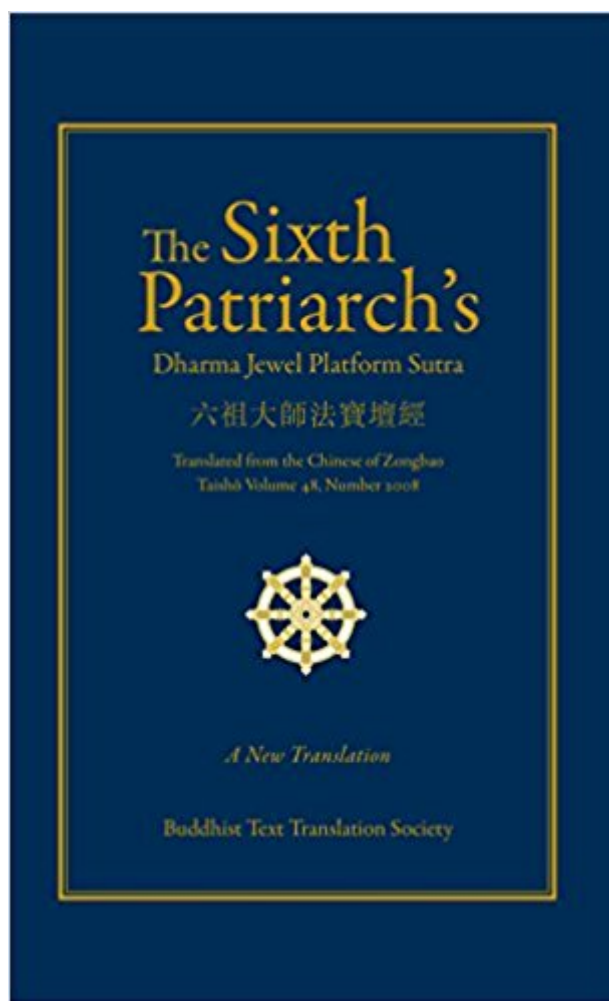


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The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

Martin J. Verhoeven, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializes in the Euro-American encounter with Asian religions. He is adjunct professor of Comparative Religion at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), and a professor of Buddhist Classics at Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU). He also teaches a weekly translation and meditation series at the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery. Rev. Heng Sure, M.A. in oriental languages from University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union, is Director of the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery. He teaches at the Institute for World Religions and is an adjunct professor at Bond University, Australia. He is actively involved in interfaith dialogue and in the ongoing conversation between spirituality and technology. Rev. Heng Sure was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1976. For the sake of world peace, accompanied by Martin Verhoeven (then Heng Chau), he undertook a two and a half year, six hundred mile pilgrimage up the coast of California from Los Angeles to Ukiah in Mendocino County, taking three steps and one bow during the entire journey. Their journey is recorded in *Highway Dharma Letters: Two Buddhist Pilgrims Write Letters to Their Teacher* (forthcoming October 2014) and the nine volume series *Journals & Letters on a Bowing Pilgrimage* (2007).

The Sutra is an elegant and understandable translation. I can tell the translators (academics) spent years discerning the nuanced meaning of the characters to get it right. It really flows and the reader is left with a meaningful and detailed instruction on meditation -- what it is, what it isn't. I both appreciate and laud the authors demystifying what, at first, appears to be a simple text. It is not. Their work "unpacking" the Sutra is essential, ingenious and makes the text deeply enriching.

This translation of the Sixth Patriarch Sutra is profound. It gives us valuable insight into the mind of an enlightened buddhist patriarch, Venerable Master Huineng. I found the teachings in this text truly humble, compassionate, and kind to humanity. These wonderful teachings can be applied in everyday life. This Sixth Patriarch Sutra is a precious gem.

My guide in life.

This is extraordinary and speaks directly to my life experiences. There is much clarity to be found here.

Excellence

This book contains an extensive introductory note by Professors Heng Sure and Martin Verhoeven, which was very informative and intellectually stimulating. The professors go into great details regarding the history of Huineng (the Sixth Patriarch), different versions of this Sutra, how methods of Sutra interpretations differ from a typical western interpretation of other religious text. However, it was the actual Sutra that was the most remarkable part of this book. The direct teaching from the ancient Master Huineng was very profound; it was as though I was looking and interpreting reality through a different lens. It definitely distinguishes itself from a typical religious textbook. This book truly deserves a 5-star as it is not everyday I find my perception being transformed and challenged. On the critical side, I found the introduction a little difficult to read at times, I was scratching my head with certain vocabulary or terminologies, nonetheless it would be unfair to downgrade my rating due to my lack of knowledge. I would say this book is also aimed at anyone who is interested in psychology/ philosophy or just want to understand the world a little more.

Wow. This sutra and commentary are both quite profound. One of the few sutras that do not originate with Shakyamuni Buddha in ancient India, the Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra is a foundational piece for Chinese Buddhism, and by extension, Zen and other East Asian Mahayana Buddhist schools. Exceedingly rare though is the opportunity to have such a wonderful English translation, and to add to that, an insightful and succinct commentary by Americans. The two authors are perhaps the first generation of truly accomplished American Buddhist full-time practitioners - definitely with wisdom far "beyond" the level of many self-help gurus and inexperienced Zen writers that clutter. From an academic point of view, there is so much depth and history in this book. From a practitioner's point of view, the clear language makes it quite accessible for even the intermediate-level student of Buddhism, and not as esoteric as many hefty texts can appear. (For outright beginners without any prior background in Buddhism, it may be too much, perhaps would recommend starting first with very introductory level works such as *Peace is Every Breath* by Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, or *Essence of Buddhism* by Venerable Hsing Yun, or *Happiness* by Matthieu Ricard, or *Buddhism for Beginners* by Venerable Thubten Chodron, or many

of the other more general works out there, etc.) This powerful combination makes this book a must-have for any Buddhist academic or practitioner's collection, though of course, it's what's in our actions and minds that's more important than collecting words on paper. To complement, there's free Youtube discussions of the work by some of the authors, live-streaming on Dharma Realm Live from Berkeley Buddhist Monastery and Dharma Realm Buddhist University in California. Obviously (and that's a good thing), the authors are heavily influenced by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, who was one of the most accomplished teachers of Buddhism in the 20th century.

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