



The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra

Martin Verhoeven PhD, Heng Sure PhD

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The knowledge and vision of the Buddha is just your own mind; there is no other Buddha. Such is the teaching of Master Huineng (638 713), the most important and most revered figure in the Chan (Zen) School of East Asian Buddhism. Huineng left no written record, but his students compiled accounts of his public lectures and one-on-one exchanges, together with the dramatic story of his life. The resulting volume was *Liu zu fa bao tan jing*, The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, sixth, because Master Huineng is counted as the sixth generation of patriarchal succession from the first Chan patriarch Bodhidharma. Master Huineng's Platform Sutra is so highly regarded in Buddhist Asia that it is called a Sutra, a term otherwise reserved for texts spoken by the Buddha himself.

In presenting this entirely new English translation of The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, the editors, Professors Heng Sure and Martin Verhoeven of Dharma Realm Buddhist University, have aimed above all to bring across into English Master Huineng's plain-spoken, forthright style. As Professor Verhoeven writes, "Readers inclined to see Buddhist writings as abstruse metaphysical treatises will find The Platform Sutra refreshingly artless and spare. Those expecting a sutra to delve into the supernatural and otherworldly will be surprised at how down-to-earth and here-and-now this text is. The Platform Sutra is humanistic to its core." As Huineng says in a verse, 'The Buddha Dharma is right here in the world,/There is no awakening apart from this world.' The essence of the Sixth Patriarch's philosophy is that all beings have the buddha-nature; all can become Buddha. Full awakening is not a future state or a distant place, but exists right within your own mind,' directly and immediately available. The text presents a powerful and resounding vision of unbounded human potential waiting to be fully realized if only we could see it.

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