

## Transmission and Enlightenment in Chan Buddhism Seen Through the *Platform Sūtra* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經)

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### Abstract

As is well-known, the notion of transmission of the Dharma is at the center of Chan Buddhist identity and self-understanding. In the mature Chan school, the basis for Dharma transmission is seen as the moment when a Chan master recognizes that a student has attained the same enlightened state that he himself has achieved. By receiving Dharma transmission the student becomes a member of a Chan lineage that goes directly back to the Buddha himself and, in principle, his enlightenment is recognized as equal to that of all the past masters in his lineage. However, in spite of the powerful simplicity and enduring appeal of this model, the recognition of enlightenment and the transmission of the Dharma have always been complex and, at times, contested issues in Chan Buddhism. Also, evidence indicates that Chan Buddhist ideas about enlightenment and transmission of the Dharma were not stationary but changed over time.

The archetype of Chan Dharma transmission was the transmission to Huineng, the sixth patriarch of Chan. Huineng's story and his teaching of sudden enlightenment was entombed in the *Platform Sutra*, the most famous, and no doubt most widely read, of all Chan texts. The *Platform Sutra* is concerned with both the transmission to Huineng and the transmission of his teachings to later generations. Since a number of different versions of the *Platform Sutra* are available to us it is possible to trace changes in how the issue of transmission is dealt with, and enlightenment depicted, through the evolution of the text. In this paper, I discuss developments in the conceptualization of transmission and enlightenment in the *Platform Sutra*'s main line of development, beginning with the earliest version found at Dunhuang leading down to the orthodox version included in the Taishō canon. The four versions of the *Platform Sutra* discussed span at least five centuries, from the beginnings of Chan to the mature Chan school in the late Song and early Yuan, and in important ways reflect overall developments within Chan.

Key words: 1. Chan Buddhism 2. Dharma transmission 3. enlightenment  
4. *Platform Sutra* 5. Huineng

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## Introduction

As is well-known, the notion of transmission of the Dharma is at the center of Chan Buddhist identity and self-understanding. The basis for Dharma transmission is seen as the moment when a Chan master recognizes that a student has attained the same enlightened state that he himself has achieved. The Dharma transmission itself is presented as a wordless transmission from master to disciple concerning absolute insight into the nature of ultimate reality. In orthodox Chan mythology the Chan Dharma transmission began with the transmission from the Buddha Śākyamuni to his disciple Mahākāśyapa and was then continued from one person to the next in a single line with only one lineage holder per generation. However, when the lineage reached the thirty-third patriarch, Huineng 慧 (惠) 能 (638–713) who was the sixth patriarch in China, the single-line patriarchy ended and the lineage branched out and proliferated giving rise to the Chinese Chan school as we now know it.

Of course, scholars have long realized that the single-lineage Chan patriarchy is entirely fictional and that it did not find its final form until the tenth century. What is more, the crucial sixth patriarch of Chan, Huineng, is an elusive figure about whom we know next to nothing and it is very doubtful that he really played the role of father of the Chinese Chan school that later hagiography assigned to him. However, to the mature Chan school in the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279) and later the lineage was at the very foundation of its self-understanding. The content of the transmission was, of course, entirely in the religious realm, but the transmission line itself was understood, and meant to be understood, as historical fact. Any Chan lineage can be traced straight back to Huineng, the sixth patriarch, and further through the first patriarch, Bodhidharma (Putidamo 菩提達摩, fifth century), all the way back to Śākyamuni Buddha and his six predecessors. The implication was that those who had received the transmission possessed an insight which was, in principle, identical to that of the Buddha himself. In a very real sense, then, the members of the lineage were living Buddhas, and only through the association with one of them could one gain the same special knowledge and receive the transmission oneself. Receiving the transmission would secure the recipient a place in the transmission line, which was like a complex family tree harking back to a single ancestor, i.e., the historical Buddha.<sup>1</sup> It is the power of the lineage that

<sup>1</sup> In fact, family terms were often used within the Chan lineage, such as *shu* 叔 ‘uncle’ to indicate one’s master’s fellow disciples, or *zu* 祖 ‘grandfather’ for one’s master’s master.

gives authority to the Dharma-transmission and validates the student's enlightenment as a reenactment of that of the Buddha. Only someone who has a Dharma transmission and thereby is in the Chan lineage can be said to be a member of the Chan school, and a Chan master's entire claim to legitimacy rested with his (or her) recognized position in the transmission line.<sup>2</sup> In this way, the lineage was seen both as the vehicle for a mysterious transmission of a wordless truth and a very concrete historical fact.

The ultimate model for Chan transmission was the transmission from the fifth patriarch, Hongren 五祖弘忍 (ca. 600–674) to Huineng who became the sixth patriarch. While the early masters in the lineage, including Hongren, always remained somewhat aloof and inaccessible characters in Chan literature, Huineng became one of the most beloved and famed figures of Chan, largely due to the text that supposedly was spoken by him, the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經). In the present paper I will discuss the development of the depiction of transmission and lineage as presented to us in several different versions of the *Platform Sutra*. By looking at different dateable editions of the *Platform Sutra* we will be able to draw some conclusions about how the concept of transmission evolved and how concerns about it changed over time. I see the *Platform Sutra* as creating a model that deeply influenced developments in Chan, while at the same time the text itself was shaped by these developments.

### The *Platform Sutra*

The *Platform Sutra* is one of the best known, most beloved and most widely read of all Chan texts. The first part of the *Platform Sutra* tells in dramatic fashion of how an illiterate seller of firewood known as Huineng is initially enlightened upon hearing the Diamond Sutra recited. This inspires him to travel to the monastery of the fifth patriarch of Chan, Hongren, where, in spite of the fact that Hongren recognizes his superior understanding, Huineng is employed as a lowly worker. Later Huineng proves himself by composing a poem illustrating an understanding of inherent Buddha-nature that is vastly superior to that of the favored disciple of Hongren, Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706). Then, in the secrecy of night, Hongren gives Huineng Dharma transmission as the sixth patriarch and also transmits the robe of the first patriarch Bodhidharma to him. Fearing that people will harm Huineng,

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of some of these issues see T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," *Religion and Society in Tang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia B. Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 147–208.

Hongren sends him away and tells him to stay hidden for several years. Eluding those who want to kill him and take Bodhidharma's robe, Huineng escapes. He eventually becomes publicly recognized as the sixth patriarch and the second part of the *Platform Sutra* records Huineng's sermons and encounters with disciples and others, as well as protracted parting instructions to his disciples before his death.

The great appeal of the *Platform Sutra* to both monastics and laypeople probably lies in its dramatic and exciting narrative and in the fact that Huineng is depicted as both illiterate and a lay person when he receives Hongren's Dharma (he is, however, understood to later become a monk even if this is not always made explicit). Huineng's exchange of poems with Shenxiu illustrates in a lucid fashion the doctrine of inherent Buddha-nature, and once and for all establishes the superiority of the "sudden" teaching that affords complete and direct insight into a person's enlightened self-nature.

Scholarship on early Chan was transformed after the discovery in the beginning of the twentieth century of a number of texts relating to the early Chan movement in the cave library at Dunhuang, which also contained an early version of the *Platform Sutra*. Using this and other materials scholars have long ago shown that the story of Huineng should be understood in the context of competition among different factions of Chan in the years after Hongren's demise, and that virtually nothing in the *Platform Sutra* can be taken as historical fact.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the exchange of poems with Shenxiu and the story of Huineng's transmission from Hongren, as well as other features of the *Platform Sutra*, are reflections of the struggle by the monk Shenhui 神會 (684–758)<sup>4</sup> to have himself recognized as the main heir of Huineng and the rightful seventh patriarch. However, it is clear that there are a

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<sup>3</sup> See the ground-breaking work by Hu Shih in *Shenhui heshang yiji* 神會和尚遺集 (Shanghai, 1930), and in "The Development of Zen Buddhism in China," *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 15.4 (1932): 475–505. See also Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki Zenshū shisho no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967); Philip B. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986); and John Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers in Far Eastern History* 35 (1987): 89–133.

<sup>4</sup> This is a revised set of dates, earlier Shenhui's dates were thought to be 670–762. See John R. McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in Early Ch'an Buddhism," in *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, ed. Peter N. Gregory, *Studies in East Asian Buddhism*, no. 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

number of different voices in the early *Platform Sutra*; that of Shenhui and his faction is not the only one. Additionally, the *Platform Sutra* is unique in that several different versions are extant. Not only is there the Dunhuang version and what I call the orthodox version that is contained in the Taishō canon, but with several other editions found in Japan, there are now at least seven distinct versions of the *Platform Sutra* available. Several of these versions are considerably different from each other. These differences provide a fascinating window on the development of some of the key points of Chan Buddhism.

