a 大師言善知識。聽悟說無相訟。令汝名者罪滅。亦名滅罪頌。頌曰	The Master said: Good friends, listen as I recite a formless verse that will make the sins of the de-

10 The six thieves are the six sense-consciousnesses, the six gates the sense organs, and the six dusts their objects.

CHINESE

愚人修福不修道　謂言修福而是道
布施供養福無邊　心中三業元來在
若將修福欲滅罪　後世得福罪無造
若解向心除罪緣　各自世中真懺悔
若悟大乘真懺海　除邪行正造無罪
學道之人能自觀　即與悟人同一例
大師令傳此頓教　願學之人同一體
若欲當來覓本身　三毒惡緣心中洗
努力修道莫悠悠　忽然虛度一世休
若遇大乘頓教法　虔誠合掌志心求

ENGLISH

luded among you vanish. It is also called the Verse for Destroying Sin. The verse goes:

The foolish cultivate merit, not the way, and say that cultivating merit is the way.
Giving and offerings bring boundless merit, but the three kinds of karma in the mind remain as before.
If you hope to destroy sin by cultivating merit, you may gain merit in later lives, but the sin remains.
If you know to remove the conditions of sin within your mind, each of you truly repents within your own nature.
If you awaken to the true repentance of the Great Vehicle, remove the wrong, practice the right, and you are without sin.
Students of the way who can observe themselves are of one kind with the awakened.
The Master had this sudden teaching handed on; may all who would learn it be one body.
If you wish in time to come to find your original body, wash the evil conditions of the three poisons from your mind.
Strive to cultivate the way, do not drift, or suddenly your one life is spent in vain and over.
If you meet the dharma of the Great Vehicle's sudden teaching, join your palms in reverence and seek it with all your heart.[11]

EMPEROR WU'S MERIT

Prefect Wei asks why Emperor Wu's temple-building earned no merit, and Huineng explains.

CHINESE

大師說法了。章使君官寮僧眾道俗讚言無盡。昔所未聞。使君禮拜自言。和尚說法實不思議。弟子當有少疑欲聞。和尚望意。和尚大慈大悲為弟子說。大師言。有議即聞。何須再三。使君聞法可不不是西國第一祖達磨祖師宗旨。大師言是。弟子見說。達磨大師代梁武諦問達磨。朕一生未來造寺布施供養有有功德否。達磨答言。並無功德。武帝惆悵遂遣。達磨出境。未審此言。請和尚說。六祖言。實無功德。使君朕勿疑達磨大師言。武帝著邪道不識正法。

ENGLISH

When the Master had finished preaching the dharma, Prefect Wei, the officials, the monks, and everyone there, ordained and lay, praised him without end: they had never heard anything like it before. The prefect bowed and said, "Reverend, your preaching of the dharma is truly beyond thought. I, your disciple, now have a few small doubts I would like to ask you about. I hope that, in your great kindness and great compassion, you will explain them to me." The Master said, "If you have doubts, ask. Why ask twice?" The prefect asked, "Is the dharma you preach not the teaching of the patriarch Bodhidharma, the first patriarch from the western countries?" The Master said, "It is." "I have heard it said that when the great mas-

11 The three kinds of karma are those of body, speech and mind.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		ter Bodhidharma was teaching Emperor Wu of Liang, the emperor asked him, 'All my life I have built temples, given alms and made offerings. Is there merit in this?' Bodhidharma answered, 'No merit at all.' The emperor was displeased and sent Bodhidharma out of his territory. I do not understand these words. Please explain them, Reverend." The Sixth Patriarch said, "There truly is no merit. Do not doubt the words of the great master Bodhidharma, Prefect. Emperor Wu was attached to a false path and did not know the true dharma."[12]
	使君問。何以無功德。和尚言。造寺布施供養只是修福。不可將福以為功德。功德在法身非在於福田。自法性有功德。平直是德。佛性外行恭敬。若輕一切人悟我不斷。即自無功德。自性虛妄法身無功德。念念德行平等真心。德即不輕常行於敬。自修身即功。自修身心即德。功德自心作。福與功德別。武帝不識正理。非祖大師有過。	The prefect asked, "Why is there no merit?" The reverend said, "Building temples, giving alms and making offerings is only cultivating blessings. Blessings cannot be taken for merit and virtue. Merit and virtue are in the dharma body, not in the field of blessings. Merit and virtue lie in your own dharma-nature. Evenness and straightforwardness are virtue: within, buddha-nature; without, the practice of respect. If you look down on everyone and do not cut off the sense of self, you yourself have no merit and virtue. If your own nature is false and unreal, the dharma body has no merit and virtue. Thought after thought practicing virtue, with an impartial, straightforward mind—then your virtue is not slight. Always practice respect. Cultivating your own body is merit; cultivating your own mind is virtue. Merit and virtue are made by your own mind. Blessings are different from merit and virtue. Emperor Wu did not know the true principle; the fault was not the great patriarch's."[13]

IS THE PURE LAND IN THE WEST?

Huineng teaches that the Pure Land is found by purifying one's own mind.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
341b	使君禮拜又問。弟子見僧道俗。常念阿彌大佛。願往生西方。請和尚說。德生彼否。望為破疑。大師言。使君聽。惠能與說。世尊在舍衛國。說西方引化。經文分明。去此不遠。只為下根。說近說遠。只緣上智。人自兩重。法無不名。悟有殊見有遲疾。迷人念	The prefect bowed and asked again, "I see monks and lay people always chanting the name of Amitābha Buddha, wishing to be reborn in the Western Land. Please tell me, Reverend: can they be reborn there? I hope you will dispel my doubt." The Master said, "Listen, Prefect, and I, Huineng,

12 Bodhidharma, the Indian monk traditionally said to have brought Chan to China, is counted as its first patriarch; Emperor Wu of Liang (r. AD 502–549) was a famous patron of Buddhism.

13 The Chinese word for merit, gongde, combines gong ("merit, achievement") and de ("virtue"); the Master explains the two halves separately.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
佛生彼。悟者自淨其心。所以言佛隨其心淨則佛土淨。	will explain it to you. When the World-Honored One was in Śrāvastī, he preached the Western Land to lead people on. The words of the sutra are clear: it is not far from here. It was only for those of lower capacity that he spoke of it as far; speaking of it as near was for those of higher wisdom. People are of two kinds; the dharma is not of two kinds. Delusion and awakening differ; seeing is slow or quick. The deluded chant the Buddha's name to be reborn there; the awakened purify their own minds. That is why the Buddha said, 'As the mind is pure, so the buddha-land is pure.'[14]
使君。東方但淨心無罪。西方心不淨有愆。迷人願生東方。西者所在處並皆一種。心但無不淨。西方去此不遠。心起不淨之心。念佛往生難到。除惡即行十萬。無八邪即過八千。但行真心到如禪指使君但行十善。何須更願往生。不斷十惡之心。何佛即來迎請。若悟無生頓法。見西方只在剎那。不悟頓教大乘。念佛往生路遙。如何得達。	"Prefect, a person of the East who simply purifies the mind is without fault; a person of the West whose mind is impure has transgressions. The deluded wish to be born in the East or in the West, but wherever one is, it is all the same. If only the mind has no impurity, the Western Land is not far from here. If the mind gives rise to impure thoughts, then even chanting the Buddha's name for rebirth, it is hard to get there. Get rid of evil, and you have traveled the hundred thousand; be without the eight wrong ways, and you have passed the eight thousand. Just practice the straightforward mind, and you arrive in a snap of the fingers. Prefect, just practice the ten good deeds—why should you need to wish for rebirth? If you do not cut off the mind of the ten evils, what buddha will come to welcome you? If you awaken to the sudden dharma of no-birth, you see the Western Land in a single instant. If you do not awaken to the sudden teaching of the Great Vehicle, the road to rebirth by chanting the Buddha's name is long—how will you ever get there?"[15]
六祖言。惠能與使君移西方剎那。問曰。前便見。使君願見否。使君禮拜。若此得見何須往生。願和尚慈悲為現西方大善。大師言。唐見西方無疑即散。大眾愕然莫知何是。	The Sixth Patriarch said, "I, Huineng, will move the Western Land here for you, Prefect, in an instant, so that you see it right before your eyes. Do you wish to see it?" The prefect bowed: "If it can be seen here, why would one need to be reborn there? I hope that, in your compassion, you will make the Western Land appear, Reverend. That would be wonderful." The Master said, "There—the Western Land is seen all at once. If you have no

14 Amitābha is the buddha of the Western Land, or Pure Land, where those who call on his name hope to be reborn; Śrāvastī was a city in northern India where the Buddha often taught.

