

## PREFACE.

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From the time of the coming of the First Patriarch Bodhidharma who transmitted the 'Western Message' (*i. e.*, message from India or the Zen teaching) to China up to the time of his fifth successor, the Sixth Patriarch Wei Lang, Zen followers who aimed directly at Buddhahood and who instantaneously attained the 'Holy Fruit' through having thoroughly understood their mind and penetrated their inmost nature are so numerous that we can hardly take an account of them. From the Sixth Patriarch up to now, a period of about twelve hundred years, millions of orientals have obtained deliverance through the Zen teaching. And it is rather sad to see that so far this Good Law has not yet been made known to the Western people in Europe and America.

It has long been my desire to have this Sutra translated into a European language so that the Message of Zen may be transmitted to the West. The idea obsessed me unremittingly for nearly thirty years, as I could not find a translator to undertake the work until I met Mr. Wong in last spring. In an ecstasy of joy, I invited him to stay in my house to translate this Sutra into English. Working on and off, it took him nearly a year and half to complete the translation. My desire is now fulfilled and may it prove to be one of the happiest events during the period of the past twelve hundred years.

I sincerely hope that hereafter Europeans and Americans who understand the Great Law spontaneously and who embrace it unhesitatingly will come forth in great numbers. So far as felicity in the form of material comfort is concerned, the occidentals are in a more favourable position than our Eastern people. But in spite of their favourable position, the Great Law reaches them at a later date than it reached us. The reason deserves our attention. According to the Buddhist geography, human beings inhabit in four great continents. The inhabitants of the North continent, Uttarakura, which is the most favoured one in point of felicity live as long as a thousand years. People of the East and the West continents who live as long as six hundred and three hundred years respectively also have a far better time than we, the inhabitants of the South continent, Jambudvipa, have. But of these four great divisions of land, Jambudvipa is the only one which the Buddha Dharma reaches.

Now, since an attempt has been made to disseminate this Good Law to the West, I look forward to the day when Europe and America will produce a type of Zen followers whose quick understanding and spontaneous realisation in the solution of the 'Ultimate Problem' are far superior to our Eastern brethren. Thinking that I have connected the most favourable link with the Occidentals, my happiness is beyond measure.

In addition to writing the preface, I take liberty to name this book 'The Chinese Sutra', as with the exception of it, all Chinese Buddhist works are designated by the name 'Sastra.' Another name I would like to call it is 'Message from the East,' for in China Patriarch Bodhidharma's teaching is known as 'Message from the West' (*i.e.* India), and as this message is now re-directed to Europe and America, the title I propose to give seems to be more appropriate.

SHANGHAI, March, 1930.

DIH PING TSZE.



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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This is an English translation—or rather a very imperfect translation—of the 'Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch on the High Seat of the Gem of Law' (Nānjo's Catalogue No. 1525) which records the sermons and the sayings of Wei Lang, (638-713) the most famous Dhyana Master of the Tang Dynasty. It may be of interest to note that of all the Chinese works that have been canonized in the Tripitaka, this standard work of the Dhyana School is the only one that bears the designation of 'Sutra', a designation which is reserved for the sermons of Lord Buddha and those of great Bodhisattvas. Hence, it is not without justification to call it, as some one does, 'the only Sutra spoken by a native of China'. (中國唯一之佛經)

As it takes a poet to translate Virgil, the translator keenly realises how incompetent he is in tackling this difficult task; since neither his knowledge of Buddhism nor his linguistic attainment qualifies him for the work. He reluctantly agrees to bring out an English version of this Sutra when urged to do so by his teacher who admits the incompetency of his pupil but still insists that the translation should be done on the following reasons:—

(1) That in training himself as a translator for Buddhist work in future, this is a good exercise.

(2) That the translation may receive the benefit of correction and revision from the hands of those who have better qualifications but not enough time to do the complete work themselves.

(3) That, with due allowance for mistranslation, the book may still be useful to those who cannot read the original but who had mastered it so well in their previous lives that they only need a paragraph or two, nay even a word or two, to refresh their memory in order to bring back the valuable knowledge that they have now forgotten.

