

9th Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra



(Based on a **direct transcript** from the **recording** of the
9th Lesson of the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra class
[dated 6th September 2015]

Conducted by Bro. Teoh at Wu Pin Chin Seah,
No. 4, Jalan 11/8, Petaling Jaya, Selangor)

For free distribution - to **non-Muslim** only

Donated by:

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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 societies* and places that invite him.

For *more details* of *Bro. Teoh's dharma activities* and his *Kalyāṇamittaship grouping* please login to his recently launched *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 9th **lesson** of the **Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra** class (dated 6.9.2015); 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 recording **first before** reading the transcript book.

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<http://broteoh.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/9th-6th-Patriarch-6-Sept-2015.mp3>

2. Acknowledgement

It is the donors' **sincere intention** that this *dharma transcript book* 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 Hong** (Hong 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: 30th December 2017)

3. 9th Lesson of the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra dated 6th September 2015

3.1. Pūjā

We can start the puja now. Compose your mind; develop the faith (*saddhā*) and spiritual zeal (*vīriya*). Then pay respect **mindfully** before we start. 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 (3x) (南無佛菩薩) (3x)

Then we will chant the: **Salutation to the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha) in the Theravada and Thai tradition.**

Arahaṃ Samma-sambuddho Bhagavā Buddhaṃ Bhagavantaṃ
Abdhivādemī.

Svakkhato Bhagavatā Dhammo Dhammaṃ Namassāmi.

Supatipanno Bhagavato Sāvaka - saṅgho Saṅghaṃ Namāmi.

Vandanā - Salutation to Lord Buddha:-

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa (3X)

Tisaraṇa - 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
Tatīyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Tatīyampi Dhammaṃ
saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Tatīyampi 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 Lord Buddha, Quan Yin
Bodhisattva and all the other great beings that are worthy of
respect and The **Triple Gem** to end the pre-pūjā.

Okay. We will turn to page 1 to recite the **Verse for Opening a
Sutra.**

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.*

3.2. Dharma and Sutra By Bro. Teoh

We shall turn to page 61. This one we will run through it **quickly** because we have covered it under the Heart Sutra Short Notes earlier on. That one is more accurate. Now you can go through this one which is based on Hsuan Hua's commentary. It is **slightly different** but by now you should be able to understand and develop the clear understanding of it. You go back a little bit to page 60 where the Sutra starts.

Sutra:

One day the Patriarch summoned his disciples together and said, "I have something to say to you: for people in the world, the matter of birth and death is a great one. All day long you seek fields of blessings only; you do not try to get out of the bitter sea of birth and death. If you are confused about your self-nature, how can blessings save you?"

This English translation is not so precise and not so clear. Anyway, this was Hsuan Hua's translation at that time. If you want to have a better one, you should refer to our Heart Sutra short Notes transcript book. That one is better. We will now read the Commentary.

Commentary:

The Fifth Patriarch said, "Regardless of whether you are extremely rich or bitterly poor, you cannot avoid birth and death. Consequently, you should know how you were born. If this

question of birth and death is not resolved, life is dim and confused, and you are confused with coming and going.”

“You do nothing but seek merit among the gods and among humans; you do not know how to seek wisdom. Thus, you swirl and drift in the suffering sea of birth and death.”

The Mandarin words were **literally** translated. That's why it became 'suffering sea' (苦海, kǔhǎi) of birth and death.

It is said that one who cultivates wisdom and does not cultivate merit is like an Arahāt with an empty begging-bowl; he is very wise, but no one makes offerings to him. But if one cultivates merit and neglects wisdom, he is just like a big elephant wearing a pearl necklace; beneath the adornments of blessing, he is stupid and will never solve the problem of birth and death.

So this was Hsuan Hua's analogy, not so important. Okay then the sutra continues.

Sutra:

“Each of you goes back and looks into your own wisdom and use the Prajna-nature of your own original mind to compose a verse. Submit it to me so that I may look at it. If you understand the great meaning, the robe and Dharma will be passed on to you and you will become the sixth patriarch. Hurry off! Do not delay! Thinking and considering is of no use in this matter. When seeing your own nature it is necessary to see it at the very moment of speaking. One who does that

perceives as does one who wields a sword in the height of battle.”

That's why this analogy that Hsuan Hua used was more of like going to battlefield and the English was also not so precise and not so clear. Anyway this was Hsuan Hua's commentary. So we can go through the Commentary quickly.

Commentary:

“Verse” here is the Sanskrit word “gatha.” A gatha is composed of lines of uniform length, though the length may vary from gatha to gatha.

“Go quickly!” said the Fifth Patriarch. “Go as if a fire were about to overtake you. Do not dawdle and procrastinate saying, ‘Oh, I cannot do it today. I will do it tomorrow instead,’ and then the next day saying, ‘Not today either, perhaps tomorrow...’ Do not keep putting it off and do not try to think about it. It is useless to use your discriminating mind. If you have deep prajna wisdom, you understand the moment you hear the words spoken. Just as one grabs a weapon and confronts the oncoming enemy, so do you perceive. You can see your nature in the same immediate way.”

So the English translation was really not so appropriate and clear. What he wanted to mean was not expressed clearly. If you depend on the English translation then this translation is not something you should follow. You should follow the **Heart Sutra short notes version**. Anyway we go on.

Sutra:

The assembly received this order and withdrew, saying to one another, “We of the assembly do not need to clear our minds and use our intellect to compose a verse to submit to the High Master. What use would there be in this?”

“Shen Hsiu is our senior instructor and teaching transmitter. Certainly he should be the one to obtain it. It would be not only improper for us to compose a verse, but a waste of effort as well.”

Hearing this, everyone put his mind to rest, and said, “Henceforth, we will rely on Master Shen Hsiu. Why vex ourselves writing verses?”

So they would rather leave it to their most senior teacher Shen Hsiu who had actually taught them, guided them and instructed them all these while.

Commentary:

They went away to other courts, other gardens, and other buildings, saying to themselves, “Why worry about writing this verse? We do not need to waste the effort.”

I believe the people who spoke this way were of Shen Hsiu’s party. Why did they not write verses? Because Shen Hsiu’s followers were trying to make him the patriarch; all his followers, disciples, Dharma brothers, friends, and relatives contrived to set

up the position for Shen Hsiu. They convinced everyone else not to write verses, because if anyone else wrote verses, then perhaps Shen Hsiu might not get to be the next patriarch.

So this was what they thought.

They secretly passed it around and whispered behind the scenes, like friends of a candidate for President who say, "Hey! Vote for this one! He can be President!" They spread it about and stuffed the ballot box.

Convinced that they had no learning, the assembly decided it was useless to write verses. Swayed by the rumours, they said, "The Senior-Seated Shen Hsiu is second to the Abbot. His literary skill is good, his virtue is high, he lectures on the Sutras and speaks Dharma for us. Certainly he should become the sixth patriarch."

When the assembly heard Shen Hsiu's followers saying things like, "If we write verses, they will be very unpolished and certainly not good enough to submit," they all decided not to write verses themselves. They didn't want to compete with Shen Hsiu, their superior.

So that was the Commentary. Then after that we shall read the Sutra.

Sutra:

Shen Hsiu then thought, "The others are not submitting verses

because I am their teaching transmitter. I must compose a verse and submit it to the High Master.”

“If I do not submit a verse, how will the High Master know whether the views and understanding in my mind are deep or shallow?”

“If my intention in submitting the verse is to seek the Dharma that is good but if it is to grasp the patriarchate, that is bad, for how would that be different from the mind of a common person coveting the holy position? But, if I do not submit a verse, in the end I will not obtain the Dharma. This is a terrible difficulty!”

It looked like he was in a dilemma.

Commentary:

The Fifth Patriarch had announced that in order to obtain the Dharma, one must compose a verse. Shen Hsiu knew that if he did not submit one, the Fifth Patriarch would not know whether Shen Hsiu had wisdom and he could not transmit the Dharma to him. Shen Hsiu fretted and worried, “What shall I do? This is very hard; it is just too difficult!”

Sutra:

In front of the Fifth Patriarch’s hall were three corridors. Their walls were to be frescoed by Court Artist Lu Chen with stories from the Lankavatara Sutra and with pictures portraying in detail the lives of the five patriarchs, so that the patriarchs

might be venerated by future generations.

So this was what they called the wall that they reserved for the court artist to do up the painting of the first 5 patriarchs and all those things. The commentary goes on...

Commentary:

A court artist is one appointed as an official to the Imperial Court because of his talent.

