

2nd Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra



(Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording** of the
2nd Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra class
[dated 21st June 2015])

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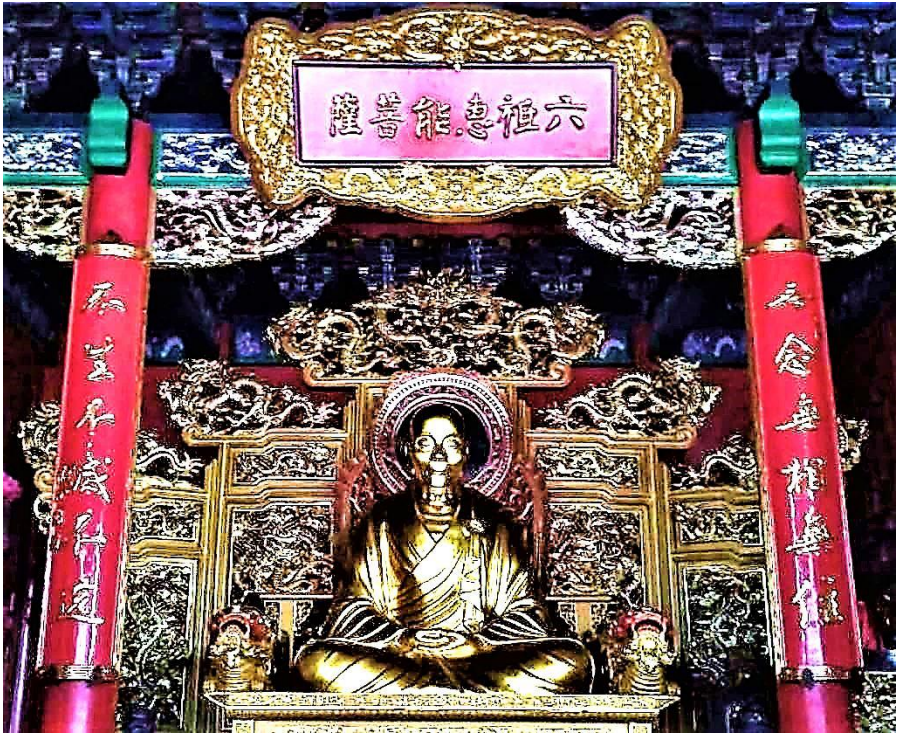
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Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng Bodhisattva

六祖惠能菩薩

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(Biodata of Bro. Teoh Kian Koon)

Bro. Teoh graduated from University of Malaya in Civil Engineering in 1979. He has been a *spiritual practitioner cum ‘Meditator’ since 1971*. Since his retirement in 2001 from his **Engineering career**, he has been **sharing his understanding and experiences** with those who are *keen in their search for true happiness, peace and liberation from birth and death and all mental suffering so that they can be a blessing to all of humanity via becoming a more virtuous, nobler and wiser human being*. He gives dharma talks and holds *meditation classes & retreats* and **weekly Dharma classes** at various *meditation centres, Buddhist society* and places that invite him.

For *more detail* of Bro. **Teoh’s dharma activities** and his **Kalyāṇamittaship grouping’s objectives** please login to his **dharma website** at: <http://broteoh.com>

1. Preface

It is Brother Teoh's **sincere** wish that Dharma friends, spiritual practitioners, seekers of truth, and cultivators will be able **to make use** of the enclosed dharma **transcript notes** to develop a **better understanding** of the Buddha **Dharma as taught** by the Buddha so that they may **progress along the path of dharma** to become more **virtuous, nobler** and **wiser** human beings that can be a **blessing** to all *of humanity and the world*.

As these notes were mostly **compiled** based on a **direct transcript** from the recording of the 2nd **lesson** of the **Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra** class (dated 21.6.2015); the text is aligned as closely as possible to the **colloquial speech** in the talk. **However some editorial amendments have been made** to the **text without detracting** from the **essence** of the talk. With this, it is hoped that readers can **adjust** themselves accordingly to ***better understand*** its **true meaning** and **intent**. A **good** way to do this is **to listen** to the recordings **first before** reading the transcript notes.

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2. Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intention** that these *dharma transcript notes* be **given free** to those who are **interested** and have the **affinity** to receive them. I would like to *take this opportunity to thank* and **rejoice** in the **generosity** and **wholesomeness** of all those **Dharma friends** or **Kalyāṇamittas** who have **donated** and **helped out** in the **transcription, typing, typesetting, formatting, proof reading, etc.** to make this **free distribution** of **dharma dāna** possible. Special thanks should be accorded to **Sister SK Hoong** (Hoong Suet Kun) who has taken the **initiative** to volunteer to develop the **draft transcript** for my **subsequent editing** thereby enabling this **dharma transcript book** to be printed.

By the **power of all these wholesomeness**, may all beings be **well and happy, free** from all mental and physical sufferings and dangers and may there be **love, peace and joy** - deep **within** their hearts. And may it also **pave the way** for there to be **causes and conditions** for **all dharma friends** who have **donated or helped out** in one way or another to realize their **good and noble wishes/aspirations** soonest possible.

With Metta always,
Brother Teoh Kian Koon
(Dated: 30.9.2017)

3. 2nd Lesson of the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra dated 21st June 2015

A very good afternoon to all, brothers and sisters in the Dharma, we are still early. We have one more minute to go before we start at 3.00pm. Can anybody remember which page we were at when we end last Sunday? We finished Romanized page (xx) so we are at Romanized page (xxi). This is **Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua's** introduction. Oh! Today is **Father's day** so some of you may want me to stop the class earlier, right? No problem, we can stop at 5pm or 5.30pm latest, we will see how it goes. If you need to leave early you can - no problem. If you have any **prior arrangement** you can go first because it is an **important occasion** and if you need to meet up with your family members you better go. We also would like to **take this opportunity to wish every father a very happy Father's day**. If as a father you **do your duty well** then *your children will remember you for all the sacrifices, love and wholesomeness that you have given them*. So if you **do your duty well** you will have a **good Father's day**. If you **don't do your duty well** then Father's day **may not** have much meaning.

3.1. Pūjā

We can start the **puja** now. Compose your mind; develop the faith (saddhā) and spiritual zeal (vīriya). Then pay **respect mindfully** when we chant the salutation. We will chant the Mahayana tradition first:

Nā Mó Běn Shī Shì Jiā Móu Ní Fó (南无本师释迦牟尼佛) (3x)

Nā Mó Guān Shì Yīn Pú Sà (南无观世音菩萨) (3x)

Námó Fó Púsà

(南無佛菩薩) (3x)

Salutation to the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma & Sangha) following the **Theravada tradition**:

Vandanā - Salutation to Lord Buddha:-

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsaṃbuddhassa (3X)

Tisarāṇa - Taking of the Three Refuges:-

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi,
Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dutiyampi Dhammaṃ
saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dutiyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Tatiyampi Dhammaṃ
saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Tatiyampi Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Pañca Sīla - Renewing of the Five Precepts:-

Pānātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi;

Surā-meraya-majja-pamā-daṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ
samādiyāmi

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu! (Rejoicing)

Now let us pay respect **mindfully** to Quan Yin Bodhisattva and all the other great beings that are worthy of respect and The Triple Gem to end the pre-pūjā:

Buddhaṃ pujemi; Dhammaṃ pujemi; Saṅghaṃ pujemi.

3.2. Dharma Sharing By Bro. Teoh

Okay. You all can be seated. Please turn to **page (Romanized 21), (xxi),**

Tripitaka Master Hua's Introduction:

*All of the Sutras **are guides** for us to use in cultivating the Way.*

This is a **very important understanding**. Do you know why it is a **guide**? It is like a **pointer, pointing towards the dharma, the truth**. But the **sutra itself** is **not** the truth. Just like if you want to realize *nibbāna* – that **realization** is **not** the **word** *nibbāna*. It is also **not** the *idea or concept* of enlightenment. It is the *actual realization*. So whatever words used to describe, *nibbāna*, **are just words** and *all the dharma point* towards enlightenment; they are just similar to the **finger pointing** to the moon, do you understand? When the finger points to the moon, it tells you that is the moon, which you have to realize. But the **dharma that points towards the enlightenment** is just like the finger. So *to see the moon or to realize the moon, you must gaze beyond that finger*.

There are **3 phases of dharma cultivation**. According to the Buddha phase 1 is **pariyatti** (where you develop the **learning** and **understanding** of dharma via *hearing and reading*). So this is

learning. When you learn, you *develop knowledge* or *partial understanding* of what the teaching is. But you **cannot live it** as yet because it's *still at the knowledge level*. You **know** you **cannot do** certain **wrong or evil thing** *but* your **deluded** mind *can still condition* you to do it.

It's just like the precepts, you have learnt about *their importance* via right view. You know precepts are **very important** because they **support** our cultivation. That's the reason why when we chant them in Pāḷi, or when they administer those precepts to you; towards the end you will be reminded on the **importance of keeping** these precepts. If it is the 5 precepts they will chant: *Imāni pañca sikkhāpadāni*; if it is the 8 precepts its: *Imāni aṭṭha sikkhāpadāni*. So these are the 5 precepts or the 8 precepts. Then they will **emphasize** to you the **importance of precepts** via chanting: **Sīlena sugatim yanti** - the meaning is very important and very deep. This *sīla* or *virtue/precepts*, if you cultivate them, it will bring about **happiness or joy**. Hence keeping **precepts or virtues is the source of happiness (sugatim yanti)**. It comes from the word *sukham*, *meaning* happiness; source of happiness. The next benefit of keeping precepts or virtue is : **Sīlena bhogasampadā**. The meaning is keeping *precepts or virtue is the source of spiritual wealth*. Then the third benefit is **Sīlena nibbutim yanti**, *nibbutim* is **peacefulness**. Keeping virtue or precepts is the source of **peacefulness of mind**.

If you don't keep precepts, you **will not have the condition** to have a **peaceful** mind, a **happy** mind and a mind that has **the ability to receive the dharma** (source of **spiritual wealth**). These will remind you of the **importance of precepts** because without precepts as a

base, it's *very difficult* to develop the **meditation** (*mind state* of *Samadhi*). *That's the reason why* the Buddha lists the cultivation in the order of *Sīla, Samadhi and Paññā*. *Sīla* is precepts. Without precepts, you **cannot prepare** your mind **to meditate** because the **mental hindrances** that **hinder** your mind from entering the **meditative state** of **inner peace** and **inner mindfulness** or awareness are very powerful. When the **mental hindrances** are at bay, it means you already have the spiritual faculties. **Without** the **spiritual faculties**, you cannot keep your precepts. You must have **faith** in the *Buddha* and *his teaching*, leading to the *understanding* of the **importance** of his **teachings**. Then there is the **spiritual zeal** (*vīriya*) that **drives** you to **cultivate** the Buddha Dharma to understand his teaching because it can bring about **enlightenment** *in the here and the now*; hence no more suffering. With this understanding, the *vīriya* will be very strong. Then you will be determined to go this way to cultivate the Buddha Dharma.