On this understanding alone, the translator undertakes the work; and the result of his feeble attempt is now put before the public only for what it is worth. As the book stands, the translator knows, to his sorrow, that a greater part of it will be jargon to readers who have had no previous knowledge of the Dhyana School. May the day come soon when either the translator himself or some other full-fledged Dhyana Master will bring out a new translation with copious notes and explanations, so that the Sutra may be readable to all.

It is from Dr. Ting Fo Po's edition that this translation is made. To this learned gentleman whose commentaries the translator has made free use of and to other friends who have given him valuable advice and liberal support, he wishes to express his deepest gratitude.

"PUPIL-TRANSLATOR."

SHANGHAI, November 21st, 1929.



# SUTRA SPOKEN BY THE SIXTH PATRIARCH (WEI LANG) ON THE HIGH SEAT OF "THE GEM OF LAW" (DHARMARATHA).

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## CHAPTER I. AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Once, when the Patriarch had arrived at Pao Lam Monastery, Prefect Wai of Shiu Chow together with other officials went thither to ask him to deliver public lectures on Buddhism in the hall of Tai Fan Temple in the City.

There were assembled (in the lecture hall) Prefect Wai; government officials and Confucian scholars, about thirty each; and Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni, Taoists and laymen, altogether numbered about one thousand. After the Patriarch had taken his seat, the congregation in a body paid him homage and asked him to preach the fundamental laws of Buddhism. Whereupon, His Holiness delivered the following address:—

Learned Audience, our essence of mind (literally self nature) which is the seed or kernel of enlightenment (Bodhi) is pure by nature, and by making use of this mind alone, we can reach Buddhahood directly. Now, let me tell you something about my own life and how I came into possession of the esoteric teaching of the Dhyana School (the Contemplation School or the Zen School).

My father, a native of Fan Yang, was dismissed from his official post and banished to Kwangtung to be a commoner in Sun Chow. I was so unlucky that my father died when I was very young, leaving my mother poor and miserable. We removed to Kwang Chow (Canton) and were then in very bad circumstances.

I was selling firewood in the market one day, and one of my customers ordered some to be brought to his shop. Upon delivery made and payment received, I left the shop, outside of which I found a man reciting a Sutra (Buddhist Scripture). No sooner than I heard the text of this Sutra, my mind at once became enlightened. Thereupon I asked the man the name of the book he was reciting and was told that it was the 'Diamond Sutra' (Vagrakkhedika or Diamond Cutter). I further enquired whence he came and why he recited this particular Sutra. He replied that he came from Tung Tsan Monastery in Wong Mui District of Kee Chow; that the Abbot in charge of this temple was Hwang Yan, the Fifth Patriarch; that there were about one thousand disciples under him; and that when he went there to pay homage to the Patriarch, he attended lectures on this Sutra. He further told me that His Holiness used to encourage the clergy as well as the laity to recite this scripture; as by doing so, they might realise their own essence of mind, and thereby reach Buddhahood directly.



It must be due to my good affinity in past lives that I could have heard about this and that I was given ten taels for the maintenance of my mother by a man who advised me to go to Wong Mui to interview the Fifth Patriarch. After arrangements had been made for her, I left for Wong Mui which took me less than thirty days to reach.

I then went to pay homage to the Patriarch and was asked where did I belong to and what did I expect to get from him. I replied, "I am a commoner in Sun Chow of Kwangtung. I have travelled far to pay you respect and I ask for nothing but Buddhahood". "You are a native of Kwangtung; and moreover, you belong to the aborigine. How can you expect to be a Buddha?" said the Patriarch. I replied, "Although there are northern men and southern men, north and south make no difference to their Buddha-nature. An aborigine is different from Your Holiness physically, but there is no difference in our Buddha-nature". He was going to speak further to me, but the presence of other disciples made him stop short. He then ordered me to join the crowd to work.

"May I tell Your Holiness", said I, "that Prajna (transcendental Wisdom) always rises in my mind. As one does not go astray from one's own essence of mind, one may be called the 'field of merits' (a title of honour given to monks, as they afford the best opportunities to others to sow the 'seed' of merits). I do not know what work Your Holiness would ask me to do?"

"This aborigine is too witty", he remarked. "Go to the stable and speak no more". I then withdrew myself to the backyard and was told by a lay brother to split firewood and to pound rice.