The title of The Lankavatara Sutra has two meanings: "city" and "cannot be gone to." This city, located behind Malaya Mountain, is inaccessible to those without spiritual powers. Shakyamuni Buddha used his spiritual powers to go there and speak The Lankavatara Sutra for the benefit of those who had spiritual powers. The court artist was to depict the miraculous, inconceivable, wonderful transformations which took place in the assembly on Lanka Mountain.

The court artist was also to paint pictures illustrating the flow of the Dharma from Great Master Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch, to the Great Master Hui K'o, the Second Patriarch, and onward from generation to generation, to the Fifth Patriarch, Great Master Hung Jen. The paintings would remain in the world so that future generations might receive benefit from respecting and making offerings to them.

Sutra:

After composing his verse, Shen Hsiu made several attempts to submit it. But whenever he reached the front hall, his mind became agitated and distraught, and his entire body became covered with perspiration. He did not dare submit it, although in the course of four days he made thirteen attempts.

This is another version of the sutra. This one was not in the original Heart Sutra's Notes. Anyway it's not important. Maybe we skip this. Then we continue with the Sutra text at the bottom of page 66 bottom.

Sutra:

Then he thought, "This is not as good as writing it on the wall so that the High Master might see it suddenly. If he says it is good, I will come forward, bow, and say, 'Hsiu did it.' If it does not pass, then I have spent my years on this mountain in vain, receiving veneration from others. And as to further cultivation—what can I say?"

That night, in the third watch, holding a candle he secretly wrote the verse on the wall of the South corridor, to show what his mind had seen.

So we straightaway go to the verse on the Sutra further down.

Commentary:

Verse:

The body is like a Bodhi tree,

The mind like a bright mirror stand.

Time and again brush it clean, (Bro Teoh: It should be, 'Polish it until it shines,')

And let no dust alight.

After writing this verse, Shen Hsiu returned to his room, and the others did not know what he had done.

Then he thought, "If the Fifth Patriarch sees the verse tomorrow and is pleased, it will mean that I have an affinity with the Dharma. If he says that it does not pass, it will mean that I am confused by heavy karmic obstacles from past lives, (Bro Teoh: See, he also understands what karmic obstacles are) and that I am not fit to obtain the Dharma. It is difficult to fathom the sage's intentions."

In his room he thought it over and could not sit or sleep peacefully right through to the fifth watch.

So this was the version given by Hsuan Hua. Then we move on to the next section of the Sutra.

Sutra:

The Patriarch already knew that Shen Hsiu had not yet entered the gate and seen his own nature. At daybreak, the Patriarch called Court Artist Lu Chen to fresco the wall of the south corridor. Suddenly he saw the verse and said to the court artist, "There is no need to paint. I am sorry that you have been wearied by coming so far, but The Diamond Sutra says,

‘Whatever has marks is empty and false.’ Instead leave this verse for people to recite and uphold. Those who cultivate in accordance with this verse will not fall into the evil destinies and will attain great merit.”

He then ordered the disciples to light incense and bow before it, and to recite it, thus enabling them to see their own nature. The disciples all recited it and exclaimed, “Excellent!”

Commentary:

“If you cultivate according to the principles contained in this verse,” said the Fifth Patriarch, “you will not fall into rebirth in the three evil paths of the hells, animals, or hungry ghosts, and you will receive many benefits.”

The Sutra continues.

Sutra:

At the third watch, the Patriarch called Shen Hsiu into the hall and asked him, “Did you write those verses?”

Shen Hsiu said, “Yes, in fact, Hsiu did it. He does not dare lay claim to the position of Patriarch, but hopes the High Master will be compassionate and see whether or not this disciple has a little bit of wisdom.”

The Patriarch said, “The verse which you wrote shows that you have not yet seen your original nature but are still outside the gate. With such views and understanding you may seek

supreme Bodhi, but in the end will not obtain it. Supreme Bodhi must be obtained at the very moment of speaking. In recognizing the original mind, at all times, in every thought, you yourself will see that the ten thousand Dharmas are unblocked; in one truth is all truth and the ten thousand states are of themselves 'thus', (*Bro Teoh: 'thus' means suchness*) as they are. The 'thusness' of the mind is true reality. If seen in this way, it is indeed the self-nature of supreme Bodhi."

5th Patriarch had given Shen Hsiu a lot of **very important pointers** and **hints** but too bad, he couldn't understand. Yet Shen Hsiu couldn't comprehend and that was the reason why he couldn't come out with another verse *to confirm his **understanding** and **realization***. We shall read on.

Commentary:

The Patriarch chose the same hour at which Shen Hsiu had written the verse on the wall the night before. He secretly called him in and said, "Psst! Was it you who wrote that verse?"

"Yes, yes," Shen Hsiu whispered back, "yes, in fact, I, Hsiu, wrote it. I do not dare seek the status of the patriarch, but..."

*"Your verse shows that you are still an outsider," said the Fifth Patriarch. "You have not yet **seen your nature**. As soon as you speak the words, know your **original nature!**"*

*When you understand the mind and see your own nature (**or true nature**), you know that the nature is not produced and not*

destroyed; for at all times, all dharmas are perfectly fused, without the slightest bit of obstruction. There is no place where all dharmas are not identical.

*When you understand one truth, all truth is understood. The ten thousand externals are all produced from the state which is “thus, unmoving,” and within the mind which is “thus, thus, unmoving,” **true reality** is to be found. Seen in this way, this state is the **original nature** exactly; it is the **highest enlightenment**. And so, in response to Shen Hsiu, I wrote a verse myself:*

So this one, I think it's Hsuan Hua's one.

*Because of the Way, ten thousand things are born.
One who obtains it penetrates the mystery oneself;
Awakened, the basic substance is fathomed:
Bodhi does not decrease or increase.*

So this was Hsuan Hua's response to the poem. Then we go on to the Sutra.

Sutra:

“Go and think it over for a day or two. Compose another verse and bring it to me to see. If you have been able to enter the gate, I will transmit the robe and Dharma to you.”

Shen Hsiu made obeisance and left. Several days passed, but he was unable to compose a verse. His mind was agitated and

confused and his thoughts and mood were uneasy. He was as if in a dream; whether walking or sitting down, he could not be happy.

So that was the state of mind of Shen Hsiu. We will continue with the Sutra section.

Sutra:

Two days later, a young boy chanting that verse passed by the threshing room. Hearing it for the first time, Hui Neng knew that the writer had not yet seen his original nature. Although he had not yet received a transmission of the teaching, he already understood its profound meaning. He asked the boy, "What verse are you reciting?"

"Barbarian, you know nothing," replied the boy. "The Great Master has said that birth and death are a profound concern for people in the world. Desiring to transmit the robe and Dharma, he ordered his disciples to compose verses and bring them to him to see. The person who has awakened to the profound meaning will inherit the robe and Dharma and become the Sixth Patriarch. Our senior, Shen Hsiu, wrote this 'verse without marks' on the wall of the south corridor. The Great Master ordered everyone to recite it, for to cultivate in accord with this verse is to avoid falling into the evil destinies and is of great merit."

So that was the Sutra. Then we move on further to the next page.

Sutra:

Hui Neng said, "I, too, would like to recite it to create an affinity. Superior One, I have been pounding rice here for over eight months and have not yet been to the front hall. I hope that the Superior One will lead me before the verse to pay homage. The boy then led him to the verse to bow."

Hui Neng said, "Hui Neng cannot read. Please, Superior One, read it to me." Then an official from Chiang Chou, named Chang Jih Yung, read it loudly. After hearing it, Hui Neng said, "I, too, have a verse. Will the official please write it for me?"

The official replied, "You, too, can write a verse? That is strange!"

Then we go on to the next section of the Sutra at the bottom of the page 74, last paragraph.

Sutra:

Hui Neng said to the official, "If you wish to study the supreme Bodhi, do not slight the beginner. The lowest people may have the highest wisdom; the highest people may have the least wisdom. If you slight others, you create limitless, unbounded offenses."

The official said, "Recite your verse and I will write it out for you. If you obtain the Dharma you must take me across first. Do not forget these words."

Hui Neng's verse reads: (*Bro Teoh: Hui Neng recited this verse*

to counter Shen Hsiu's poem.)

Originally Bodhi has no tree, *
The bright mirror has no stand.
Originally there is not a single thing:
Where can dust alight?

* (**Bro Teoh:** This is a direct translation. because the Mandarin words are: 菩提本無樹 (Pútí běn wú shù), 本 is from word, 本性 (Běnxìng). That's why the correct words should be, 'originally Bodhi is **not a tree**' but he said, '... originally Bodhi **has no tree.**)

When this verse had been written, the followers all were startled and without exception cried out to one another, “Strange indeed! One cannot judge a person by his appearance. How can it be that, after so little time, he has become a Bodhisattva in the flash of time?”