15 The Western Land was said to lie 108,000 li away; the Master links the hundred thousand to the ten evils and the eight thousand to the eight wrong ways (the opposite of the eightfold path).

CHINESE

ENGLISH

doubts, you may disperse." The assembly was dumbfounded and did not know what he meant.[16]

大師曰。大眾。大眾作意聽。世人自色身是城。眼耳鼻舌身即是城門。外有六門。內有意門。心即是地。性即是王。性在王在性去王無。性在身心存。性去身壞。佛是自性作。莫向身求。自性迷佛即眾生。自性悟眾生即是佛。慈悲即是觀音。喜捨名為勢至。能淨是釋迦。平真是彌勒。人我是須彌。邪心是大海。煩惱是波浪。毒心是惡龍。塵勞是魚鼈。虛妄即是神鬼。三毒即是地獄。愚癡即是畜生。十善是天堂。我無人須彌自倒。除邪心海水竭。煩惱無波浪滅。毒害除魚龍絕。

The Master said, "Everyone, everyone—listen attentively. For people of the world, their own physical body is a city; the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body are its gates. Outside there are five gates; inside there is the gate of thought. The mind is the ground; one's nature is the king. While the nature is present, the king is present; when the nature departs, there is no king. While the nature is present, body and mind remain; when the nature departs, body and mind decay. A buddha is made in one's own nature—do not seek it outside the body. When one's own nature is deluded, a buddha is a living being; when one's own nature is awakened, a living being is a buddha. Compassion is Avalokiteśvara; joy and equanimity are called Mahāsthāmaprāpta; the power to purify is Śākyamuni; evenness and straightforwardness are Maitreya. Self and other are Mount Sumeru; the false mind is the great ocean; the afflictions are the waves; the poisonous mind is the evil dragons; the toils of the world are the fish and turtles; falsehood is the spirits and ghosts; the three poisons are hell; ignorance is the realm of animals; the ten good deeds are heaven. Without self and other, Mount Sumeru topples of itself; remove the false mind, and the ocean's waters dry up; without afflictions, the waves subside; get rid of poison and harm, and the fish and dragons vanish.[17]

341c 自心地上。覺性如來。施大智惠。光明照曜。六門清淨。照波六欲。諸天下照。三毒若除。地獄一時消滅。內外明徹。不異西方。不作此修。如何到彼座下。問說讚聲徹天。應是迷人人然便見。使君禮拜讚言。善哉善哉。普願法界眾生聞者一時悟解。

"On the ground of your own mind, the awakened nature, the Tathāgata, sends forth the light of great wisdom, shining so that the six gates are clean and pure, shining through the heavens of the six desires. Shining downward, when the three poisons are removed, the hells vanish all at once. Inside and outside are bright and clear, no different from the Western Land. If you do not practice this way, how will you get there?" Those seated below heard this, and the sound of their praise reached the heavens; even the deluded saw it clearly. The prefect bowed and praised him: "Excellent, excellent! May all beings in the dharma realm who hear this awaken and understand at once."

16 The manuscript is corrupt here; the Master's words are usually read as an abrupt dismissal, which he then explains.
17 Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta are the two bodhisattvas who attend Amitābha; Śākyamuni is the historical Buddha and Maitreya the buddha to come. Mount Sumeru is the great mountain at the center of the world in Buddhist cosmology.

THE FORMLESS VERSE FOR LAY PEOPLE

Huineng says practice can be done at home and gives a verse for lay people.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
大師言。善知識。若欲修行。在家亦得。不由在寺。在寺不修。如西方心惡之人。在家若修行。如東方人修善。但願自家修清淨即是惡方。	The Master said, “Good friends, if you wish to practice, you can do it at home as well; it does not depend on being in a temple. Being in a temple and not practicing is like a person of the West with an evil mind. Being at home and practicing is like a person of the East who practices good. Just wish to cultivate purity yourself, at home, and that is the Western Land.”
使君問和在家如何修。願為指授。大師言。善智識。惠能與道俗作無相頌。盡誦取。衣此修行。常與惠能說一處無別。頌曰	The prefect asked, “Reverend, how should one practice at home? Please instruct us.” The Master said, “Good friends, I, Huineng, will make a formless verse for you, ordained and lay. All of you, recite it and remember it. If you practice according to it, you will always be with me, no different from being in one place.” The verse says:
說通及心通　如日至虛空 惟傳頓教法　出世破邪宗 教即無頓漸　迷悟有遲疾 若學頓教法　愚人不可迷 說即須萬般　合離還歸一 煩惱暗宅中　常須生惠日 邪來因煩惱　正來煩惱除 邪正疾不用　清淨至無餘 菩提本清淨　起心即是妄 淨性於妄中　但正除三障 世間若修道　一切盡不妨 常現在已過　與道即相當 色貌自有道　離道別覓道 覓道不見道　到頭還自懊	Mastery of preaching and mastery of mind are like the sun in empty space; only transmitting the dharma of the sudden teaching, they come into the world to destroy false doctrines. The teaching has no sudden or gradual; delusion and awakening are slow or quick. If you study the dharma of the sudden teaching, even fools cannot stay deluded. Explaining it takes ten thousand ways, but in principle they return to one. In the dark house of the afflictions, the sun of wisdom must always rise. The false comes because of the afflictions; when the right comes, the afflictions are removed. Use neither false nor right, and in purity you reach nirvāṇa without remainder. Bodhi is originally clean and pure; to stir the mind is falsehood. The pure nature is within the falsehood; only be right, and remove the three obstacles. If you practice the way in the world, nothing at all hinders you. Always see your own faults, and you will be in accord with the way. Every kind of being has its own way; if you leave the way to seek the way elsewhere, you seek the way and do not see the way, and in the end you only grieve.

CHINESE

342a 若欲貪覓道　行正即是道
自若無正心　暗行不見道
若真修道人　不見世間愚
若見世間非　自非却是左
他非我有罪　我非自有罪
但自去非心　打破煩惱碎
若欲化愚人　是須有方便
勿令破彼疑　即是菩提見
法無在世間　於世出世間
勿離世間上　外求出世間
邪見出世間　正見出世間
邪正悉打却　此但是頓教
亦名為大乘　迷來經累劫
悟則剎那間

ENGLISH

If you are eager to seek the way, acting rightly is the way.
If you yourself have no right mind, you walk in the dark and do not see the way.
One who truly practices the way does not look at the foolishness of the world.
If you see the wrongs of the world, the wrong is yours, and you are the one astray.
If others are wrong, the fault is mine; if I am wrong, the fault is my own.
Just rid yourself of the mind that finds wrong, and smash the afflictions to pieces.
If you wish to transform fools, you must have skillful means.
Do not let them have doubts, and bodhi appears.
The dharma is originally in the world; in the world, you go beyond the world.
Do not leave the world to seek outside it for what is beyond the world.
False views are in the world; right views go beyond the world.
Knock away both false and right: this alone is the sudden teaching.
It is also called the Great Vehicle. Deluded, you pass through countless kalpas;
awakened, it takes an instant.

大師言。善智識。汝等盡誦取此偈。依偈修行。去惠能千里。常在能邊。此不修對面千里。各各自修法不相持。眾人且散。惠能歸漕溪山。眾生若有大疑。來彼山間。為汝破疑。同見佛世。

The Master said, “Good friends, all of you, recite and remember this verse and practice according to it. Though you are a thousand miles from me, you will always be at my side. If you do not practice according to it, though face to face with me, you are a thousand miles away. Each of you, practice for yourselves; the dharma does not wait. Now, everyone, disperse. I am going back to Mount Caoxi. If any of you have great doubts, come to that mountain, and I will dispel your doubts for you, so that together we see buddha-nature.”