More than eight months after, the Patriarch saw me one day and said, "I know your knowledge of Buddhism is very sound; but I have to refrain from speaking to you, lest evil doers should do you harm. Do you understand?" "Yes Sir, I do," I replied. "To avoid people taking notice of me, I dare not go near your hall."

The Patriarch one day assembled all his disciples and said to them, "The question of incessant rebirth is a momentous one, indeed! Day after day, instead of trying to free yourselves from this bitter sea of life and death, your men seem to go after tainted merits only (i.e., merits which will bind one to be reincarnated in one of the Dhatus or planes). Merits would be of no help, if your essence of mind is obscured. Go and seek for Prajna (wisdom) in your own mind and then write me a stanza (gatha) about it. He who gets the general idea of what the essence of mind is will be given the robe (the insignia of Patriarchate) and the Dharma (i.e., the esoteric teaching of the Dhyana School), and I shall make him the Sixth Patriarch. Go away quickly. Delay not in writing the stanza, as deliberation is quite unnecessary and of no use. The man who has realised the essence of mind can identify it at once, as soon as he is spoken to about it; and in such a case, he cannot lose sight of it, even when he is engaging in a battle."

Having received this instruction, the disciples withdrew themselves and said to one another, "It is of no use for us to concentrate our mind to write the stanza and submit it to His Holiness, since the Patriarchship is bound to be won by Elder



Shin Shau, our instructor. If we write perfunctorily, it would be only a waste of energy." Upon hearing this, all of them made up their mind not to write and said, "Why should we take the trouble to do it? Hereafter, we shall simply follow our instructor, Shin Shau, wherever he goes; and look upon him for guidance."

"Considering that I am their teacher, none of them would take part in the competition. I wonder whether I should write a stanza and submit it to His Holiness,"—thus Shin Shau reasoned with himself. "If I do not, how can the Patriarch know how deep or superficial my knowledge is? If my object is to get the Dharma, my motive is a pure one. If I were after the Patriarchship, then it is bad. In that case, my mind would be that of a worldling and my action would amount to robbing the Patriarch's holy seat. But if I do not submit the stanza, I would never have a chance of getting the Dharma. A very difficult point to decide, indeed!"

In front of the Patriarch's hall, there were three corridors, the walls of which were to be painted by a court artist, named Lo Chun, with pictures from the Lankavatara (a Buddhist scripture) depicting the transfiguration of the assembly, and with sceneries showing the genealogy of the five Patriarchs for the information and the veneration of the public.

When Shin Shau had composed the stanza, he made several attempts to submit it; but as soon as he went near the hall, his mind was so perturbed that he sweated all over his body. He could not screw up courage to submit it, although in four days' time, he had altogether made thirteen attempts to do so.

Then he suggested to himself, "It would be better for me to write it on the wall of the corridor and let the Patriarch see it himself. In case he approves it, I shall come out to pay him homage and tell him that it is done by me; but if he disapproves it, then I would have wasted several years' time in this mountain in receiving homage from others, while I by no means deserve it! In that case, what progress have I made in learning Buddhism?"

At 12 o'clock on that night, he went secretly with a lamp to write the stanza on the wall of the south corridor, so that the Patriarch might know (through reading it) what spiritual insight he had attained. The stanza reads:—

Our body may be compared to the Bodhi-tree,  
While our mind to a case of bright mirror.  
Carefully we wipe and sweep them hour by hour,  
And let dust fall on them not.

As soon as he had written it, he left at once for his room; and so nobody knew what he had done. In his room, he again pondered: "When the Patriarch sees my stanza tomorrow and is pleased with it, then I would be in good affinity with the Dharma; but if he says that it is badly done, then it would mean that I am unfit for the Dharma, owing to my misdeeds in previous lives and Karmic obscurations which thickly becloud my mind. Difficult indeed it is to speculate on what the Patriarch will say about it!" In this vein, he kept on thinking until dawn, as he could neither sleep nor sit at ease.



The Patriarch knew already that Shin Shau had not entered the door of enlightenment and that he had not known the essence of mind.

In the morning, the Patriarch sent for Mr. Lo, the court artist, and went with him to the south corridor to have the walls there painted with pictures. By chance, the Patriarch saw the stanza. "Sorry to have troubled you to come from so far," he said to the artist. "The walls need not be painted now, as the Sutra says, 'All forms or phenomena are transient and illusive.' Better leave the stanza here, so that people may study it and recite it. If they put its teaching into actual practice, they would be saved from the misery of being born in the evil realms of existence (gatis). The merit gained by one who practises it is great indeed!"