So everybody was caught by surprise. Okay, we shall read the Commentary by Hsuan Hua.

Commentary:

Originally, Layman Lu had not planned to say a thing, but if he had remained silent, no one would have helped him write a verse. So in reply to the mocking of Layman Chang, the Master said, “If you wish to study the highest Bodhi, do not ridicule those who are studying the Buddha Dharma for the first time.”

It may well be that those who appear to be the lowest and

stupidest have the highest wisdom, for those who have truly great wisdom may act as if they have no wisdom at all. No matter what they are asked, they reply, "I don't know," This is an example of the great wisdom which is like stupidity. For instance, when I ask a question of my disciples they often say, "I don't know." When they first came to study, they said, "I know everything!"

So it's just like **J. Krishnamurti's famous** verse, 'The **most dangerous person** in this world is the person **who says, I know.**'

Once I met a person who said he knew everything. I asked, "How can you know everything? If you know all there is to know, I'll ask you a question."

He said, "What is your question?"

I replied, "Do you know how many grains of rice you swallowed at lunch today?"

"No, I didn't count them," he admitted.

"Your 'not counting' is just 'not knowing,'" I said.

Those who do the most menial work often have wisdom excelling that of people in high positions. Then again, those who ordinarily have great wisdom may have times when their wisdom is suffocated by thoughts of desire.

"Okay, okay," said the official, "that's right. You certainly speak with principle. Now, what is your verse? Recite it and I will write

it out. You don't have to say another word. But you must remember to take me across first because if I don't write your verse no one will know of it."

So that was Hsuan Hua's Commentary.

Originally Bodhi has no tree. Bodhi is just the Way of enlightenment, and that's all there is to it; how can there be a tree? (Bro Teoh: The Pāḷi word, Bodhi means enlightenment. That's why Bodhisattva; Sattva is a living being who walks the path of Bodhi to become Samma Sambuddha.) If there is a tree, Bodhi becomes a mere thing, a place of attachment. Originally Bodhi doesn't have anything. If you say you are enlightened, what is enlightenment like? Is it green or yellow? Is it red or white? Can you speak of the appearance of Bodhi when it has no appearance?

So this was Hsuan Hua's Commentary, his interpretation.

The bright mirror has no stand. You may say the mind is like a bright mirror stand, but there is actually no stand at all. If you have a stand, you have a place where you can dwell. But you should "produce a thought which is nowhere supported;" how can you have a stand? If you have a stand, then you have a dwelling place, a place where you are attached; therefore, the bright mirror has no stand. What is the appearance? No appearance.

So again this was Hsuan Hua's interpretation or commentary. What

is your understanding about the second line of the verse? The first line is 菩提本無樹 (Pútí běn wú shù) - Pútí or Bodhi is not a tree because Bodhi is enlightenment, wisdom. Wisdom is not knowledge. It cannot be compared to anything.

Then the second verse, Hsuan Hua's interpretation was 'The bright mirror does not have any stand; 明鏡亦非台 (Míngjìng yì fēi tái). The actual meaning was different but Hsuan Hua interpreted it this way. He thought if you have a stand, you dwell but the actual dwelling, the meaning is very deep. What Shen Hsiu wrote in his poem under the 2nd line is **not the true mind**, that mind that he described was the **mundane mind**; that was **not the true mind**. Even **without** the stand, that mirror bright was still the mundane mind.

The true actual meaning is; the second verse 明鏡亦非台 (Míngjìng yì fēi tái); the one that Shen Hsiu wrote, 'The mind is like a mirror bright on a stand'; that is the **mundane mind**; that is **not the true mind**. That's why Hui Neng said that the **true mind** has nothing to do with the mirror bright (明鏡, míngjìng) and the stand. So **when you understand**, its **meaning is different**. That's why when Hsuan Hua quoted the Diamond Sutra, his interpretation is so different. Hsuan Hua explained it differently.

The **real understanding** is **different** because the **true mind** is just the **pure awareness** before the knowing. The **moment you perceive**; the **moment you know**, you **already dwell**; **dwell on** what you **perceive**; dwell on whatever arises. The mind that has no dwelling is the **enlightened state** of the **true nature**, the **true mind**.

It doesn't dwell. It is just aware without a centre. So the *moment it perceives, holds or does anything via words and concepts it is already dwelling*. So this is the **real understanding**. This part you have to contemplate, reflect and develop the understanding yourself. Okay? Then we move on. The rest we can skip.

Okay we turn to page 78.

Sutra:

The Fifth Patriarch saw the astonished assembly and feared that they might become dangerous. Accordingly, he erased the verse with his shoe saying, "This one, too, has not yet seen his nature." (Bro Teoh: The word Hsuan Hua used is 'seen'. Nature cannot be seen. It has to be realized.)

The assembly agreed.

Then we move on to the next section of the Sutra.

Sutra:

The next day the Patriarch secretly came to the threshing floor where he saw Hui Neng pounding rice with a stone tied around his waist, and he said, "A seeker of the Way would forget (*risk*) his very life for the Dharma. Is this not the case?"

So the 5th Patriarch knew why Hui Neng was so daring. Then we move on to the next section of the Sutra. Never mind, we will also read the Commentary (page 80) because I also don't know what Hsuan Hua wrote.

Commentary:

The next day everyone was quiet and no longer worrying about who was enlightened and who was not. The Fifth Patriarch secretly left his room and went quickly to the threshing floor (means the kitchen) to see the Great Master Hui Neng. As he went he peered about to see if anyone was looking; just like Shen Hsiu when he had finished writing the verse, he ran silently, darting glances over his shoulder to make sure no one saw him.

When the Fifth Patriarch got to the threshing floor, he saw Hui Neng pounding rice. He had tied a stone around his waist and pounded rice so that others could eat. What was he doing? He was practicing the Bodhisattva Way, forgetting others and having no notion of self. He did not think, "Why should I pound rice for you to eat? You don't work. You don't do anything at all! I pound rice all day and it is very difficult!" He did not think that way. Instead, he thought, "You do not work? Fine, I will do it myself," just like one of my disciples who is so busy that when he is called to lunch he says, "Wait a minute, wait a minute!" I really like that kind of disciple, but not everyone can be that way.

"Isn't that so?" the Fifth Patriarch said. Remember this. It ought, it must be this way! You must give up being afraid of difficulty to the point of forgetting to eat. No one knows how many days the Sixth Patriarch went without eating. No one called him to eat, and he himself forgot about it until he had no strength. He tied a heavy rock around his waist to add weight to his body so that he could pound the rice. I think he used the stone to add to his

*weight because he had not eaten for some time; (Bro Teoh: I think this is Hsuan Hua's commentary but in real life, I don't think this is the case. He still eats but he eats with understanding and he adds on the weight because he is **not heavy enough to pound**. So adding the stone pestle is just a **skilful means** which is appropriate so that it can make your **weight heavier**. Then with that, you need less effort to lift up the pestle that pounds the rice. Okay we shall go on.) However, you should not get attached and think, "It was definitely like that." On the other hand, don't think, "It's definitely wasn't like that." The **profound insight** comes from precisely that kind of **non-attachment**.*

So the above is based on Hsuan Hua's commentary. We just leave it. Then page 81, the Sutra continues.

Sutra:

Then the Fifth Patriarch asked, "Is the rice ready?"

Hui Neng replied, "The rice has long been ready. (Bro Teoh: Actually the English used is not so good. The other version 'Ready long ago since the day I arrived' is better.) It is now waiting only for the sieve." The Patriarch tapped the pestle three times with his staff and left. Hui Neng then knew the Patriarch's intention, and at the third watch he went into the Patriarch's room.

So this is how the transmission started. I will continue with the Commentary.

Commentary:

The Fifth Patriarch rapped the pestle three times with his staff and left. Old monks who have left the home life to become Bhikshus often carry a walking stick. Sometimes these staffs are made of twisted vines. The Great Master Hsü Yün said:

We go to pick the ivy lively like a dragon, beating wind and rain beating empty space. The ivy vine curves and twists like a dragon who by attacking the wind and rain attacks empty space. That is certainly a case of going out to look for trouble. If that vine were as busy as my disciples it would have no time to beat space and wind.

“Knock, knock, knock,” went the Fifth Patriarch’s staff, and how do you know he left? If you know, then you know. If you don’t know, then you must wait until I tell you. He went out with his two hands behind his back, holding his crooked staff.