A number of years ago I published an article that attempted to determine how the different extant editions of the *Platform Sutra* were related to each other, employing the methodology of textual criticism.<sup>5</sup> Although, as part of a larger project on the *Platform Sutra*, I plan to revise this article at a later point to address new research and some new evidence,<sup>6</sup> I still believe its main conclusions to be correct, or at least to be the best estimate that can be made with the available data. In any case, there is no doubt that the methodology of textual criticism is a crucial tool for determining the relationship between the different editions of the *Platform Sutra* and it is disappointing that much of the more recent scholarship on the *Platform Sutra* and other Buddhist texts has ignored textual criticism altogether.<sup>7</sup> For example, all too often, so-called critical editions of texts that exist in multiple versions are created by choosing the readings from each of the versions that make most sense to the scholar preparing the edition. This procedure creates an entirely new text, different from all the previous versions of the text and so actually obscures rather than illuminates the history of the text.

To briefly summarize the points I made in my earlier article that are relevant

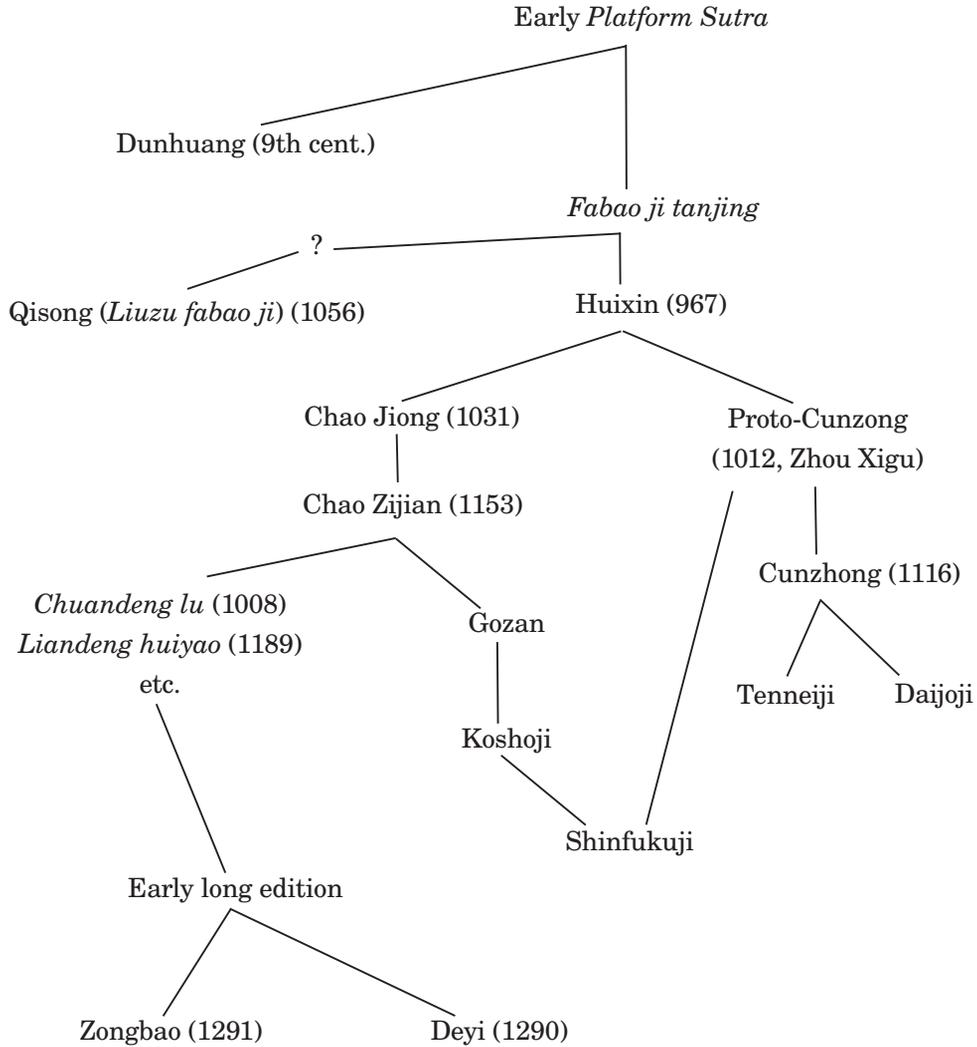
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<sup>5</sup> Morten Schlütter, "A Study in the Genealogy of the *Platform Sūtra*," *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 2 (1989): 53–114. Textual criticism has been used extensively in Christian biblical studies to determine the most authentic readings when manuscripts vary.

<sup>6</sup> One of the most exciting recent events for the study of the *Platform Sutra* is the publication of a second complete manuscript edition found at Dunhuang, discovered in the collections of the Dunhuang District Museum. See the text in Pan Chonggui 潘重規, *Dunhuang Tanjing xinshu* 敦煌壇經新書 (Taipei: Fotuo jiaoyu jijin hui, 1994), and Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, *Dunhuang xinben Liuzu tanjing* 敦煌新本六祖壇經 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993). A preliminary study shows that the text of this edition is almost identical to the text of the well-known Dunhuang manuscript in the Stein collection in the British Museum.

<sup>7</sup> See a summary of recent scholarship on the *Platform Sutra* in John Jorgensen, "The *Platform Sutra* and the Corpus of Shenhui: Recent Critical Text Editions and Studies," *Revue Bibliographique de Sinologie*, Vol. 20, 2002: 399–438.

Figure 1.



for the present paper, we know that a monk named Huixin 惠昕 (d.u.)<sup>8</sup> in 967 took an “old version” (or perhaps several versions) of the *Platform Sutra* similar to, but not identical to, the ones currently known from Dunhuang, and revised the text in certain ways, also dividing it into eleven chapters and two fascicles. Huixin’s original edition is lost, but several editions of the *Platform Sutra* in eleven chapters and

<sup>8</sup> Otherwise unknown.

two fascicles that must be ultimately based on Huixin's text are extant. In my earlier article I determined that one of these editions, probably edited by Chao Zijian 晁子健 (d.u.)<sup>9</sup> in 1153 but now known from a Japanese printed edition found at the Kōshōji in Kyoto, was the direct basis for a new and considerably longer edition of the *Platform Sutra* in ten chapters and one fascicle which also added much material from the 1004 *Jingde chuangdeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 and other sources, and which eventually became the orthodox version. This orthodox version exists in a number of different variant editions, the texts of which are all fundamentally similar, and it is at present unclear both exactly when the root edition to the orthodox version was created and who the main figure behind it was (it was almost certainly not the scholar-monk Qisong 契嵩 [1007–1072], although he is often credited for it). Below I reproduce a chart from my earlier article which summarizes my findings (see Figure 1).

In the current study I will, because of space limitations, concentrate on the *Platform Sutra's* main line of evolution. That is, I will start with the Dunhuang version which is the earliest complete version we have. Then I will turn my attention to the Huixin version. Huixin's version is not extant, but we can safely assume that everything that is common in the extant eleven-chapter editions of the *Platform Sutra* was part of the Huixin edition. Furthermore, when the eleven-chapter texts differ we can assume that the readings that are the closest to the Dunhuang version were most like Huixin's edition. The next version I will look at is the text that Chao Zijian prepared in 1153, as represented in the Kōshōji edition. Finally I will address the orthodox version, as found in the Taishō canon.

## The Dunhuang Version

The early development of the *Platform Sutra* is shrouded in the mists of time, and we will probably never know much for certain about it. The Dunhuang version of the text, the earliest complete edition we have, is almost certainly a product of a long evolution with elements coming together from several different Chan groups with different agendas, as the uneven character of the text and its internal inconsistencies attest. From extant catalogues and other sources we have indications that there were other versions of the *Platform Sutra* in circulation which were similar

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<sup>9</sup> See Chang Bide et al, *Songren chuanji ziliao suoyin* (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1975), vol. 3, p. 1947, for a list of references to him.

to, but also different from, the extant Dunhuang version.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, we have two different complete manuscripts from Dunhuang that are almost identical, and several fragments that also correspond to the extant Dunhuang texts.<sup>11</sup> This makes it clear that the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* does not just represent the idiosyncratic and careless copying of one individual, but that it was a text that at one point must have been widely circulated.

Transmission and authority were clearly very much at the center of the early layers of the *Platform Sutra* that we have access to. Perhaps the earliest layer we can discern using the method of textual criticism is one that strongly promoted the monk Shenhui's position as the main heir of Huineng and even as the seventh patriarch. As is well known, Shenhui began in 732 his attacks on what he called the "Northern School" of Chan and on the monk Puji 普寂 (651–739).<sup>12</sup> Puji was the main heir of the prominent disciple of the fifth patriarch Hongren, named Shenxiu. The story of Shenhui's crusade is too well known to merit detailed repetition, but Shenhui's main points of criticism were that the Northern School taught an inferior gradual and dualistic approach to enlightenment, and that it had usurped the position of the sixth patriarch by claiming that title for Shenxiu. According to Shenhui, the real heir to Hongren was Huineng, who had founded a Southern school of Chan that was infinitely superior to the Northern School. Huineng was, in fact, a somewhat obscure monk whose name was first listed among the ten disciples of Hongren in the *Lengqie renfa zhi* 楞伽人法志, a work probably from the early eight century, where he is said to be a master of only local significance.<sup>13</sup> Shenhui claimed to be the disciple of Huineng, and the underlying implication of his denunciation of the Northern School and promotion of Huineng and the Southern School was that he, Shenhui, and not Puji, was the rightful seventh patriarch.

