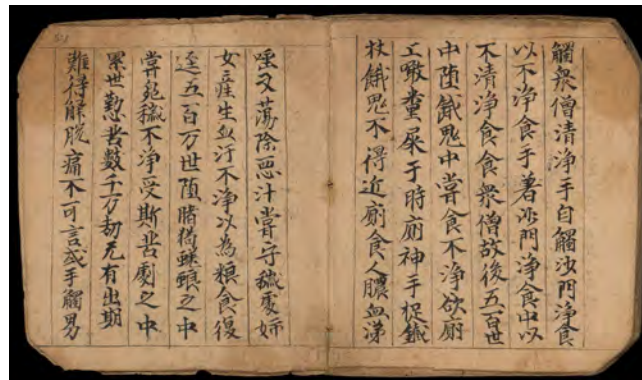# STUDIES IN CHINESE MANUSCRIPTS: FROM THE WARRING STATES PERIOD TO THE 20TH CENTURY

EDITED BY

IMRE GALAMBOS

STUDIES IN CHINESE MANUSCRIPTS:
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Was the Platform Sūtra Always a Sūtra?

Studies in the Textual Features
of the *Platform Scripture* Manuscripts from Dūnhuáng

CHRISTOPH ANDERL

Among the manuscripts found at Dūnhuáng 敦煌, there are several copies and fragments of the so-called *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*,[1] one of the key texts of Chinese Chán Buddhism. This text had a crucial role in creating the image of the 'Southern School' of Chán, establishing Huìnéng 慧能/惠能 – described as an illiterate lay person who became enlightened intuitively when he heard the recitation of the *Diamond Sūtra*[2] – as the Sixth Patriarch. In addition, the sūtra was also significant for constructing a transmission lineage of Indian and Chinese patriarchs (based on previ-

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[1] I want to express my special gratitude to Sam van Schaik and Carmen Meinert for providing many insightful comments on a draft version of the paper. I am also very much indebted to Imre Galambos for his helpful comments and editing suggestions. The illustrations of manuscript S.5475 (i.e. Or.8210/S.5475) are reproduced with kind permission of the British Library. When quoting secondary literature, in order to maintain consistency of presentation, the transcription of terms and proper names have been transferred to pīnyīn; occasionally, additional information such as Chinese characters are provided in square brackets within citations.

[2] As Jorgensen (2005: 772) phrases it:

"Huìnéng was made an illiterate child of déclassé parents who lived among semi-barbarians in the remote South, yet was still a buddha, rising from obscurity to the rank of an 'uncrowned king' like Confucius. In this way Huìnéng simultaneously represented meritocracy and a natural aristocracy of the enlightened. […], access to Huìnéng was through his *sūtra*, the *Platform Sūtra*, and transmission approval was by verses."

John McRae (2000: XV) describes the figure of Huìnéng the following way:

"By the time of the *Platform Sūtra*, interest in factionalist rivalry had passed and the goal was to unify the burgeoning Chán movement under the standard of Huìnéng. Why Huìnéng? Not because he was an important historical figure, or even a well-known teacher. Rather, Huìnéng was an acceptable figurehead for Chinese Chán precisely because of his anonymity. Anything could be attributed to him as long as it would fit under the rubric of subitism."

For a translation of an early biography of Huìnéng in *Zǔtáng jí* 祖堂集 (*Collection From the Patriarchs' Hall*, 952 A.D.), see Anderl 2004, vol. 2: 768–787.

ous lineage systems) which has survived nearly unaltered until modern times and became the very basis of Chán/Zen identity.

Prior to the discovery of the Dūnhuáng texts around 1900, only Sòng and Yuán versions of this text were known. In addition, several versions have been discovered in Japanese temple libraries during the 20th century. The discovery of the *Platform Sūtra* among the Dūnhuáng manuscripts triggered a new interest in the text among scholars. For a long period, these studies have been dominated by Japanese researchers, to which a few Western scholars have added their contribution. In recent years, however, Chinese scholars have also shown a growing interest in the *Platform* scripture, particularly after the discovery of several additional Dūnhuáng manuscripts with the text in Chinese libraries. Despite the large number of studies published in recent years on the different versions of this scripture, there is still much disagreement concerning the textual development of the text, its authorship, and a series of other questions. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra*, with a focus on the Stein manuscript and the lesser known Dūnbó (an acronym for Dūnhuáng bówùguǎn 博物館) manuscript kept at the Dūnhuáng Museum. In addition, I briefly review aspects of recent scholarship on the subject and discuss textual and linguistic features of the Dūnhuáng texts. I also argue that a thorough philological approach to the text and its structure, in combination with an analysis of its socio-religious context, might enable us to uncover additional information concerning its origin and function.