That's how you will start **to train** your **mind** to have **sati or mindfulness** which is the *third spiritual* faculty because without *sati or mindfulness*, you **cannot see** your *mental intention*. Hence you cannot keep your precepts because you cannot identify the evil roots, and you cannot check whether your spiritual faculties are there or not? And you can't even know whether the mental hindrances are active or not because you are **heedlessly lost in thought**; you don't have **mindfulness or heedfulness**. So **training your mind to be mindful** is the **most important**. If you are **not mindful**, you are **heedless** and the Buddha said, "*The heedless are as if dead, spiritually dead*, no chance at all to develop the **spiritual** understanding and **to live the spiritual life** of *wisdom, peacefulness,*

joy and happiness.” That’s the reason why *sīla* is very important. Once *sīla* is in place, you will have fewer problems, less fear, worry, anxiety, suffering and misery. Then your mind will have **more peace** and you are **happier**. That’s why **precepts** are the **source of happiness; source of peacefulness** and **source of spiritual wealth**. All these will fall into place and the mind that is **peaceful with clarity can see things as they are, clearly**.

As you develop the ability to keep your *Sīla*, the *Samadhi path* factor which are *Sati* and *Samadhi* or what they call path factors of *Sati* (or mindfulness) and *Samadhi* (the collected and the unwavering mind), they will **enable you** to see things as they are, clearly. A mind that has a stable *Sati* will have *Samadhi*. When *Sati* and *Samadhi* are there, there is **no thought, there is clarity**. That’s why you can be **attentive**. You can see things as they are **without** the words, **without** the conditioning, **without** the interpretation, the **stirring** and the **reaction of mind**. The Buddha calls this the **direct seeing, seeing things as they are** or *nana dassanā* (direct knowledge and vision of the truth, of the reality).

With that, we will continue. By now you understand why all sutras are **only guides** for you to **use** in *cultivating the way* because the sutras only *consist of teachings* that **point towards the truth, the enlightenment, the realization** of the Buddha Dharma leading to the **true awakening**. The real awakening is more important than the sutras because the sutras are just the guide to guide you there. The other **Zen analogy** is that of the turtle. If you go to a Zen monastery, you will **see the image of a turtle** with a bundle of *Tripitaka* behind wrapped around it. Living beings who are **still not**

enlightened, will **laugh** at the turtle. They say, “The turtle has been **keeping and carrying the Tripitaka** for so long and yet he hasn’t **penetrated** the truth. He is still **holding on to the Tripitaka** or the **sutras**.” But then the **turtle** which is **wise** will laugh back at the human being. Do you know why the turtle laugh back? Give it a try. Why did the turtle laugh back at them? Master Hsuan Hua had already given you the hint. What did Master Hsuan Hua say? He said all sutras are **only a guide** for you **to make use of to develop the cultivation**. It is not the truth/enlightenment. That’s why the turtle laughs back. Only the **living beings** that are **deluded** think the *Tripitaka* is the truth, is the enlightenment. It is just the sutras **pointing towards** the truth. That’s why the turtle laughs back. What the turtle is trying to tell you is you **cultivate** Buddha Dharma **to develop understanding**. You don’t carry the **knowledge** with you or **attach and cling** on to the **Dharma knowledge**.

It’s just like the **analogy** the Buddha gave. In the olden days, in order to cross the river or a stream, you may need a boat or a raft to take you across. So the dharma is like the **raft that helps** you **cross the stream** to the **other shore**, which is *nibbāna*. After you have crossed to the other shore (having developed the realization), **why must you still carry the raft** with you while over there? You may say, ‘this is the **dharma**, which has made me awakened. That’s why I must carry it.’ Then you are like the Zen master Shen Hsiu.

Do you know who Zen master Shen Hsiu is? He is the most **senior disciple** of the 5th Patriarch, Hong Rén. Shen Hsiu is the 大师兄 (dà shīxiōng) and because he still cannot understand so he holds onto the dharma. To him, cultivation is that way. That’s the reason why

he wrote in his poem:

*“The mind is like a mirror bright on a stand.
Polish until it shines so that no dust can alight.”*

So to him, the **wholesomeness, purity** and **virtue** are the right dharma. He holds on to those practices. That’s the reason why he **cannot realize** the **true mind** because he clings onto the **duality of wholesomeness, pure mind, true mind** and **right practice**. This is still a one-sided duality. That’s why the **mind cannot cease** because he is *busy polishing the mind* so that **no dust can alight**. He is busy **rejecting** the defilements, the *āśava* and the unwholesomeness. *Such a mind cannot be free*. Such a mind is busy doing a lot of things. Such a mind is **still grasping, clinging** and **holding** on to the good. So because of that, if you have the wisdom, you will understand all these sutras, they are like **pointers pointing towards the truth**. They are **not the truth**. They are like the **rafts that help you cross the stream** to realize **enlightenment**. You cannot cling, you cannot hold, you cannot grasp.

Enlightenment has nothing to do with memory. Memory is just **accumulation** of the past, of the known. That’s why **thoughts arise** because **thoughts are responses** to all these memories and experiences. Then if you use these past or the known to act, **you are not acting** at all because you **act from memory**, you act *from your attachment, your clinging, your craving, your delusion*. These are all your **conditioning** and **accumulation of experiences** that you have **developed over time**.

In the **Mahayana tradition**, its **Four Noble Truths** teaching differs slightly from those of the Theravada tradition. They have changed their 2nd noble truth to '**accumulation**' as the cause of suffering instead of using the word **craving**. In the 2nd noble truth of the Theravada tradition, we always come across the word *samudaya*. What is *samudaya*? It's the **cause of the arising of suffering**. But they change it to **accumulation**. Actually they are not wrong. Regarding the 1st noble truth, the Buddha just proclaimed the 1st noble truth of suffering via just saying, "In this world, there are **8 realities of life and existence** that each and every living being (if they live long enough), have to confront. When they confront them **without wisdom, suffering will be the result.**" That is the 1st Noble Truth of dukkha.

Then the Buddha moved on to explain the 2nd Noble Truth. He said, 'there is a 2nd Noble Truth that **explains clearly the cause of the arising of suffering.**' How do all these suffering come about? It is mainly due to your **craving borne of delusion**. But the Mahayana never uses this word, *samudaya* or **cause of arising** of suffering. They say **suffering arises because of accumulation**, so to them the 2nd noble truth is: 'The cause of arising of suffering is **accumulation.**' If you **accumulate** all these **experiences as memory**, it means you are **holding and clinging** on to them in your **memory**. Due to your **delusion** it will **condition** you **to grasp, cling and hold** on to them because when you **accumulate** all of your life experiences, **good and bad** what actually happens? You will give rise to the **wrong thoughts** because more often than not, you will **accumulate more** of your **scars of memory, things** that make you **unhappy – like your various types of phobias, child abuses**, etc. and you **hold onto them**

because there is *a lot of fear, sorrow and lamentation* when you **confront** these memories. Similarly you have memories of *how people torture and torment you, take advantage of you, cause so much fear, sorrow and lamentation* to you; how they **deceive** you, **mistreat** you and do all **those negative things** unto you. Whereas your **happy moments** (*unless you have good karma*), you *don't have much to recall*. You may recall only once a while, how your parents **reward you** when you **do well in your exams** or when you **behave very well**. Then during the early years, if you come from **a poor family** you will **recall all the harsh and difficult moments**. Then suddenly when those conditions *improve* and you become *well off*, you can recall all **those joyful moments of striving** coming back to you. But whatever it is, these are **memories** of your **experiences** and when **you accumulate** them, what happens? You **create duality**. Whatever **experiences** you **don't like**, will condition **your fear** and your **phobia**. You will have **this negative interpretation** of them. That's how you create this **unhappiness** and **fear** towards them or what we call the **evil roots** of **anger, hatred, emotional negativity**, etc.

Delusion and negative tendencies are one side of the duality. The other side is what you hold on to as the **memories** of your **good moments** etc. That is why when you **accumulate all these** and you come out with **your views and opinions of what is good for you and what is bad for you** or **what is favourable and unfavourable; what is pleasant and unpleasant**, *your mind develops a view of duality*.

When you **come out to live life** and you **act according** to these **memories**, what will happen? These memories will remind you of

all the **fear, worries, anxiety, and insecurity**; how people cheat you and how you were **deceived** by others and how sometimes **you also deceive others**, etc. All these are **accumulated memories**. So whenever you see something, or hear something while living life, you will recall these memories. Then you will **act according** to what this memory tells you, - 'oh, this guy, the last time he cheated me before' or you may recall from memory, 'this guy is up to no good'; then like **snatch thief** – the moment you **hear the motorbike sound**, there is **fear via memory** that reminds you - maybe it's a snatch thief again. So you act **out of fear**, out of **anxiety**, out of **sorrow** and **lamentation**, out of **stupidity** and **ignorance**.

Sometimes you may have certain type of **sense experiences** arising, then you compare them with those in your memory via saying, 'the last time, when I was there, it was more beautiful, the food was better but now the food there is not as nice as before.' Then what happens? Your likes and dislikes arise because you **measure**, you **judge**, you **comment**, you **react** and **all these are attachment, craving** and **clinging**, which are the causes of suffering. That's why **accumulation indirectly** is attachment, clinging and grasping borne of the evil roots of greed, hatred and delusion. If you **don't have delusion**, you will **not accumulate**; you will **not attach** nor **cling**.

