



The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

Hui-Neng , Philip B. Yampolsky (Translation) , Fa-hai (Compiler)

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The "Platform Sutra" records the teachings of Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch, who is revered as one of the two great figures in the founding of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. This translation is the definitive English version of the eighth-century Ch'an classic.

Phillip B. Yampolsky has based his translation on the Tun-huang manuscript, the earliest extant version of the work. A critical edition of the Chinese text is given at the end of the volume.

Dr. Yampolsky also furnishes a lengthy and detailed historical introduction which contains much information hitherto unavailable even to scholars, and provides the context essential to an understanding of Hui-neng's work. He gives an account of the history and legends of Ch'an Buddhism, with particular attention to the traditions associated with Hui-neng, quoting or summarizing the most important narratives. He then discusses the various texts of the "Platform Sutra," and analyzes its contents.

The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch Details

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From Reader Review The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch for online ebook

Thelbert Dewain Belgard says

The Platform Sutra is one of the basic texts of the Chinese Zen school of Buddhist practice. As such it's regarded as sacred by some adherents who may not appreciate the book being subjected to the methods of historico-critical analysis that we find in this book. It's a very scholarly work -- even containing in an appendix a copy of the complete Chinese text of the Tun-huang version of the book. It's not a book for the casual reader (or the non-casual reader who happens to be in a casual mood). But for that relatively small sub-set of the human race whose members are fascinated with the history, religion, and metaphysics of Tang dynasty China, this book is a must. I think it's the standard by which all other studies of the Platform Sutra will be measured.

Alex says

Edit: traditionally ascribed to Huineng or his "disciple" Shenhui. Yampolsky's got some great introductory material on sources and manuscripts, etc. AND, in the back, it comes with a critical Dunhuang manuscript in the Chinese, so you can chant with your friends.

S says

“Your enlightened nature is originally pure. Just use this mind, and you will at once become a buddha.”

We meditate to realize the mind. Through realizing the mind we see our true nature. To see our true nature is to experience its emptiness, our ineffable unity with all beings and all things. Our own buddha nature.

Dayla says

He was poor and went to work at the mill grist for 8 years, then he wrote a poem on the West wall, and the Fifth Buddah pronounced he was the 6th Buddah and also given a robe.

The instant you see into your own nature-this is the True Buddha.

Starting to meditate tomorrow every day at 10:00 am to see into my own nature.

Mattomic says

I know this is a core book for Zen Buddhism, but it's only a slightly above average read for me (content is superb, but presentation is, well, lacking). It was a big deal to have a work entitled a "sutra" back in those days (roughly 9th C. CE, if memory serves me correctly). That is because until then, a sutra was any direct recording of the Buddha's words. So this was the first work to have that title centuries after the first ones were recorded. Keeping that in mind, I appreciate the message, but, well, there are far better texts for introducing the newbie to Zen. Strictly for those wanting to complete their background in Zen (hardcore Zen-o-philes) and academics, both of which I am.

Jessica Zu says

This is a well-written, cutting-edge scholarly research on Chinese Chan and the Platform Sutra. It is very helpful for my research. I think it might also be good to the Chan practitioners. After all, although Dharma is formless, the way it expresses itself through history in this world is nothing but form, and through the making of the Chan legends we could clearly see how the human defects come into the play through all kinds of doors.

Levas says

It's been a long and rather difficult read with all the details, but highly recommended read.

Daniel says

I recommend this book to anyone interested in what Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, or general 'liberation' or 'New Age' is about. Hui-Neng is a fantastic character, more so for his simplicity, his accomplishment, his directness, and the fact of his being a real person. His account of his life and enlightenment, and those who seek but do not attain has something for everyone, the vain, the proud, the stoic, the passionate... His view of Buddhism was welcome to me because, as he says, we find Buddhism in the world, not apart from it, for without the world there is no need for Buddhism and to run from the world to find enlightenment is to look for a bird's nest at the top of a ladder, all the while wondering where the leaves and branches are. Hui-Neng is right up there with Nagarjuna and the buddha known as 'Buddha' in terms of what they offer to us, but he is so lowly in his message and emans that he may as well be our next door neighbor. Thomas Cleary is also one of my favorite translators of literature like this and he maintains a stylistic consistency that lends accessibility to hos translations yet remains transparent so as to not interfere with the translated work.

Greg says

This is a translation of a specific version of the Platform Sutra. The version translated is earlier than the one typically used for the other popular translations. It therefore it may seem unfamiliar to some readers. On the other hand, it is probably closer to the doctrine of 8th century Ch'an than the 16th century version usually used for preparing translations. It is copiously footnoted and includes the author's reconstructed Chinese. The introductory material is strictly academic about the transmission of the documents and the different Ch'an schools of the 8th century. The translation is literal yet flows well.

Peter Bibler says

I read this in anticipation to traveling in the area where the manuscript had been discovered - in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang, northwestern China along the ancient Silk Road. Yampolsky's introduction is seemingly exhaustive and provides a rich history of how Buddhism entered China and developed as Chan Buddhism (Zen) and how Hui-Neng's (6th Patriarch, early Tang Dynasty) interpretations and school represented a turning point in the development of Chan. I was slightly disappointed that in the current edition there was no second introduction or essay to reflect the developments in scholarship after the first edition of this book upon discovering a more complete manuscript in Dunhuang.

Hollis Fishelson-holstine says

This was far too scholarly for me - i'm looking for spiritual guidance vs theoretical buddhism - or I'm just not there yet!

Jay Allen says

It feels weird assigning a rating to a book that enjoins you to abandon preferences, but...what the hell. THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF HUI-NENG contains some true gems of instruction. The consistent theme is that we must each work to discover our own buddha-nature; no one can do this work for us. The text itself, however, declines in quality after the main section, as it consists mainly of sectarian material added after Hui-neng's death to defend his "Southern School" teaching against that of Shen-Hsiu's "Northern School". (What was that about preferences?)

While Red Pine (Bill Porter)'s commentary is generally excellent, the multiple sources for the PLATFORM SUTRA contain numerous discrepancies and conflicts, forcing Mr. Porter to squander space explaining the textual variations. This material is chiefly of interest to scholars, not practitioners.

Daniel Cloutier says

Hui-neng for teh win.

Silvio Curtis says

This book is also called *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, since Hui Neng was the sixth and last Patriarch of Zen/Chan Buddhism in China. (He chose not to name a successor). It is a collection of lectures he gave and conversations he had, compiled I don't know when. Hui Neng himself was illiterate. The message actually seems really similar to the modern Zen book I read, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Hui Neng is from the Tang dynasty): remember that Buddha-nature is you, don't start thinking that a program of behavior

or a ritual is a substitute for experience of Buddha-nature, don't let concepts mislead you. It's a short book.

Rochelle says

So far, kind of dry, but I think it's mainly because the names are so challenging. It's like trying to chew raw, rolled oats and peanut butter, know I'm probably saying them wrong and it is very distracting. Written for an audience probably more versed than I in Chinese culture and language, his passion for this work still shines through his erudition.....I'll keep going.