Part I:
Sources for the Study of the *Platform Sūtra*

1.1 The *Platform Sūtra* Manuscripts from Dūnhuáng

1.1.1 Manuscript S.5475

The *Platform Sūtra* in manuscript S.5475 (Or.8210/S.5475) from the British Library was the second identified among the Dūnhuáng versions of the text. The text is nearly complete, with only three lines missing in the middle portion.[3] The manuscript is bound in the form of a booklet consist-

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[3] For a description of the context and textual history of this manuscript, see Yampolsky 1967: 89–121 and Schlütter 2007: 386–394. Based on a number of inconsist-

ing of 52 pages (including six blank pages: pp. 1, 44, 49–52, and two half-blank pages: pp. 2 and 48).[4] Each page is stitched in the middle and typically consists of 14 lines, 7 on each half-page. The text begins on the left half-page of page 2 of the manuscript and the title consists of 3 lines. Characters on the front page are larger than those on subsequent ones (on details of the title, see below). Characters are often vertically not aligned. Each line consists of 19 to 24 full-size characters, but smaller size characters are occasionally inserted in the text. Stanzas (*ghātā*s) are visually distinguished by the insertion of empty spaces between the verses. The manuscript seems to have been copied in a hurry and little consideration was paid to character alignment and spacing, or other aspects of atheistic presentability. It also contains many corrupt passages and a particular system of loan characters.[5] Based on these textual features, Chinese scholars have referred to this copy as the 'bad copy' (*èběn* 惡本), and contrasted it to the more recently identified Dūnbó version of this text.

The Stein manuscript served as the source text for Philip Yampolsky's English translation.[6] He described the manuscript the following way:

> "[…] it is highly corrupt, filled with errors, miscopyings, lacunae, superfluous passages and repetitions, inconsistencies, almost every

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encies in the text, Schlütter discerns several layers. Inconsistencies can be found in the 'autobiographical' section of the text (this will be discussed later in this paper), the description of the monk Shénhuì (the de facto creator of the notion of 'Southern School of Chán'), the persons who received the transmission of the text, the role of transmission symbols such as Huìnéng's robe, etc. For a short description of the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra* manuscripts, see also Jorgensen 2005: 596–602.

[4] Reference to the Stein manuscript is given according to 'full' page-numbers (rather than the folded half-pages), line and character number.

[5] For a list of loan and corrupt characters across all extant manuscripts, see Anderl *et al.* 2012: 33–44. There is a strong influence of contemporary Northwestern dialects in the system of phonetic loans, especially in S.5475.

[6] The manuscript was identified by the Japanese scholar Yabuki Keiki 矢吹庆辉 in 1923 at the British Library. The first facsimile reproduction appeared in Yabuki 1933: 102–103 and is also the source of the Taishō edition (T.48, no. 2007: 337a01–345b17; this edition, however, contains many mistakes and misleading punctuation). The Stein manuscript is also the source for the critical edition and translation in Yampolsky 1967. The other Dūnhuáng manuscripts were rediscovered much later and thus Yampolsky could only use later Sòng versions for correcting and amending the Stein manuscript, particularly the Kōshōji version (see below). Yampolsky also structured the text by dividing it into sections introduced in Suzuki and Kuda 1934, as well as the translation of Chan 1963. An edition of the Stein manuscript was also published by Suzuki and Kuda 1934 (in 57 sections) and Ui 1939–1943, vol. 2: 117–172.

conceivable kind of mistake. The manuscript itself, then, must be a copy, written hurriedly, perhaps even taken down by ear, of an earlier, probably itself imperfect, version of the *Platform Sūtra*. What this earlier version was like we have no way of knowing."[7]

Yampolsky dates the copy of the text between 830 and 860, based on an analysis of its calligraphic style.[8] The text also employs particular types of phonetic loans which are thought to reflect a Northwestern regional dialect of that period.[9]

1.1.2 Manuscript Dūnbó 77

Manuscript Dūnbó 77[10] is presently kept at the Dūnhuáng City Museum.[11] The text is preserved as a 93-page booklet in butterfly binding, which con-

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[7] Yampolsky 1967: 89.

[8] *Ibid*.: 90. The calligraphic style was analyzed by Akira Fujieda. According to Fujieda, the calligraphic style, the writing tools and the paper are important methods of dating. He analyzed more than five thousand Dūnhuáng manuscripts and his method of dating seems to be especially accurate for the period of Tibetan occupation (786–846). He also noticed that during this period (and until 860) usually bamboo styli were used instead of brushes (for bibliographic references, see Sørensen 1989: 120, fn. 17; on a similar attempt by Ueyama Daishun to date the Chán manuscripts, see Meinert 2008: 216).

[9] For details on the linguistic aspects of the manuscripts, see Anderl *et al.* 2012. "Textual and phonological evidence suggest that the Stein and Lǚshùn Museum texts are later, probably dating from the Cáo clan administration of the Guīyì [歸義] army at Dūnhuáng. The Cáo struggled with the Zhāng [張] for control from 914, and they fell to the Tangut Xīxià state soon after Cáo Yánlù [曹延祿] was assassinated in 1002." (Jorgensen 2005: 597).

[10] References to manuscript Dūnbó 77 are given according to the page number in the facsimile edition Gānsù 1999. The *Platform Sūtra* starts on page 94–46 and ends on page 94–87. As in the case of S.5475, the numbering refers to 'full' pages and not to the folded half-pages.