Memory is for you to use, **not to register** all your **psychological fear**, all your **psychological emotional negativities**. These are the ones that make you **recall** your **scars of memory**, thus reminding you of the **unhappy moments**, the **sorrowful moments**, the **insecurity**, the **fear** and the **danger** etc. So if you **act with that type of mind**, you are **not acting at all** because you are **acting** from **memories** which is

the **past** and because of that, you are **acting according** to your *fear, insecurity, sorrow and lamentation and your phobias etc.* This is **not acting** at all. What you should do is **to act base on your understanding, your wisdom.** When you see something, **do not allow memory to interfere,** you just **check with your nature,** which may already have the **understanding.** *If there is understanding, you will act appropriately,* you will **not act out of fear, out of insecurity.** Instead you act **out of love, out of understanding.** You **maintain your virtues,** via following your **Noble 8-Fold Path cultivation.** Then you **will act according to Noble 8-Fold Path to resolve things amicably.** Hence *no more fear, sakkāyadiṭṭhi or self-delusion, jealousy, envy and selfishness.*

You **act based on understanding** means *according to reality.* For things are just the way they are and people are just the way they are too. **You learn to accept them for what they are;** then you are at **peace;** then you can act with **wholesomeness via inquiring – ‘How can I resolve this amicably?’ ‘How can I be a blessing to others** so that they **can improve their life,** so that we can avoid **unnecessary arguments, conflicts** and **misunderstanding,** so that we can **resolve** all issues **amicably, thereby reducing any unnecessary tensions or misunderstanding** that may erupt. This is **what the Dharma is capable of** when you understand. This will bring us back to this particular topic regarding sutras. We shall come back to page Romanized 21, (xxi) where Hsuan Hua said *all the sutras are only guides to be used in cultivating the way.* Hopefully by now your understanding is better.

3.2.1. Tripitaka Master Hua's Introduction

All of the Sutras are guides to use in cultivating the Way. They may be spoken by the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, the Patriarchs, and also by Arhats, transformation beings, and gods. Although they all serve the same purpose, the doctrines within them differ.

(Arhat is a Mahayana term whereas the Theravada tradition uses the word Arahant).

The Sutras spoken by the Buddha were translated from the Indian languages into Chinese, and thus worked their way into Chinese society. In China, all the Sutras are translations, with the **sole exception** of this present work, *The Sixth Patriarch's Sutra*, which was spoken by the great Chinese master the Sixth Patriarch.

Do you all know why this sutra is the sole exception? This sutra was never in the Tripitaka. This is the only teaching by Master Hui Neng that actually enjoys the **same status** as the sutras, which are the **discourses of the Buddha**. And because of that, it **does not need** interpretation as it comes directly from China, the *Sixth Patriarch*.

...The Great Master Hui Neng was originally an illiterate peasant.

See, he didn't have any education. So don't be foolish. Don't **look down** upon yourself because a lot of **Buddhist practitioners** tell themselves, *"How can I cultivate? I don't even have a formal education or I don't even get to study in the university."*

Dharma doesn't need any qualifications. Dharma only needs ***sincerity of the heart, faith and perseverance.*** It *does not need any formal education.* Education, if you develop it with *understanding*, then education helps. But if you don't have the understanding, education may become *a stumbling block* because too much knowledge will prevent you from ***opening up*** your *mind to receive the teaching.* This is because you may think you are highly educated hence you are very wise, smart, and clever. Then when the Buddha said in the sutta that all living beings were deluded and ignorant before they were enlightened, you cannot take it. You may even say, "I am a university student and I've a first class honours degree so how can you say I am ignorant or I am deluded?" That may be the reason why you will not even take a look at the teaching or give it a chance. If you are ***so egoistic*** and ***intellectual***, then it is ***very difficult*** for you to have an ***open mind*** to listen to this teaching.

In the early days, I heard this dharma talk from the late **Venerable Suvanno**. He said according to the Buddha, ***all living beings before they are enlightened, they are all deluded and they have ignorance.*** They don't have wisdom. Then I felt funny, thinking - 'this cannot be. We are the top students of our own state. We also top the faculty of our university. Then why did the Buddha say we are ignorant and deluded?' When you go to the temple, most of you ***can't even bow down*** to *lower your self-esteem* (to have ***humility***) to *pay respects to the Great Beings like Sākyamuni or Guan Yin Bodhisattva.* A lot of graduates tend to have this problem. But for me it was never a problem.

I reflected on it and I told myself that there must be a reason.

Otherwise, it cannot be, for the Buddha himself, is such a great being. The moment I read his *4 Noble Truths*, I knew he was the real one. Nobody can **summarize all his understanding** into just the **4 Noble Truths and they are so beautiful and so wonderful**. All of life, **mundane and supra mundane** are all inside this 4 Noble Truths. I said: - 'nobody can do that unless he is the **real one**' because even at that time I said to myself, 'If my nature realizes this truth, I still cannot **summarize it this way** unless **I have heard about it before** and received the teaching.' I decided to have an **open mind** and started studying the teaching. I then determined to go all out to develop the **faith** and the **sincerity to cultivate**, and I just **persevered**. Then as I moved into it, developed the **mindfulness** and **heedfulness**, only did I come to realize the **profound meaning** of what Buddha meant by: - 'all living beings, before they are enlightened, they are deluded and full of ignorance.'

Delusion here means *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* (**self-delusion**) and it points towards the belief that there is an entity, a being within these so-called **5 aggregates** of 'form and mind' that you call the 'me' and the 'I'. This so called **human being**, you will deludedly grasp and cling on to it because you think you are real. When you think you are real, what happens? There's an **entity created**, which is the **egoic mind, a personality** of who you are. That's why from there on, you live and act with that personality. That's why you will have selfishness, - for me or not for me? Then when people threaten you or cause any unhappiness unto you, you will have emotional negativities. That's how the **3 evil roots** of **greed** (*selfishness, possessiveness*), **anger** (*hatred*) and **delusion** arise within your mind when you deludedly **grasp and cling** via **self-delusion** thinking that

this 'form and mind' is you. **Delusion is fear, worry and anxiety** because you **don't understand**. As a living being, when **this delusion** manifests, you will have these problems leading to suffering in the here and the now.

Then after I had developed the mindfulness and the heedfulness, I came to realize that everything I had done, as a person, as a human being, I had my **own selfishness**; it was *either for me or not for me? If nothing to do with me or beneficial to me, I didn't want to do*. No advantage to me, to my family, my parents, brothers and sisters or my own race or my school or my own company, I didn't want to do. That **self-delusion** leading to an **automatic selfish personality was always there**. Do you understand? Then when you don't like certain things, **your mind reacts**. Your mind develops anger, hatred, envy, jealousy and dislike making you feel **unhappy and miserable**. Then when certain things or situations arise, **via delusion**, you will develop *fear; fear of death, fear of things not happening the way you want them to happen, fear of the unknown, fear of the consequences of your wrong actions and whatever wrong speeches that you have arisen*. All these fears are due to our delusion and because of that I came to realize that the **Buddha was indeed very wise**.

Every living being before their awakening has this **inherent selfish intention, emotional negativity and fear** within them. Because of that I started to cultivate the understanding of this rather unique teaching which is so beautiful. I felt like it was meant to be. Then I started to study what the Buddha meant by the **3 evil roots** of *greed, anger and delusion*. How from *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* all these things come

about. Without ***self-delusion (sakkāyadiṭṭhi)***, there is *no greed, anger, hatred and fear*. And I finally managed to expand on these **3 evil roots** on my own to understand its ***deep meaning***. Nobody taught me these and the books also never write about them. They only use the words but never explain and elaborate on them. Then later on as I **reflected, contemplated and meditated** into all these via mindfulness, I could see all those ***very fine and subtle mind states*** (of evil) which came back through the back door. This understanding started to stabilize. Then one day, it dawned upon this nature of mine this understanding - no wonder the Buddha said *'living beings are deluded'*. They have a lot of ignorance and because of that; they create a lot of negative karma. Their nature develops what they call ***delusion leading to downfall*** because they ***cannot see things as they are***. They ***cannot*** develop this understanding via *connecting their mundane mind* to the ***true nature*** because they ***cannot*** be silent. They ***cannot*** develop ***the ability to be aware*** hence they ***cannot connect*** to their true mind. And because of that, they cannot see things as they are. Hence they ***cannot*** awaken to understand this teaching. And because they don't understand, they are ***caught in delusion and heedlessness***. That's how they will continue to develop the ***negativity of karma*** leading to *downfall, life after life*. They don't have any chance of salvation.

All these understanding will arise and you will know how to cultivate and move. That's the reason why ***without mindfulness and heedfulness***, to ***reflect and contemplate deep*** into the teaching, you ***cannot*** understand.

So this particular sutra, the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra, is a very good sutra. What I am trying to explain to you is that you don't need to be educated to understand the real dharma. Even an illiterate person like Hui Neng, can understand. So don't look down upon yourself, don't blame yourself for lack of education, no need. You only need to have an ***open mind, a simple mind***, a mind that has **faith** and be ***very sincere*** in understanding life. Then you ***just persevere*** to develop the understanding. Then the way will be there, the dharma will be there. Then you will be able to go beyond, just like Hui Neng. Of course he has his past cultivation. We shall read on.

Tripitaka Master Hua's Introduction: (continued...)

The Sixth Patriarch's Sutra was spoken by the great Chinese master Hui Neng. The Great Master was originally an illiterate peasant.

(Note: A peasant is supposed to be a farmer but he is actually a woodcutter).

...and when he heard the sentence of The Vajra (Diamond) Sutra which said, "One should produce that thought which is nowhere supported,"

(Note: The English translation here, 'thought which is nowhere supported' is not so good. The actual translation should be, '*the mind that has no dwelling*' because 'support' sometimes the meaning is not so clear. It is better to translate it as – 'the mind that has no dwelling'.)

...he experienced an awakening and went to Huang Mei to draw near to the Fifth Patriarch, the Great Master Hung Jen. The Fifth Patriarch transmitted to him the wonderful Dharma, "using the mind to seal the mind," which has been handed down in unbroken Patriarchal succession. The Sixth Patriarch inherited this mind-seal Dharma-door and proceeded to carry out the wisdom-life of the Buddha in his speaking of The Sixth Patriarch's Sutra.

This is how the Platform Sutra comes about.

Nowadays this 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra has been translated into English and the mind-seal Dharma-door of the Buddha has thereby been transmitted in perpetuity to the West. It is hoped that Westerners will now read, recite, and study it, and all become Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and/ or Patriarchs. This is the main objective of this translation. May all who see and hear it quickly accomplish the Buddha way.

See, this is a **pure wish**; Master Hsuan Hua has made for you all.