合座官寮道俗禮拜和尚。無不嗟嘆。善哉大悟。昔所未聞。嶺南有福。生佛在此。誰能得智。一時盡散。

All those present—officials, ordained and lay—bowed to the reverend, and none failed to exclaim: “Excellent! A great awakening, something we have never heard before! Lingnan is blessed: a living buddha is here. Who could have known?” Then they all dispersed.

Disciples and Last Days

Sudden and gradual; the encounters with Zhicheng, Fada, Zhichang and Shenhui; the thirty-six pairs; the verses of the patriarchs; Huineng's death and the transmission of the sutra.

THE PLATFORM SUTRA AS THE TOKEN OF TRANSMISSION

Huineng teaches at Caoxi for forty years; the Platform Sutra itself becomes proof of succession.

CHINESE

大師往漕溪山。韶廣二州行化四十餘年。若論門人。僧之與俗三五千人說不盡。若論宗指。傳授壇經。以此為衣約。若不得壇經。即無稟受。須知法處年月日性名遍相付囑。無壇經稟承。非南宗定子也。未得稟承者。雖說頓教法。未知根本。修不免諍。但得法者。只勸修行。諍是勝負之心。與道違背。

ENGLISH

The Master went to Mount Caoxi and taught in the two prefectures of Shaozhou and Guangzhou for more than forty years. As for his disciples, monks and lay people together numbered three to five thousand—too many to tell. As for the essence of his teaching, he handed down the Platform Sutra and made it the token of trust. Anyone who has not received the Platform Sutra has not received the teaching. The place, the year, month and day, and the names must be recorded, and it is entrusted from one to the next. Anyone without the Platform Sutra as proof of succession is not a disciple of the Southern school. Those who have not received the proof of succession, though they preach the dharma of the sudden teaching, do not know its root and in the end cannot avoid disputes. Those who have received the dharma should only urge others to practice. Disputing comes from a mind set on winning and losing; it runs counter to the way.[1]

SOUTH AND NORTH, SUDDEN AND GRADUAL

The text explains the names Southern and Northern, sudden and gradual.

CHINESE

世人盡傳南宗能比秀。未知根本事由。且秀禪師於南荊府堂陽縣玉泉寺住時修行。惠能大師於韶州城東三十五里漕溪山住。法即一宗。人有南比。因此便立南北。何以漸頓。法即一種。見有遲疾。見遲即漸。見疾即頓。法無漸頓。人有利鈍。故名漸頓。

ENGLISH

People everywhere speak of "Huineng of the South and Shenxiu of the North," without knowing the real reason. Chan Master Shenxiu lived and practiced at Yuquan Temple in Dangyang County, in the southern prefecture of Jing; the great master Huineng lived at Mount Caoxi, thirty-five li east of the city of Shaozhou. The dharma is one school; it is people who are of the north and the south. That is how the names "Southern" and "Northern" came

1 This passage reflects a time when copies of the Platform Sutra themselves served as certificates of transmission within the lineage.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	about. Why sudden and gradual? The dharma is one, but seeing is slow or quick. Slow seeing is gradual; quick seeing is sudden. The dharma has no sudden or gradual; people are sharp or dull. That is why it is called sudden and gradual.[2]

ZHICHENG, THE ENVOY FROM SHENXIU

Shenxiu sends Zhicheng to spy on Huineng; Zhicheng awakens and stays.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
342b 神秀師常見人說。惠能法疾直旨路。秀師遂換門人僧志誠曰。汝聰明多智。汝與吾至漕溪山。到惠能所禮拜。但聽莫言吾使汝來。所聽意旨記取。却來與吾說看惠能見解與吾誰疾遲。汝弟一早來勿令吾怪。	Master Shenxiu often heard people say that Huineng's dharma pointed quickly and directly to the path. So Master Shenxiu called his disciple, the monk Zhicheng, and said, "You are clever and very intelligent. Go to Mount Caoxi for me. When you reach Huineng's place, bow to him and just listen. Do not say that I sent you. Remember the meaning of what you hear, then come back and tell me, so that I can see whose understanding is slower and whose quicker, Huineng's or mine. Above all, come back quickly; do not make me displeased."[3]
志誠奉使歡喜。遂半月中間即至漕溪山。見惠能和尚禮拜。即聽不言來處。志城聞法。言下便悟。即契本心。起立即禮拜自言。和尚。弟子從玉泉寺來。秀師處不德契悟。聞和尚說。便契本心。和尚慈悲願當散示。惠能大師曰。汝從被來應是紬作。志誠曰。未說時即是。說乃了即是。六祖言。煩惱即是菩提亦復如是。	Zhicheng gladly accepted the mission, and within half a month he reached Mount Caoxi. He saw the reverend Huineng, bowed, and listened, without saying where he had come from. Hearing the dharma, Zhicheng awakened at once at the words and was in accord with the original mind. He stood up, bowed, and said, "Reverend, I have come from Yuquan Temple. With Master Shenxiu I could not reach accord and awakening; hearing you speak, I was at once in accord with the original mind. Reverend, in your compassion, please instruct me." The great master Huineng said, "If you have come from there, you must be a spy." Zhicheng said, "Before I spoke, I was; now that I have spoken, I am not." The Sixth Patriarch said, "'The afflictions are bodhi' is just like this."
大師謂志誠曰。吾聞。與禪師教人唯傳戒定惠。與和尚教人戒定惠如何。當為吾說。志城曰。秀和尚言戒定惠。諸惡不作名為戒。諸善奉行名為惠。自淨其意名為定。此即名為戒定惠。彼作如是說。不知和尚所見如何。惠能和尚答曰。此說不可思議。惠能所見又別。志城問何以別。惠能答曰。見有遲疾。志城請和	The Master said to Zhicheng, "I hear that your Chan master teaches people only by transmitting precepts, meditation and wisdom. How does your reverend teach people precepts, meditation and wisdom? Tell me." Zhicheng said, "The reverend Shenxiu says of precepts, meditation and wisdom: not doing any evil is called the precepts; practi-

2 A li is about a third of a mile. Yuquan Temple lay in present-day Hubei, Caoxi in present-day Guangdong.
3 Zhicheng appears here as a disciple of Shenxiu who goes over to Huineng; little else is known of him.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
	尚說所見戒定惠。大師言。如汝聽悟說看悟所見處。心地無疑非自姓戒。心地無亂是自姓定。心地無癡自姓是惠。	cing every good is called wisdom; purifying one's own intention is called meditation. This is what he calls precepts, meditation and wisdom. That is how he explains it. I do not know what your view is, Reverend." The reverend Huineng answered, "That explanation is beyond thought, but my view is different." Zhicheng asked, "How is it different?" Huineng answered, "Seeing is slow or quick." Zhicheng asked the reverend to explain his view of precepts, meditation and wisdom. The Master said, "Then listen to what I say and see where my view lies. The mind-ground without wrong is the precepts of one's own nature. The mind-ground without disturbance is the meditation of one's own nature. The mind-ground without ignorance is the wisdom of one's own nature."[4]
	能大師言。汝戒定惠勸小根諸人。吾戒定惠勸上人。得吾自亦不立戒定惠。志城言。請大師說不立如何。大師言。自姓無非無亂無癡。念念般若觀照。當離法相。有何可立。自姓頓修。立有漸此契以不立。志誠禮拜。便不離漕溪山。即為門人。不離大師左右。	The great master Huineng said, "Your precepts, meditation and wisdom are for encouraging people of small capacity; my precepts, meditation and wisdom are for encouraging people of higher wisdom. Once you awaken to your own nature, you do not set up precepts, meditation and wisdom either." Zhicheng said, "Please, Master, explain what you mean by not setting them up." The Master said, "One's own nature is without wrong, without disturbance, without ignorance. Thought after thought, wisdom shines and observes, always free of the forms of dharmas. What is there to set up? One's own nature is cultivated suddenly. Setting things up implies stages; that is why nothing is set up." Zhicheng bowed and did not leave Mount Caoxi; he became a disciple and never left the Master's side.