[11] The Dūnhuáng Museum (Dūnhuáng bówùguǎn 敦煌博物館) is situated in the modern city of Dūnhuáng (presently, a new Museum building is under construction, and the Museum has been closed in 2010). The collection of Dūnhuáng manuscripts stored at this institution is relatively small (81 items) but contains some important manuscripts. The ca. 700 Chinese Dūnhuáng scrolls and fragments held in Gānsù 甘肅 Province are scattered among 11 institutions (most importantly, the Dūnhuáng yánjiūyuàn 敦煌研究院, i.e. the Dūnhuáng Academy situated at the site of the Mògāo 莫高 caves; the Academy has 383 items in its collection). Facsimiles were published in 6 volumes under the title *Gānsù cáng Dūnhuáng wénxiàn* 甘肅藏敦煌文獻 (Gānsù 1999). For a history of the manuscripts which remained in Gānsù and a discussion on their authenticity, see Gānsù 1999: 1–6.

tains five texts, three of them authored by Shénhuì 神會 and/or his disciples, plus the *Platform Sūtra* and a commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* by the Northern School master Jìngjué 淨覺 (683–ca. 750). The manuscript seems to have been in a private collection for some time. A certain Rèn Zǐyí 任子宜 obtained it in 1935 in a temple at Qiānfó shān 千佛山. The text is first mentioned in 1940 by the scholar Xiàng Dá 向達 who catalogued it in his Xīzhēng xiǎojì 西征小記.[12]

Jorgensen (2008: 596) thinks that the texts were combined into a book in Dūnhuáng, since at the end of the 8th century a disciple of Shénhuì by the name of Móhēyán 摩訶衍 ('Mahāyāna') tried to harmonize the teachings of 'Northern' and 'Southern' Schools. Manuscript P.2045 contains the three Shénhuì texts in the same order and it is generally assumed that the texts were written about the same time, during the period when Dūnhuáng was under the Tibetan administration.[13] Zhōu Shàoliáng (1999: 1) points out that the paper of Dūnbó 77 is not typical for the Dūnhuáng area but thicker than usual. He suggests that the copy was not produced at Dūnhuáng but came from a more humid place in the southern region of China.[14]

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One of the special features of the Gānsù mansucripts is their early origin, including many copies dating back to the Northern Dynasties period (*Ibid.*: 6). As such, they are also of great value for the study of the development of scribal conventions and calligraphic styles. Most of the manuscripts consist of canonical Buddhist sūtras (and very few *śāstra*s or *vinaya* texts), including some early tantric scriptures, a few apocryphal Buddhist scriptures and the Chán texts on Dūnbó 77. A few manuscripts include administrative and historical texts (for a list of these texts, see *ibid.*: 8).

[12] In Xiàng Dá 1957. See also Fāng Guǎngchāng 2001: 483; the manuscript was eventually given to Lǚ Wéi 呂澂 who published an article on Jìngjué's commentary to the *Heart Sūtra* in *Xiàndài fójiào* 現代佛教 (Lǚ 1961). It is actually not quite clear where the manuscript was kept in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1983 it was 'rediscovered' at the Dūnhuáng Museum by Zhōu Shàoliáng 周紹良. The first major study appeared in 1993 (Yáng Zēngwén 1993).

[13] See Jorgensen 2002: 399–404 and Jorgensen 2008: 597. Evidence suggests that the two manuscripts were not copied during the same period. Judging from the calligraphic style, Ui Hakuju proposed a rather late date of the Stein copy (around 960; see Jiǎng Zōngfú 2007: 85).

[14] These special features of the paper could raise doubts concerning the authenticity of the Dūnbó copy, however, as far as I know there are no doubts or questions raised in secondary literature concerning the authenticity of the Dūnbó or Běijīng copies. At other occasions, particularly Prof. Akira Fujieda has raised more general concerns about the authenticity of many manuscripts stored in the Chinese Dūnhuáng collections; forgeries are often produced with an astonishing degree of mastery. For a more general discussion of Dūnhuáng forgeries see Susan Whitfield, "The Question of Forgeries" (International Dunhuang Project: http://idp.bl.uk/ education/forgeries/index.a4D).

Dūnbó 77 countains the following five texts:

(1) *Pútídámó nánzōng dìng shìfēi lùn* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論 (*Treatise on Determining Right and Wrong Concerning Bodhidharma's Southern School*)[15]

(2) *Nányáng héshàng dùnjiào jiětuō Chánmén zhí liǎo xìng tányǔ* 南陽和尚頓教解脫禪門直了性壇語 (*The Platform Sayings of Preceptor Nányáng on Directly Understanding the [Buddha-]Nature in the Chán Teaching of Liberation [based on the] Sudden Teaching*)[16]

(3) *Nánzōng dìng xiézhèng wǔgēng zhuǎn* 南宗定邪正五更轉 (*Meditation at the Fifth Night Watch on Determining the Wrong and Right of the Southern School*)[17]

(4) *Nánzōng dùnjiào zuì shàng dàshèng móhēbōluómì-jīng Liùzǔ Hùinéng dàshī Shàozhōu Dàfànsì shī fǎ tánjīng yī juàn* 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶波羅蜜經六祖惠能大師韶州大梵寺施法壇經一卷[18]

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[15] This text by Shénhuì records the polemic attack on the 'Northern School' initiated in 732. In fact, this is the first text which uses the labels 'Northern' and 'Southern' Schools (see McRae 1986: 8). The text is also found in P.2045 and P.3047.