Much of the material in the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* seems to have originated with Shenhui and his followers, such as many of the details about

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<sup>10</sup> See Schlütter, "A Study in the Genealogy of the *Platform Sūtra*."

<sup>11</sup> Pan, *Dunhuang Tanjing xinshu* conveniently includes both of the complete Dunhuang editions of the *Platform Sutra* and several fragments.

<sup>12</sup> The story of Shenhui's crusade was first brought to light in Hu Shih (1930 and 1932), For a recent discussion of Shenhui see John McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment." As McRae points out, echoing Yanagida, there was no "Northern School" until Shenhui started talking about it.

<sup>13</sup> See Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no Zenshi, I, Zen no goroku, no. 2* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1971), p. 273. The *Lengqie renfa zhi* is the only early source not connected with Shenhui which mentions Huineng.

Huineng's life, the passages of praise for Shenhui and the indication that Huineng secretly had bestowed his Dharma on someone who twenty years after Huineng's death would restore his teachings to their rightful place. However, there is also much in the Dunhuang version that cannot have come from Shenhui's camp, such as doctrinal positions that seem to contradict Shenhui's writings, and the description of Shenhui's first encounter with Huineng which is rather unflattering to someone who later would promote himself as the seventh patriarch. I believe we can safely assume the past existence of an earlier version of the *Platform Sutra*, no longer extant, which was much more unequivocally promoting Shenhui than the current Dunhuang version.<sup>14</sup> The existence of such a "Shenhui" edition is further indicated by some "relics" (bits of text that are clearly from an earlier layer) in the editions descended from Huixin's version. As already discussed Huixin's version is no longer extant, but in the Japanese Daijōji/Tenneiji/Shinpukuji editions, in the passage towards the end where Huineng predicts the appearance of Shenhui, it is said that the person who would restore Huineng's Dharma after twenty years would be from Nanyang xian 南陽縣 and that he would propagate it in the Luoyang area.<sup>15</sup> This makes it even clearer that the prediction points to Shenhui, who was in a monastery at Nanyang and who began his crusade in Luoyang in 732, but the passage is not included in the Dunhuang edition. This addition must have been present in the version of the text that the three editions were based on, probably Huixin's, but by the time Huixin compiled his version in 967 the controversy was long over and largely forgotten and it is unlikely Huixin would have added the detail. It must therefore have been present in the text (or one of the texts) that Huixin used as his basis. The same passage in the Kōshōji edition, which also derives from Huixin's edition, does not have the passage about the reviver of Huineng's Dharma being from Nanyang although it does include the bit about him propagating the Dharma in the Luoyang area. However, the Kōshōji edition continues by having Huineng state "if it is not this person the [Bodhidharma's] robe should not be transmitted," while the other texts have "you must now know that the robe will not be transmitted" (which makes much more sense given the context).<sup>16</sup> The remark about the robe found in the Kōshōji edition may well have been originally made in response

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<sup>14</sup> It is possible that this version had the title *Liuzu fabao ji* which is attested to in a number of catalogues and other sources. See Schlütter, "A Study in the Genealogy of the *Platform Sūtra*."

<sup>15</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 58.

<sup>16</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 58.

to the claim by the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記, from around 780,<sup>17</sup> that Huineng sent the robe to the Empress Wu who later gave it to Hongren's disciple Zhishen 智誥 (609–702).<sup>18</sup> Again, this is unlikely to have been a concern of the editor of the Kōshōji edition or its direct precursors and therefore must have been retained by Huixin from an earlier edition (but discarded by Zhou Xigu 周希古, who in 1012 prepared the edition that became the ancestor to the Daijōji and the Tenneiji editions, and partly to the Shinpukuji edition).

Yanagida Seizan has suggested that the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* as it now stands is a likely product of the monk Wuzhen 悟眞, a disciple of Huineng's disciple Daoji 道際 (in the Dunhuang museum edition written 道際). This is based on the notation at the end of the Dunhuang version which says that its compiler, Fahai 法海, at his death entrusted the *Platform Sutra* to his fellow disciple Daoji, who when he died passed it on to his disciple Wuzhen, who now is transmitting the Dharma at the Faxing monastery in Caoqi.<sup>19</sup> Yanagida feels that Wuzhen had the text in this version produced in competition with the teachings and disciples of Shenhui.<sup>20</sup> While Yanagida's suggestions in many ways seem very reasonable,<sup>21</sup> it is rather strange that Wuzhen did not have the name of his teacher Daoji included in the list of Huineng's ten main disciples that occurs towards the end of the text. Also, if Wuzhen was in competition with Shenhui's group, it would have seemed natural if he had taken out the passages in the *Platform Sutra* that extol Shenhui. But perhaps Wuzhen simply took an existing text and added the bit about its transmission to himself at the end. Of course, this leaves the problem of who then produced the text that Wuzhen used.

Interestingly, in the Huixin version of the *Platform Sutra*, discussed below, we find a passage at the end of the text that corresponds to the passage in the Dunhuang version describing the transmission of the text. However, in the Huixin version it says that when Fahai passed away he transmitted the *Platform Sutra* to Zhidao 志道, who transmitted it to Bi'an 彼岸, who transmitted it to Wuzhen 悟眞,

<sup>17</sup> This work was also found at Dunhuang. See T 51, pp. 179a–196b. It is reproduced and translated in Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no Zenshi, II*, Zen no goroku, no. 3 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1976).

<sup>18</sup> See the *Lidai fabao ji* in Yanagida, *Shoki no Zenshi, II*, pp. 129–30.

<sup>19</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 345b. Daoji and Wuzhen are otherwise unknown.

<sup>20</sup> Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, “Goroku no rekishi: Zen bunken no seiritsu shiteki kenkyū 語録の歴史—禪文獻の成立史的研究,” *Tōhō gaku* 57 (1985): 211–663.

<sup>21</sup> Yanagida had earlier advanced a more complicated theory, that suggested the *Platform Sutra*'s compiler Fahai was associated with the Oxhead school of Chan and that the text should be seen as a product of that school. See Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū*, pp. 195–209.

who transmitted it to Yuanhui 圓會.<sup>22</sup> Nothing further is said about Yuanhui or any of the others in this lineage, but Zhidao is likely the same as the Zhidao who is mentioned in all the versions of the *Platform Sutra* as one of Huineng's ten main disciples. It would also seem that Wuzhen is the same Wuzhen who was mentioned in the Dunhuang version in this passage, although he is here given a completely different lineage. It seems clear that this passage was retained by Huixin from the edition he used and further proves that this text was not identical to the Dunhuang version. But it also shows us that the provenance of the *Platform Sutra* is extremely complex and that it was used by different groups as a legitimizing text.

These questions cannot be pursued here. Whatever the provenance of the Dunhuang version, we should consider the text in its current form as a whole, as it clearly was by its early readers. A major concern of the Dunhuang version is the transmission of the Dharma. This operates on several different levels. First, of course, there is an overarching concern with establishing Huineng as the sixth patriarch, an issue which the text addresses several times. The famous exchange of poems with Shenxiu and the following secret midnight meeting with Hongren, in which Hongren expounds the *Diamond Sutra* to Huineng who is “immediately awakened,” constitutes the core narrative.<sup>23</sup> As the culmination, Huineng is pronounced the sixth patriarch and is given Bodhidharma's robe. In the narrative Huineng's superiority is confirmed and Shenxiu's thought repudiated, although Shenxiu himself remains an oddly sympathetic figure. Still, conflict is very much part of the story as Hongren warns Huineng that people in his monastery might harm him, and Huineng is in fact pursued by people who want to kill him and steal the robe and the Dharma (although it is not clear how the last would have been possible!). When the fierce Huiming 惠明 (called Huishun 惠順 in the Dunhuang version) finally catches up with Huineng, he is converted by Huineng's teaching and is immediately enlightened.<sup>24</sup>

When Huineng moves on to his sermon right after this short “autobiography,” the text again has him affirm his authority as he states that his teaching has been handed down from the sages of the past.<sup>25</sup> Later, Huineng reiterates that when he was with Hongren he experienced a great enlightenment hearing the teaching just

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<sup>22</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 65.

<sup>23</sup> T48, no. 2007, pp. 337b–338a.