He then ordered incense to be burnt and all his disciples to pay homage to it and to recite it, so that they might realise the essence of mind. After they had recited it, all of them exclaimed, "Well done!"

In midnight, the Patriarch sent for Shin Shau to come to the hall and asked him whether the stanza was written by him or not. "It is, Sir," replied Shin Shau. "I dare not be so vain as to expect to get the Patriarchship, but I wish Your Holiness will kindly tell me whether my stanza shows the least grain of wisdom."

"Your stanza," replied the Patriarch, "shows that you have not yet realised the essence of mind. So far you have reached only the border of the 'door of enlightenment', but you have not yet entered it. To seek for the supreme enlightenment with such an understanding as yours can hardly be successful.

"To attain the supreme enlightenment, one must be able to know spontaneously one's own nature or essence of mind which is neither created nor can be annihilated. From Ksana to Ksana (momentary sensations), one should be able to realise the essence of mind all the time. All things will then be free from restraint (i.e. emancipated). Once the Tathata (Suchness, which is another name for essence of mind) is known, one will be free from delusion for ever; and under all circumstances, one's mind will be in a state of 'Thusness'. Such a state of mind is absolute truth. If you can see things in such a frame of mind, you would have known the essence of mind which is the supreme enlightenment.

"You had better go back to think over it again for a couple of days, and then submit me another stanza. In case your stanza shows that you have entered the 'door of enlightenment', I shall transmit you the robe and the Dharma."

Shin Shau made obeisance to the Patriarch and left. For several days, he tried in vain to write another stanza. This upset his mind so much that he was as ill at ease as if he were in a nightmare, and he could find comfort neither in sitting nor in walking.

Two days after, it happened that a young boy who was passing by the room in which the rice was pounded recited loudly the stanza written by Shin Shau. As soon as I heard it, I knew at once that the composer of it had not yet realised the essence of mind. Although I had not been taught about it at that time, I had already a general idea of it.



"What stanza is this?" I asked the boy. "You aborigine," replied he, "don't you know it? The Patriarch told his disciples that the question of incessant rebirth was a momentous one, that those who wished to inherit his robe and Dharma should write him a stanza, and that the one who had a general idea of the essence of mind would get them and be made the Sixth Patriarch. Elder Shin Shau wrote this 'Formless' (above phenomena) Stanza on the wall of the south corridor and the Patriarch told us to recite it. He also said that those who put its teaching into actual practice would attain great merit and be saved from the misery of being born in the evil realms of existence."

I then told the boy that I wished to recite the stanza too, so that I might have an affinity with its teaching in future life. I also told him that although I had been pounding rice there for eight months, I had never been to the hall; and that he had to show me where the stanza was to enable me to make obeisance to it.

The boy took me there and I asked him to read it to me, as I am illiterate. A petty officer of the Kong Chau District named Chang Yat Yung who happened to be there then read it out loudly. When he had finished reading, I told him that I also had composed a stanza and asked him to write it for me. "Extraordinary indeed!" exclaimed he. "To see that you can also compose a stanza."

"Don't you despise a beginner," said I, "if you are a seeker of the supreme enlightenment. You should know that the lowest class people may have the sharpest wit, while the highest may be in want of intelligence. If you slight others, you would have committed a very great sin."

"Please dictate your stanza," said he. "I'll take it down for you. But do not forget to deliver me, should you succeed in getting the Dharma."

My stanza reads:—

Neither there is Bodhi-tree,  
Nor case of bright mirror.  
Since intrinsically it is void,  
Where can the dust fall on?

When he had written this, all disciples and others who were present were greatly surprised. Filled with admiration, they said to one another, "How wonderful! No doubt we should not judge people by appearance. How can it be that for so long we have made a Bodhisattva incarnate work for us?"

Seeing that the crowd was overwhelmed with amazement, the Patriarch rubbed off the stanza with his shoe, lest jealous ones should do me injury. He also gave the opinion which they took for granted that the author of this stanza had also not yet realised the essence of mind.