[16] This text is also found in P.2045.

[17] This text is also preserved in other Dūnhuáng manuscripts, e.g. BD00018, S.2679, S.4634V, S.4654, S.6923 (verso), P.2045, P.2270, P.2948V. For a useful edition of the Shénhuì material, see Yáng Zēngwén 1996. These texts are also important material for linguists since they contain many examples of Táng colloquialism, vernacular phonetic loans and vernacular syntactic constructions. The Shénhuì texts were originally discovered by the famous Chinese scholar Hú Shì 胡適 during a trip to London and Paris and their publication (Hú Shì 1930) triggered an interest in early Chán, especially among Japanese scholars. Based on Hú Shì's publication, the Shénhuì texts were revised and translated into French by Jacques Gernet (1949).

Jorgensen (2005: 596) thinks that the various texts in Dūnbó 77 were combined in Dūnhuáng and reflect an effort to harmonize the 'Southern' and 'Northern' branches of Chán (see below my alternative view). One driving force behind these efforts was a disciple of Shénhuì by name of Móhēyǎn 摩訶衍. According to Jorgensen (2005: 597) P.2045 contains these Shénhuì texts in the same sequence, dating from the time when Dūnhuáng was under Tibetan administration. There seems to have been an increased interest in Chán during that time and many copies of scriptures were ordered, probably for private libraries: "As the cult of Hùinéng grew, with celebrations of his birthday being fêted from at least 832 onwards, monasteries began to make cheaper copies, and the texts were altered to allow easier comprehension in the local Héxī dialect, which is evident in the Stein copy especially." (*Ibid*.: 598). Jorgensen assumes that other versions of the *Platform Sūtra* probably existed during the Táng period (for the evidence suggested, see *Ibid*.: 598).

[18] For an analysis of the title of the *Platform Sūtra*, see below.

(5) *Jìngjué zhù Bōrěbōluómìduō xīnjīng* 淨覺註般若波羅蜜多心經 (Commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra* by Jìngjué) [19]

The first five pages of the manuscript are missing but the remaining part, including the *Platform Sūtra*, is complete. It is interesting to note that while the first four texts belong to the 'Southern' branch of Chán, the last text is usually connected with the 'Northern' School.

1.1.3 Manuscript BD.48

BD.48 (8024) verso is the manuscript preserved at the National Libary of China (NLC).[20] This version of the text is in the form of a scroll, several parts in the beginning are missing and only about one third of the original manuscript is extant. The text is written on the back of an apocryphal sūtra, the *Wúliàng shòu zōngyào jīng* 無量壽宗要經. This version of the text was probably produced somewhat later than Dūnbó 77. BD.48 was already listed by Chén Yuán 陳垣 in his *Dūnhuáng jiéyú lù* 敦煌劫餘錄,[21] but did not attract any attention. The manuscript was mentioned again by Huáng Yǒngwǔ 黃永武 in 1986 in the catalogue called *Dūnhuáng zuìxīn mùlù* 敦煌最新目錄, as well as in publications by the Japanese scholar Tanaka Ryōshū 田中良昭.

There is another copy of the text at the NLC (BD.79, 8958), this fragment, however, only has four and a half lines of text.[22]

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[19] Also found in S.4556. The Northern School Master Jìngjué is also the author of one of the earliest Chán transmission texts, the *Léngqié shīzī jì* 楞伽師資記 (*Records of the Teachers and Disciples of the Laṅkā[vatāra]*, P.3436, P.3537, P.3703).

[20] Formerly called Běijīng Library 北京圖書館. The shelfmark of the *Platform* manuscript in the collection is BD04548. Jorgensen (2005: 597) thinks that this manuscript was copied somewhat later than the Dūnbó manuscript: "It is incomplete, with both ends of the *Platform Sūtra* broken off, and it is possible the copyist was confused or was transcribing from a faulty copy. Only about a third of the *Platform Sūtra* remains." For a facsimile reproduction, see Lǐ Shēn and Fāng Guǎngchāng 1999: 233–246. In total, 153 lines are extant; in some places, the characters are very condensed. The calligraphy is rather awkward and inconsistent, sometimes even coming close to a xíngshū 行書 style. In the 'condensed' parts, there are typically 26 to 29 characters per line, in other parts between 21 and 25.

[21] Reprinted in Chén Yuán 2009.

[22] The size of the page is 17 cm × 25.3 cm. 10 vertical lines are outlined, but only the first 5 contain text (18/18/17/18/6 characters). For a facsimile reproduction see Lǐ Shēn and Fāng Guǎngchāng 1999: 232.

1.1.4 The Lǚshùn Manuscript

This manuscript was preserved at the Lǚshùn 旅順 Museum (Lǚshùn bó-wùguǎn 旅順博物館) near Dàlián 大連 (Liáoníng Province), which previously housed part of the Ōtani Collection.[23] In 1954, 620 Dūnhuáng scrolls were moved from the Dàlián Museum and are now part of the NLC collection. Only nine scrolls remain at the museum together with the bulk of ca. 20,000 fragments from Central Asia (mostly from Turfan and Kharakhoto). In reality, the text on the Lǚshùn manuscript was the first Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra* to be discovered. It was originally described as a booklet bound in a butterfly format, consisting of 45 folios, folded into 90 pages. It is the only *Platform* text which is dated (959), and is probably the most recent copy among the surviving manuscripts.[24] Until very recently, only one photograph of the beginning and the end were known.[25] These photographs have been taken at Ryūkoku University when the manuscript was still in Japan.