<sup>24</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 338a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 134. Interestingly, the transmission line histories have Huiming as the heir to the fifth patriarch Hongren.

<sup>25</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 338b. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 134.

once.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the text has Huineng confirm, when asked by Prefect Wei, that his Dharma is the essentials of the first patriarch Bodhidharma.<sup>27</sup>

Thus the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* does much to convince its readers that Huineng is the rightful sixth patriarch of Chan and Hongren's chosen successor. The text also establishes Huineng's lineage as an unbroken chain of person-to-person transmission going directly back to the Buddha Śākyamuni. Just before he passes away, Huineng is asked about his lineage. He answers by listing the seven Buddhas of the past, followed by twenty-seven Indian patriarchs and the six patriarchs in China beginning with Bodhidharma and ending with Huineng himself. Everyone is numbered consecutively so Huineng declares himself the fortieth in the lineage.<sup>28</sup> This version of the lineage was revised in various ways in later editions of the *Platform Sutra* as we shall see further below.

The Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* is of course also concerned with the continuation of Huineng's teaching through his disciples and the further transmission of his Dharma. However, the text here is quite ambiguous in several ways. First of all, it both promotes Shenhui as Huineng's main heir (and by extension the seventh patriarch) and has a list of ten disciples that seems to indicate that the single-line patriarchate has ended. Towards the end of the text, Huineng calls to him ten of his disciples, who each are named, and tells them that they are different from other people and that after he dies they will each become a master somewhere.<sup>29</sup> Huineng then tells them that he will explain the basic Dharma to them so that the teaching will not become lost and proceeds to give a lengthy Abhidharma-type explanation. The text then continues, in Philip Yampolsky's translation:

The Master said: "You ten disciples, when later you transmit the Dharma, hand down the teaching of the one scroll of the *Platform Sutra*; then you will not lose the basic teaching. Those who do not receive the *Platform Sutra* do not have the essentials of my teaching. As of now you have received them; hand them down and spread them among later generations. If others are able to encounter the *Platform Sutra*, it will be as if they received the teaching personally from me." These ten monks received the teaching, made copies of the *Platform Sutra*, handed them down, and spread them among later generations. Those who received them have without fail seen into their own true natures.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 340c. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 151.

<sup>27</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 341a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 155.

<sup>28</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 344b–c. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 179.

<sup>29</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 343b. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 170.

<sup>30</sup> Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 173–4. T48, no. 2007, p. 343c.

The transmission of Huineng's Dharma is here intimately wound up with the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* itself. Even earlier in the text a passage describes the importance of the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* and the manner in which it should be transmitted. Interestingly, this passage is not placed in the mouth of Huineng but appears as a general statement:

If one were to talk about the pivot of his [Huineng's] teaching, it lies in the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* and this serves as the authority. Unless a person has received the *Platform Sutra*, he has not received the sanction. The place, date, and the name of the recipient must be made known, and these are attached to it when it is transmitted. Someone who does not have the *Platform Sutra* and the sanction is not a disciple of the Southern School.<sup>31</sup>

This passage shows us the *Platform Sutra* not only as a text that describes Huineng's Dharma transmission, but as an embodiment of the transmission itself. Other sources indicate that the *Platform Sutra* was used to sanction masters in Shenhui's lineage<sup>32</sup> and, clearly, copies of the *Platform Sutra* functioned in several different circles as a kind of transmission documents. This sort of function is also demonstrated at the very end of the *Platform Sutra* when, as discussed earlier, the text states that Fahai entrusted the *Platform Sutra* to Daoji, who again transmitted it to Wuzhen.<sup>33</sup> Of course, here we get the impression that only a few masters could receive the text in transmission, while the passage above hints at a much broader transmission of a monastic and even lay membership of a wider conceived "Southern school."

In any case, the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* in these passages makes it clear that no single person is to be seen as Huineng's main heir or a "seventh patriarch." Thus, after his recitation of the line of patriarchs Huineng says:

From today on transmit the teaching among yourselves, but be sure that you

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<sup>31</sup> Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 162; translation of T48, no. 2007, p. 342a.

<sup>32</sup> Following Chen Jinhua's interpretation of Wei Chuhou's 韋處厚 (773–828) inscription for Mazu's disciple Dayi 大義 (746–818), which has it that Wei criticized the descendants of Shenhui for using the *Platform Sutra* for Dharma transmission, in QTW 715, 8: 7352b8–9. See Chen Jinhua, "One Name, Three Monks: Two Eighth-Century Northern Chan Masters Emerge from the Shadow of Their Contemporary, the Tiantai Master Zhanran (711–782)" *JIABS* Volume 22, Number 1, 1999:1–91. For a discussion of different interpretations of the passage see Jorgensen, "The *Platform Sutra* and the Corpus of Shenhui."

<sup>33</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 345b. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 182. Yampolsky for some reason here changes the name of Daoji to Daocan 道漦.

have the sanction, and do not let the essentials of the teaching become lost.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, just before his passing away, Huineng states that the robe is not to be handed down and that if one only depends of the meaning of the verse Bodhidharma composed when he received the robe and Dharma there is no need to do so.<sup>35</sup> This further strengthens the notion that there is no single heir to Huineng's Dharma. Huineng then proceeds to quote Bodhidharma's verses and the similar verses of the other Chinese patriarchs ending with himself. However, earlier in the same passage, Huineng responds to Fahai's questioning about the robe and Dharma:

“The Dharma has already been entrusted; that you may not ask. Some twenty years after I have died evil dharmas will run rampant and becloud the essentials of my teaching. Then someone will come forward and, at the risk of his life, fix the correct and false in Buddhism, and raise up the essentials of the teaching. This will be my true Dharma.”<sup>36</sup>

As discussed earlier, this is a clear reference to Shenhui and his campaign for Huineng beginning in 732. The passage bolsters Shenhui's claim to have a special transmission from Huineng and seems to affirm him as the seventh patriarch although he is not actually mentioned by name. A bit earlier, though, Shenhui is singled out as the most accomplished disciple of Huineng. When Huineng tells his disciples that he is about to die Fahai and the other monks begin to weep from sorrow. Only Shenhui is unmoved and has no tears of grief. For this he receives Huineng's high praise, while Huineng tells the others that they have not understood and have wasted their time practicing at his temple these past several years.<sup>37</sup> Harsh words indeed for the other nine disciples whom he earlier had praised as outstanding men that would carry on his teaching.

In fact, the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* never explicitly states that the ten disciples are Huineng's Dharma heirs. In several passages, Huineng rather seems to show little faith in the ability of his chosen disciples, as in the passage just cited and when he feels obliged to explain the “basic teaching” to the disciples so that “it will not become lost.” The real heir to Huineng's Dharma is the *Platform Sutra* itself which, it is repeatedly stressed, is crucial if a person is to see his own nature.

Still, individual passages pertaining to some of the ten disciples show a certain

<sup>34</sup> Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 179. T48, no. 2007, p. 344c.

<sup>35</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 344a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 176.

<sup>36</sup> Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 176. T48, no. 2007, p. 344a.

<sup>37</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 343c. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, p. 174.

concern with Huineng's disciples as enlightened masters-to-be in the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*. The first disciple who figures in a special dialogue with Huineng is Zhicheng 志誠. We are told that Zhicheng was a student of Shenxiu, who sent him to Huineng to find out about Huineng's teaching. Without saying who he was, Zhicheng listened to Huineng preaching the Dharma and as soon as he heard it had an enlightenment and understood his own original mind.<sup>38</sup> The episode of course shows the superiority of Huineng's teaching over that of Shenxiu and Zhicheng becomes a devoted disciple. Then follows the episode with Fada 法達. He comes to Huineng with questions about the *Lotus Sutra*, which of course Huineng cannot read. However, hearing it recited Huineng understands it at once and explains it to Fada. As soon as he hears Huineng's explanation Fada has a great enlightenment and breaks into tears.<sup>39</sup> Then there is the episode with Zhichang 智常, who asks about the three vehicles and the Supreme Vehicle. Huineng gives an explanation, but we are never told Zhichang's reaction.<sup>40</sup> Finally comes the famous episode with Shenhui. Shenhui challenges Huineng by asking him whether in sitting meditation he sees or not. Huineng then thoroughly shames him and Shenhui becomes a devoted disciple. However, nothing is said about Shenhui experiencing enlightenment.<sup>41</sup> All in all, these passages do more to enhance the status of Huineng than that of his disciples who are shown as admiring and faithful students, seemingly far from potential equals to Huineng. Their position as the Dharma heirs of Huineng is never unequivocally established in the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*.