Next day the Patriarch went secretly to the room where the rice was pounded. Seeing that I was working there with a stone pestle, he said to me,

"A seeker of the Path risks his life for the Dharma. Should he not do so?" Then he asked, "Is the rice ready?" "Ready long ago," replied I, "only waiting for the sieve." He knocked the mortar thrice with his stick and left.

Knowing what his message meant, in the third watch of the night (midnight), I went subsequently to his room. Using the robe as a screen so that none could see us, he expounded the Diamond Sutra to me. When he came to the sentence, "one should use one's mind in such a way that it will be free from any attachment",\* at once I became thoroughly enlightened and realised that all things in the universe are essence of mind itself.

"Who would have thought," to the Patriarch I expressed myself, "that the essence of mind is intrinsically pure! Who would have thought that the essence of mind is intrinsically free from becoming or annihilation! Who would have thought that the essence of mind is intrinsically self-sufficient! Who would have thought that the essence of mind is intrinsically free from changes! Who would have thought that all things are the manifestation of the essence of mind!"

Knowing that I had realised the essence of mind, the Patriarch said, "To him who does not know his own mind, it would be of no use to learn Buddhism. On the other hand, if he knows his own mind and sees intuitively his own nature, he would be called, 'Great Man,' 'Teacher of Men and Devas,' or 'Buddha'."

Thus to the knowledge of no one, the Dharma was transmitted to me in the midnight and consequently I became the inheritor of the teaching of the 'Sudden' School (the Dhyana School) as well as the robe and the begging bowl.

"You are the Sixth Patriarch," said he, "take good care of yourself and deliver as many sentient beings as possible. Propagate and perpetuate the teaching, and don't let it come to an end. Take note of my stanza:—

Sentient beings who sow seeds of enlightenment  
In the field of Causation, will reap the fruit of Buddhahood.  
Inanimate objects which are void of Buddha-nature  
Sow not and reap not.

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\*'To be free from any attachment' means not to abide in Rupa (form or matter), not to abide in sound, not to abide in delusion, not to abide in enlightenment, not to abide in the quintessence, not to abide in the attribute. 'To use the mind' means to let the 'One Mind' (i.e. the Universal mind) manifest itself everywhere. To let our mind dwell on piety or on evil, piety or evil manifests itself, but our essence of mind (or Primordial mind) is thereby obscured. But when our mind dwells on nothing, then we shall realise that all the worlds of the ten quarters are nothing but the manifestation of 'One Mind'?—National Teacher On's annotation.

The above commentary is most accurate and to the point. Scholastic Buddhist Scholars can never give an explanation so satisfactory as this. For this reason Dhyana Masters (National Teacher On being one of them) are superior to the so-called Scriptural Expounders."

—DIH PING TSZE.



He further said, "When Patriarch Bodhidharma first came to China, most Chinese had no confidence in him, and so this robe was handed down as a testimony from one Patriarch to another. As to the Dharma, this is as a rule transmitted from heart to heart and the recipient is expected to understand it and to realise it by his own efforts. From time immemorial, it has been the practice for one Buddha to pass to his successor the quintessence of the Dharma and for one Patriarch to transmit to another the esoteric teaching from mind to mind. As the robe may give cause to dispute, you are the last one to inherit it. Should you again hand it down to your successor, your life would be in imminent danger. You should leave this place as quickly as you can, lest some one should do you harm."

"Whither should I go?" I asked. "At Wei you stop and at Wui you seclude yourself," he replied.

Upon receiving the robe and the begging bowl in the middle of the night, I told the Patriarch that as I am a Southerner, I did not know the mountain tracks and that it was impossible for me to get to the mouth of the river (to catch a boat). "You need not worry," said he. "I'll escort you."

He then accompanied me to Kiukiang Station and there he ordered me to get into a boat. As he did the rowing himself, I asked him to sit down and let me handle the oar. "It is only right for me to get you across," (an allusion to the sea of birth and death which one has to go across before the shore of Nirvana can be reached) he said. To this I replied, "Under illusion, it is you who get me across; but after enlightenment, I should cross it myself. Although the term 'to go across' is the same, it is used differently in each case. As I happen to be born in the frontier, even my speaking is incorrect in pronunciation; (but in spite of this), I have had the honour to inherit the Dharma from you. Since I am now enlightened, it is only right for me to cross the sea of birth and death myself by realising my own essence of mind."