However, in the beginning of 2010 the Chinese press announced the rediscovery of the complete manuscript and an exhibition at the Lǚshùn Museum.[26] This rediscovery is sensational and the study of this manuscript will no doubt have a significant impact on our understanding of the Dūnhuáng versions of the *Platform Sūtra*.[27]

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[23] The Dūnhuáng manuscripts were collected during the three expeditions to Central Asia organized by Ōtani Kōzui 大谷光瑞 (1876–1948; he participated personally only in the first expedition) between 1902 and 1914. Following a financial scandal which forced him to leave Japan, the items brought back from Dūnhuáng became dispersed and found their way into various collections in China, Korea and Japan. Important collections include those in the Lǚshùn Museum and Ryūkoku University, Kyōto.

[24] Early mention can be already found in *Dàgǔ Guāngruì shì jìtuō jīng mùlù* 大谷光瑞氏寄託經目錄 (published between 1914–1916). There is also mention of this version of the *Platform Sūtra* in Yè Gōngchuò 1926. For bibliographical details, see Fāng Guǎngchāng 2001: 481.

[25] For facsimile reproductions of the photographs, see for example Zhōu Shàoliáng 1997: 106–107.

[26] For some photographs of this rediscovered manuscript, see http://blog.sina.com.cn (2010-01-28 17: 05: 51) where several low-resolution pictures were published.

[27] For a press release, see, for example, http://www.chinareviewnews.com from January 30, 2010. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see a copy of the manuscript since only a few pictures have been published in the Chinese press. According to the available information, the manuscript is in the form of a stitched booklet in butterfly binding, containing 52 full and 105 folded pages. Prior to the discovery, it was assumed that it consisted of 45 full pages – folded into 90 half-pages (Jorgensen 2005: 597). The copy of the text is dated with *Xiǎndé wǔ nián yǐwèi suì*

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1.2 Later Editions of the *Platform Sūtra*[28]

1.2.1 The Huìxīn Edition

This is the earliest version that had been known prior to the discovery of the Dūnhuáng texts. The Huìxīn 惠昕 edition is usually dated to 967 (5th year of the Qiāndé 乾德 era) and introduces the title *Liùzǔ tánjīng* 六祖壇經 (Yanagida 1976). The text is divided into two fascicles. The original version is not extant and only indirectly known through versions discovered in Japanese monastery libraries. This version of the *Platform Sūtra* is attributed to the monk Huìxīn 惠昕.[29] It was printed in the 23rd year of the Shàoxìng 紹興 era (1153) and is also referred to as the Cháo Zǐjiàn 晁子健 version.[30] It was transmitted to Japan, where one of its related versions survives at the Kōshōji 興聖寺 Monastery.[31] The Huìxīn version

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顯德五年乙未歲 ('*yǐwèi* year of the 5th year of the Xiǎndé era'). This is probably a mistake for 顯德六年, the 6th year of the Xiǎndé era which is A.D. 959. In addition, the manuscript includes another text, the apocryphal *Dà biàn xiézhèng jīng* 大辯邪正經. A special feature of this manuscript version concerns the punctuation marks added in red ink. According to a press release at http://www.gg-art.com (January 29, 2010), the manuscript is one of the items taken by the Ōtani expedition from Dūnhuáng. During the 1950s, when objects from the museum were moved by the Department of Cultural Objects, the scroll became lost. When the collection at Lǚshùn Museum was re-examined in 2003, the manuscript was actually photographed but nobody recognized it as being of particular value. In December 2009 it was 'rediscovered' and, following an evaluation by a group of scholars, its authenticity was confirmed. Originally, the Lǚshùn manuscript had been the first copy of the *Platform Sūtra* recognized as early as 1912, long before it was transferred to the Lǚshùn Museum.

28 For a more thorough discussion of these later editions, see Schlütter 2007: 394–405. Here, only a brief overview is provided in order to place the Dūnhuáng manuscripts in a historical context.

29 He was a resident of the Huìjìn 惠進 Monastery, situated at Mt. Luóxiù 羅秀 in Yǒngzhōu 邕州.

30 According to Schlütter 2007: 386, this edition was also the basis of the longer versions of the text, with amendments from the *Jǐngdé chuándēng lù* 景德傳燈錄 (*Record of the Transmission of the Lamp from the Jǐngdé Era*, 1004).