## The Huixin Version

As already mentioned, the Huixin edition is not extant, but it can be tentatively reconstructed on the basis of the extant eleven-chapter editions which, there is little doubt, were ultimately based on Huixin's work. Such a reconstruction of the Huixin edition has been attempted by Ishii Shūdō who, using the Shinpukuji edition as the basis, has prepared an edition where all differences between the Kōshōji, the Kan'ei, Shinpukuji, Daijōji and Tenneiji editions have been listed.<sup>42</sup> Even though

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<sup>38</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 342b–c. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 163–65.

<sup>39</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 342c–343a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 165–68.

<sup>40</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 343a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 168–69.

<sup>41</sup> T48, no. 2007, p. 343a. Cf. Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 169–70.

<sup>42</sup> Ishii Shūdō, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō' no kenkyū—teihon shisaku to Tonkōhon to no taishō,"

I do not agree with Professor Ishii's reconstruction on all points, I have found this edition extremely convenient and generally very accurate in its reproduction of the texts. I will therefore use it for reference in the following.

Huixin used a text of the *Platform Sutra* that was similar to the Dunhuang version, but as I have shown above, not identical to it. In his preface, Huixin notes that the old text of the *Platform Sutra* was troublesome (*fan* 繁)<sup>43</sup> and students who first picked it up with delight later came to dislike it. He then states that he divided the text into two fascicles and eleven chapters.<sup>44</sup> Since the Dunhuang version has no chapter divisions, Huixin likely added his own chapter titles. Huixin says nothing about editing the text, but there is little doubt that he did. On the other hand, we cannot know for sure what Huixin changed and what was already different from the Dunhuang version in the edition or editions of the *Platform Sutra* that Huixin used.

The Huixin version pretty much follows the general outlay of the Dunhuang version. Overall, its biggest contribution to the text is in its “cleaning up” the text and fixing miswritten characters as well as clarifying and expanding the many obscure or corrupt passages.<sup>45</sup> However, the Huixin version also augments the text of the *Platform Sutra* with various additions.

As for establishing the credentials of Huineng as the sixth patriarch, the Huixin version contains several enhancements. The dramatic “autobiography” is even more dramatic here with significant elaborations and a number of additional elements, all adding to the prestige and authority of Huineng. Thus, lending verisimilitude to the story and putting Huineng in a sympathetic light, the Huixin version specifies that Huineng made arrangements for the care of his mother before he left to see Hongren.<sup>46</sup> At his first interview with Hongren, Huineng makes a statement about

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*Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu kenkyū ronshū*, 11 (November 1980): 96–138, and “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō’ no kenkyū (zoku)—teihon shisaku to Tonkōbon to no taishō,” *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu kenkyū ronshū*, 12 (October 1981): 68–132.

<sup>43</sup> There has been considerable disagreement about what Huixin meant by this term. Since *fan* can mean “many” or “excessive” some have argued that Huixin abbreviated a longer text. See Jorgensen, “The *Platform Sutra* and the Corpus of Shenhui,” p. 408. However, using the methodology of textual criticism to compare the Huixin version with the Dunhuang version, it can be shown that Huixin almost certainly used a text that was very similar to the Dunhuang version.

<sup>44</sup> See Huixin's preface in Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō.’”

<sup>45</sup> We do not know the state of the version Huixin used, but interestingly many of the miswritten characters in the Stein manuscript are also found in the Dunhuang museum manuscript.

<sup>46</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 6.

his own spiritual attainments that impresses Hongren, which is also not included in the Dunhuang version. Furthermore, after Huineng is sent off to the work area following the interview, Hongren later comes to Huineng and tells him that he knows Huineng's understanding is clear but that bad people might harm him if this is acknowledged.<sup>47</sup> The narrative about the poetry exchange also contains many more details, even about Shenxiu's deliberations, but of course the biggest difference here is Huineng's poem which now has the immortal words "Fundamentally not a single thing exists" (*benlai wu yi wu* 本來無一物).<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, when Hongren expounds the *Diamond Sutra* to Huineng it is now related that Huineng was enlightened with the phrase "responding to the non-abiding, yet generating the mind" (*ying wusuo zhu er sheng qi xin* 應無所住而生其心).<sup>49</sup> Following his enlightenment, Huineng states his understanding to the approving Hongren in some detail in a passage completely lacking in the Dunhuang version. In the Huixin version Bodhidharma's bowl is transmitted to Huineng together with the robe, a detail which became a standard in the story.<sup>50</sup> Also added is the famous episode where Hongren ferries Huineng across the river until Huineng protests that he now should be doing the ferrying. The dramatic value of the narrative is further enhanced by Hongren declaring that he will die in a year after Huineng's departure. Hongren also tells Huineng to hide for five years (rather than three in the Dunhuang version).<sup>51</sup> Then, after the episode with Huiming which is much the same here as in the Dunhuang version, we are told that Huineng is further pursued by bad people and hides for five years with some hunters to whom he often preaches the Dharma.<sup>52</sup>

Now follows the sermon which for the most part parallels the Dunhuang version quite closely although some material has been rearranged.<sup>53</sup> At the beginning of the sermon, in addition to the statement also found in the Dunhuang version that

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<sup>47</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 12. The second poem, found in the Dunhuang version, has been deleted. Huineng's poem is also found in the *Zutang ji* in this form.

<sup>49</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 13. The translation is from John R. McRae, trans., *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000), p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 13.

<sup>51</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 14.

<sup>52</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 16.

<sup>53</sup> There is also the somewhat curious addition of the "five Dharmakaya incenses," in Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 25, which I will not discuss here.

Huineng is teaching the wisdom of the ancient sages, Huineng starts out by stating that since he obtained the Dharma from Hongren he has undergone extreme suffering and had his life hanging by a thread.<sup>54</sup> As in the Dunhuang version, Huineng later mentions his great enlightenment at Hongren's place and confirms to Prefect Wei that his Dharma is the essentials of the first patriarch Bodhidharma.<sup>55</sup>

Huineng's lineage in the Huixin version appears to have been essentially the same as the list found in the Dunhuang version although some obvious mistakes have been corrected.<sup>56</sup> However, the transmission verses of the six Chinese patriarchs that are found in the Dunhuang version are in the Huixin version cut back to only those of Bodhidharma and Huineng himself.<sup>57</sup> It is not clear why all the verses are not included, but in the narrative just prior to it Huineng says that Bodhidharma's verse will prove to his disciples that the robe should not be transmitted, and the other verses may have seemed superfluous.

The section where Huineng calls together his ten disciples begins Chapter Eleven in the Huixin version. The list of the disciples is unchanged, except that Shenhui now is mentioned as the fourth instead of being the last as in the Dunhuang version. Huineng's praise of the ten that they are not like other people is also unchanged, but the Huixin version additionally has Huineng say that after his death each of them will become a master and convert many people.<sup>58</sup> The Huixin version also follows the Dunhuang version when later on Huineng exhorts the ten disciples to transmit the *Platform Sutra* when they transmit the Dharma, but the warning that those who have not been transmitted the *Platform Sutra* do not have Huineng's teaching is left out. The passage ends by stating "if you read the *Platform Sutra* you will definitely see your own nature"<sup>59</sup> whereas the Dunhuang version had it that those who received the *Platform Sutra* would see their own natures. Furthermore, when earlier the importance of the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* is described, the Huixin version puts it in a context that makes it seem rather different from the Dunhuang version. The passage is embedded as the second half of the very

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<sup>54</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 17.

<sup>55</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" sections 40 and 43.

<sup>56</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 60. Since there are some differences between the lineage in the different eleven-chapter editions we cannot know for sure what exactly Huixin's version of the lineage was like.

<sup>57</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 58.

<sup>58</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 54. This passage is not included in the Kōshōji edition and so, in fact, may not have been present in Huixin's edition.

<sup>59</sup> Ishii, "Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō,'" section 56.

small Chapter Nine entitled “Aggressive questions from the various sects” (*zhu zong nan wen* 諸宗難問), and it includes the instruction about recording the place, date and name on the copy of the sutra when it is transmitted, and also the note that those who have not received a copy of the *Platform Sutra* are not disciples of the Southern School, as found in the Dunhuang version. But the first half of this diminutive chapter, which has no parallel in the Dunhuang version, explains how many people from other schools came to Huineng with evil intentions, hoping to confound him with difficult questions. However, Huineng preached to them and they all became converted to his view and asked to be his disciples. In this way, the discussion about the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* comes to be seen more as an issue of having the right understanding of its doctrines, rather than receiving a copy of it in a ritual of Dharma transmission.<sup>60</sup>

Shenhui’s position seems overall downgraded in the Huixin version. As we have already seen, in the list of ten disciples he is now in the middle, rather than at the end which in the Dunhuang version gave him some distinction. Also, in the description of his encounter with Huineng, Shenhui is said to be just thirteen years old, which makes him seem even less dignified.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, when Fahai asks Huineng who will receive the robe and Dharma, Huineng answers that his teaching is embodied in the *Platform Sutra* and that this is all they need for the correct Dharma.<sup>62</sup> The remark about the Dharma already having been transmitted, found in the Dunhuang version, has been deleted. On the other hand, as already discussed, in the subsequent prediction that twenty years later someone would appear and save the true Dharma, the Huixin version makes it even more clear that Shenhui is meant by stating that this person would be from Nanyang xian.<sup>63</sup> Also, the passage in which Huineng is praising Shenhui and berating the rest of his disciples because Shenhui is the only one who does not weep from sorrow over Huineng’s impending death has been retained in the Huixin version.<sup>64</sup>

Still, the Huixin version has a stronger statement than does the Dunhuang version about the ten disciples being his Dharma heirs. Thus, after having listed all the patriarchs in the lineage ending with himself, Huineng says to his disciples: “Now I transmit the Dharma to you,” a sentence not found in the Dunhuang

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<sup>60</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 56.