*Wherever this Sutra is transmitted, the Orthodox Dharma may be found right in that place, causing living beings quickly to accomplish Buddhahood; such is the importance of this new translation. The Sutra is indeed a treasure trove; it is the true body of the Buddha, the compassionate father and mother of all living beings. It can give rise to **limitless Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Patriarchs!** May all in the West who now read this Sutra realize Bodhi and accomplish the Buddha Way!*

The Sutras contain the precious wisdom of the Buddha. There are some, let us call them “garbage-eating” scholars who claim that the Shurangama Sutra was not spoken by the Buddha. This is most certainly not the case, and I have made the following vow: If the Shurangama Sutra is false, I will fall into the uninterrupted hells forever.

*Ch’ang Pai-shan Seng
San Francisco, August 1977*

So he took out this challenge seriously. You will *have to understand* the **Shurangama Sutra** because it is actually **very genuine** but **very few** can understand the **Shurangama Sutra**. This was written, I think, by his disciple. Let’s move on to the next page, Translator’s Introduction.

3.2.2 Translator’s Introduction

The **translator** is the co-chairman of the Buddhist Text Translation Society, Primary Translation Committee, International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts, San Francisco, Bhikshuni Heng Yin. The translation was done in August 1977.

This is the **third edition** of the first commentary to *The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra* **ever to express the essence** of the Sixth Patriarch’s heart. Since the time the Great Master spoke this Sutra, no other commentary has revealed his basic principles, the **Dharma of his heart**. Tripitaka Master Hsuan

Hua's commentary **unfolds** the *heart Dharma*, the *mind-seal*, before the reader. **Dharma Jewel** is called 法宝 (fǎbǎo) in Mandarin. That's why the sutra is called 六祖 法宝坛经 (liù zǔ fǎbǎo tán jīng).

If you wish to understand the wonderful meaning of this Sutra, you should study this commentary, for within it are set forth the *limitless, inexhaustible, profound principles* of the *Buddha Dharma*. Among Western and Eastern people it is the **flower of wisdom, the real fruit of Bodhi**. Furthermore, this translation has been prepared by the Buddhist Text Translation Society of the Sino-American Buddhist Association. Each of its members, Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upāsaka, Upāsikā, many of whom hold Master's and Doctor's degrees, have read the manuscript with care over a period of several years to **ensure its accuracy**.

Essentially, the *mind-seal cannot* be *spoken or expressed* in writing, but in his commentary the Master has done just that, using numerous analogies and expedient devices to cause people to understand what they have *never understood before*.

Tripitaka Master Hua was born in northern China, and after his mother's death he practiced filial piety by sitting beside her grave for a period of three years. He built a small grass hut to keep out the wind and rain, and sat there in meditation. If food was brought to him, he ate; if no food was brought, he did not. The Master later travelled south to Canton, where he was appointed by the Venerable Master Hsü Yün to serve as Head of the Vinaya Academy at Nan Hua Monastery, the temple of the Sixth Patriarch. He later received in transmission the

Dharma of Master Hsü Yün and became **his Dharma successor**.

Since arriving in America, the Master has **turned the Great Dharma Wheel**, lecturing *The Shurangama Sutra*, *The Lotus Sutra*, *The Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra*, *The Vajra Sutra*, and *The Heart Sutra*, and others. He teaches an ever-growing number of American disciples, many of whom have left home to become *Bhikshus* and *Bhikshunis*.

In San Francisco, the Master has founded **Gold Mountain Monastery** and lectured on *The Avatamsaka Sutra* there. He also established the *International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts*. He has made the solemn vow that **wherever he goes the Orthodox Dharma will prevail** and the **Dharma-ending Age** shall not set in. Most recently, the Master established the **City of Ten Thousand Buddha**, near *Talmage, California*, a vast complex of **237 acres** and **60 buildings**, to serve as a **center of World Buddhism**. The **City of Ten Thousand Buddha** also house the **Dharma Realm Buddhist University**, of which the Master is President, and soon to be established are many programs to **benefit living beings** in many ways.

The Master upholds firmly the Orthodox Dharma, for the Dharma he teaches proceeds from direct and authoritative transmission, and he works unceasingly for the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. This lively commentary constitutes the first authentic transmission to the West of the mind-seal of

*all Buddha which has passed in **unbroken Patriarchal succession** from Shakyamuni Buddha to the present day. We present this volume as the foundation for the **flourishing** of the Buddha Dharma in the West.*

Bhikshuni Heng Yin

Buddhist Text Translation Society/Co-chairperson, Primary Translation Committee, International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts, San Francisco, Aug 1977

[Note: The City of Ten Thousand Buddha is pronounced as 万佛城 (wàn fó chéng) in mandarin]

This was the foreword by the Primary Translation Society followed by the **Reviewer's Preface**. It is good to go through all these so that you understand the purpose of this sutra, why they translate it in such a way. This reviewer's preface also has a role. We shall read on:

Reviewer's Preface

When the Fifth Patriarch transmitted the Dharma to the Sixth Patriarch he said to him, "Do not speak too soon, for the Buddha Dharma arises from difficulty."

So this is the message from the 5th Patriarch.

Centuries later in Northern China, Tripitaka Master Hsüan Hua, then known as Filial Son Pai, was practicing filial piety. He cultivated and meditated for three years beside his mother's

grave. His only protection from the northern winds and rains was a five foot square hut made from stalks of sorghum bound together in an A-frame which left both ends exposed to the elements.

One day while cultivating a miracle happened. Filial Son Pai saw the Great Master the Sixth Patriarch come to his hut. He entered through one of the openings and talked to the filial son just like an ordinary person. Filial Son Pai thought that he was real, forgetting at that time that the Great Master had entered Nirvana over a thousand years ago. The Sixth Patriarch said to the Filial Son:

“In the future you can go to America.

You will meet this person and that person...

Five schools will divide into ten, to teach and transform living beings.

Ten will become a hundred, a hundred will become a thousand,

and so forth to endless, endless numbers, in abundance, abundance, abundance,

endless abundance—numbers incalculable as grains of sand in the River Ganges.

This marks the true beginning of the Proper Dharma in the West.”

So this was an encounter with the 6th Patriarch Hui Neng. That’s why when true cultivators relate their **encounters with Great Beings**; sometimes you need **to have an open mind** because you may not

understand how these things are possible. You may think, “The Sixth Patriarch is already dead. How can he come back?” - Just like what Master Hsuan Hua mentioned. **When in a dream**, he **couldn't recall** that the Six Patriarch was already dead over a thousand years ago. But what is your understanding on this? How come people can talk about it? Is it really true that the Sixth Patriarch came? What do you think actually happened? What is your understanding? Give it a try.

Sister Padmasuri: It is his nature that manifests.

Brother Teoh: Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! - Very Good. Thank you Sister Padmasuri. *Yes!* It is **their nature** that manifests.

Like when I said ‘Guan Yin came in 1986’, it is not Guan Yin. But her **nature manifests** because of her **vows and affinity**. When the condition arises, it will manifest - just like what I have shared with some of you regarding my **earlier encounters with some of these Great Beings**. In 2008, Maitreya Buddha’s nature came with a **request** to share the **true dharma**. Then in 1986, **Guan Yin Bodhisattva’s nature** came with the **Triple Gem** and **her message** was to move fast – not much time left. All these are not the real person. It is **from their nature**. They have **their nature** which **is ever radiating for the cultivators of the way**. When it is time for certain **cultivators** to arise and manifest, and when their form and mind are established, their **nature will know**. And their nature will come, especially Guan Yin Bodhisattva. They will **protect, support, guide** and **bless** their *form and mind that are connected to that nature*. When the time comes, they will come and send messages to your

form and mind so that you will know what to do. You will also come to know that all these *are meant to be because there are affinities and conditions behind* all those happenings. That's the reason why all these are possible and you have to have an open mind. Don't use your *limited mundane mind* to simply comment, or come out with all the funny ideas that you may have. Do you understand?

So never, never look down upon anything or make fun of anything because if you do, you have everything to lose. The question is very simple. What happens if they are the real ones? Then you not only miss his teaching, you will also get yourself into deep trouble because your speech is not in accordance with N8FP. Why must you doubt? When *you have an open mind*, you *don't need to doubt*. The moment you doubt that is *delusion*. What is doubt? It is one of the five mental hindrances, right? You lack faith. You cannot understand, yet you doubt; that is delusion because of your ego. You want to show off via your logical argument, 'How can? It can't be because the 6th Patriarch is dead long ago. This is definitely an illusion.' If you want to say that, better make sure you understand what you are saying. If you don't understand, the best policy is to keep quiet. That's why 'silence is golden'. Sadhu! For that good answer by sister Padmasuri. We shall continue.

After they had talked, when the Great Master moved to leave, the filial son rose to escort him. They walked together a few steps and suddenly the Sixth Patriarch was gone. It was then that Filial Son Pai realized, "Oh! The Sixth Patriarch entered Nirvana hundreds of years ago, but nonetheless, I met him today!"

Several decades after this miracle, following years of difficulty and hard cultivation, in a cold and tiny temple in San Francisco's Chinatown, Tripitaka Master Hsüan Hua began **transmitting the Dharma** of the **mind-seal of all Patriarchs**. He continues to do so every day. Those who **recognize him listen to it, consider it, and cultivate it**.

In this commentary on *The Sixth Patriarch's Sutra* the Master says, "...**you will succeed only if you do not fear suffering**. The Buddha Dharma arises from difficulty; the more difficult, the better. So you must endure suffering. This is difficult, but you can do it, for it is the opening of your wisdom."

Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih
Buddhist Text Translation Society/Co-chairperson,
Primary Translation Committee, International
Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts San
Francisco, August 1977

See the word he used, '**endure suffering**' is the same as the dharma taught in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*. Certain *āsava* or defilement, which you **need to endure**, you **must endure**. Some you need to **exercise restraint**, you have to **exercise restraint**. Ok, we continue. Turn to the next page.

3.2.3 The Patriarchship Lineage



The 1st Patriarch is Sākyamuni Buddha, 释迦牟尼佛 (Shì jiā móu ní fó).



The 28th Patriarch, Bodhidharma, 二十八祖 菩提達磨大師 (Èr shí bā zǔ Pútí dāmó dàshī). He is the 1st Patriarch of China.

Then comes the 29th Patriarch, the 2nd Patriarch of China, 慧可大師 (Huì kě dà shī).

Next, is the 30th Patriarch is the 3rd Patriarch of China 僧璨大師 (Sēng càn dà shī).

The 31st is the 4th Patriarch of China, 道信大師 (Dào xìn dà shī).