31 In addition, the Koryǒ 高麗 print from 1207 is also based on this version. According to Yampolsky, the Huìxīn edition is known from a handwritten preface (copied in 1599 by the monk Ryōnen) to the Kōshōji edition (which is in turn based on the Gozan 五山 edition, stemming from the Northern Sòng edition of 1153). In the preface, Huìxīn states that "the text was obscure, and students, first taking it up with great expectations, soon came to despise the work. Therefore he revised it, dividing it into eleven sections and two *juàn*." (Yampolsky 1967: 99–

is also the basis for other editions discovered in Japanese temples, including the Tenneiji 天寧寺, Daijōji 大乘寺[32] and Shinfukuji 真福寺 editions. There has been much discussion concerning the sources behind the Huìxīn edition, since Huìxīn states that he used an 'old edition' (*gǔběn* 古本) which he characterizes as *fán* 繁, the exact meaning of which is still ardently discussed among scholars (on this term, see below).[33]

1.2.2 The Qìsōng Edition

This refers to the edition produced by Qìsōng 契嵩 beween 1054 and 1056 (the Zhìhé 至和 era during Rénzōng's 仁宗 reign). He changed the title to *Liùzǔ dàshī fǎbǎo tánjīng Cáoqī yuánběn* 漕溪大師法寶壇經曹溪原本 (*The Platform Sūtra of the Dharma Treasure of the Great Master Cáoqī – the Original Cáoqī Edition*), usually referred to as Cáoqī yuánběn 曹溪

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100). The second preface to the Kōshōji edition dates from 1153 and is attributed to Cháo Zǐjiàn 晁子健. This edition is possibly part of the manuscript dated to 1031 and which had been copied by Cháojiǒng 晁迥 (Wényuán 文元) from the Huìxīn version (*Ibid.*: 100).

[32] This edition is another version going back to the Northern Sòng (the preface states that it is based on the second printing from 1116). It is similar to the Kōshōji text but less polished and contains more errors. The preface is written by Cúnzhōng 存中. Some researchers assume that the Daijōji edition is identical with the Huìxīn edition:

"I am inclined to believe, and this again is purely speculation, that both the Daijōji and Kōshōji texts represent edited versions of Huìxīn's manuscript edition of 967. […] There is, apart from the differences already alluded to, one significant place where the two texts are at variance: this is in the theory of the twenty-eight Indian Patriarchs. The Kōshōji text, with certain changes, follows largely the version found in the Dūnhuáng manuscript. The Daijōji version, on the other hand, is based on the *Bǎolín zhuàn* [寶林傳 dating from 801]. […] Thus what had been a text of comparatively small distribution became available to all branches of the sect and to the Sòng literati in general by virtue of Huìxīn's edition. The Daijōji version may then represent the text as adopted by one of the Chán schools which derived ultimately from the schools of Nányuè [南嶽] and Qīngyuán [清原], and the Kōshōji text may well represent the text as taken up by the Sòng literati, among whom a refined copy of the text was more important than such details as the accuracy of the transmission of the then accepted patriarchal tradition" (Yampolsky 1967: 101–104).

[33] For an overview of doctrinal differences between the Dūnhuáng manuscripts and the Huìxīn version, see Jorgensen 2005: 600. Jorgensen also thinks that the *Fǎbǎo jì tánjīng* mentioned by the Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (and supposedly transmitted to Korea in 826) might have been an earlier version of the Huìxīn stemmata of the text.

原本 (Yanagida 1976). The Qìsōng edition itself is not extant but seems to be a version of the text between the Huìxīn and the Northern Sòng versions (upon which the Kōshōji and Daijōji versions were based).[34] The text is in one fascicle, subdivided into 20 *pǐn* 品, consisting of ca. 20,000 characters, as contrasted to the ca. 12,000 characters in the Dūnhuáng manuscripts, and the ca. 14,000 characters in the Huìxīn version.

1.2.3 The Kōshōji Edition

The edition is preserved at the Kōshōji temple 興聖寺, Kyōto, and was discovered in the 1930s. This version of the text is mostly based on the Huìxīn edition, and is much longer than the Dūnhuáng manuscripts discussed above.[35]

1.2.4 The Zōngbǎo Edition

The Zōngbǎo 宗寶 edition dates from 1291 and has the title *Liùzǔ dàshī fǎbǎo tánjīng* 六祖大師法寶壇經 (*The Dharma Treasure Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*).[36] Zōngbǎo states in his postface that he had compared and revised three previous versions of the *Platform Sūtra*.[37] The text was published in Southern China, independent of the Déyì 德異 edition (see below). This largely expanded version of the original *Platform Sūtra*

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[34] On details of the history of this edition, see Yampolsky 1967: 104–106. Qìsōng's edition seems to have been the basis for the enlarged Yuán Dynasty editions (1290 and 1291):

"These two editions are very similar, and have obviously been based on the same work, which must be presumed to have been Qìsōng's missing text, or possibly a later revision of it. The two Yuán editions are greatly expanded, and include much new material not previously associated with the *Platform Sūtra*. Thus Qìsōng's version, which is listed as being in three *juàn*, must also be presumed to have been an enlarged text" (*Ibid*.: 106).

[35] On the Kōshōji, see Ui 1939–1943, vol. 2: 113; reproduced photolitographically by Suzuki 1938; for an edited and comparative version see Suzuki and Kuda 1934. There is also a facsimile reproduction from 1933, Kyōto (*Rokuso dankyō* 六祖壇經). The Kōshōji version is also the basis of the edition of Nakagawa Taka (1976), heavily annotated and including translations into classical and modern Japanese.