<sup>61</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 53.

<sup>62</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 58.

<sup>63</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 58.

<sup>64</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 57.

version.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, the Huixin version also has a line not found in the Dunhuang version that further subtracts from the status of the disciples. Just before he passes away Huineng says to his disciples: “I am afraid your minds are deluded and that you do not understand my meaning.”<sup>66</sup> This passage echoes the passage that extols Shenhui and berates the rest, and it is possible that it was retained by Huixin from the text he used, which, as we have seen, in other ways promotes Shenhui.

The Huixin version has the same episodes with Huineng’s students as does the Dunhuang version, although some of them contain extra elements. In the episode with Zhicheng there is quite a bit of elaboration in Huineng’s critique of Shenxiu’s teaching but it is not fundamentally different.<sup>67</sup> The episode with Fada is in essence very much the same as in the Dunhuang version although, like the rest of the text, it contains numerous reformulations.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, there are no differences important for this study in the episode involving Zhichang. However, in the episode with Shenhui, besides the addition that he is only thirteen years old, it is also said that Shenhui came from Yuquan 玉泉 monastery, which was Shenxiu’s seat. This interesting link between Shenhui and Shenxiu is also made by Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841),<sup>69</sup> but as far as I know it is not made in any other source.

## The Chao Version

What I here call the Chao version is known from the Japanese Kōshōji edition.<sup>70</sup> This edition has a preface by Chao Zijian, dated 1153, who relates how he found a copy of the *Platform Sutra* written in the hand of his ancestor Wen Yuan in

<sup>65</sup> In the Kōshōji edition the passage instead has “You members of the congregation must now receive the Dharma,” and it is possible that it was this rather than the other sentence that was originally in Huixin’s edition. Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 60.

<sup>66</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 63.

<sup>67</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” sections 49 and 50.

<sup>68</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 51.

<sup>69</sup> See Hu Shih, *Shenhui heshang yiji*, pp. 7–8, cited in McRae, “Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment.”

<sup>70</sup> A photographic reprint of the Kōshōji edition is found in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō shohon shūsei* (Kyoto: Chūbun Shuppan Sha, 1976), pp. 49–66, and it has also been published by D. T. Suzuki & Kuda Rentaro, ed., *Kōshōji bon Rokuso dankyō* (Tokyo, 1934). An edited and commented version is found in Nakagawa Taka, *Rokuso dankyō, Zen no goroku series*, no. 4 (Tokyo, 1976). It is also one of the editions used in Ishii, “Rokuso dankyō.”

Sichuan. At the end of the manuscript occurred the statement: “I am now eighty-one years old and have read [the *Platform Sutra*] sixteen times.” Later Chao had this manuscript published.<sup>71</sup> Hu Shih has shown that Wen Yuan was the famous scholar Chao Jiong 晁迥 and that he turned eighty-one in 1031.<sup>72</sup>

Of course, we cannot know for sure if the Kōshōji edition is a faithful reproduction of Chao Zijian’s edition or even if Chao Zijian himself made any significant changes in Chao Jiong’s manuscript. However, judging from the text of the Kōshōji edition it seems likely that it is very close to Chao Zijian’s edition which again probably did not differ much from Chao Jiong’s manuscript. I therefore feel confident enough to refer to it as the Chao version. The Chao version is a crucial link in the development of the *Platform Sutra* because the orthodox version, which for many centuries was the only version of the *Platform Sutra* known, was directly based on it.

The Chao version is very much like the Huixin version that it is ultimately based on. Most of the differences are stylistic ones; the Chao version overall represents a more polished text than does the Huixin version. However, the Chao version does contain some interesting additions and other differences that are relevant for the present paper.<sup>73</sup> I will here make the assumption that passages that have no parallel in the other editions that are based on Huixin’s text are innovations of the Chao version, although we cannot be certain that this is true in all cases.

In the description of the “poem contest” which is already considerably more elaborate in the Huixin than it is in the Dunhuang version, the Chao version further has it that during the night, after Shenxiu had written the poem on the wall but before Hongren had actually seen it, Hongren knew that Shenxiu had not seen his own nature.<sup>74</sup> This detail strengthens Huineng’s claim to superiority and makes it clear that Hongren was always aware of his students’ state of mind.

At the end of Huineng’s autobiography, after the description of Huineng’s stay

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<sup>71</sup> Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” supplement section 2.

<sup>72</sup> See Hu Shih, “Tanjing kao di er,” *Hu Shih wencun*, VI, pp. 78; reprinted in Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Ko Teki zengaku an* (Kyoto: Chūbun Shuppan Sha, 1975), pp. 304–5.

<sup>73</sup> An interesting difference that will not be treated here is in the section with the repentance of transgressions where the Chao version is quite different from the Huixin version. See Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” sec. 26, and supplement section 5.

<sup>74</sup> See the Kōshōji edition in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō*, p. 51c. Ishii considers this addition part of the Huixin version, but since it only occurs in the Kōshōji and Shinpukuji editions and not in the Daijōji and Tenneiji editions this is very unlikely; see Ishii, “Ekinbon ‘Rokuso dankyō,’” section 11.

with the hunters that was added in the Huixin version, the Chao version has a story about Hongren's meeting with Dharma master Yinzong 印宗 (d.u.) not found in the former work. It is here related that around the time of Emperor Gaozong's 高宗 (r. 650–684) enthronement, Huineng went to Guangzhou and met Yinzong who was expounding the *Nirvana Sutra*. At this time Huineng overheard two monks looking at a flag in the wind and discussing whether it was the flag that was moving or the wind that was moving. Huineng then told the monks that it was neither the flag nor the wind but their minds that were moving, and Yinzong was startled when he heard about this.<sup>75</sup> Also added to the Chao version is a note at the very end of the section with Huineng's biography which relates the question Huineng asked Huiming leading to Huiming's enlightenment ("When you don't think of good and don't think of evil—at that time where is your original face?").<sup>76</sup> Further, we find in the Chao version a note after Huineng's stupa inscription referring the reader to the inscription by Wang Wei 王維 (700–761).<sup>77</sup> Finally, at the very end of the text, the Chao version notes that in 816 Huineng was by imperial order given the posthumous name Dajian Chanshi 大鑑禪師 and that it is described in the epitaph by Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772–842).<sup>78</sup>

Huineng's lineage in the Chao version would appear to be the same as the one that was included in the Huixin version. In regard to the treatment of Shenhui the Chao version holds no significant differences from the Huixin version. Lacking in the Chao version is the small boost for Huineng's students where he tells them that after his death each of them will become a master and convert many people, which probably was included in the Huixin version. Since the remark is partly repeated when Huineng shortly after predicts that each of the disciples will be a master somewhere, it may have been removed from the Chao version for stylistic reasons. In all other ways, the Chao version is like the Huixin version in its depiction of the status of Huineng's disciples.

## The Orthodox Version

What I call the "orthodox version" is by far the longest of our versions of the *Platform*

<sup>75</sup> Kōshōji edition in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō*, p. 52f–53a.

<sup>76</sup> Kōshōji edition in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō*, p. 53b.

<sup>77</sup> Kōshōji edition in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō*, p. 65c. Wang's inscription is in the *Quan Tang wen*, fascicle 327.

<sup>78</sup> Kōshōji edition in Yanagida Seizan ed., *Rokuso dankyō*, p. 65d. Liu's epitaph is in the *Quan Tang wen*, fascicle 610.

*Sutra*. As I reported in my earlier article, the orthodox version is based on the Chao version that we now know through the Japanese Kōshōji edition, which in all likelihood is based on the edition by Chao Zijian, and on material from the *Chuandeng lu* and a few other sources. We do not know when the orthodox edition was first prepared, but it probably was in the period 1183 to 1225.<sup>79</sup>

The original editor of the orthodox version took over most of the text from the Chao version almost verbatim, although he rearranged the material considerably. Even though most of the Chao version is reproduced unchanged in the orthodox version, there are considerable and interesting differences and additions in a number of the passages that we have looked at above.