"Quite so, quite so," he agreed. "Beginning from you, Buddhism (here the Dhyana School is referred to) will hereafter be very popular.\* Three years after your departure from me, I shall leave this world. You may start on your journey now. Go as fast as you can towards the South. Do not preach too soon, as Buddhism is not so easily spread."

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\* Before the coming of Bodhidharma, Chinese Buddhists who have entered the 'Path of Holiness' (i. e. attained the fruit of the various stages such as the Sravaka Stage, the Bodhisattva Stage etc.) may be counted on one's fingers. After the Sixth Patriarch the Dhyana School has flourished to such an extent that the number of its followers who are thoroughly enlightened and have attained the Holy Fruit amounts to hundreds of thousand. Such a splendid result agrees with Buddha Gautama's prediction that five hundred years after his death, the 'Light of the Prajna (Wisdom) Lamp' will be transmitted eastward to China.

Dhyana Master Wong Ip said. "He who attains enlightenment in one moment (i. e. through the teaching of the Sudden School) is as efficient as those who do it by passing successfully through the ten stages."

Thus we may see that after enlightenment, a follower of the Dhyana School cannot be rated by the usual 'Stage of Progress', and that the saying. "An enlightened Dhyana Master at once surpasses an expectant Buddha who has gone through the ten stages", is absolutely reliable.

—DIH PING TSZE.



After saying good-bye, I left him and walked towards the South. In about two months' time, I reached the Tai Yu Mountain. There I noticed that several hundred men were in pursuit of me with the intention of robbing my robe and begging bowl.

Among them, there was a monk named Wei Ming whose lay surname was Chen. He was a general of the fourth rank in lay life. His manner was rough and his temper hot. Of all the pursuers, he was the most vigilant in search of me. When he overtook me, I threw the robe and the begging bowl on a rock, saying, "This robe is nothing but a testimonial. What is the use of taking it away by force?" When he got to the rock, he tried to pick them up; but found he could not! Then he shouted out, "Lay Brother, Lay Brother, (it should be noted that the Sixth Patriarch at that time had not yet formally joined the order) I come for the Dharma, I come not for the robe."

Whereupon, I came out from my hiding place and squatted on the rock. He made obeisance and said "Lay Brother, preach to me, please."

"Since the object of your coming is for the Dharma," said I, "please refrain from thinking of anything and just keep your mind blank. I shall then preach to you." When he had done this for a considerable time, I said "When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, and at that particular moment, what is, Venerable Sir, the real nature (literally physiognomy) of yourself?"

As soon as he heard this, he at once became enlightened. But he further asked, "Apart from those esoteric sayings and esoteric ideas handed down by the Patriarch from generation to generation, are there still any other esoteric teachings?" "What I can tell you is not esoteric," replied I. "If you turn your light inwardly,\* you will find what is esoteric within you."

"In spite of my staying in Wong Mui," said he, "I realised not the real nature of myself. Now, thanks to your guidance, I know it in the same way as a water-drinker himself knows how hot or how cold the water is. Lay Brother, you are now my teacher."

I replied, "If this is the case, then you and I are fellow disciples of the Fifth Patriarch. Please take good care of yourself."

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\* The most important point in the teaching of the Dhyana School lies in 'Introspection' or 'Introversion' which means the turning of one's own 'light' to reflect inwardly. To illustrate, let us take the analogy of a lamp. We know, the light of a lamp, when surrounded by a shade, will reflect inwardly with its radiance centering on itself; whereas the rays of a naked flame would diffuse and shine outwardly. Now, when we are so engrossed with criticising others—as it is the wont of us—we hardly turn our thoughts on ourselves and hence scarcely know anything about ourselves. Contrary to this, the followers of the Dhyana School turn their attention completely within and reflect exclusively on their own 'real nature' known in Chinese as the 'natural physiognomy'.

Lest our readers should overlook this important passage, let it be noted that, in China alone, thousands of Buddhists have attained enlightenment by acting on this wise saying of the Sixth Patriarch.



In answering his question whither he should go thereafter, I told him to stop at Yuen and to take up his abode in Mong. He paid homage and departed.

Sometime after, I reached Tso Kai. There the evil-doers again persecuted me and I had to take refuge in Sze Wui where I stayed with a party of hunters for a period as long as fifteen years.