The 32nd is the 5th Patriarch, 弘忍大師 (Hóng rěn dà shī)

Then 33rd Patriarch is 6th Patriarch, Hui Neng, 慧能大师 (Hui Néng dàshī).

That day somebody asked, “How come, from Sākyamuni Buddha, straight away go to the 28th Patriarch?” I have explained it in my last talk because he is the 28th and the **last Patriarch** from India. After Sākyamuni passed away, it was passed down to Mahākāśyapa who then passed it down to another 26. Finally it reached **Bodhidharma**. Bodhidharma carried the patriarch ship over to China just like how Master Hsuan Hua carried it over to the west, America. He is the **1st Patriarch** of the West in America. Then the next one he appoints will be the 2nd Patriarch in America. So hopefully when it reached the 6th Patriarch of the west, something great will also happen in the west. Hopefully more **profound teaching** like those of Master Hui Neng’s can arise. If this one comes out, he will be English speaking, as against Hui Neng who is Mandarin speaking. This one will have American accent.

Ok, next page, we shall read the opening statement which is very important. From now onwards, before we start, we shall recite the **verse for Opening a Sutra**. Let’s recite it together.

Verse for Opening a Sutra

*The **unsurpassed, profound, and wonderful** Dharma,
Is **difficult** to encounter in **hundreds of millions of eons**,
I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it,
And I vow to fathom the Tathāgata’s true meaning.*

So this one you have to bear in mind that this type of teaching is

very rare and **not easy to come by**. Just like in the opening verse, Master Hsuan Hua mentioned: *The unsurpassed, profound, and wonderful Dharma is difficult to encounter* not only in one eon, but hundred and millions of eons and one eon is one world cycle. Hence if you have the condition to receive it you should recite it with faith and determination: *‘I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it, and I vow to fathom the Tathāgata’s true meaning’*. So this is a **very important determination**.

3.2.4 Foreward By Master Hsuan Hua

Now we read the Foreword.

FOREWORD

The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra has been explained in America before, but I do not know how well it has been done. Some lecturers simply read the text aloud, and, since each Sutra has its own special interpretation, merely reading it aloud does not reveal the meaning.

Understanding this is very important.

*The Buddha Dharma flourished in China, but only the teachings of the Sixth Patriarch, the illiterate Patriarch, were made into a Sutra. It was recorded by the **Master’s disciple Fa Hai**. Although his transcription may not mirror the Patriarch’s exact words, the meanings expressed are correct. I hope everyone will study the Buddha Dharma with his **true mind**, and **not hold** the opinion that it is very easy. It is only by*

*regarding the Buddha Dharma as extremely important that you will be able to **comprehend** the principles which I explain.*

Here, study with your **true mind** is being **emphasized**. Hui Neng's advice is don't study with your **thinking mind**, **mundane mind** or your **condition arising mind** because **that mind cannot** understand/awaken. Those who understand will advice as follow, 'I hope everyone will study the dharma with *his true mind*'. Why are women left out? Only 'His' is used and 'her' is not included. They should change the word to 'their' true mind. He used the word 'everyone', so it can be changed to 'with their **true minds**' so as to include women as well. English is very precise, gender specific. When you say 'his', ladies are not involved. This is the foreword by Hsuan Hua.

The note below states:

*1. Dharma Master **Fa Hai** was a "room entering disciple" of the Sixth Patriarch. That means the Sixth Patriarch had transmitted the wonderful mind-seal Dharma to him and he was therefore privileged to enter the Patriarch's room.*

Fa Hai was actually the *hand-picked successor* of the **Sixth Patriarch**. So he will also become the Seventh Patriarch. After that it must be along that line that reached **Master Hsu Yun**. Then Master Hsu Yun transmitted it to Master Hsuan Hua.

We now move on to the Introduction. Then we can go into the Sutra

proper, which is on page 3. This Introduction is quite long because he needs to introduce how all these came about.

3.2.5 Introduction to Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra

The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform is the specific title of this Sutra, and the word Sutra is a general term for **all discourses given by the Buddha**. In order to clarify their content, Sutra titles are classified into seven types, according to their reference to person, dharma, and analogy, as follows:

A. Three Single: Three of the seven types of titles refer to only one of the categories of person, dharma, or analogy, and so they are called the “three single.” For example:

1. *The Buddha Speaks of Amitabha Sutra* is a title established solely by reference to person; both the Buddha and Amitabha are persons, for only a person can cultivate and realize Buddhahood. The Buddha is a person, and people are just Buddha. In Chinese, when we write the word Buddha (佛), the symbol for “person” (人) stands on the left-hand side.
2. *The Mahaparinirvana Sutra* is a title established by reference to the dharma, “nirvana.” Nirvana is a Sanskrit word which in Chinese is composed of two characters “(涅槃)–nieh p’an” which may be explained as “not produced and not destroyed.”
1. *The Brahma Net Sutra* is a title established by reference to analogy. In this Sutra the Buddha explains the precepts. If you

keep these precepts, you will give forth light, like the great net in the heaven of the Brahma King. But if you carelessly break the precepts, you commit the grave offense of “knowing and yet deliberately violating dharma.” Your light then flows into the three evil paths: the hell beings, animals, and hungry ghosts, where there is not the slightest trace of merciful treatment.

B. Three Double: Titles established by reference to person and dharma, person and analogy, or dharma and analogy are called the “three double.” For example:

2. *The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra* is a title established by reference to dharma and analogy since the **Wonderful Dharma** is analogous to the **Lotus Flower**.
3. *The Lion Roar of the Thus Come One Sutra* is a title established by reference to person and analogy. Thus Come One is the first of ten honorific titles given to every Buddha and therefore represents a person. The Lion Roar is analogous to his speaking the Dharma.
4. *The Sutra of the Questions of Mañjusrī* is a title established by reference to a person, the Bodhisattva Mañjusrī of great wisdom, and the dharma he requested, Prajna.

C. Complete in One: The seventh classification contains references to person, dharma, and analogy.

5. *The Great Universal Buddha Flower Adornment Sutra (Avatamsaka Sutra)* refers to the Buddha as a person, Great and Universal as a dharma, and Flower Adornment as an analogy.

The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra is a Chinese, not an Indian Sutra, and its title is not classified according to the seven topics mentioned above. This sutra is classified according to person, dharma, and a place. The Sixth Patriarch is a person, the Dharma Jewel is a dharma, and the Platform is a place.

I will now explain the specific title of this Sutra.

The Sixth Patriarch.

Master Hui Neng of Nan Hua Temple, who spoke the Sutra at the beginning of the eighth century A.D., was the Sixth Chinese Patriarch. He lived six generations after Bodhidharma, who brought the Mahayana teaching to China from India and who became the First Chinese Patriarch. Bodhidharma was also the twenty-eighth Indian Patriarch, and so from the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, the Great Master Hui Neng is counted as the Thirty-Third Generational Patriarch.

Dharma.

Dharma is a method. It is like a rule, a model, or a pattern. If one cultivates according to this method that is practicing "Dharma."

Jewel.

The Dharma is like a precious jewel.

Platform

The platform is the place where this Sutra was spoken. This Dharma Seat may be raised above the ground by three, five or nine feet, but never more than ten feet. In front of it sits a small table which holds Sutras. Dharma Masters speak Dharma, administer the Three Refuges, and transmit precepts from the Dharma Seat, which Dharma protectors, good spirits, and numerous diamond-treasury Bodhisattvas take turns protecting.

There are some notes on this page which say:

1. *One formally becomes a Buddhist only when one has received the **Three Refuges**, transmitted in a **traditional ceremony** by a **qualified member** of the Sangha. They are: refuge in 1) the Buddha, 2) the Dharma (the teachings), and 3) the Sangha (Buddhist monks and nuns of the past, present and future).*

That's why 皈依三宝 (Guīyī sānbǎo), taking the **3 refuges** is very important. If you don't take the refuge **seriously**, you are **not a true** Buddhist, a **true cultivator** of the dharma because the Triple Gems, they are the gems in the entire universe. Only within the Triple Gem, can you find the teaching.

The translation of the Sangha may not be that accurate. Here they are referring to the **Ariyan Sangha**. To qualify as a **Triple Gem**, you must be an **enlightened disciple** of the **Buddha**, **not any** disciple that has taken refuge in the Buddhist tradition. So here, we may take note that their definition of all Buddhist monks and nuns of the

past, present and future may **not be that accurate**. It's all of the **Ariyan disciples** of the **Buddha**; it can also be a lay person. The Sangha within the Triple Gem is the **ariyan sangha**, the **enlightened disciples of the Buddha**.

2. *Bodhisattva is a Sanskrit word. Bodhi means "enlightenment" and sattva, "being". They do not enter Nirvana but choose instead to remain in the world and save living beings. Thus Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who enlighten other beings. "Diamond-treasury" refers to a division of Dharma-protecting Bodhisattvas.*

Some of these dharma protectors are also bodhisattvas, like Wei Tuo (韦驮 or 韋馱) Bodhisattva. He is cultivating the Bodhisattva way. So don't think they are normal devas, they can also be Bodhisattvas. Okay, we turn to the next page. 章章

Sutra

The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform is the specific name of the Sutra, and the word "Sutra" is its general name. "Sutra" is a Sanskrit word which means "a tally." Above, it tallies with the true principle of all Buddha, and below, with the opportunities for teaching living beings. Above, it tallies with true suchness, the miraculous principle of all Buddha, and below, it tallies with the living beings who need the teaching. Thus, a Sutra tallies with both the principle and the opportunity.

The word Sutra has four additional meanings:

All these we will skip through quickly as they are not important.

1. **Stringing together.** The principles of the Buddha dharma are linked together by the Sutras just like beads are strung together on a string.
2. **Attracting.** Creating the opportunities for teaching living beings, a Sutra attracts living beings just like a magnet attracts iron filings. All living beings who wish to study the Buddha dharma will be drawn to the principles in the Sutras, like iron filings to a magnet.
3. **Permanent.** From antiquity to the present, a Sutra does not change. Not one word can be deleted; not one meaning can be added. Not increasing or decreasing, a Sutra is permanent, unchanging.
4. **Method.** A Sutra is a method respected by living beings in the three periods of time. In the past, living beings relied upon this method to cultivate and attain Buddhahood. In the present, living beings depend upon it to move from the position of foolish common people to that of Buddhahood. In the future, living beings will also cultivate according to this method. A Sutra is a method, then, venerated throughout the three periods of time.

This is their interpretation, not important.