First, Huineng's autobiography contains several new elements. After Huineng has his verse written on the wall, Hongren wipes it out with his shoe; he then secretly visits Huineng who is pounding rice with a rock tied to his back to set up their midnight meeting.<sup>80</sup> When Hongren transmits the Dharma to Huineng, he warns him not to transmit the robe, for if he were to do so his life would hang by a thread.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the episode with Huiming has more details and includes a passage where Huiming is unable to lift Bodhidharma's robe from a rock.<sup>82</sup> Also the description of Huineng's life with the hunters is more elaborate and describes how Huineng set animals in the hunters' nets free, and how he would eat only vegetables.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the orthodox version includes a long description of how Huineng was recognized as the sixth patriarch by the Dharma master Yinzong and given tonsure by him.<sup>84</sup> All this serves to enhance the stature of Huineng, clear up any doubts left in the earlier versions (such as how Huineng became a monk), and make the story more realistic.

As in the Chao version, Huineng states at the beginning of his sermon in the orthodox version that since he obtained the Dharma from Hongren he has undergone extreme suffering and had his life hanging by a thread, and that his teaching is that of the ancient sages.<sup>85</sup> And again Huineng later mentions his great enlightenment at Hongren's place and confirms to Prefect Wei that his Dharma is the

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<sup>79</sup> Schlütter, "A Study in the Genealogy of the *Platform Sūtra*."

<sup>80</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 349a.

<sup>81</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 349b.

<sup>82</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 349b.

<sup>83</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 349c.

<sup>84</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 349c.

<sup>85</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 350a.

essentials of the first patriarch Bodhidharma.<sup>86</sup> But the orthodox *Platform Sutra* differs from the other editions discussed above in its version of Huineng's lineage. In the orthodox version we find the version the lineage that was first seen in the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳,<sup>87</sup> and repeated in the 952 *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 and *Chuangdeng lu*. By the Song this version of the lineage had become universally accepted. Clearly, by the late twelfth century the compiler of the orthodox version could not let the lineage as found in the earlier versions of the *Platform Sutra* stand.<sup>88</sup>

The orthodox version also has the passage in which Huineng calls together his ten disciples, and the disciples are listed in the same order as in the Huixin and Chao versions. Again, Huineng tells the disciples that they are not like other people and that they each will become a master somewhere. However, all reference to the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* has been omitted. The small Chapter Nine that in the Huixin and Chao versions contains instructions of how the *Platform Sutra* was to be transmitted is partly included at the end of the orthodox version's Chapter Eight but the whole section about the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* has been deleted. Also, not surprisingly, the particular transmission of the *Platform Sutra*, from Fahai to Zhidao to Bi'an to Wuzhen to Yuanwu, that is recorded at the end in both the Huixin and Chao versions is not included in the orthodox version.

The only mention of the *Platform Sutra* in the orthodox version is in the passage where Fahai asks about who will receive the robe and Dharma. The orthodox version here is like the Huixin and Chao versions, having Huineng say that the disciples should only follow the *Platform Sutra* as the correct Dharma. In this section in the other versions we find the prediction of Shenhui's campaign but all reference to it has been deleted in the orthodox version.<sup>89</sup> However, the praise of Shenhui because he does not weep and Huineng's berating of his fellow disciples have been retained.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, in the section that recounts Shenhui's meeting with Huineng, there is an added passage which relates how Huineng later

<sup>86</sup> T48, no. 2008, pp. 351a and 351c.

<sup>87</sup> The *Baolin zhuan* was compiled in 801. It was lost for centuries, but parts were rediscovered in the 1930s. The work is in ten fascicles, but fascicles 7, 9, and 10 are still missing. See Yampolsky, *The Platform Sutra*, pp. 47–49.

<sup>88</sup> See the chart that compares the lineage in different editions of the *Platform Sutra* in Ishii Shūdō, "Shinpukuji bunko shozō no 'Rokuso dankyō' no shōkai—Ekinbon 'Rokuso dankyō' no sohon to no kanren," *Komazawa Daigaku Bukkyō Gakubu kenkyū ronshū*, 10 (November 1979): 74–111 (p. 82).

<sup>89</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 361a.

<sup>90</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 360c.

rebuked Shenhui, telling him that he has only intellectual understanding.<sup>91</sup> In this way, the Shenhui faction's original influence on the *Platform Sutra* has been almost completely expurgated in the orthodox version.

Much of the extra material found in the orthodox version consists of descriptions of Huineng's encounters with his disciples. Of the ten disciples listed, all but two get their own episodes. Additionally, accounts of six other disciples' meetings with Huineng are also included. Among them are, not surprisingly Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740) and Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744), the two disciples that came to be seen as the masters from whom the whole later Chan school descended. As I detail in my earlier article, most of the new material about Huineng's encounters with disciples came from the *Chuangeng lu*. Although a detailed discussion of this material is not possible here, it should be noted that in the orthodox version we see for the first time 'encounter dialogue' in the *Platform Sutra*. Encounter dialogue<sup>92</sup> is unique to Chan Buddhist literature, where it depicts Chan masters interacting with disciples and sometimes lay people in highly unconventional ways, using illocutionary language and seemingly bizarre actions to undermine our habitual conceptualizing and assumptions. However, encounter dialogue was not a feature of early Chan and it is not attested until the 952 *Zutang ji*. It is therefore not surprising that there is no encounter dialogue in the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*; and when Huixin compiled his edition in 967 it may still not have become standard in Chan instruction.

Interestingly, encounter dialogue mainly appears in Huineng's interactions with students who are not mentioned among the ten disciples in the text of the *Platform Sutra*.<sup>93</sup> The only exception is the episode with Shenhui, which builds on the Chao version but which adds a section at the end that includes some encounter dialogue.<sup>94</sup>

While each of the episodes with Huineng's disciples does function to show the great insight of Huineng, the disciples themselves are also promoted. The orthodox version is careful to note in each case that the disciple achieved enlightenment or was sanctioned by Huineng. Especially Xingsi and Huirang are extolled by

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<sup>91</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 359c.

<sup>92</sup> John McRae's rendition of *jiyuan wenda* 機緣問答, a term coined by Yangida Seizan which cannot be found in any pre-modern Chan source. See John R. McRae, "The Antecedents of Encounter Dialogue in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright eds., *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 47.

<sup>93</sup> See the entries on Xingsi, Huirang and Yongjia Xuanjue 永嘉玄覺 (665–713), T48, no. 2008, p. 357b–c.

<sup>94</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 359c.

Huineng, as we might expect for these two masters who were so crucial in the later Chan lineage. But even in the case of someone like Zhichang, whose encounter with Huineng is described in the earlier versions of the *Platform Sutra* but where nothing is said about him gaining enlightenment, the orthodox version notes he experienced enlightenment when hearing Huineng's Dharma.<sup>95</sup> Zhichang and the other ten disciples who are listed in the *Platform Sutra* were not at all important in the later Chan lineage, but since they were recognized as the heirs of Huineng it is important for the orthodox version to establish their authority as enlightened masters. The only disciple in the orthodox version of the *Platform Sutra* who has no record of becoming enlightened is Shenhui. This sends a clear message about his standing in the later Chan school, although the orthodox version does end the section on him with a note saying that Shenhui later widely spread the sudden teaching of Huineng and that he wrote a work that was circulated widely.

The passages that describe Huineng's encounters with his disciples in the orthodox version makes it clear that the disciples are his Dharma heirs who have gained an insight that is comparable to Huineng's own. They are safely ensconced in the Chan lineage and we can trace their line of enlightenment back to the Buddha himself. In this way Huineng's disciples were enabled to function as models for the later Chan lineage where members of the Chan school ultimately derived their authority from the lineage. Despite this, elsewhere in the orthodox version there is little attempt to enhance the status of Huineng's disciples. Oddly, Huineng's remark found in the Chao version after the list of patriarchs that "You members of the congregation must now receive the Dharma," has in the orthodox version been replaced with "from the beginning all the patriarchs each have had someone they sanctioned"<sup>96</sup> which does nothing to strengthen the authority of Huineng's disciples. Likewise, Huineng's berating of the disciples who cry over his impending death is retained in the orthodox version, as is the passage where Huineng tells his disciples just before his death that he fears that their minds are deluded and that they do not understand him.<sup>97</sup> Thus, some ambiguity about the status of Huineng's disciples remains in the orthodox version.

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<sup>95</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 356c.

<sup>96</sup> T48, no. 2008, p. 361c.

<sup>97</sup> T48, no. 2008, pp. 360c and 362a.