Why did the Patriarch tap three times? Do you understand the meaning of that? The Sixth Patriarch understood right away. The tapping meant, “Come to my room at the third watch, at midnight.” This is called “speaking the Dharma without words.” Here in the meditation hall, for example, when the wooden fish is hit twice, it means “Walk;” hit once, it means “Stop and sit down;” hit three times, it means, “Meditate! Work hard!” All these are like “speaking the Dharma without words.”

Why did the Fifth Patriarch carry his staff behind his back? Now you are going to ask me, “How do you know he carried it behind

his back since it doesn't say so in the Sutra?" Well, how do you not know? I know that you don't know. He carried it behind his back to indicate that the Sixth Patriarch should come in by the back door. "Do not let the others see you come in!"

If the Fifth Patriarch had said openly, "Come to my room at the third watch and we'll have a little talk," I am sure that the word would have spread like fire to Shen Hsiu's ears and Shen Hsiu and his disciples would not have been very kind to the Sixth Patriarch. The Fifth Patriarch tested the Sixth Patriarch's wisdom by tapping his staff three times and putting it behind his back.

The Sixth Patriarch understood but no one else did. They were all as if deaf and dumb, without any idea as to what had transpired in this wordless exchange of Dharma.

At midnight, as soon as the Sixth Patriarch entered the room, there was a quick exchange.

"What are you doing here?" demanded the Fifth Patriarch.

"But the Patriarch told me to come at the third watch!" came the reply.

"Really? Did I tell you that? How could I have forgotten? What do you think you are doing? Why did you come in the back door instead of the front door?"

“Did the Master not tell me to use the back entrance?”

The Fifth Patriarch laughed and said, “You are not bad, really not bad. You are all right!”

You, ask how I know that? I ask, “How do you not know it?”

That was the Commentary by Hsuan Hua but it is not important. We shall go back to the Sutra.

Sutra:

The Patriarch covered them with his precept sash so they could not be seen, and he explained The Diamond Sutra for him down to the line, “One should produce a thought that is nowhere supported.”

This one was actually recited by the other merchant before Hui Neng came. So here, the sutra defers a bit. Anyway we shall read on, to see what Hsuan Hua's commentary is.

Commentary:

*The Fifth Patriarch was afraid that someone might have seen the Great Master Hui Neng enter his room and might be outside the window eavesdropping. At that time the windows were made of paper; so, to insure privacy, the Fifth Patriarch pulled his robe over both their heads. (**Bro Teoh:** Okay! Let's assume what he said was true.)*

The Fifth Patriarch's explanation of The Diamond Sutra was not

a public one, such as I have given you. His was a secret and very difficult explanation, telling the Sixth Patriarch how to **forge an indestructible vajra body**. When he heard the words, “**One should produce a thought which is nowhere supported,**” Hui Neng achieved the **great enlightenment** and knew that all the ten thousand dharmas are **not separate** from the **self-nature**. He suddenly experienced that even greater enlightenment.

Although the Sixth Patriarch knew the method, his afflictions of views and thought had not yet been completely eliminated. That he was waiting for the sieve can mean, also, that no one had certified him. Even though, in his intense vigor, he had reached a high peak, and the fire in the censer was pure green, he had not yet been certified by a good knowing advisor. So when the Fifth Patriarch heard him say that the rice was ready and merely waiting for the sieve, he prepared to certify the Sixth Patriarch.

Because I have a kind of radar, I was able to record their conversation and I shall now replay it for you. Keep in mind that this is a T'ang Dynasty recording, not a present-day one:

So this is (maybe) Hsuan Hua's joke.

“Do you want to reach Buddhahood?” asked the Fifth Patriarch.

“Yes,” said the Sixth Patriarch, “I just want to become a Buddha. I do not seek anything else. I only want to attain Buddhahood.”

“Your resolution is extremely firm,” replied the Fifth Patriarch,

“but if you want to realize Buddhahood you must first cut off ignorance, for it is ignorance which produces the afflictions of delusion, brought on by false views and false thought. If you want to cut off these afflictions, you must first cut off ignorance.

“For example, the **cycle of birth and death** is based on the **state of emotional love**. When you break through ignorance, then the **delusions of false views and false thoughts** which are *tied to birth and death also ceases to exist*, for *ignorance is the root* of birth and death. If you want to cut off ignorance and thereby **put an end to birth and death**, then, as The Diamond Sutra says, “*produce a thought which is nowhere supported.*” That means do not dwell in emotional love, get rid of desire, and cast out craving. Then you can bring an end to birth and death.

The Sixth Patriarch heard this and suddenly became enlightened. He saw through to his original face and said, “**Ah! It is basically just like this! It is not difficult at all! In fact, it’s very easy!**” Thus he became enlightened.

This has been a T’ang Dynasty recording which has just been played for you to hear.

In cultivating and studying the Buddha Dharma, you should produce an unsupported thought. That means to dwell neither in emotion nor love. If you dwell in emotion and love, you dwell in ignorance, and thus in birth and death. If you do not dwell in emotion or in love, if you do not dwell in existence or non-existence, you know the Middle Way. The **Middle Way** is not

separate from existence and is not separate from emptiness, nor does it exist elsewhere. The ability to **transform** emotion and love into **genuine** Prajna or wisdom is enlightenment. Not changing them is confusion. It is said, "Although the sea of suffering is inexhaustible, a turn of the head is the other shore." The difference between confusion and enlightenment is just in knowing how to turn. *If you accept emotion and love and run after desire, then the more you run, the more confused you become.* If you can turn your head, you *arrive at Nirvana, the other shore.* If you do not turn your head, you become more and more confused. The more confused, the farther away you are and the deeper you sink into confusion. But although you are extremely far off, one turn can be sudden enlightenment. Sudden enlightenment is awakening. Awakening is the Buddha.

You may be thinking, "If I become a Buddha, there won't be any work for me to do. Wouldn't I just sit in a lotus flower all day and wait for people to come and light incense and bow before me? Frankly, I don't think that sounds the least bit interesting!" If that is what you think, you can go on being a living being, but you can be a living being who is a friend to others, taking them across to Buddhahood.

You need not worry about Buddhahood being uninteresting. Yesterday I talked about the ghost who had no trouble and as a consequence did not want to become a person.

This is Hsuan Hua's poem:

*I've been a ghost for three thousand years,
Without happiness, without fears,
Shen Kung tells me to go be a man,
But I really just don't think I can!*

The ghosts have no fears, but they only come out at night, because they belong to the yin, the darkness principle. The Buddha is totally yang, like the light of the sun. So, you decide. Do you want to be a ghost or a Buddha? If you want to be a ghost, then it is all right to have emotion and love. But if you want to be a Buddha, you must “produce a thought which is nowhere supported.”

So this part was Hsuan Hua's interpretation. This part was not in the new translation. That's why I said the new translation as given in my Heart Sutra Short Notes was the more **authentic one**. Anyway, we shall move on to the next section of the Sutra and see what Hsuan Hua said.

Sutra:

At the moment he heard those words, Hui Neng experienced the great enlightenment and he knew that all the ten thousand dharmas are not separate from the self- nature. He said to the Patriarch:

How unexpected! The self-nature is originally pure in itself.
(Bro Teoh: Actually the words should be 'How amazing!')

How amazing! The self-nature is originally neither produced

nor destroyed.

How amazing! The self-nature is originally complete in itself.

How amazing! The self-nature is originally without movement.

How amazing! The self-nature can produce the ten thousand dharmas.

So this part is quite similar except the word 'unexpected' changed to 'amazing'. Then we skip the rest and go on to the Sutra section.

Sutra:

The Fifth Patriarch knew of Hui Neng's enlightenment to his original nature and said to him, "Studying the Dharma without recognizing the original mind is of no benefit. If one recognizes one's own original mind and sees one's original nature, then one is called a great hero, a teacher of gods and humans, a Buddha."

Okay, we shall go on to the next section of the Sutra.

Sutra:

He received the Dharma in the third watch and no one knew about it. The Fifth Patriarch also transmitted the Sudden Teaching and the robe and bowl saying, "You are the Sixth Patriarch. Protect yourself carefully. Take living beings across by every method and spread the teaching for the sake of those who will live in the future. Do not let it be cut off."