FADA AND THE LOTUS SUTRA

Huineng explains the one buddha vehicle of the Lotus Sutra to the monk Fada.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
342c	又有一僧。名法達。常誦法華經七年。心迷不知正法之處。經上有疑。大師智惠廣大。願為時疑。大師言。法達。法即甚達。汝心不達。經上無癡。汝心自邪。而求正法。吾心正定。即是持經。吾一生已來不識文字。汝將法華經來對。吾讀一遍。吾問即之。法達取經到對。大師讀一遍。六祖問已即識佛意。便汝法達說法華經。	There was also a monk named Fada, who had been reciting the Lotus Sutra constantly for seven years, but his mind was deluded and he did not know where the true dharma lay. He had doubts about the sutra and, since the Master's wisdom was vast, hoped that he would clear them away. The Master said, "Fada, the dharma itself penetrates everything; it is your mind that does not penet-

4 Shenxiu's definitions follow a famous verse attributed to the buddhas of the past: "Do no evil, practice every good, purify your own mind."

CHINESE

ENGLISH

rate. There is no doubt in the sutra; the doubt is in your mind. Your own mind is false, and yet you seek the true dharma. When my mind is rightly settled, that itself is upholding the sutra. All my life I have never known how to read. Bring the Lotus Sutra and read it to me once; when I hear it, I will understand." Fada brought the sutra and read it once to the Master. When the Sixth Patriarch had heard it, he understood the Buddha's intent and explained the Lotus Sutra to Fada.[5]

六祖言。法達。法華經無多語。七卷盡是譬喻內緣。如來廣說三乘。只為世人根鈍。經聞公明。無有餘乘。唯一佛乘。大師。法達。汝聽。一佛乘莫求二佛乘。迷却。汝聖經中何處是一佛乘。汝與說。經云。諸佛世尊唯汝一大事因緣故出現於世（已上十六字是正法）法如何解。此法如何修。

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Fada, the Lotus Sutra does not say much. Its seven scrolls are all parables and stories of causes and conditions. The Tathāgata preached the three vehicles at length only because people's capacities are dull. The sutra's words are clear: there is no other vehicle, only the one buddha vehicle." The Master said, "Fada, listen to the one buddha vehicle and do not seek two buddha vehicles, which would delude your nature. Where in the sutra is the one buddha vehicle? I will tell you. The sutra says, 'The buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, appear in the world for one great cause alone.' (These sixteen characters are the true sutra text.) How is this dharma to be understood? How is this dharma to be practiced?[6]

汝聽吾說。人心不思。本源空寂。離却邪見。即一大是因緣。內外不迷。即離兩邊。外迷看相。內迷著空。於相離相。於空離空。即是不空。迷吾此法。一念心開。出現於世。心開何物。開佛知見。佛猶如覺也。分為四門。開覺知見。示覺知見。悟覺知見。入覺知見。開示悟入上一處入即覺知見。見自本性即得出世。

"Listen to what I say. When the human mind does not think, its original source is empty and still. To leave false views behind—that is the one great cause. Not deluded inside or outside, you are free of the two extremes. Deluded outwardly, you cling to forms; deluded inwardly, you cling to emptiness. Within form, be free of form; within emptiness, be free of emptiness—that is not being deluded. Awaken to this dharma, and in a single thought the mind opens: that is 'appearing in the world.' What does the mind open? It opens the knowledge and insight of a buddha. 'Buddha' means awakening. This is divided into four gates: opening the knowledge and insight of awakening, showing the knowledge and insight of awakening, awakening to the knowledge and insight of awakening, entering the knowledge and insight of awakening. Opening, showing, awakening and entering all enter from one place: the knowledge and

5 Fada's name means "penetrating the dharma"; the Master puns on da, "to penetrate." The Lotus Sutra is one of the most revered scriptures of the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna).

6 The Lotus Sutra teaches that the three vehicles were provisional devices and that there is in truth only the one buddha vehicle.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	insight of awakening. See your own original nature, and you come forth into the world."[7]
大師言。法達。悟常願。一切世人心地。常自開佛知見。莫開眾生知見。世人心愚迷造惡。自開眾生知見。世人心正起智惠觀照。自開佛智見。莫開眾生智見。開佛智見即出世。	The Master said, "Fada, I always wish that on the mind-ground of all people of the world the knowledge and insight of a buddha would always open of itself, and not the knowledge and insight of a living being. When people's minds are false, deluded by ignorance and doing evil, they open the knowledge and insight of a living being. When people's minds are right, giving rise to wisdom that shines and observes, they open the knowledge and insight of a buddha. Do not open the knowledge and insight of a living being. Open the knowledge and insight of a buddha, and that is coming forth into the world."
大師言。法達。此是法達經一乘法。向下分三。為名人故。汝但於一佛乘。大師言。法達。心行轉法華。不行法華轉。心正轉法華。心耶法華轉。開佛智見轉法華。開眾生智見被法華轉。	The Master said, "Fada, this is the dharma of the one vehicle of the Lotus Sutra. Further on, it is divided into three, for the sake of deluded people. You should simply rely on the one buddha vehicle." The Master said, "Fada, when the mind practices, it turns the Lotus; when it does not practice, the Lotus turns it. When the mind is right, it turns the Lotus; when the mind is false, the Lotus turns it. Open the knowledge and insight of a buddha, and you turn the Lotus; open the knowledge and insight of a living being, and you are turned by the Lotus."[8]
343a 大師言。努力依法修行。即是轉經。法達一聞言下大悟。涕淚悲泣自言。和尚實未僧轉法華七年。被法華轉。已後轉法華。念念修行佛行。大師言。即佛行是佛。其時聽人無不悟者。	The Master said, "Strive to practice according to the dharma—that is turning the sutra." As soon as Fada heard this, he had a great awakening at the words. Weeping, tears streaming down, he said, "Reverend, truly I have never turned the Lotus; for seven years the Lotus has turned me. From now on I will turn the Lotus, practicing the buddha's practice thought after thought." The Master said, "To practice as a buddha is to be a buddha." Of those who heard this at the time, there was no one who did not awaken.

ZHICHANG AND THE FOUR VEHICLES

Huineng tells Zhichang that the four vehicles are only differences in people's minds.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
時有一僧。名智常。來漕溪山。禮拜和尚。聞四乘法義。智常聞和尚曰。佛說三乘。又言最上乘。弟子不	At that time there was a monk named Zhichang who came to Mount Caoxi, bowed to the reverend, and asked about the meaning of the dharma of the

CHINESE	ENGLISH
解。望為敬示。惠能大師曰。汝自身心見。莫著外法相。元無四乘法。人心不量四等法有四乘。見聞讀誦是小乘。悟解義是中乘。衣法修行是大乘。萬法盡通。萬幸俱備。一切無離。但離法相。作無所德是最上乘。乘是最上行。義不在口諍。汝須自修。莫問悟也。	four vehicles. Zhichang asked the reverend, "The Buddha taught three vehicles, and he also spoke of the supreme vehicle. I do not understand; I hope you will instruct me." The great master Huineng said, "Look into your own mind; do not cling to the forms of outer dharmas. Originally there are no four vehicles of the dharma. People's minds are of four grades of themselves, so the dharma has four vehicles. Seeing, hearing, reading and reciting is the small vehicle. Awakening to the dharma and understanding its meaning is the middle vehicle. Practicing according to the dharma is the great vehicle. Mastering all the ten thousand dharmas, complete in all the ten thousand practices, departing from nothing, yet free of the forms of dharmas, attaining nothing—this is the supreme vehicle. 'Vehicle' means practice; it is not a matter for argument. You must practice for yourself; do not ask me."[9]

SHENHUI: DO YOU SEE OR NOT?