## Conclusion

Above I have looked at how the issue of transmission is treated in the four versions of the *Platform Sutra* in its main line of development, and I believe that certain general tendencies in the evolution of the text have become clear. In the Dunhuang version, Huineng's authority as the sixth patriarch is at the center, together with the authority of the *Platform Sutra* as the embodiment of Huineng's teaching and real proof of membership of Huineng's school. On the other hand, the description of the actual transmission to Huineng's disciples is rather tepid. The ten disciples are certainly not held up as equals to Huineng himself. Rather they are portrayed as good students who will do their best to carry on the teachings of the great master, and keep his teaching alive by transmitting the *Platform Sutra*. Even the passage that predicts Shenhui and his campaign is less than fully enthusiastic, portraying Shenhui as a faithful reviver of Huineng's teaching rather than the next patriarch. This strongly contrasts with the depiction of Huineng's own transmission from Hongren, where it is made clear in the text that Huineng shows an understanding of the Dharma that is completely on par with that of Hongren. The Dunhuang version seems to reflect a time when the main concern was to establish the authority of Huineng and the *Platform Sutra*, and the notion of a wider family tree of transmission probably was not fully established.

The Huixin version was first published shortly after the appearance of the *Zutang ji* in 952. Huixin was a Buddhist monk and must have been associated with the Chan school. We would therefore expect that his sensibilities as to what the *Platform Sutra* should look like would reflect the view of the monastic Chan community at the time. For example, it was probably a general understanding at the time that Huineng's verse in the contest with Shenxiu contained the line "fundamentally not a single thing exists" as it did in the *Zutang ji*, and accordingly Huixin changed what he probably saw as a mistake in the version he was working from. It is also not surprising that the admonishments about transmitting the *Platform Sutra* are somewhat toned down in Huixin's version. Although the *Platform Sutra* undoubtedly still held great authority at Huixin's time, it could not be seen as the only text of Chan Buddhism, nor as a text that must have been received in transmission for a person to be considered a member of the Chan school. Here and elsewhere, Huixin seems to be struggling with the text since he obviously felt bound by the contents of the edition he was working with and only corrected what he saw as obvious mistakes or missing passages. He therefore deleted one passage that excluded those who had not received the *Platform Sutra* while he kept a similar passage later on, but embedded in a context that made it seem more like

a general extolling of the *Platform Sutra*.

As we have seen, Huixin's edition in various ways seems to downgrade Shenhui's position. But although Huixin removed the passage about the Dharma already having been transmitted (indicating Shenhui), Huixin did not delete the prediction of Shenhui and his campaign from his version of the *Platform Sutra*. It is unclear whether Huixin and his audience understood that Shenhui was referred to in the prediction, but either way the passage must have seemed puzzling to Huixin and his audience, because in the tenth century Shenhui was not seen as important in the Chan lineage; rather his lineage was almost considered a collateral one, not fully heir to Huineng's Dharma. That Huixin retained the prediction is further evidence that he did not simply change the text of the *Platform Sutra* to his liking, but felt strongly bound by what was in the text he based himself on.

At the time of Huixin, the notion of several Dharma lineages descending from Huineng where each member equally held the transmission and, in principle, were heirs to the same enlightenment experienced by Huineng had been forcefully presented in the *Zutang ji*. Huixin's text does move towards a stronger endorsement of Huineng's disciples as his Dharma heirs with the addition after the listing of Huineng's lineage that they now would become heirs to his Dharma. But Huixin does little to bring the text in line with the conception of the lineage found in the *Zutang ji*. Since he probably did not feel free to make arbitrary changes to the text he could not make the additions and enhancements that we see in the orthodox version. But the text of his edition as it stands clearly seemed highly meritorious to Huixin; it could help later generations see their own Buddha-natures as he states in his preface. Given that Huixin did not even change the line of patriarchs in his edition to the one that is found in the *Zutang ji*, it would seem that at least to Huixin and his circle, the conception of the lineage in the *Zutang ji* had not yet taken on the aura of orthodoxy with which it was later imbued.

The Chao edition is very much like the Huixin edition although, as we might expect from a text edited by a member of the educated elite, it is more highly polished. Neither Chao Jiong or Chao Zijian were monastics or members of the Chan school and they were probably not invested in Chan ideology the same way someone like Huixin would be. Still, the changes introduced in the Chao version, whether first made by Chao Jiong or Chao Zijian, are not dramatic, at least as regards the depiction of transmission in the *Platform Sutra*. It is perhaps most noteworthy what was *not* changed in the Chao version: not the line of patriarchs nor any attempt of introducing a stronger statement of Dharma transmission to Huineng's disciples. Encounter dialogue, which dominated Chan instruction by 1153, is also not added to the Chao version (although we do get the phrase that

enlightened Huiming), and to Chao Zijian's contemporaries his edition must have seemed strangely old-fashioned and lacking in the features that to them characterized Chan Buddhism.

It is not surprising then, that someone perceived a need for a new version of the *Platform Sutra* and perhaps only about thirty years later created the orthodox version. The orthodox version is a dramatic reconception of the *Platform Sutra*. Here the Song ideas about the Chan lineage are fully played out. Huineng's lineage is corrected to conform with what had become orthodoxy and, perhaps more importantly, his disciples are now depicted as fully enlightened masters who become virtual equals to Huineng. This last point must have been crucial to a Chan monastic audience since the Chan school based its entire claim to legitimacy on the lineage to which each of its members were heir, as equals of the great masters of the past and ultimately the Buddha himself. Still, even with all those changes, the compiler of the orthodox version did not simply make changes as he felt was needed. He employed works that had taken on great authority and canonical force by his time to supplement the text of the *Platform Sutra*, especially using the hallowed *Chuandeng lu*. Although not all sources for the orthodox version have been identified, it is likely that very little of it actually originated with the compiler himself. The compiler's reluctance to make changes in the text that were not based on a canonical source would also help explain why his text still has the disparaging remarks about Huineng's disciples or the extolling of the un-grieving Shenhui.

However, the *Platform Sutra* as the center of, and proof of transmission in the "Southern school" which appears as a very important concern of the Dunhuang version is completely gone from the orthodox version. In the Song and Yuan this could have made no sense to Chan monastics who had their own system of "inheritance certificates" (*sishu* 嗣書) that were issued by a master to his enlightened disciples, giving concrete proof of their attainment and the particular lineage of Chan that they came to belong to. In the Huixin version the description of the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* was already toned down, but at Huixin's time there may not have been a system of inheritance certificates in place and the passages about the transmission of the text would have seemed less grating. Here we can see a clear trajectory in the development of the *Platform Sutra*'s depiction of transmission. From being a text where Huineng's disciples have relatively little prestige and power associated with them and where the *Platform Sutra* takes on a almost magical power as the real "heir" to Huineng, the text gradually puts more emphasis on the transmission to the disciples and less on the transmission of the *Platform Sutra* until the disciples are at the center and all references to the transmission of the sutra have been deleted.

But what of the transmission to Huineng and his position as the sixth patriarch? It turns out that the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* is actually the least effective in promoting Huineng even if it reflects a time where his position was far from undisputed. The subsequent versions do much to enhance the stature of Huineng, through various elaborations of his biography and emphasis on his exalted lineage. The orthodox version presents by far the fullest picture of Huineng and it is not surprising that through this text his fame as the most extraordinary of Chan masters has continued up to the current time. For all its later emphasis on the position of Huineng's disciples, the *Platform Sutra* remains Huineng's book, a work that has inspired both lay and monastic readers with its depiction of Huineng's humble beginnings, many tribulations and great attainments for more than twelve centuries.

# 《六祖壇經》所見禪宗之傳法與證悟

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## 提要

如眾所皆知，傳法的概念是中國禪宗門徒自我認同與自我了解的重要思想，晚期禪宗中，傳法更被視為是當一位禪師認可其弟子獲得與其同等證悟之境界而言。當該弟子獲得傳法時，意謂著他成為禪宗傳承的一份子，而禪宗傳承又可遠溯至佛陀；從理論上來說，該弟子獲得的證悟亦同等於祖師之境界。儘管此模式說來很單純有力而且非常吸引人，但是，認可證悟和傳法的情況常常很複雜，而且在禪宗中，有時並引起爭議。此外，我們亦可見到禪宗對於證悟和傳法的看法並非是不變的，而卻是經常變動的。

禪宗傳法最早的典型可從禪宗六祖惠能的例子見到，惠能的故事及其頓悟之教法可見於禪宗典籍中最被廣為閱讀的《壇經》。《壇經》記述了惠能己身的傳法和其傳法給弟子的情況，由於《壇經》現存有諸多版本，我們因此可藉由探索這些版本的變化與發展，了解傳法的議題是如何被處理的，證悟的內容是如何被描述的。在本論文中，作者於《壇經》變化與發展的主軸中，從最早的敦煌本到收於《大正藏》中傳統的版本，探討傳法和證悟二概念的發展，《壇經》四種版本的年代共跨越了至少五個世紀，從早期禪宗到宋元間的晚期禪宗，在許多重要方面，反映了禪宗整體的發展。

關鍵詞：1. 禪宗 2. 傳法 3. 開悟 4. 《壇經》 5. 惠能