So based on what is written here, I think the *translation differs*. Based on what we have got from the other version (which I had

extracted from the internet) that one was **more authentic** and I had **used that version** in our Heart Sutra Short Notes sharing. This first verse, 'the mind must have no dwelling', he actually heard it from the merchant earlier on (before he came to see the 5th Patriarch). Then when the 5th Patriarch expounded the **Diamond Sutra** to him, halfway through Hui Neng suddenly become **greatly enlightened**. (Suddenly, Hui Neng awakened to a very profound and great enlightenment). Can you all remember what that section was? When the 5th Patriarch read to him that part, which part was it? Can anybody recall? It's not this part. This part was by Hsuan Hua. The other one which was in the Heart Sutra Short Notes - that one is very accurate. The 5th Patriarch explained to Hui Neng, 'because the **self-nature** or the **true nature** was **already complete**, *thus, thus*, and **without anything...**' Then he continued, 'Even if you have understood this, you have to know that as a living being when you come to this world, there is **another mind** which is the **mundane mind**, the **conditioned arising mind**; *you have to learn how to use that mind* and *yet not affected by it.*' The moment he heard that, **he came to great enlightenment** and that one was **very profound** and that was the **authentic version**. So as far as this version by Hsuan Hua is concerned, you just **have an open mind**. His understanding is this way. Maybe he got it from another **source**.

Then we move on. We have to turn to page 94.

Sutra:

The Patriarch further said, "In the past, when the First Patriarch Great Master Bodhidharma first came to this land and people did not believe in him, yet he transmitted this robe

as a symbol of faith to be handed down from generation to generation. The Dharma is transmitted from mind to mind, leading everyone to self-awakening and self-enlightenment.

“From ancient times, Buddha only transmits the original substance to Buddha; master secretly transmits the original mind to master. Since the robe is a source of contention, it should stop with you. Do not transmit it, for if you do, your life will hang by a thread.”

So that's how, after the 6th Patriarch, he was advised not to pass on the alms bowl and the robe anymore. Then we go on to page 95, last paragraph.

Sutra:

“You must go quickly for I fear that people might harm you.”

Hui Neng asked, “Where shall I go?”

The Patriarch replied, “Stop at Huai and hide at Hui.”

Hui Neng received the robe and bowl in the third watch. He said, “Hui Neng is a Southerner and does not know these mountain roads. How does one reach the mouth of the river?”

The Fifth Patriarch said, “You need not worry. I will accompany you.”

The Fifth Patriarch escorted him to the Chiu Chiang courier

station and ordered him to board a boat. The Fifth Patriarch took up the oars and rowed. Hui Neng said, "Please, High Master, sit down. It is fitting that your disciple takes the oars."

The Patriarch replied, "It is fitting that I take you across."

Hui Neng said, "When someone is deluded, his master takes him across, but when he is enlightened, he takes himself across. Although the term 'taking across' is the same in each case, the function is not the same."

So that was the conversation. We shall now go through the Commentary:

Commentary:

The Fifth Patriarch instructed the Sixth Patriarch to leave quickly, for he knew that Shen Hsiu's followers would certainly want to kill him when they realized he had inherited the patriarchate. "Do not stay here," the Fifth Patriarch said. "Stop at Huai and hide at Hui." Huai is a district in Kuang Hsi, Wu Chou, and Hui is Szu Hui, now called Hsin Hui.

High Master is a respectful form of address used for a teacher or an Abbot, so the Sixth Patriarch used it to address the Fifth Patriarch "High Master, it is only proper that your disciple take the oars."

"Hey!" said the Fifth Patriarch, "Let me take you across the river." The Master and disciple exchanged courtesies, but although

they each used the same term “taking across,” it meant something different in each case. For the teacher to take the disciple across is not the same thing as for the disciple to take the teacher across. Hui Neng understood. “When the student is confused,” he said, “the teacher must save him. But when the student becomes enlightened, he must save himself.”

Before becoming enlightened and obtaining the original substance of the self-nature, the *disciple is confused and lost.* His teacher advises him to work hard: “Do not be afraid of the pain in your legs when you sit in meditation. If you are afraid of suffering you cannot become enlightened.” The Sixth Patriarch, when he hung a stone around his waist so he could pound the rice harder, was not afraid of suffering. The rock which the Layman Lu, the Sixth Patriarch, used to tie around his waist when he pounded rice is still on P’ing Mao Mountain at Tung Shan Ch’an Monastery and carved on the rock is the inscription: “The rock Hui Neng, the former Layman Lu, tied around his waist.”

So this one, it seems is still there. Then the Sutra continues.

Sutra:

“Hui Neng was born in the frontier regions and his pronunciation is incorrect, yet he has received the Dharma transmission from the Master. Now that enlightenment has been attained, it is only fitting that he takes his own nature across.”

The Patriarch replied, “So it is, so it is. Hereafter because of you, the Buddha Dharma will be widely practiced. Three years after your departure I will leave this world. Start on your journey now and go south as fast as possible. Do not speak too soon, for the Buddha Dharma arises from difficulty.”

So based on this statement, we will come to understand that the 5th Patriarch would pass away into Parinibbāna 3 years after Hui Neng had left him. We can skip this part and go to page 101.

Sutra:

After Hui Neng took leave of the Patriarch, he set out on foot for the South. In two months he reached the Ta Yü Mountains. The Fifth Patriarch returned to the monastery but for several days he did not enter the hall. The assembly was concerned and went to ask: “Has the Master some slight illness or problem?”

“There is no illness,” came the reply, “but the robe and Dharma have already gone south.”

“Who received the transmission?” they asked.

“The Able One obtained it,” said the Patriarch.

The assembly then understood, and soon several hundred people took up pursuit, all hoping to steal the robe and bowl.

So this was in the Sutra. This part was not mentioned in the summarized version. But the next section which we are going to read is reflected in that video show, the 6th Patriarch Hui Neng

show. So I believe this part was in the Sutra. Turn to page 103.

Sutra:

One Bhikshu, Hui Ming, a coarse-natured man whose lay name had been Ch'en, had formerly been a fourth class military official. He was intent in his search and ahead of the others. When he had almost caught up with Hui Neng the latter tossed the robe and bowl onto a rock, saying, "This robe and bowl are tokens of faith. How can they be taken by force?" Hui Neng then hid in a thicket.

When Hui Ming arrived, he tried to pick them up, but found he could not move them. He cried out, "Cultivator, Cultivator, I have come for the Dharma, not for the robe!"

Hui Neng then came out and sat cross-legged on a rock. Hui Ming made obeisance and said, "I hope that the Cultivator will teach the Dharma for my sake."

Hui Neng said, "Since you have come for the Dharma, you may put aside all conditions. Do not give rise to a single thought and I will teach it to you clearly."

(Bro Teoh: Can you do it? Now I shall say to you the same thing. 'Do not give rise to a single thought. Then I will help you awaken'. If you can do that you are already destined for enlightenment.) After a while of silence, Hui Neng said, "With no thoughts of good and with no thoughts of evil, at just this moment, what is Superior One Hui Ming's original face?" At these words, Hui Ming was greatly

enlightened. (*Bro Teoh: It is so easy! So can we try it now (laughing). The Commentary we shall read through now.*)

Commentary:

Bhikshu Hui Ming was coarse and uneducated. He never opened his mouth unless it was to scold someone, and if they refused to listen, he beat them. He could smash a rock of several hundred pounds with one blow. With this extraordinary strength he became a fourth class army officer.

Hui Ming had one peculiar trait. His feet were covered with feathers which enabled him to run fast. He could travel sixty miles a day, compared to the ordinary man's thirty. His feathered feet and great strength carried him far ahead of the others. As he flew along, his mind raced, "I'll get the robe and bowl and then it will be mine! It belongs to the strongest man." When Hui Neng saw this big crude feather-footed pursuer, he was a bit frightened. Although he had obtained the Dharma, he had just begun to cultivate and did not yet have great spiritual power. He shouted into empty space: "This robe and bowl are symbols of the faith. How can you take them by force? How can there be any dispute?"

What do you think? Hui Ming had actually intended to grab the robe and bowl and run. But he could not move them. **Why couldn't he move them?** After all he was so strong he could have smashed the bowl to smithereens with a single blow and have ripped the robe to shreds. **Yet for all his strength and as light as the robe was, he couldn't budge it.** This indicates that

there were Dharma protectors—gods, dragons, and others of the eight divisions present guarding the robe and bowl. Since he couldn't grab them, he thought, *"That's strange. I can't use force here. Ah! I'll ask for the Dharma instead."* Had he truly been seeking the Way he wouldn't have first tried to grab the robe and bowl but would immediately have said, *"Cultivator, Cultivator, I come for the Dharma, not for the robe and bowl." Don't you think my opinion about this is logically sound? (Bro Teoh: Of course it's sound.)*

Hui Neng emerged and sat in lotus position on a rock. Hui Ming bowed to the Sixth Patriarch. He understood now that the Dharma of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas cannot be taken by force. "You say you've come for the Dharma." said Hui Neng. "Did you really come for the Dharma and not to steal the robe and bowl? That's fine. Put aside all conditions. Put your **mind to rest**. Stop **grasping at conditions** and then I will **explain** the **Dharma** clearly for you."