Huineng strikes Shenhui and tells him to see his own nature instead of questioning others.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
又有一僧。名神會。南陽人也。至漕溪山禮拜。問言。和尚座禪見亦不見。大師起把打神會三下。却問神會。吾打汝痛不痛。神會答言。亦痛亦不痛。六祖言曰。吾亦見亦不見。神會又問。大師何以亦見亦不見。大師言。吾亦見常見自過患故。云亦見亦不見者。不見天地人過罪。所以亦見亦不也。汝亦痛亦不痛如何。	There was also a monk named Shenhui, a man of Nanyang. He came to Mount Caoxi, bowed, and asked, "Reverend, when you are in seated meditation, do you see, or do you not see?" The Master got up and struck Shenhui three times. Then he asked him, "When I struck you, did it hurt or not?" Shenhui answered, "It both hurt and did not hurt." The Sixth Patriarch said, "I both see and do not see." Shenhui asked again, "Master, how is it that you both see and do not see?" The Master said, "I see: I always see my own faults. That is why I say I see. I do not see: I do not see the faults and wrongs of heaven, earth, or other people. That is why I both see and do not see. And you—how is it that it both hurt and did not hurt?"[10]
神會答曰。若不痛即同無情木石。若痛即同凡即起於恨。大師言。神會向前見不見是兩邊。痛是生滅。汝	Shenhui answered, "If it did not hurt, I would be like an insentient tree or rock. If it hurt, I would be like an ordinary person, and resentment would

7 The four gates echo the Lotus Sutra's account of why buddhas appear: to open, show, awaken beings to, and lead them into a buddha's knowledge and insight.
8 To "turn" a sutra means to recite it; the Master plays on turning the sutra and being turned by it.
9 Zhichang is otherwise little known. The three vehicles are traditionally those of the disciples who hear the teaching, the solitary buddhas, and the bodhisattvas.
10 Shenhui (AD 684–758) later championed Huineng's Southern school against the Northern school; Nanyang is in present-day Henan.

CHINESE

自性且不見。敢來弄人禮拜。禮拜更不言。大師言。汝心迷不見。問善知識覓路。以心悟自見。依法修行。汝自名不見自心。却來問惠能見否。吾不自知。代汝迷不得。汝若自見。代得吾迷。何不自修。問吾見否。神會作禮。便為門人。不離漕溪山中。常在左右。

ENGLISH

arise." The Master said, "Shenhui, the seeing and not seeing you asked about are the two extremes; hurting and not hurting are arising and ceasing. You have not yet seen your own nature, and you dare to come here and toy with people!" Shenhui bowed and said nothing more. The Master said, "If your mind is deluded and does not see, ask a good teacher to show you the way. If your mind awakens, you see for yourself; then practice according to the dharma. You yourself are deluded and do not see your own mind, and yet you come asking whether Huineng sees or not. Whether I see, I know for myself; I cannot take on your delusion for you. If you see for yourself, can you take on my delusion for me? Why not practice for yourself instead of asking me whether I see?" Shenhui made a bow and became a disciple. From then on Shenhui never left Mount Caoxi and was always at the Master's side.

THE THIRTY-SIX PAIRS OF OPPOSITES

Huineng teaches ten disciples to preach with the thirty-six pairs of opposites.

CHINESE

343b 大師遂喚門人法海·志誠·法達·智常·志通·志徹·志道·法珍·法如·神會。大師言。汝等拾弟子近前。汝等不同餘人。吾滅度後。汝各為一方頭。吾教汝說法不失本宗。舉科法門動三十六對。出沒即離兩邊。說一切法莫離於性相。若有人問法。出語盡雙。皆取法對來去相因。究竟二法盡除。更無去處。

三科法門者蘊界入。蘊是五蘊。界十八界。是十二入。何名五蘊。色蘊受蘊相蘊行蘊識蘊是。何名十八界。六塵六門六識。何名十二入。外六塵中六門。何名六塵。色聲香未獨法是。何名六門。眼耳鼻舌身意是。法性起六識。眼識耳識鼻識舌識身識意識。六門六塵。自性含萬法。名為含藏識。思量即轉識。生六

ENGLISH

The Master then called the disciples Fahai, Zhicheng, Fada, Zhichang, Zhitong, Zhiche, Zhidao, Fazhen, Faru and Shenhui. The Master said, "You ten disciples, come forward. You are not like the others. After my extinction each of you will be the head of a region. I will teach you how to preach the dharma without losing the original teaching. First bring up the three categories of dharmas; then use the thirty-six pairs of opposites in their functioning. Coming out and going in, leave both extremes behind. In preaching any dharma, do not depart from the nature and its characteristics. If someone asks you about the dharma, make every reply a pair: always take the opposites, so that coming and going depend on each other. In the end both dharmas are wholly removed, and there is nowhere left to go.

"The three categories of dharmas are the aggregates, the elements and the sense-fields. 'Aggregates' means the five aggregates; 'elements,' the eighteen elements; 'sense-fields,' the twelve sense-fields. What are the five aggregates? The aggregates of form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. What are the eighteen elements?

CHINESE

識出六門六塵是。三六十八。由自性邪起十八邪含。自性十八正含。惡用即眾生。善用即佛。用油何等。油自性。

ENGLISH

The six sense-objects, the six gates and the six consciousnesses. What are the twelve sense-fields? The six sense-objects outside and the six gates within. What are the six sense-objects? Form, sound, smell, taste, touch and dharmas. What are the six gates? Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. The dharma-nature gives rise to the six consciousnesses—eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness—and to the six gates and the six sense-objects. One's own nature contains the ten thousand dharmas; this is called the storehouse consciousness. When thinking starts, it turns into consciousness: it produces the six consciousnesses, which go out through the six gates to the six sense-objects. Three sixes make eighteen. When one's own nature is wrong, eighteen wrongs arise; when one's own nature is right, eighteen rights arise. Used for evil, it is a living being; used for good, it is a buddha. What does the function depend on? It depends on one's own nature.[11]

對外境無情對有五。天與地對。日與月對。暗與明對。陰與陽對。水與火對語與言對法與相對有十二對。有為無為。有色無色對。有相無相對。有漏無漏對。色與空對。動與淨對。清與濁對。凡與性對。僧與俗對。老與少對。大大與少少對。長與短對。高與下對。自性居起用對有十九對。邪與正對。癡與惠對。愚與智對。亂與定對。戒與非對。直與典對。實與虛對。嶮與平對。煩惱與菩提對。慈與空對。喜與順對。捨與慳對。進與退對。生與滅對。常與無常對。法身與色身對。化身與報身對。體與用對。性與相有清無親對。言語與法相有十二對。內外境有無五對。三身有三對。都合成三十六對法也。

"Among the insentient objects of the outer world there are five pairs: heaven and earth, sun and moon, dark and light, yin and yang, water and fire. In words and the characteristics of dharmas there are twelve pairs: the conditioned and the unconditioned; with form and without form; with characteristics and without characteristics; with outflows and without outflows; form and emptiness; motion and stillness; clear and murky; ordinary and holy; monastic and lay; old and young; large and small; long and short; high and low. In the functions arising from one's own nature there are nineteen pairs: wrong and right; folly and wisdom; foolishness and knowing; distraction and meditation; precepts and wrongdoing; straight and crooked; real and unreal; steep and level; afflictions and bodhi; compassion and harm; joy and anger; giving and stinginess; advancing and retreating; arising and ceasing; permanent and impermanent; the dharma body and the physical body; the transformation body and the reward body; substance and function; nature and characteristics; sentient and insentient. Words and the characteristics of dharmas have twelve pairs; the