Occasionally I preached to them in a way that befitted their understanding. They used to put me to watch their nets; but whenever I found living creatures therein, I set all of them free. In meal time, I put vegetables in the same pan in which they cooked their meat. Some of them questioned me and I explained to them that I would eat vegetables only, after they had been cooked with the meat.

One day I bethought myself that I ought not to pass a secluded life all the time and that it was high time for me to propagate the Law. Accordingly I left there for Fat Shing Temple in Canton.

At that time, Bhikkhu Yen Chung, Master of Dharma, was preaching the Maha Parinirvana Sutra in Fat Shing Temple. It happened that one day, when a pennant was blown about by the wind, two Bhikkhus entered into a dispute as to what was it that was in motion, the wind or the pennant. As they could hardly settle their difference, I submitted to them that it was neither, and that what actually moved was their own mind. The whole assembly was startled by what I said and Bhikkhu Yen Chung invited me to take the seat of honour and questioned me as to the various knotty points in the Sutras.

Seeing that my answers were so precise and accurate and that they meant something more than book-knowledge, he said to me, "Lay Brother, you must be an extraordinary man. I was told long ago that the inheritor of the Fifth Patriarch's robe and Dharma has come to the South. Very likely you are the man."

To this I politely assented. He immediately made obeisance and asked me to show to the assembly the robe and the begging bowl I inherited.

He further asked what instructions I had when the Fifth Patriarch transmitted me the Dharma. "Apart from a discussion on the realisation of the essence of mind," I replied, "he gave me no other instruction. Neither did he discuss on Dhyana and Emancipation." "Why not?" he asked. "Because that would mean two ways," I replied. "There cannot be two ways in Buddhism. There is one way only."

He then asked what was the only way. I replied, "The Maha Parinirvana Sutra which you expound explains that Buddha-nature is the only way. For example, in that Sutra, King Ko Kwai Tak, a Bodhisattva asked Buddha whether those who commit the four *pārāgika*, (gross misconduct. They are murder, stealing, incontinence, and falsehood of a serious nature) or the five deadly sins, (i.e. Patricide, Matricide, Setting the Buddhist Order in discord, Killing an Arhat, and Causing blood to flow from the body of a Buddha) and those who are *icchantika* (heretics), etc., would eradicate their 'element (literally root) of goodness' and their Buddha-nature or not. Buddha replied, 'There are two kinds of 'element of goodness': the eternal and the non-eternal. Since Buddha-nature is neither eternal nor non-



eternal, therefore their 'element of goodness' 'is not' eradicated.' Now, Buddhism is known as having no two ways. There are good ways and evil ways, but since Buddha-nature is neither, therefore Buddhism is known as having no two ways. From the point of view of ordinary folks, skhandhas (aggregates or component parts of a personality) and Dhātus (factors of consciousness) are two separate things; but enlightened men know and understand that they are not dual in nature. The nature of non-duality is Buddha-nature."

Bhikkhu Yen Chung was highly pleased with my answer. Putting his two palms together (as a sign of respect), he said, "My interpretation of the Sutra is as worthless as a heap of debris, while your discourse is as valuable as genuine gold." Subsequently he conducted the ceremony of hair-cutting for me (i.e. the ceremony of Initiation) and asked me to accept him as my pupil.

Thenceforth, under the Boi-tree I preached the teaching of the Tung Shan School (the School of the Fourth and the Fifth Patriarchs who lived in Tung Shan).

Since the Dharma was transmitted to me in Tung Shan, I had gone through many hardships and my life often seemed to be hanging by a thread. Today I have had the honour of meeting Your Worship, officials, Bhikkus, Bhikkhunis, Taoists, and laymen in this assembly and I must ascribe this to our good connection in numerous kalpas (cyclic periods) as well as to our common accumulated merits in making offerings to various Buddhas in our past incarnations; otherwise, we would have no chance of hearing the above teaching of the 'Sudden' School and thereby laying the foundation of our future success in understanding the Dharma.

This teaching was handed down from the past Patriarchs and it is not a system of my own invention. Those who wish to hear the teaching should purify their own mind first; and after hearing it, they themselves ought to clear up their own doubts in the same way as what the Sages did in the Past.

At the end of the address, the assembly felt rejoiced, made obeisance and departed.