The word Sutra has many more meanings. For example, a Sutra is like a bubbling spring; principles flow from it like water bubbling up out of the earth. It is also like a carpenter's chalk-line, which makes a perfectly clear,

straight guide. But if you understand the first four meanings, you understand the basic meanings.

To explain a Sutra correctly, one must first outline it according to the ***Five Profound Meanings of the T'ien T'ai School:***

1. ***Explaining the Name.*** According to the seven kinds of Sutra titles explained previously, this Sutra is established by reference to person, Dharma, analogy, and place.
2. ***Discriminating the Substance.*** This Sutra takes the Real Mark as its substance. The Real Mark is without a mark, and yet there is nothing which is not marked by it.
3. ***Clarifying the Principle.*** The principle of this Sutra is the realization of Buddha hood. If you cultivate according to this Sutra, you can realize the Buddha position.
4. ***Discussing the Function.*** This Sutra's ***function is to lead you*** to understand the ***mind*** and ***see your own nature***. If you understand the mind, you have no worries. ***If you see your own nature, you have no cares.*** No longer do you quit worrying about one problem only to begin worrying about another and, when that one is solved, find yet another one coming to take its place. ***If you understand the mind and see your own nature, then everything is easy.***

Ah, this statement is **very true** and **very profound**. ‘You understand your mind, **meaning** your **mundane mind**, your **5 aggregates of form and mind**, and **see your own nature**, your **true mind**, *then everything is very easy.*’

- 5. **Determining the Teaching Mark.** This Sutra is like sweet dew, the heavenly elixir of immortality. Drink it once and you will never die. The Sutra is also like ghee, a clarified butter with the most miraculous and subtle of tastes. Ghee is also used to describe the Sutras spoken by Sākyamuni Buddha during the Dharma Flower and Lotus-Nirvana periods of his teaching.

Note 5:

The **T’ien T’ai School**, systematized by the **Great Master Chih-i** (538-597), is one of the great teaching schools of Chinese Buddhism. It takes as its basic text the **Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra**, and **divides** the Buddha’s teaching into five periods; each period is represented by an analogy to a milk product.

Period	Milk Product
Avatamsaka (21 days)	whole milk
Agama (12 years)	coagulated milk
Vaipulya (8 years)	curdled milk
Prajna-paramita (22 years)	butter
Lotus Flower-Nirvana (8 years)	clarified butter (ghee)

The original dharma of the Avatamsaka is like fresh milk. With each new teaching, it becomes richer and purer, yet it is still the same basic substance— Dharma Food.

So these are the explanations, - not so important. I think the next chapter is trying to introduce to you the **5 previous Chinese patriarchs** before Hui Neng. This one, we keep it for our next class. You can go back and read it up yourself if you want, page 9 onwards. Anybody has any questions regarding the **6th Patriarch Platform Sutra** thus far? Are you all surprised? **Suddenly** the recording becomes **so clear** and **without** anymore disturbance again.

Kalyāṇamitta: I have a question which is probably a bit dumb. It's a very basic question. Basically, you said, 'you have to have **an open mind** to receive the teachings'. Then my question is: 'there might be an issue here, if you look at everything **with an open mind** because certain teachings, certain paths lead you to a bad path. How then can you say if you do not use what you have learnt previously to screen it you won't learn the wrong thing because there are so many paths in the world, more bad ones than good ones?

Brother Teoh: That's a very good question. What is your understanding? You mentioned that you **must not** have an open mind. Is that your final conclusion?

Kalyāṇamitta: No, my conclusion is how can you put a filter in place?

Brother Teoh: If that is your meaning, then it is different. Then I will answer your question because it's a very good question. That's why I like people who enquire so that we can discuss it. It's meant to be a discussion. Dharma discussion is important. I **respect you** for what you are. Likewise, I hope **you respect me for what I am**. We are here to share understanding; no right, no wrong because **right and wrong** will lead to **unnecessary conflicts, arguments, division of opinions** and non-beneficial things. What is important is this dharma sharing must be done **to benefit everybody**, do you understand? Sharing with **mutual understanding** and **respect** is very important. If I respect you for what you are and you respect us for what we are, then what we share **becomes beneficial**.

We are not talking about **right and wrong**. We are not trying to argue over a teaching or a dharma. Then we are not trying to be protective of what we believe in; *my teaching, my teacher, my method, my technique*, etc. - all these are no more issues. So what we are here for is to **sincerely** share something that we understand, and then we open it up for discussion. No right, no wrong, because for people with that understanding they will think it is right, but right according to them. Right according to them is still right. That's why there is no right, no wrong in the ultimate sense because that right is a **relative right** according to them.

Likewise, if I say something, I will never say it's right. I would say that this is the dharma that I understand. This is the truth that I have realized. It's up to you - whether to use it, accept it, or make full use of whatever that **is helpful** and **beneficial** to help you move. Then you will benefit from such sharing or discussion. Whatever

you cannot understand, unless you are very sure that it is not the correct one, then it's **better for you** to have an **open mind**. Like I have said, what happens if it is the true one? This is the teaching that ***you have not yet understood*** because ***it is beyond you***. If you ***don't have*** an *open mind*, then you are ***creating unnecessary karmic obstruction*** of karmic negativity by reacting negatively to it. Rejecting it is ok but **reacting to it negatively** is very dangerous. Then when you start to say things **heedlessly** and **hit out at others harshly**, it's even more dangerous.

So out of ***love and compassion for living beings***, I call this a ***dharma sharing*** session. Sharing means - No right, no wrong like what I have explained. Whatever sharing that is **beneficial**, use it. Whatever you ***cannot understand*** just let it be via ***having an open mind***. Then there is ***no more argument***. No more right and wrong. Then the discussion can be **very open, very frank** and **very meaningful** and **beneficial**. Then *everybody can feel free to comment* and **suggest** or even **share** whatever he or she *understands*. So with that as a basis, I will answer you.

Your question is about **filtering** which is very good. **Filtering** is something you can only do when you have a **view** or an **opinion**. If you don't have a view or opinion, you don't filter. You can have an **open mind** because *you are open to truth*. What you have to do, according to the Buddha is, you have to **listen first**. **Listen attentively, don't filter before you investigate**, can you understand? If you **don't listen**, you **cannot** investigate whether this is the *truth or not*; whether this person has **wisdom** and **understanding** beyond what you have or not. But if you can **discern** through your

understanding, then you **become beautiful**. You don't **just filter with your views and opinions**. That is *very dangerous*. Filter with your views and opinions means - you only want to listen to **things** that **fit** into your **belief system**, *into what you think is the truth or the correct teaching*. Such a person has this danger – just like what the Buddha said in the **Sallekha sutta**: “if you hold on **tenaciously** to your *views and opinions*, then even the Buddha cannot help you”. Also according to the Zen analogy, **your cup is full**. When your **cup is full**, whatever *tea you pour in will overflow out* because *you don't give it a chance* for you **to investigate** with **an open mind**.

If you have an open mind it means you can listen **without prejudice**, **without** a view or opinion of whether *it's right or wrong*. You will just listen and investigate. Then according to the Buddha's **advice** to the Kalamas it is very easy for you to develop the understanding.

The Buddha told the Kalamas, ‘If you follow the advice given, **does it harm you? Does it harm others?** If it doesn't harm anyone then you have **nothing to lose**.’ Maybe this is something beyond your understanding and you still don't understand but that will be the criteria you can use. If you want to say, that is a filter, then I think it is a **very good filter**. But **if you filter with a view and opinion**, that is **not a good filter** because you **don't give truth a chance**.

When you **filter with understanding** it means *as long as it doesn't harm you and harm others*, you have **nothing to lose**. At the most, you will waste some time trying it out via **investigating** it because when I agree to try it out via putting it into practice, I have **not believed** it yet. Like the Buddha said - **do not believe anything (including what he said)** because his teaching which is the **dharma**

is the truth, and if it is the truth **it will stand up to investigation**. That's the reason why his Dharma is '*Ehipassiko*'. He can *invite the monks* to come and **investigate** it **because the truth will stand up to investigation**. And since the **Dharma is related to life**, you can **put it to test in real life situations**. If you investigate this way, you will not get into trouble. If it does not stand up to the test or investigation, then you can drop it because this is something for you to find out and investigate upon. But **if you listen according to your views and opinion and you try to filter, that is not listening at all. That is resisting with your views and opinions**.

The **art of listening** is different because first **you listen with an open mind** and you **don't filter**. You listen, and then you investigate. But if you listen with a filter, with a view and opinion, you are **not listening**. You are **commenting, verbalizing, judging and reacting**. The moment you listen, you will comment, '*Cannot be, truth is not like that. We cannot accept everything via an open mind!* If we listen with an open mind, then how are we going to filter things, how? '. So when you start to do all these, do you know what is happening? You are **not listening attentively**. A lot of **very important messages** from the *teaching and sharing*, you **didn't get to listen** because your own *views and opinions* are **opposing** what are being said. There is this **subtle right and wrong idea behind**.

That's why the **art of listening** is to listen with *an open mind* **without** prejudice. When I listen with **an open** mind, it doesn't mean I believe and accept what is being said. I listen then I investigate and put it to test. If what they advise when I put it test **cause me harm and harm others**, I will not even investigate because

it has got no benefit and it causes suffering via delusion instead. That is how **the Buddha taught the Kalamas** because the Kalamas were a group of people who didn't know what truth is. Then there are **so many teachers** who came and teach, all teach differently. So one day, the head of the Kalamas gathered all his people. They had heard so much about **Sākyamuni Buddha** at that time because he was very famous. So they decided to approach him. The leader asked him this question which was very good and Sākyamuni Buddha answered him in a very beautiful way. That's how it became the very famous **Kalama Sutra**. The Buddhists always refer to this Sutra.

The Buddha told the Kalamas, "You don't have to believe anything just because it is spoken by a great being who is widely accepted, widely acknowledged and famous or just because it is written in a **very famous holy book**, or whatever status that person may carry." The key point is to have an **open mind** not to believe but **to investigate** into **everything** that is being spoken. He even told the Kalamas, not to believe what he said. If you **just believe**, then its **blind faith** because you haven't put it to test and you haven't investigated it to find out whether it **stands up** to investigation or not or whether this can bring about **downfall, unnecessary suffering and problem** in the future or not. If you just believe, that is **blind faith**. Then like the blind leading the blind, you will end up somewhere else."