11 The storehouse consciousness (Sanskrit ālaya-vijñāna) is the Yogācāra term for the base consciousness that holds the seeds of all experience.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		outer objects, the insentient, have five pairs; the functions arising from one's own nature have nineteen pairs. Altogether they make thirty-six pairs of dharmas.[12]
343c	此三十六對法。解用通一切經。出入即離兩邊。如何自性起用三十六對。共人言語。出外於離相。入內於空離空。著空即惟長無名。著相惟邪見謗法。直言不用文字。既云不用文字。大不合言語。言語即是文字。自性上說空。正語言本性不空迷自惑。語言除故。暗不自暗。以名故暗。暗不自暗。以名變暗。以暗現明。來去相因。三十六對亦復如是。	"These thirty-six pairs of dharmas, once understood and used, run through all the sutras; coming out and going in, you leave both extremes behind. How does one's own nature function in the thirty-six pairs? When you speak with people, outwardly, amid forms, be free of forms; inwardly, amid emptiness, be free of emptiness. If you cling to emptiness, you only increase ignorance; if you cling to forms, you only increase wrong views and slander the dharma. Some flatly say, 'Do not use words and letters.' But if they say not to use words and letters, then people should not even speak, for speech is itself words and letters. They speak of emptiness in one's own nature, but true speech is, in its own nature, not empty. The deluded confuse themselves, and it is through speech that this is removed. Darkness is not dark of itself; it is dark because of light. Darkness is not dark of itself: light changes into darkness, and through darkness light appears. Coming and going depend on each other. The thirty-six pairs are all like this."[13]
	大師言。十弟子。已後傳法迎相教授一卷壇經。不失本宗。不稟授壇經。非我宗旨。如今得了。迎代流行。得遇壇經者。如見吾親授。拾僧得教授已。寫為壇經。迎代流行。得者必當見性。	The Master said, "Ten disciples: when you transmit the dharma hereafter, hand down this one scroll of the Platform Sutra from one to another, and do not lose the original teaching. One who has not received the Platform Sutra does not hold my teaching. Now that you have it, pass it on from generation to generation. Whoever comes upon the Platform Sutra will be as if receiving it from me in person." When the ten monks had received the teaching, they wrote it down as the Platform Sutra, to be passed on from generation to generation. Whoever obtains it will surely see their nature.

12 The manuscript is corrupt here: the summary actually reads "the three bodies have three pairs," restored by editors from the count above. The lists as copied do not add up exactly to thirty-six.
13 The manuscript is corrupt in this passage; the translation follows the usual restorations (for example "dark because of light" for "dark because of the name").

FAREWELL TO THE DISCIPLES

Huineng announces his coming death; only Shenhui does not weep, and Huineng gives a verse.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
大師先天二年八月三日滅度。七月八日喚門人告別。大師天無年於樟州國恩寺造塔。至先天二年七月告別。大師言。汝眾近前。五至八月欲離世間。汝等有疑早問。為外破疑。當令迷者盡使與安樂。吾若去後無人教與。	The Master entered extinction on the third day of the eighth month of the second year of Xiantian. On the eighth day of the seventh month the Master called the disciples together to take leave of them. In the first year of Xiantian the Master had built a stupa at Guoen Temple in Xinzhou; and now, in the seventh month of the second year of Xiantian, came the farewell. The Master said, "All of you, come forward. In the eighth month I intend to leave this world. If you have doubts, ask about them soon, so that I can dispel them for you. I must bring your delusion to an end and give you peace and happiness. After I am gone, there will be no one to teach you."[14]
法海等眾僧聞已涕淚悲泣。唯有神會。不動亦不悲泣。六祖言。神會小僧却得善等毀譽不動。除者不得。數年山中更修何道。汝今悲泣。更有阿誰。憂吾不知去處在。若不知去處。終不別汝。汝等悲泣即不知吾處。若知去處即不悲泣。性聽無生無滅無去無來。	When Fahai and the other monks heard this, they wept and wailed. Only Shenhui was unmoved and did not weep. The Sixth Patriarch said, "Shenhui, a young monk, has reached the point where good and not-good are the same, and is not moved by praise or blame. The rest of you have not. What way have you been practicing on this mountain all these years? Now that you weep, for whom are you weeping? Are you worried that I do not know where I am going? If I did not know where I was going, I would not be taking leave of you. You weep because you do not know where I am going; if you knew, you would not weep. The nature in itself has no arising and no ceasing, no going and no coming.
汝等盡座。吾與如一偈真假動淨偈。與等盡誦。取見此偈意汝吾同。於此修行不失宗旨。僧眾禮拜。請大師留偈。敬心受持偈曰	"Sit down, all of you. I will tell you a verse: the verse of the true and the false, motion and stillness. All of you recite it. If you see the meaning of this verse, you and I are the same. Practice by it and you will not lose the teaching." The monks bowed and asked the Master to leave them the verse, which they would receive and keep with reverent minds. The verse said:
一切無有真　不以見於真 若見衣真者　是見盡非真 若能自有真　離假即心真 自心不離假　無真何處真	Nothing anywhere is true; do not see things as true. If you see things as true, all that seeing is untrue. If you can have the true in yourself, apart from the

14 The Xiantian era began in AD 712, so the death falls in AD 713. Xinzhou, in present-day Guangdong, was Huineng's home district.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
有性即解動　無性即不動 若修不動行　同無情不動 若見真不動　動上有不動 不動是不動　無情無佛眾 能善分別相　第一義不動 若悟作此見　則是真如用 報諸學道者　努力須用意 莫於大乘門　却執生死智 前頭人相應　即共論佛語 若實不相應　合掌令勸善 此教本無諍　無諍失道意 執迷諍法門　自性入生死	false the mind is true. If your own mind does not leave the false, there is nothing true—where could the true be? The sentient know how to move; the insentient do not move. If you practice not moving, you are like the insentient that do not move. If you would see true unmoving, in moving there is the unmoving. Unmoving that is mere unmoving is insentient, without the seed of buddhahood. Able to distinguish characteristics well, one is unmoving in the first principle. If you awaken and see in this way, this is the function of suchness. I tell all who study the way: make every effort and take care. At the gate of the Great Vehicle, do not cling to the knowledge of birth and death. If those before you are in accord, discuss the Buddha's words together; if they are truly not in accord, join your palms and urge them toward the good. This teaching from the start has no disputes; to dispute is to lose the meaning of the way. Clinging to delusion and disputing over the teaching, one's own nature enters birth and death.

THE ROBE WILL NOT BE PASSED ON

Huineng says the robe will not be handed on and recites the verses of the patriarchs.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
344a 眾僧既聞識大師意。更不敢諍。依法修行。一時禮拜。即之大師不求住世。	When the monks had heard this, they understood the Master's meaning; they no longer dared to dispute, and they practiced according to the dharma. All bowed together, knowing that the Master would not remain in the world.
上座法海向前言。大師。大師去後。衣法當付何人。大師言。法即付了。汝不須問。吾滅後二十餘年。邪法遼亂。惑我宗旨。有人出來。不惜身命。弟佛教是非。竪立宗旨。即是吾正法。衣不合轉。汝不信。吾與誦先代五祖傳衣付法誦。若據第一祖達摩頌意。即不合傳衣。聽五與汝頌。頌曰	The head monk Fahai came forward and said, "Master, after you are gone, to whom should the robe and the dharma be entrusted?" The Master said, "The dharma has already been entrusted; you need not ask. Some twenty years after my extinction, wrong teachings will run riot and confuse my teaching. Then someone will come forward who, without sparing their own life, will settle right and wrong in the Buddha's teaching and set up the teaching: that will be my true dharma. The robe should not be handed on. If you