For seven or eight minutes the Great **Master sat waiting**. **Neither he nor Hui Ming gave rise to a single thought**. **Everything stopped**. Not even the ghosts and spirits knew what was happening. *Everything was empty*.

Hui Ming was not giving rise to thought. He was not thinking north, south, east, or west. So Hui Neng said, **"With no thoughts of good and no thoughts of evil, at just that moment, what is Superior Ming's original face?"** Since the Sixth Patriarch was at that time still a layman he respectfully

addressed Hui Ming as “Superior One.”

The word “what” means “who”. In the Dhyana School we meditate on the question, “Who is reciting the Buddha’s name?” When Hui Ming heard the word “what” he became enlightened. “Oh!” he said, “originally it’s just this way!”

Hearing these words, have you become enlightened?

So this is Hsuan Hua's Commentary.

Okay, what is the time now? Almost 4:30pm. I think maybe we can stop here, at page 106. The rest you can go back and read about it. Maybe we can discuss it at the next session.

Next Sunday is the 13th of September. After that we will be going to Putuoshan, China. On the 13th, I've got something on, I forgot what it is already. Oh! Now I remember, my son is coming back. Okay maybe we cancel the next Sunday class. Then because of our Putuoshan spiritual trip, we have to cancel yet another Sunday class. So we will have it after the Putuoshan trip which is at the end of the month. We arrive on Friday. Then at least you all can rest on Saturday. If you all are too tired, please let me know or we can also cancel that Sunday class. Otherwise, we can have that one. Sister Lee said, ‘It's full moon on that day, 15th September and you have your celebration here’, and then we might as well cancel it. Will be too tired having to clean up the place and doing all those preparation, right? Maybe for 3 Sundays we shall take a break and we start again in October. Okay, so far any questions?

This page 106, I will read through it quickly. Then you can *reflect* and *contemplate* on it.

Sutra:

Hui Ming asked further, “Apart from the secret speech and secret meanings just spoken, is there yet another secret meaning?”

Hui Neng said, “What has been spoken to you is not secret. If you turn the illumination inward, (*Bro Teoh*: 回光返照 {*Huíguāng fǎnzhào*}; you reverse the light and look within), the secret is with you.”

Hui Ming said, “Although Hui Ming was at Huang Mei he had not yet awakened to his original face. (*Bro Teoh*: It means the true nature.) Now that he has been favored with this instruction he is like one who drinks water and knows for himself whether it is cold or warm. The cultivator is now Hui Ming’s master.”

“If you feel that way,” said Hui Neng, “then you and I have the same master, Huang Mei. Protect yourself well.”

Hui Ming asked further, “Where should I go now?” Hui Neng said, “Stop at Yüan and dwell at Meng.”

So this was the instruction by Hui Neng to Hui Ming. **Later on, you will see the relevant link and connection.** So this part was how Hui

Ming, after he had suddenly understood what that nature was, he thought there was some other teaching. That's why he asked, **'Apart from the teaching you have taught me, is there yet another secret meaning.'** Hui Neng said, 'If you look within. Reverse your light and realize that nature. **You will understand everything.'** It's nothing esoteric or secret. *Actually the true teaching is very simple, very direct.* The funny thing is that before you have that condition, you can never understand. Before you develop the ability to have that direct seeing, you cannot understand. That's why Dharma is very strange; **simple and yet very profound; can only be realized by the wise, each for themselves and that saying is very true.**

Okay we will stop there. So do you have any questions or anything that you want to discuss, ask or share regarding this 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra, which is still at the introduction phase? We are finishing off the part on: How Hui Neng came to know about 5th Patriarch; he then determined to visit the 5th Patriarch; then how he reported to the 5th Patriarch on arrival, then later on how he was transmitted the ***Patriarch-ship***; then how he left; then how he was instructed to go south, lie low and waited for conditions; then how he met Hui Ming and how he instructed Hui Ming.

So this is the initial part of the 6th Patriarch Platform Sutra which is already very important and very useful because there are a lot of **very profound** teachings within. Then after this, is the part on how he came out to share the Dharma. Regarding his life with the hunters, I still don't know how much was written of it in the Commentary by Hsuan Hua. I haven't read it myself too. Anyway, we will come to it later. Then later, after he had come out from his

16 years of lying low, when **conditions had ripened** for him **to come out to share the dharma**, that's when the **interesting part of his teaching** started to surface. That one is at the later part. Okay. Anybody wants to ask any questions? If you don't have, maybe we can have our **meditation** now.

End of Sutra session.

4. Session 2

4.1. Meditation

Today I can give you more time to meditate because we end at 4.30pm exactly. Since everybody has been here before, you all can start your meditation straight away. We will have **45 minutes of silent awareness meditation**. Can someone help off the lights? Just **relax body and mind** and **maintain silence**. If you **need to train your mind then do it**. If **you already trained** then *you just stabilize your sati*. Then if you **have already stabilized your sati** you only need to **relax, maintain awareness and silent your mind completely to develop the meditation**. Then **your self-nature** or **true nature will meditate**. Then you will understand clearly everything that is going on within your own form and mind. (45 minutes of silent meditation Ting, Ting, Ting)

Okay for those **who still** wants to **continue to meditate** you can continue. For those who **have had** enough **slowly and mindfully come out of your meditation**. Always remember this is the mind that **you have trained** and **because it is already trained** the **spiritual**

faculties will be there. And when **the spiritual faculties are there the hindrances will be gone**. And because it is **already trained** this **mind will listen to you and you can use it**. *You want it to be silent it will be silent. If you want it to be peaceful it will be peaceful. If you want it to be aware it will just do that.* And such a mind is the **meditative mind**. **Such a mind** can develop **heedfulness** and you can use it to cultivate *daily mindfulness leading to the heedfulness* so that you **can insight** into phenomena to understand clearly **who you are** and **what you are?** And also what is going on within your own form and mind. All of the activities within, your 5 aggregates of form and mind, you will understand them and you will see them. Then you will come to experience all the essential dharma. And through that you will understand the Buddha Dharma very clearly and easily. That's why **spiritual faculties** can allow you to have **this quality of mind** that **can understand spiritual teachings very quickly** and **easily** as **opposed** to the **mental hindrances** that will **hinder you** from **entering** the **meditative states** of *inner peace, inner calmness and inner awareness*. So **these 2 states of mind** are *very different*. That's why before the Buddha passed away he said, '**Strive on with heedfulness**'. You must have **this heedfulness** and as we have learnt – **to be heedful is to be ever mindful then use it to cultivate the wisdom or the Noble 8-fold Path (which is the meditation as taught by the Buddha)**. And the **bulk of it is the cultivation of the four foundations of mindfulness**. So these are key pointers to understanding meditation.

4.2. Meditation reporting followed by Q & A session

Now we will open up for **meditation reporting** and **Q & A**. If you have any questions **related** to the **meditation** or the **teaching** or **how to apply what you have learnt** to help you **understand life** and **overcome your life problems**, you can ask. Here is the microphone (mic), just raise your hand and we will pass you the mic. Anybody wants to report his or her meditation or ask any question? Huh! How come everybody is so quiet, no question? What about your meditation? You just have to **report your meditation accordingly**. Are yes! Please pass the mic to Sister Susan, Sadhu!

Sister Susan: Bro. Teoh regarding my meditation, I am aware, when I am in the **lying down posture I am definitely more relaxed** when compared to my sitting. During sitting I am aware there is **more tension**. So should I just **continue to lie down** every time I want to do the sitting meditation?

4.2.1. Understanding Lying Down Meditation

Bro. Teoh: It is **up to you** because there are times to sit and times to lie down. If you want to train your mind it is easier to do it while in the sitting posture because in the sitting posture you **can maintain awareness** or **mindfulness** of the in and out breath (*ānāpānasati*) better. **Initially** the **sitting posture** is **usually more conducive** but **later on** as you develop the **ability** to have this **meditative mind** that is already **so quiet, so peaceful, so clear** and **so tranquil** – which means **you have developed the ability** to go into **stillness of mind** (which is *passaddhi*) rather **easily**. Then when that happens, **if you continue with the sitting posture** you will find it **very difficult**

to go into that **relaxed state** of a **free mind** to maintain this **state of tranquility** and **stillness** of mind **unless you know** how to **relax very well**. When you have the **ability to relax** so well, the whole of your body and mind will be in the **state of complete relaxation** even while in the sitting posture but because of your **crossed legged posture** there will be **energy** built up **without you realizing it**. Then this energy built up together with your cross legged posture, **actually restrict** the **flow of chi** and **that** is why during that time you are **not so relaxed** and if you can, you should try **meditating** with the **lying down posture**. Then the mind that has the ability to **become so quiet** and **so still** will become a **free mind** that is **naturally relaxed**.