The criterion is very simple. When I listen with an **open** mind, I can **reflect** and **check** because **I have listened**. I have given this particular sharing a chance. I have **listened thoroughly** meaning I

understand what this person is trying to tell me to do but I **do not reject** when I listen. I have clarity of mind while listening. Then when I listen and understand what has been spoken, I can put to test. This **first criterion** is very simple. Then I can **inquire**, if I cultivate according to what he said, **does it harm me**, and **does it harm others?** If it doesn't, I have got nothing to lose so I can investigate it.

When you investigate it, it becomes very simple. Just like the Buddha's Dhammapada verses 1 and 2. (Are you all familiar with these two Dhammapada verses?) Oh, some of you are not familiar with the Buddhist teaching? Never mind. These two Dhammapada verses are very simple but they are very important. Maybe I will explain what Dhammapada verses are first. Do you all understand what **Dhammapada verses** are?

The Buddha spoke a lot of truth during his time but they managed to compile a total **of 423 of these truths** and put them into a book called the **Dhammapada verses** of the Buddha. Dhammapada verses are **words of wisdom** spoken by the Buddha and these are very **unique** and **powerful wisdom** because **they are evergreen**. Do you know the meaning of evergreen? Evergreen means it is **always applicable irrespective** of what **period of civilization or era**. **Evergreen** means it is a **universal truth** that can withstand the **test of time** and will be **applicable forever** no matter during what period of civilization whether it's very ancient or modern or medieval age.

If you were to look at history it is not easy for any human being to come out **with even one verse** that will **last for a certain period of**

time as truth. It is very difficult. Take for example science. During the early days, *Newton's law of motion* was so popular. The apple dropped on his head and he discovered **gravity**. Newton's laws of motion and law of action and reaction were so popular. Initially they were so accurate including the law of gravity. He can even calculate the movement of the planets and their gravitational pulls. **Newtonian mechanic** became very popular. That's why they initially call it a hypothesis. Then after it passed the test - from hypothesis, it becomes a theory. Theory means it's accepted because it has been tested and proven.

Then what happened when **Einstein** came? He **revolutionized** the *Newtonian mechanic*. The whole of the Newtonian mechanic collapsed, failed and could not stand up to the test because Einstein came out with a 4th dimension. He said **time** is relative. Can you understand? Einstein came out with the **Theory of Relativity and he said Time is dependent on speed**. When your **speed tends towards the speed of light**, there is **no time**. It's timeless. There is a formula on it. Then he said that the relative velocity between 2 entities - when both travel near to the speed of light, it's not according to Newtonian mechanic anymore. When the speed increases, let's say when the speed is slow at 1,000 miles per hour travelling this direction and in the opposite direction another 1,000 miles per hour. Relative velocity according to Newtonian mechanic is (1000 + 1000) because these 2 will meet at a relative velocity of 2000 miles per hour. Einstein said no! There are some numbers at the back that is **dependent on the Theory of Relativity** and because of those numbers, when you reach near the speed of light; let's say this entity travels near the speed of light and that the other one also

travels near the speed of light. When the two go on different directions, their relative velocity should be **twice** the speed of light or almost that isn't it? **Einstein's theory said no!** The fastest moving entity within the phenomenal world is just the **speed of light**. It cannot exceed the speed of light because the speed of light is the **fastest within matter**. Then that Newtonian mechanic's theory collapsed. Later on, they managed to come up with more advance theory like the **Quantum Theory** at microscopic level and the **Photon Theory** and the *Wave-Particle Duality* of **Light**. **Quantum theory** tells us that both **light** and **matter** consist of tiny particles which have *wavelike properties* associated with them. **Light** is composed of particles called **photons**, and **matter** is composed of particles called *electrons, proton and neutrons*. **Quantum Field Theory** is a branch of **physics** which explained the *fundamental Theory of Nature* at the *small scales and energy levels of atoms and subatomic particles*.

What I am trying to say is; it is **not easy** to come out with **one truth** that is **evergreen** because everything is subject to condition and everything else. So, it's not only scientific truth. These are **spiritual truths**. The *power of spiritual truths is very unique* because *it's based on wisdom*, which is **so profound**. The Buddha was able to come out with **423 such verses** and until now since the passing away of the Buddha over 2,000 years ago, they are still applicable, evergreen, and you can investigate upon them because these are truths related to the spiritual teachings.

These first two Dhammapada verses are very simple. You can put them to test as explained by the Buddha. He said, '*our mind is the*

*forerunner of all things. Mind is chief. When mind arises, everything arises'. If you don't take care of the mind, if you allow your mind to be **heedless** meaning you don't give any attention to it, you just allow it to do anything it likes, then this mind will become heedless. **Heedless means** you are **not serious** about life. You are not training it. You are not giving it any importance. *You just do what you like.* You want to kill, you kill. If you want to do whatever, you do because you are heedless. You are **not interested** in its **consequences**; you are not interested in the truth that governs life and existence. If you were to act, speak and think with this type of heedless mind that is **not trained**, the Buddha said the **evil roots** borne of delusion, which are greed, hatred and delusion, will arise. For such a being, *suffering will follow him. Just like the wheel that follows the hoof of the oxen wheel. This is Dhammapada verse 1.**

The Buddha said, *'your life, you **decide** how you want to **live**. You **don't** have to **believe it**. You can put it to test'. A greedy person, a selfish person, a violent person, an emotional person with a lot of anger, hatred, envy, jealousy, selfishness, deceitfulness etc.; and people who have a lot of what they call, lust, craving and desire to own things, to possess things, to take advantage of things; such a person when they live life with all these evil roots, are they happy? Do they **inflict suffering** on people?' That's why the verse says, *'suffering will follow them because there is this law of karma. You reap what you sow; do good beget good, do evil begets evil.'* Finally it will hit back and they will **become afflicted, miserable**. If you don't believe, you can try cheating and lying. You can try to commit sexual misconduct, rape or misappropriate things, then see what happens to your life.*

Suffering will follow you whereas the opposite complementary verse, which is verse 2, the Buddha said, ‘similarly when you understand the **importance** of mind because mind is the forerunner of all things and mind is chief. When mind arises, everything arises. So if you are **heedful**, you choose to **take care** of the mind, **train this mind** so that it’s **ever mindful** not to arise the evil roots of **greed** (which is selfishness, craving, desire and lust), **hatred** (which is envy, jealousy, violent, emotional negativity) and **delusion** (all those mind states related to those evil roots of fear, worry, anxiety, sorrow and lamentation, etc.) then for such a being, the Buddha said, happiness will follow him like a **shadow** that never leaves him.’ After you **have trained** your mind to be **heedful, to be mindful** of your **mental intentions**, all these **evil roots** will **not arise** and you will act, speak and think with a **wholesome mind** (with a pure mind) that is **free of all these evil roots**.

*Evil roots are roots of all evil. They will make you evil. When you are selfish (which is the evil root of Greed), you **can kill, harm** and **do all sorts of negative things** because of your selfishness. That’s why it’s an evil root. When you are angry (also an evil root), you can become violent, you can kill, harm and do a lot of funny things too. That’s why it’s called an evil root. Out of **fear**, you will also do those sorts of things. **Fear** is also an **evil root** of **self-delusion**.*

But out of love, you will never do such things. If you are **heedful** to **cultivate virtues, love, understanding, respect, gratitude, contentment** etc. – all these will lead to **happiness**. That’s the reason why a person *who is heedful, trains their mind* and develops

the **keen attention** to check their **mental intention** behind *all his actions, speech and thought* processes; such a person, the Buddha said, **happiness will follow him, just like the shadow that never leaves him**. Just like how we started just now; *precepts or virtues are the source of happiness. They are the source of spiritual wealth and spiritual peacefulness*. If I don't kill, harm, misappropriate things, commit sexual misconduct, etc.; if I don't lie or deceive people; if I don't take intoxicants that make my consciousness low and lead to downfall, **I will have a lot of peace and happiness**. If I do and violate all these, **I become evil**. I will have *a lot of enemies*; a lot of people will come after me. The law will come after me. Then there is **fear, worry** and **anxiety** leading to **restlessness of mind, misery**, and all the negativities. That's why you have to understand **the importance of training one's mind to maintain the precepts** so that you don't make mistakes in life.

These Dhammapada verses are just the first 2 twin verses. You can investigate further but if you **don't have an open mind** because you have another type of teaching, then you say you want to filter. Before you understand, before you investigate, you want to filter. My advice is you must check - whether if you follow, will it harm you and others or not. Like the precepts spoken by the Buddha; if you have **greed, hatred** and **delusion**, you can check whether you can harm anybody or not, whether you will become evil or not. The moment you check and realize that if you have selfishness, - you will become evil, you will harm and deceive people and you will do all those evil things, then it not only harms you karmically, it will also harm others and this is something you cannot do. This is a very good check. The moment you check and it stands up to investigation,

then you should ask yourself; my life, how should I live my life? I don't want to end up following Dhammapada verse 1 and become **afflicted** and *miserable*. I don't want to have suffering then you will **determine to cultivate, to train your mind to be mindful, to be aware and attentive** so that you are **incapable of negativity**.

That is the reason why the Buddha in his advice to the Kalamas is **to investigate** into *everything* and the **best check** is to see *whether it harms you or harms others or not*. If you do this, you are well protected **but please don't filter before you listen, can you understand?** When you listen and try to filter with your views and opinions, you are not listening. You are actually judging, reacting, commenting and that's what living beings are doing throughout the day, most of the time. That's why they fail to listen.

The **art of listening** is very important. To listen with an open mind means I **don't prejudge** the sharing, the situation. I will just listen and then I will put it to test and investigate on it via checking, if I do, does it harm me and harm others? If that investigative criterion passed, I tell myself there is **no harm** following that advice because *it doesn't harm others and it doesn't harm me*. There is **no karmic** effect. So I can give it a try. Then I put it to test, I really put it to test and if it **stands up to investigation**, I will **adopt it and use it for the good of the many** because *I can learn from it*. I can **benefit** from it. *This is the meaning of having an open mind*. This is the purpose of having an **open mind discussion** – which means we do not want **to prejudge** any sharing. Then whatever I don't understand yet, I will **maintain an open mind** and still agree to accept whatever is shared based on our **respect for our mutual**

understanding; for this is what he or she believes to be right or the truth. Then we respect them for what they are.