[36] This edition is not divided into fascicles and is the source text for the Taishō edition (T.48, no. 2008: 245–265). It has been translated into English in Luk 1962: 15–102, and more recently in McRae 2000.

[37] For the postface, see T.48, no. 2008: 364c9–365a4.

became the most popular one, and was integrated into the Míng Buddhist canon (together with the preface of the Déyì edition).

1.2.5 The Déyì Edition

The Déyì 德異 edition is another printed version from Yuán times, dating from the 27th year of the Zhìyuán 至元 era (1290), and it represents the basis for a Koryŏ print from 1300.[38] This edition is closely related to the Qìsōng edition. Although the Déyì and Zōngbǎo prints appeared nearly simultaneously, they do not seem to be based on each other but rather share a common source.[39]

1.2.6 The Xīxià Editions

The extant parts of the Xīxià 西夏 edition can be found in Shǐ Jīnbō 1993. In 1929, more than 100 manuscripts from the Xīxià Buddhist canon were discovered at Běijīng University, including 5 pages of the *Platform Sūtra*.[40]

In addition to the above versions of the *Platform Sūtra*, we have references to other versions that are no longer extant, for example in the lists made by the Japanese pilgrims Ennin 圓仁 (in 847)[41] and Enchin 円珍 (in 854, 857 and 859).[42]

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[38] See Gen En'yū 1935: 1–63. There is another reprint from Míng times (the 7th year of the *chénghuà* 成化 era, i.e. 1471), the printing was actually done at Cáoqī. Other reprints were made in 1573, 1616 and 1652. The Qìsōng, Zōngbǎo and Déyì versions all consist of ca. 20,000 Chinese characters.

[39] It appears that Déyì used a version in the stemmata of the Huìxīn edition, in addition to a version of the Qìsōng edition:

"Both Yuán editions divide the text into ten sections; there are certain differences within the sections, and the titles given to each section are at variance. […] The chief difference in the two Yuán texts lies in the amount of supplementary material that is attached. Déyì includes only his preface and the one attributed to Fǎhǎi. The Zōngbǎo edition contains Déyì's preface, Qìsōng's words in praise of the *Platform Sūtra*, Fǎhǎi's preface, the texts of various inscriptions, and Zōngbǎo's postface" (Yampolsky 1967: 107).

[40] A translation into modern Chinese and reproductions of photographs was published in Luó Fúchéng 1932. For facsimile reproductions of the 5 fragments found at the Běijīng University, see Lǐ Shēn and Fāng Guǎngchāng 1999: 250–252.

[41] The text is referred to as *Cáoqī-shān dì-Liùzǔ Huìnéng dàshī shuō jiànxìng dùnjiào zhí liǎo chéng Fó juédìng wúyí fǎbǎo-jì tánjīng* 曹溪山第六祖惠能大師說見性頓教直了成佛決定無疑法寶記檀(=壇)經 (T.55, no. 2167: 1083b8).

[42] Referred to as *Cáoqī-shān dì-Liùzǔ Huìnéng dàshī tánjīng* 曹谿(=漕溪)山第六祖惠能大師壇經 (T.55, no. 1095a19); *Cáoqī Néng dàshī tánjīng* 曹(=漕)溪能大師

1.3 Notes on the Relationship between the Different Versions of the *Platform* Texts

In recent years, several controversies concerning the relationship between the Dūnhuáng manuscripts and the later editions have re-emerged. Eversince the discovery of the Dūnhuáng texts, one of the central issues discussed among scholars was the question whether the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra*s were the earliest versions of this text. Another concern is whether there is an 'Urtext' from which all the other versions derive, or whether several versions circulated simultaneously. All the extant Dūnhuáng copies seem to belong to the same text family. However, there is much disagreement whether these copies are already expanded or different versions of an earlier *Platform Sūtra*. Other frequently discussed questions are the authorship of the *Platform Sūtra* and its relationship to the monk Shénhuì.

As for the sequence of the copies, Zhōu Shàoliáng (1999: 5) thinks that the Běijīng manuscript is the earliest copy (also based on features of the paper) and that it was produced in Dūnhuáng. The remaining three copies belong to the same stemmata of texts and are all interrelated. Zhōu Shàoliáng also argues that the discrepancies with the Huìxīn version are the result of the interpolation of later material, as well as the misunderstanding of many passages of the Dūnhuáng versions, rather than of the existence of an earlier version of the *Platform Sūtra* known to Huìxīn (for a more thorough discussion of some of these differences, see below).

Ui Hakuju (1996) assumes that there was an original version of the *Platform Sūtra* from ca. 714, written immediately after Huìnéng's death, which reflected his teachings as recorded by Fǎhǎi. Several textual layers were added to this text, most likely by students of Shénhuì, until the present manuscript version was completed in ca. 820.[43]

Hú Shì regards the Dūnhuáng manuscript as a copy of an earlier version but attributes the text to Shénhuì and/or his disciples, rather than to Huìnéng or Fǎhǎi. Hú Shì's view was challenged already in 1945 by Qián Mùshǒu 錢穆首 who attributed the original version of the *Platform Sūtra* to Fǎhǎi, recording the teachings of Huìnéng (as such accepting the information provided in the Dūnhuáng copies). Jiǎng Zōngfú 蔣宗福 also argues against Hú Shì by comparing the *Platform Sūtra* with the texts attributed to Shénhuì.[44]

壇經 (T.55, no. 2172: 1100c25) and *Cáoqī Néng dàshī tánjīng* 曹(=漕)溪能大師
檀(=壇)經 (T.55, no. 2173: 1106b21), respectively.