Initially the mindfulness or awareness is at the ānāpānasati (or in and out breath) region, until it becomes **very subtle** then finally one day it will **drop** down to the **heart or mind-base** then **you just stay there** because that is the location which is **very near** the **'gateway'** to your **Nature**. From there, if you continue **to relax** and **silent** your mind, then one day that silent and still pure awareness that is **without thought** and **craving** will be able **to detect** the **'gateway'** and go in. The lying down posture is the **most relaxed posture** as you have found out on your own. This is a very *important posture* because in the **lying down posture** you **do not create** any **restriction** or **constriction** in your **flow of chi** then **chances** of going into **concentration** is much lower because this energy cannot build up. If you are in a crossed legged position all of your energy field and chi (they) will be building up **without you knowing it**, then from your spine it can go up to the brain then you can push it up to develop all the jhānas. But if you are in the lying down posture and if you **know how to relax** into it, all these energy fields **will not build up**. The

moment you relax into it, it will stabilize. Then after that, it will become **very quiet** and **very still** until you are very sensitive. During that time you will come to understand that the lying down posture is the best posture. If you can **detect the 'gateway'** after you have become very quiet and very still then all your **yin and yang energies** which you **have developed and stored up earlier on** (whether via mindfulness or energy fields training from your chi qong, tai chi, dan tian, yoga, Wai dan qong or whatever energy field related practices) **they will all melt into the 'gateway'** and during that time the 'meditator' or the 'cultivator' which is the form and mind that is in that state **will understand** because all these yin and yang energies as it goes through the gateway will be **transformed** and **purified** into **pure energy**. This is the **pure energy** that is already **intelligent**. This one is **not thought based** because there is **no thought** behind; you **just silent, relax and aware** and the **last support** is '**trust**'. You just silent and **don't do anything, no thought invoked** then the **pure energy** will develop the **internal movements** which most people **cannot** understand because they have never done it before. That is the **real 'opening'** of all the **nadis** and **chakras** within your **internal bodily movements**. All these will happen without any thought, **without** any directive or **effort** via mental intention from the thought – which means there is **no will, no effort** or **mental intention** involved and there is also **nobody doing the meditation**. So this is the reason why **J Krishnamuti** via his **understanding** said, '*wherever there is a 'meditator' there is no meditation and wherever there is effort there is also no meditation.*' All these, the cultivator will come to understand them clearly. When this **transformation** happens your mind **will become very still**, very **quiet** and very **tranquil** very fast. After that you can even **maintain** this **state of**

awareness or **mindfulness** in the *midst of your daily life very easily*. The reason being by the time you can detect the 'gateway' you must have already **progressed** very far in your meditation and you must have already **touched your nature**; you are already like Hui Ning and the other great beings, **understood what the true mind** is. So the key to understanding meditation is: posture is **not critical**. You can use any posture. Even in the Satipaṭṭhāna or Four Foundations of Mindfulness Sutta, it is stated that all the **four postures**, *standing, sitting, walking and lying down* **you can use them to meditate**. But the **real wisdom** or **insight** comes from **meditation in daily life**. After you have developed all these abilities to be **peaceful**, to be **quiet**, to be **aware** and to be **heedful then** you will have to come out into life and **apply this trained mind state**, which is the awareness or mindfulness **to insight** into phenomena, to insight into the three **universal characteristics** of impermanence, suffering state and non-self via the **direct seeing** to penetrate the dharma. And later on to **reflect and contemplate** via the **2nd turnings** of the 4 Noble Truths **to prepare the base for receiving truth**; then after that *any of the 3 turnings, (either 1st turning, 2nd turning or 3rd turning)* can awaken your nature because by then **most of the time** you are **aware, silent** and **heedful** - then it can trigger off the **awakening any time**.

After you have had this **initial wisdom**, only then **can you cultivate** the **real** Noble 8-fold Path and the Four Foundation of Mindfulness in a **more refined** and **deeper** manner. After you **have developed** all these **understanding borne of daily mindfulness**, you **can lie down** and **do your meditation again**. By then it will be **very different** because during that time you will **understand very clearly** and you

will know what to do. Then you will understand that the **lying down posture meditation** has its **purpose** and **function** because to realize the more stable **Nibbāna** you need a **formal posture** and the **lying down posture** is the most conducive. There are two types of awakening: the **1st type** is via the **sainthood way in daily life** whereby the **realization of Nibbāna** is just a **glimpse** or a **moment of cessation** of the form and mind – those realized by the Sotāpan (the 1st stage of Sainthood) and the Sakadāgāmī (the second stage of Sainthood); then there is a 2nd type of awakening that is more stable and last longer – those realized by the Anāgāmī (3rd stage of Sainthood), the Arahants (the 4th stage of Sainthood) and the other great beings. For the first two stages of Sainhoods the **cessation** happens only for a **moment**, or **momentarily for one moment of cessation** only but that's good enough because that itself is the **realization** of *Nibbāna*; that moment is enough to awaken especially the Sotāpannaship and Sakadāgāmīshipp Sainthood ways and this can happen in the **daily life** while cultivating the **daily mindfulness**. One **doesn't need** to be in a formal meditation posture. But for Anāgāmī and Arahants onwards usually they will have to go into **cessation** for **longer period**. To realize this **2nd type of awakening** one needs to be in a **more stable formal meditative posture**. During the early days, most of them do it in their **daily life** via the 1st and 2nd turnings of the 4 Noble Truths. That is via hearing the sutta followed by contemplation, reflection and inquiries into what the Buddha had proclaimed or taught. Then there are some who develop **Samatha meditation first** via going into jhāna first and that is the reason why they like the sitting posture which is more conducive but later on they **still have to release** their **energy field** and **return** to **normal awareness** and go into **daily mindfulness** to **develop** the **initial**

wisdom via **insight** into the 3 universal characteristics of nature to realize the enlightenment. After that they will sit again or go into the formal meditation to realize the more stable **cessation**. Then sitting **can also awaken** them. During the time of the Buddha a lot of his disciples did it in the sitting posture but later on for *those who understand* they will come to realize that the **lying down posture** is in fact **more conducive**. That is also the reason why later on the Buddha was in the **lying down posture** during his Parinibbāna. Then whenever he rested, he was also in the **lying down** posture. This lying down posture was **seldom taught** because most living beings **don't have the ability to meditate that way**. If they are **not trained** they **tend to fall asleep very fast**. Then it becomes '**sleeping' meditation** and not lying down meditation anymore. That's the reason why it was seldom (or not) taught because very few people can do it. And because of that it was **hardly taught**. But for those who understand they will know, *the moment you can do the lying down meditation* you are already a **very good** and an **advanced cultivator**. The lying down posture has its purpose – it is needed when you are developing the 2nd type of awakening, when you go into this so **called cessation of form and mind to realize Nibbāna**. In the **lying posture** you can develop it much more easily, you can go into it **very fast** and you can stay there **for quite a while**. Then it depends - if you **are ready** and about to do it, you **have to develop** some form of **tactfulness** because *you have to let those who are around you, understand what you are doing otherwise they may think* you are **already dead** when you go into this cessation. You are really like a dead person. The only difference between you and a dead person is you won't become very cold, you won't become like the dead corpse, ***your body will not rot, and your body will not emit***

*those foul smells. But you really have no heartbeat. Even the brain activities and everything else also ceased - no more activity, no more consciousness, nothing, the whole body and mind is like no difference from a dead person except the stillness's pure energy of Nibbāna, they are still within the form. And because that being is in that state, so **in order to prevent any confusion** it is **advisable** to let people know so that when you go into it, people will understand. But as far as I know you don't have to worry so much because it is **not easy** to go into that state **for long periods of time**. It **depends on your past cultivation**, it **depends** on your **understanding** and it also *depends on how **skilful** you are and most of these cultivators when they go into this cessation they will know how to come out. It is **automatic** but you cannot predict when to come out because it is the **un-conditioned***. You can only come out at the time when the conditions are there for it to come out. So all these are part and parcel of **lying down meditation** and lying down meditation is **only to be done** after you **have trained your mind very well**. After you have developed the **passaddhi** enlightenment factor, until your mind is **very stable** and **very still** and **after your daily mindfulness has stabilized**. Then you will come to understand why this lying down posture is the **most relaxed, conducive or appropriate**, and then you can do it. Especially at night when you are at home you have to learn **to meditate** in the **lying down posture** so that you **can rest very well**, so that when you arise the next day you can become **very fresh and mindful**. The other reason is because human beings spend almost 1/3 of their time sleeping. If you sleep 8 hours a day it is exactly 1/3; if you sleep even 6 hours a day it is 1/4 of the days' time. Regarding the lying down posture meditation, if you **can understand** and **develop the ability to meditate** in that **posture it will help you***

a lot. It can help speed up your cultivation. This type of formal meditation can be done any time even when you are resting.