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		do not believe me, I will recite for you the verses of the five patriarchs before me on transmitting the robe and entrusting the dharma. Going by the meaning of the verse of the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, the robe should not be handed on. Listen as I recite the verses for you." The verses said:[15]
	第一祖達摩和尚頌曰 吾大來唐國　傳教救名清 一花開五葉　結菓自然成	The verse of the First Patriarch, the Reverend Bodhidharma: I came originally to the land of Tang to pass on the teaching and rescue deluded beings. One flower opens five petals, and the fruit forms of itself.[16]
	第二祖惠可和尚頌曰 本來緣有地　從地種花生 當本願無地　花從何處生	The verse of the Second Patriarch, the Reverend Huike: From the beginning, because there is ground, it is from the ground that seeds give rise to flowers. If from the beginning there were no ground, from where would flowers grow?
344b	第三祖僧璨和尚頌曰 花種雖因地　地上種化生 花種無性生　於地亦無生	The verse of the Third Patriarch, the Reverend Sengcan: Though flower seeds depend on the ground, it is on the ground that seeds give rise to flowers. If flower seeds had no nature to grow, on the ground, too, nothing would grow.
	第四祖道信和尚頌曰 花種有生性　因地種花生 先緣不和合　一切盡無生	The verse of the Fourth Patriarch, the Reverend Daoxin: Flower seeds have the nature to grow; from the ground, seeds give rise to flowers. If the prior conditions do not come together, nothing at all will grow.
	第五祖弘忍和尚頌曰 有情來下種　無情花即生 無情又無種　心地亦無生	The verse of the Fifth Patriarch, the Reverend Hongren: Sentient beings come and sow the seed; from the insentient, flowers then grow. Without sentience there is no seed, and in the mind-ground, too, nothing grows.
	第六祖惠能和尚頌曰 心地含情種　法雨即花生 自吾花情種　菩提菓自成	The verse of the Sixth Patriarch, the Reverend Huineng: The mind-ground holds sentient seeds; when the dharma rain falls, flowers grow.

15 Scholars generally read this as an allusion to Shenhui, who from AD 732 publicly campaigned for Huineng's line against the Northern school.

16 The five petals are traditionally taken to mean the five patriarchs after Bodhidharma, ending with Huineng.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	When you awaken yourself to the sentient seeds of the flower, the fruit of bodhi forms of itself.
能大師言。汝等聽。吾作二頌。取達摩和尚頌意。汝迷人依此頌修行。必當見性。	Master Huineng said, “Listen, all of you. I have made two verses that take up the meaning of the Reverend Bodhidharma’s verse. You deluded people, practice according to these verses and you will surely see your nature.”
第一頌曰 心地邪花放　五葉逐根隨 共造無明葉　見被葉風吹	The first verse: On the mind-ground wrong flowers open, five petals following from the root; together they make the karma of ignorance, and you see it blown about by the wind of karma.
第二頌曰 心地正花放　五葉逐恨隨 共修般若惠　當來佛菩提	The second verse: On the mind-ground right flowers open, five petals following from the root; together they cultivate the wisdom of prajñā, and what is to come is the bodhi of a buddha.

THE LINE OF TRANSMISSION

Huineng lists the patriarchs through whom the sudden teaching has been handed down.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
六祖說偈已了。放眾生散。門人出外思惟。即知大師不久住世。六祖後至八月三日食後。大師言。汝等善位座。五今共與等別。	Having finished speaking the verses, the Sixth Patriarch dismissed the assembly. The disciples went out and reflected, and realized that the Master would not remain long in the world. Later, on the third day of the eighth month, after the meal, the Master said, “Take your seats in order, all of you. I am now going to take leave of you.”
法海聞言。此頓教法傳受。從上已來至今幾代。六祖言。初傳受七佛釋迦牟尼佛。第七大迦葉。第八阿難。第九末田地。第十商那和修。第十一優婆毱多。第十二提多迦。第十三佛陀難提。第十四佛陀密多。第十五脇比丘。第十六富那奢。第十七馬鳴。第十八毘羅長者。第十九龍樹。第二十迦那提婆。第二十一羅睺羅。第二十二僧迦那提。第二十三僧迦那舍。	Fahai asked, “This dharma of the sudden teaching—from the beginning until now, through how many generations has it been handed down?” The Sixth Patriarch said, “It was first handed down through the seven buddhas, of whom Śākyamuni Buddha was the last. Seventh, Mahākāśyapa; eighth, Ānanda; ninth, Madhyāntika; tenth, Śāṇakavāsa; eleventh, Upagupta; twelfth, Dhṛtaka; thirteenth, Buddhanandi; fourteenth, Buddhamitra; fifteenth, the monk Pārśva; sixteenth, Puṇyayaśas; seventeenth, Aśvaghoṣa; eighteenth, the elder Kapimala; nineteenth, Nāgārjuna; twentieth, Kāṇadeva; twenty-first, Rāhulata; twenty-second, Saṅghanandi; twenty-third, Saṅghayaśas;[17]

17 The numbering is the manuscript’s; this list differs from the later standard Chan lineage of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, and some names (Śāṇakavāsa, Upagupta) appear twice.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
344c	第二十四鳩摩羅馱。第二十五闍耶多。第二十六婆修盤多。第二十七摩拏羅。第二十八鶴勒那。第二十九師子比丘。第三十舍那婆斯。第三十一優婆堀。第三十二僧迦羅。第三十三須婆蜜多。第三十四南天竹國王子。第三子菩提達摩。第三十五唐國僧惠可。第三十六僧璨。第三十七道信。第三十八弘忍。第三十九惠能自身當今受法第十四。	twenty-fourth, Kumāralāta; twenty-fifth, Jayata; twenty-sixth, Vasubandhu; twenty-seventh, Manorhita; twenty-eighth, Haklena; twenty-ninth, Siṃha Bhikṣu; thirtieth, Śāṇakavāsa; thirty-first, Upagupta; thirty-second, Saṅgharakṣa; thirty-third, Subhamitra; thirty-fourth, Bodhidharma, third son of a king of South India; thirty-fifth, Huike, a monk of the land of Tang; thirty-sixth, Sengcan; thirty-seventh, Daoxin; thirty-eighth, Hongren; thirty-ninth, I myself, Huineng, who have now received the dharma."[18]
	大師言。今日已後。迎相傳受。須有依約。莫失宗旨。	The Master said, "From today on, as you hand it on from one to another, there must be something to rely on as a pledge. Do not lose the teaching."

THE VERSE OF THE TRUE BUDDHA

Huineng leaves a verse saying that the buddha is found by knowing living beings.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
法海又白。大師今去留付何法。今後代人如何見佛。六祖言。汝聽。後代迷人。但識眾生即能見佛。若不識眾生覓佛。萬劫不得見也。五今教汝。識眾生見佛。更留見真佛解脫頌。迷即不見佛。悟者即見。法海願聞代代流傳。世世不絕。	Fahai spoke again: "Master, now that you are going, what dharma will you leave and entrust to us? How will people of later generations see the buddha?" The Sixth Patriarch said, "Listen. Deluded people of later generations need only know living beings, and they will be able to see the buddha. If they seek the buddha without knowing living beings, they will not see the buddha in ten thousand kalpas. Now I will teach you how to know living beings and see the buddha, and I will also leave you a verse on seeing the true buddha and liberation. Deluded, one does not see the buddha; awakened, one sees." Fahai asked to hear it, so that it might be handed down from generation to generation and never be cut off.
六祖言。汝聽。吾汝與說。後代世人。若欲覓佛。但識佛心眾生即能識佛即像有眾。離眾生無佛心	The Sixth Patriarch said, "Listen, and I will tell you. If people of later generations want to seek the buddha, they need only know that the buddha-mind is in living beings, and then they can know the buddha. For the buddha-mind depends on living beings: apart from living beings there is no buddha-mind.[19]
迷即佛眾生　悟即眾生佛 愚癡佛眾生　智惠眾生佛	"Deluded, a buddha is a living being; awakened, a living being is a buddha.

18 The manuscript ends the list with a stray "fourteenth," probably miscopied for "fortieth" (counting Śākyamuni); it is omitted here.