But if I have **an understanding** that allows me to explain it to you in a different way then I will explain it to you, **without** having to dwell on the issue of right or wrong. I just explain to you clearly that this can be explained in another way. Then you can go back and investigate again and then make a decision because this is your life, nothing to do with my nature or me. **My duty** is to **share**. After that **whether** you understand, don't understand, agree, don't agree or accept is not important. The **important message** is - *whatever is shared please do listen with an open mind*. Take whatever that **can benefit you** and **use it for the good of the many and yourself**. Ah, that is very important. To me **it's not about right or wrong**. It's about how you can develop the **wisdom** and **understanding to improve your life** so that you can be **a better human being** to develop the understanding of life. Okay? You can add or share any of your understanding, no problem.

Kalyāṇamitta: What you said, there are two ways to look at it. One is personally for me, the way I grew up in this world and considering I was from the science stream, we were taught from very young through education to have an opinion. So in order to have an open mind is not a natural instinct. When you go to work, you cannot be too open; you need to make a decision immediately. So how to do you flip, how do you learn to be totally open in your approach to life?

Brother Teoh: I think I understand what you mean - when it comes to career and the work environment or situation you find it **very**

difficult to have an **open** mind. I am indeed **very** surprised **when** you said, 'as a science student you were trained to have opinion'. I never learnt that. I am also a science student. I never learnt that in my science subjects.

Kalyāṇamitta: What I mean is opinion in terms of - for example when you are doing a research project, you need to propose a hypothesis, right?

Brother Teoh: Hypothesis is something I am not sure as yet and it's not an opinion. I want to do a research thesis. A thesis is something my lecturer gives to me. You do this thesis because this field could be a green field and it is not clearly understood yet because there are lots of new ideas being presented. That's why you do a thesis on it. Then the thesis will be based on what they think is the truth. That is a hypothesis not an opinion expressed.

Kalyāṇamitta: But in the scientific field, research is builds upon previous truths and that's how science evolves. The problem I am face with is - I was brought up as a Buddhist and the issue that I have is it's very difficult to look at it thoroughly with an open mind. It's near impossible because you are already brought up with a **preconceived** notion. My second question is in terms of when you said that the **initial filtering** is, 'do no harm unto yourself and others', which is fine in theory but... *(Comment by Brother Teoh)*

Brother Teoh: That is not filtering. Just give me one minute. When you listen, you must listen with an open mind. **Don't exercise** any **prejudgment** or **filtering**. When you listen with a view and opinion,

you are **not listening with an open mind**. You are listening with **your prejudice** inside. That's why you said you have expressed your opinion already. With that opinion, you approach the meeting, you approach your company discussion, and then it becomes your opinion against others' opinion. That is the first point I want to **make clear** because when I said 'you check' - it means *investigate whether 'it harms yourself or harms others or not'* and this is **not a filtering**.

Filtering means the moment you filter, you express an opinion which is **not checking**. Checking means - *I don't know*. That's why I check, whether it harms me or not? If it harms me – then stop it straight away, no need to investigate further. Similarly if it harms others – no need to investigate. This is not what I meant by 'you listen and you filter'. No! When you listen, you **don't filter**. You **listen until you understand** then you **give it a check**. That **check is not a filtering**. That check is just to check whether '*it harms others and harm you.*' If it harms others and harms you then this is something **against nature's law**. Something that will bring about **downfall** and **suffering**, definitely you will never go ahead because it doesn't stand up to investigation.

Maybe later you can continue and finish off your second question. Then I will try my best to make it clearer for you to understand based on my understanding. Your first question, before I forget, can I answer it first?

You talked about **scientific understanding** of expressing opinion. You said, without opinion, as a science student, you cannot move.

Let's say, during the olden days when we do not understand science that well, a few of these *famous scientists, Galileo, Copernicus*, they were put in jail. Why? Because they said the earth was **not the centre of the universe**; the earth was only one of the planets that go round the sun. Then when they said that the earth is round, nobody believed them because everybody said: "How can the earth be round?" Then when they said, the earth rotates on its axis and goes round in space, it was **even more difficult** for society to accept **at that time** but like you said **science manages to evolve** through all these because it is the **truth**.

Science is **not based** on belief whereas most religion is **based** on belief. That's why the church condemned the scientists and put them in jail. But as science is **based on hypothesis leading to theory** because people want to see proof, so when the scientists can prove it, then only it is accepted. Ah, this is what I mean by an open mind. I don't reject. I investigate. Then I come up with hypothesis and I confirm it with experiment before accepting it as a theory.

The moment they realized the truth, they progress very fast. If it is **not** the truth, **science stagnates**. That's why after all these years; they come **to realize** that the **scientific approach** is similar to the **Buddhist teaching**. They investigate into everything and if it **stands up to the investigation**, then **only they accept**. That is what I mean by having an open mind. If you have a closed mind, like the early years churches because they didn't believe in all these; they said these were against God's written law. Men are born special, born in the image of God. Man is the centre of the universe therefore earth must be the centre of the universe by deduction. This is how they

believe and what they believe is **not** the **truth**. The truth when it surfaces, humanity will evolve and grow. As humanity evolves and grows, **all these belief systems, one by one will start to collapse**.

That's why the **rise of science and technology** leads to better and better understanding of **nature's truth**. It is still evolving even though the earlier scientists thought they have understood a lot. I like this sentence that says '*the more you understand or the more you know, the more you don't know.*' Do you agree? Scientists now realize, the more they know, the more mysteries they unfold.

Now there is this **latest revelation**. Every Milky Way or what they call a major galaxy, there is one very, very big **black hole** that is like the centre that drives the whole galaxy and Milky Way. This black hole is so huge in proportion that scientists can never understand how it arises. How come it is like that? But based on what they observe through the **Hubble telescope** they can detect it because they emit a type of light that is so bright, the brightest in the universe and there are so many billions of them in the universe. That's why the more they probe, the more mysteries they unfold.

It's very difficult to put a statement of truth that can be applicable forever or remain evergreen. This is something nobody can do but when you look at the Dhammapada verses, you will be very surprised. The Buddha not only came out with 1 but 423 verses that are evergreen until today. That's why the **enlightenment** of the Buddha is **very unique**. It's not that we try to praise the founder of this religion. According to the Buddha, He said, 'this teaching, the dharma was already there before him. Before he proclaimed it, the

truth was already there in the midst of life and nature. He only rediscovered it, realized it like the scientists after his enlightenment.

Now scientists have discovered most of the important scientific parameters and entities that they need to **understand our universe better**. There is **only one part** that they fail to break through and that's the main reason why the **unified theory** cannot come about. They discovered electricity, gravity, electromagnetic field and they even discovered a lot of those other very **important entities** that scientists benefited from except for one thing. **Even the thought**, they have gone into it **quite deeply** but **consciousness** is one thing **they cannot penetrate**. That's why the **unified theory** cannot come about because they fail to understand the **consciousness** part.

Consciousness is the only entity that can move beyond the speed of light. I have explained this before; - the furthest entity that scientists can probe is about 15 to 17 billion light years away. Travelling at the speed of light, you need 17 billion years to reach the entity you can observe with the Hubble telescope. That is a very long time. So let's say you want to make one phone call at the speed of light; you dial, 17 billion years later the message only reach there and for the other end to say hello and come back for you to listen, another 17 billion years even travelling at the speed of light. So we **cannot function** even at the speed of light, all these have no more meaning. By the time the message reaches there; the whole universe is different again. But there is an entity that can be within the moment, which they called, the wormhole. They talked about consciousness, super consciousness that can be there in an instant. So **without consciousness, without** the understanding of the

spiritual field, the *mysteries* of the *universe* are very difficult to unfold and penetrate. That's why in the Mahayana sutras, they have this famous sutra that can *lead one back to the origin of time*, and they call it the **source** whereas the scientist calls it the **Singularity**. The scientists also acknowledge that there is such thing as a **Singularity**. That's why *within a dust mote the entire universe is there* because it is from that **Singularity** that the *big bang* and the *expansion came about*. Since everything comes from this Singularity hence the singularity will have the all-knowing understanding. That's the reason why now the scientists also agree to accept this point of Singularity as the **Origin or Source** from which all things arise.

That's the reason why in the study of the Buddhist teaching, there is this true nature, the original nature. It is not just the beginning of all things. It's the **original nature** as it is **before creation, before mind arises, before consciousness arises**, before *all these elements, continents, planets, star systems arise and all these are in the teachings*. That's why you have to ask yourself how the Buddha, 2600 years ago can answer them when they point to the stars. He told the people then, "*The number of stars that are in the universe, are more than the sands that you can count on the river Ganges.*" How can he know that? It is because he has realized the **oneness nature**. His nature has merged with that oneness nature. That's why he has the **universal wisdom** and **understanding** to probe.

Coming back to the understanding of why I want you to have an open mind (or a free mind) is to be *open to truth* because the *truth is not something you can easily understand*. Even at this moment

my nature is still **very open to receive new truths** because this civilization of ours is very unique. At the time when I was born - based on our consciousness and evolution, we might have understood many things until this point but beyond this point of time, a lot more new things will surface and arise because **truth is unending**. The whole of the **cosmic and universe's creation** is beyond thought, beyond mind - cannot be understood by the **rational thinking mind**. It has to be from **that nature**. That's why if you don't develop the **meditation and merge with that nature**, a lot of these things you **cannot understand**. Even whatever I share with you at the moment I never study from the books. The books give me limited knowledge. Even the TV, the media or the internet gives you limited knowledge of what living beings can understand at this point of time. So if you **have that understanding**, then you will **continue to have an open mind** to receive a lot of new things, a lot of new truths, and a lot of the unknown because we **never close our minds**. We don't say that science has to be like that. We don't express our opinions and limit ourselves to just this. So this is my sharing for you all today.

I respect your view which is very good. You are willing to speak out based on what you understand. By speaking out, it **creates very good** condition for the **sharing to be livelier**. So thank you for all these sharing. Now that I have explained this to you, you can still express what you want to express, it's not a problem because this is just a **dharma sharing** session. The only difference is the people who are here are **more interested** in the sutra that we are sharing, - 'The 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra'. If your field is different, maybe we can develop that sharing in a **different environment** because this

is a sutra class. This is **not** a normal type of sharing class but today I don't mind because a lot of them want to go back early. Normally, the first session (**sutra class**) is until 4:30pm, then after that is the **meditation session**. After meditation, you can ask any questions. During that time, the normal sharing will be discussed. What is the time now? Oh! Almost 5.30pm already. What time you all want me to end? 5.30pm? Okay then you can rejoice, *Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!*

We will chant the **sharing** and **transference of merits in Pāḷi**. After that you can pay respects to all the **great beings** and **worthy ones**, **then we end**.