And finally if you want to understand: what is **24 hour meditation?** You have to be **skilful in the lying down meditation** first, and then you will come to realize that **you can be mindful throughout the day** and **24 hour meditation is possible.** I can share this with you all **because** this **nature of mine** had done it **before** during the **early days** of its **cultivation.** So it is all up to you. Don't worry about the posture. Whichever posture that is more conducive to you, use it. You only need to **understand** your **meditation focus** by inquiring: 'Do you **still need to train your mind?**' If you have already stabilized the sati and there is no need to train your mind anymore then by all means, *whatever posture* will **also be suitable** for you **because** by then your **spiritual faculties** are **already established.** Since you have already **trained** your mind hence you can meditate via **a relaxed** mind. You **can silent your mind easily,** and then you can develop whatever understanding you want. Then you will understand **very clearly** *what this form and mind is all about.* It is **for you to use** so **use it** to live life, to meditate, to develop understanding and to cultivate, and it is all up to you. Then whatever posture that is the most suitable and conducive you will also come to know, because by then very likely - **throughout the day you are already heedful and mindful.** So there is **no** difference **between standing, walking, sitting or lying down, no difference at all.** Then meditation becomes **like a part** of your **nature;** you are in that **state** of **heedfulness or awareness throughout the day,** you don't have to **rely** on **anything else** to be **mindful.** You **don't need** an **object** of **meditation anymore.** Then you will come to **realize** that **all these**

methods and techniques or objects of meditation are only **initial skilful means** used by cultivators to train and anchor their mind and **it has nothing to do with meditation**. It is just to **train the heedless mind** to be **mindful and heedful**. **But** a lot of people **cannot understand** this **very important point**. That's why that day I forwarded one email regarding this to you all recently – have you all seen it?

It was written by a monk by the name of Bhante Kumara of SBS, Taiping. According to that email he said, he has been asked many times at many places by yogis on - **what method or technique of meditation does he teach?** He said **he didn't know how to answer them** and every time he answered them he found his answer to be **unclear and inadequate**. Then he came out with one answer which he thought was very good. I will try to get it from the email and read it to you so that we can discuss it. This may be good because this **can help clear up** a lot of things.

That's why **even monks and cultivators** are also **not sure or are not clear about** all these: like *what is the meditation as taught by the Buddha?* And **what are methods and techniques or objects of meditation for?** So when I read the email I felt I should send it out to our Kalyāṇamitta for them to develop the **reflection and contemplation**, so that **hopefully they can understand better**. Let me try to look it up.

Okay I have got it. According to him he said:

“From time to time, I've been asked this question, ‘Bhante, **what method do you teach?**’ and I keep **having trouble answering it properly**. They wanted me to name it, and I don't have one for it. Usually, **I resort to saying I teach this and I teach that**. In that way, it can seem like I've a **muddled way of teaching**. *Some time ago, it dawned upon me: I don't teach a method*. I'm **not interested** in that. Instead, *I teach people. I show them how to free themselves from suffering*, in the best way I know for them at that time. Every experienced teacher knows that **every student is different**. To think that **one method fits all is unreasonable**. Sometimes I conveniently fall back on some sort of **standard methods too**, and **that's when I'm not operating at my best**, that's **when I'm not using discernment, and the results aren't so good**. Results are the **best** when **I drop all ideas of methods, pay full attention to the person, and let wisdom decide**. So, **I don't want** to use *any specific method, but whatever method that is suitable, even if I've never used it before, i.e., one that occurs spontaneously to me*. So, next time, I know how to answer the question of what method I teach. I try not to. I teach people.” **Posted by:** Kumara Bhikkhu

So with this we can open it up for discussion. What are your views and understanding on this basing on **your cultivation's understanding?** What are methods and what are techniques? Do you know why he has a problem or not? If I am not wrong he studied **Byron Katie's teaching** and he also used Byron Katie's **technique or the work** (using the **4 lines of questionings**) to teach. And he also shared a bit of the **'Power of the Now'** – a best seller book written by **Eckhart Tolle**. And because of that his students asked him, **'So what is your teaching? What method do you teach?**

He couldn't describe them because those teaching are **neither** a method **nor** a technique. It is more of an **inquiry**. With this I hope you all can have a better understanding of the above topic.

5. Appendix

5.1. What is the Work?

The Work is a simple yet **powerful process of inquiry** that teaches you to **identify** and **question** the **thoughts** that **cause** all the **suffering** in the world. It's a way **to understand** what's **hurting you**, and **to address** the **cause** of your **problems** with **clarity**. In its **most basic** form, The **Work** consists of **four lines of questioning** and the **turnarounds**.

5.1.1. Ask the Four Questions

The **Work is meditation**. It's about **opening to your heart**, **not** about **trying** to **change** your **thoughts**. Ask the questions, then **go inside and wait for the deeper answers to surface**. **Investigate** each of your **statements** from these **four questions**:

1. What your *thoughts have been telling you*, is it true? (Yes or no. If no, move to 3.)
2. Can you **absolutely know** that it's true? (Yes or no.)
3. **How** do you **react** or **what happens**, when you **believe** that **thought**?
4. **Who** would you be **without** the **thought**?

“I discovered that **when I believed my thoughts, I suffered**, but that when **I didn't believe them, I didn't suffer**, and that this is **true** for every **human being**. **Freedom** is as **simple** as **that**. I found that **suffering** is **optional**. I found a **joy** within me that **has never disappeared**, not for a single moment. *That joy is in everyone, always.*” —Byron Katie

People who do The Work as an ongoing practice **commonly** report:

- **Alleviation of depression:** Find resolution, **even happiness**, in situations that were once debilitating;
- **Decreased stress:** Live with *less* anxiety or fear.
- **Improved relationships:** Experience **deeper connection** and **intimacy** with your partner, your parents, your children, your friends, and yourself.
- **Reduced anger and fear:** Understand **what makes you angry** and **fearful**.
- **Increased mental clarity:** Live and work more intelligently and effectively, with integrity.
- **More energy:** Experience a new sense of ongoing vigor and well-being.
- **More peace:** Discover *how to become “a lover of what is (the reality).”*

6. Closing Puja

Anumodanā (Sharing of merits with the devas)

Ākāsaṭṭhā ca bhummaṭṭhā

*May all beings inhabiting
space and earth*

Devā nāgā mahiddhikā

*Devas and Nagas of mighty
power*

Puññaṃ taṃ anumoditvā

share this merit and may

Ciraṃ rakkhantu lokasāsanam

*they long protect the
Dispensation*

Ettāvatā ca amhehi

May all beings share this merit

Sambhataṃ puñña sampadaṃ

Which we have thus acquired

Sabbe devā anumodantu

And may all Devas rejoice

Sabbasampattisiddhiyā

*May it contribute greatly to
their well-being and happiness.*

Patti Dāna (Transference of merits to the departed)

Idam me ñātinaṃ hotu

*May this merit accrue to our
departed relatives and*

Sukhitā hontu ñātayo(x3)

*may they be well and happy
always. (x3)*

Pattana (Aspirations to the World)

Devo vassatu kālena

*May the rain fall in due season
and (may there be)*

Sassa sampatti hetu ca

*the right conditions for all good
fortune.*

Phito bhavatu loko ca

*May the world be prosperous
and peaceful*

Rājā bhavatu dhammiko

*May the government, rulers
and kings always be righteous.*

Patthanā (Aspirations for one self)

Iminā puñña kamma

*By the grace of this merit that
I have acquired, may I never
follow the*

Sataṃ samāgamo hotu

*foolish, but only the wise, up to
the time*

Yāva nibbāna pattiya

*I attain final liberation
(Nirvana)*

Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu!

Pay respects mindfully to Lord Buddha, Quan Yin Bodhisattva, and all the worthy ones and then we end.