19 The manuscript is garbled here; the translation follows the usual restoration.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
	心劍佛眾生　平等眾生佛 一生心若劍　佛在眾生中 一念吾若平　即眾生自佛 我心自有佛　自佛是真佛 自若無佛心　向何處求佛	Foolish, a buddha is a living being; wise, a living being is a buddha. With a crooked mind, a buddha is a living being; with an even mind, a living being is a buddha. If once in a lifetime the mind turns crooked, the buddha is inside a living being. If for one thought you awaken to evenness, the living being is itself a buddha. My own mind has its own buddha, and one's own buddha is the true buddha. If you yourself had no buddha-mind, where would you look for the buddha?"
	大師言。汝等門人好住。吾留一頌。名自性真佛解脫頌。後代迷門此頌意。意即見自心自性真佛。焉汝此頌。吾共汝別。頌曰	The Master said, "Stay well, my disciples. I leave you a verse called 'The Verse of the True Buddha of One's Own Nature and Liberation.' If deluded people of later generations grasp the meaning of this verse, they will see the true buddha of their own mind and their own nature. I give you this verse, and with it I take leave of you." The verse said:
345a	真如淨性是真佛　邪見三毒是真摩 邪見之人摩在舍　正見知人佛則過 性眾邪見三毒生　即是摩王來住舍 正見忽則三毒生　摩變成佛真無假 化身報身及淨身　三身無本是一身 若向身中覓自見　即是佛菩提因 本從花身生淨性　淨性常在花身中 性使花身行正道　當來員漏最真無	Suchness, the pure nature, is the true buddha; wrong views and the three poisons are the true Māra. In a person of wrong views, Māra is in the house; in a person of right views, the buddha comes to call. When wrong views and the three poisons arise in the nature, it is Māra the king come to live in the house. When right views do away with the three poisons, Māra turns into a buddha, true and not false. The transformation body, the reward body and the pure body—these three bodies are originally one body. If you look within your own body and see for yourself, that is the cause of buddhahood and bodhi. From the transformation body the pure nature originally arises; the pure nature is always within the transformation body. The nature makes the transformation body walk the right path, and what is to come is perfect, true and without end.[20]
	婬性本身清淨因　除即婬無淨性身 性中但自離吾欲　見性剎那即是真 今生若吾頓教門　悟即眼前見性尊	The nature of lust is at root the cause of purity: apart from lust there is no body of the pure nature. Only leave the five desires in your nature yourself,

20 Māra is the tempter who tried to obstruct the Buddha's awakening; the three poisons are greed, anger and ignorance.

CHINESE

若欲修行云覓佛　不知何處欲求真
若能身中自有真　有真即是成佛因
自不求真外覓佛　去覓總是大癡人
頓教法者是西流　求度世人須自修
今保世間學道者　不於此是大悠悠

ENGLISH

and the instant you see your nature, that is the true.
If in this life you awaken to the gate of the sudden teaching, in that awakening you will see the Honored One before your eyes.
If you mean to practice and seek the buddha, you will not know where to look for the true.
If within your own body you can have the true, having the true is the cause of becoming a buddha.
Not seeking the true in yourself but looking outside for the buddha—all who go looking like that are utterly foolish.
The dharma of the sudden teaching came from the West; to save the people of the world, you must practice yourself.
Now I tell all in the world who study the way: not to rely on this is to drift far astray.

HUINENG'S DEATH

Huineng gives last instructions and dies; marvels follow and he is buried at Caoxi.

CHINESE

大師說偈已了。遂告門人曰。汝等好住。今共汝別。吾去已後。莫作世情悲泣。而受人予門錢帛著孝衣。即非聖法。非我弟子。如吾在日一種。一時端坐。但無動無淨無生無滅無去無來無是無非無住。但然寂淨即是大道。吾去已後。但衣法修行。共吾在日一種。吾若在世。汝違教法。吾住無益。

大師云此語已。夜至三更。奄然遷花。大師春秋七十有六。大師滅度。諸日寺內異香氳氳。經數日不散。山用地動。林木變白。日月無光。風雲失色。八月三日滅度。至十一月。迎和尚神座於漕溪山。葬在龍龕之內。白光出現直上衝天旨始散。韶州刺使韋處立碑。至今供養。

ENGLISH

Having finished the verse, the Master told the disciples, "Stay well, all of you. Now I take leave of you. After I am gone, do not weep in the worldly way, and do not accept people's condolence gifts of money and silk or wear mourning clothes. That would not be the holy dharma, and those who did so would not be my disciples. Be just as when I was alive. Sit upright all together. Only be without motion or stillness, without arising or ceasing, without going or coming, without right or wrong, without abiding. Only be calm and still: this is the great way. After I am gone, simply practice according to the dharma, just as when I was alive. Even if I were still in the world, if you went against the teaching, my staying would be of no use."

When the Master had spoken these words, at the third watch of the night, the Master passed peacefully away. The Master was seventy-six years old. On the day the Master entered extinction, a rare fragrance filled the temple and did not disperse for several days. The mountains crumbled and the earth shook; the trees of the forest turned white; the sun and moon lost their light; wind and clouds lost their color. The Master entered extinction on the third day of the eighth month; in the eleventh

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
		month the reverend's coffin was received at Mount Caoxi and buried within the dragon niche. A white light appeared, rising straight up into the sky, and only after two days did it disperse. Wei Qu, the prefect of Shaozhou, erected a stele, and offerings are made there to this day.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THIS SUTRA

The text records who kept this sutra after Fahai and to whom it may be given.

	CHINESE	ENGLISH
345b	此壇經。法海上座集。上座無常。付同學道際。道際無常。付門人悟真。悟真在嶺南溪漕山法興寺。見今傳受此法。如付山法須德座上恨知心信佛法。立大悲持此經。以為衣承。於今不絕。	This Platform Sutra was compiled by the head monk Fahai. At the head monk's death it was entrusted to a fellow student, Daoji; at Daoji's death, to a disciple, Wuzhen. Wuzhen lives at Faxing Temple on Mount Caoxi in Lingnan and is now transmitting this dharma. Whoever is entrusted with this dharma must have superior capacity and wisdom, a mind that believes in the Buddha's dharma, and a firm foundation of great compassion. Holding this sutra serves as the proof of succession, and to this day it has not been cut off.[21]
	和尚本是韶州曲江縣人也。如來入涅盤。法教流東土。共傳無住即我心無住。此真菩薩。說真示行。實喻唯教大智人。是旨衣凡度誓修行。修行遭難不退。遇苦能忍。福德深厚。方授此法。如根性不堪林量不得須求此法。達立不德者不得妄付壇經。告諸同道者令諸蜜意	The reverend was originally a native of Qujiang district in Shaozhou. When the Tathāgata entered nirvāṇa, the teaching flowed into the lands of the East. What all have passed on is non-abiding, that is, the non-abiding of my mind. This true bodhisattva taught the truth and showed the practice, teaching with true parables only people of great wisdom. This is the purpose to rely on: only to one who vows to practice, who does not turn back when meeting hardship in practice, who can bear suffering, and whose merit and virtue are deep and abundant, may this dharma be given. If someone's capacities are not equal to it and their abilities fall short, then even if they seek this dharma it must not be given; and no one who breaks the rules and lacks virtue may be carelessly given the Platform Sutra. I tell all fellow followers of the way, so that they may know its hidden meaning.[22]
	南宗頓教最上大乘壇經法一卷	The Platform Sutra of the Sudden Teaching of the Southern School, the Supreme Great Vehicle: one scroll.

21 Daoji and Wuzhen, named here as the text's later keepers, are not otherwise known.

22 This colophon is badly corrupt; "the reverend" here may be Wuzhen rather than Huineng, whose home was Xinzhou.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
大乘志三十　大聖志四十　大通志五十　大寶志六十　大法志七十　大德志八十　清之藏志三十　清持藏志四十　清寶藏志五十　清蓮藏志六十　清海藏志七十　大法藏志八十　此是菩薩法號	Great Vehicle Resolve, thirty; Great Sage Resolve, forty; Great Penetration Resolve, fifty; Great Treasure Resolve, sixty; Great Dharma Resolve, seventy; Great Virtue Resolve, eighty; Pure Wisdom Store Resolve, thirty; Pure Upholding Store Resolve, forty; Pure Treasure Store Resolve, fifty; Pure Lotus Store Resolve, sixty; Pure Ocean Store Resolve, seventy; Great Dharma Store Resolve, eighty. These are bodhisattva dharma names.[23]

23 This list, added at the end of the manuscript, is obscure: it seems to pair dharma names with numbers, possibly ages. “Wisdom” reads the manuscript’s 之 as 智.