[43] Yampolsky 1967: 89.

[44] He argues that some passages directly contradict each other and that the *Platform Sūtra* therefore cannot be a product by Shénhuì and/or his disciples. One example

During the last 15 years a growing interest has developed among Chinese scholars towards the *Platform Sūtra*, rediscovered as a kind of 'national treasure', resulting in many new studies and critical editions. Probably the best of these new editions is the collated and annotated edition of the Dūnhuáng manuscript Dūnbó 77 by Dèng Wénkuān and Róng Xīnjiāng (Dèng and Róng 1999). Other editions include Guó Péng 1981, Guó Péng 1983, Zhōu Shàoliáng 1997, and Lǐ Shēn and Fāng Guǎngchāng (1999: 29–91). Studies by Chinese scholars have also been concerned with the textual history of the Dūnhuáng *Platform* copies and the parts changed and added by later editors (specifically by Huìxīn).[45] Another concern has been whether the Dūnhuáng *Platform* is the earliest version of this text,[46] or whether there had been an 'Urtext' which served as a basis for the different versions that circulated during the Táng dynasty.

Chinese scholars such as Zhōu Shàoliáng (1999: 4–5) argue against the existence of an earlier version of the *Platform Sūtra* which would have significantly differed from the extant Dūnhuáng versions. One of the arguments used for the existence of an earlier version has been Huìxīn's remark 古本文繁 "the text of the old edition is *fán*". The word *fán* 繁 has been interpreted in various ways. For example, one opinion was that it

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focuses on the role of the robe in the transmission of the teaching: the monk's robe plays a central role in the transmission scheme of Shénhuì whereas it is downplayed in the *Platform Sūtra* which emphasizes the transmission of the scripture itself (Jiǎng Zōngfú 2007: 86–87). In my opinion, although the arguments of Jiǎng Zōngfú are valid, his conclusions are not necessarily true. Considering the complex structure of the manuscripts, certain contradictions are only natural. Sørensen (1989) already observed the multilayered composition of many Chán treatises and poems, often assembled in the form of a 'Baukasten' system the elements of which were used in several texts. For a case study of text fabrication by assembling 'text blocks' in the works attributed to the meditation master Wòlún 臥輪, see Meinert 2008. More generally on the structure of Chán texts, see Anderl 2012: 46f.

[45] Some of these studies are concerned with which parts of the text 'should not have been changed' by Huìxīn and later editors. Although these studies provide useful information concerning the textual development of the *Platform* scripture, they sometimes betray a judgmental undertone in discussing these developments and a reluctance to include considerations of historical and doctrinal developments. For example, the idea that the Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra* would not have fit into the doctrinal framework of Sòng Chán and the inferior literary quality, the abundance of mistakes and inconsistencies in the manuscripts would not have been accepted by the Sòng literati readership. For this kind of textual studies, see for example Zhōu Shàoliáng 1997: 175ff; for a list of textual passages "which should not have been changed but have been changed" (*bù dāng gǎi ér gǎi zhe* 不當改而改者), see Lǐ Shēn 1999b: 127–137.

[46] E.g. Lǐ Shēn 1999c.

means 'numerous', which is in conflict with the usual assumption that the early versions of the *Platform Sūtra* – as evidenced by the Dūnhuáng manuscripts – were shorter than the later Sòng versions. Schlütter translates the term as "troublesome" (2007: 395):

> There has been considerable disagreement about what Huìxīn might have possibly meant with this term. Since *fán* can mean 'many' or 'excessive' some have argued that Huìxīn abbreviated a longer text.
>
> (*Ibid*.: 395, fn. 43)

Theoretically, the Dūnhuáng copies could have been based on a later version of the text than the Huìxīn version. However, there is not enough evidence at this point to reach conclusive decisions concerning this point. Zhōu Shàoliáng (1999: 22) interprets *fán* as 'vexatious' or 'confusing' (instead of referring to a longer version which was abridged).[47] Nányáng Huìzhōng 南陽慧忠 (675–?), the famous Táng monk and rival of Shén-huì, thus attacked the Dūnhuáng versions as 'altered' and abridged versions. Jorgensen thinks that the interpretation of *fán* as 'troublesome; difficult [to read]' is more likely because of the many vulgar and corrupt characters in the manuscript texts.

An analysis of the usage of *fán* in pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist literature reveals that the word hardly ever means 'to be numerous' in a literary or rhetorical context. Although one of the basic meanings of *fán* is 'to be/become numerous; become abundant; proliferate/multiply; flourish; etc.', it is usually used ideomatically with quantifiable concrete items such as plants, animals, and humans. Moreover, it seldom refers to abstract nouns in the sense of 'numerous', and when it does, the nouns typically signify 'punishment', 'litigation', 'taxes', etc.[48] Another typical meaning of *fán* is 'to be multifaceted; complex (such as patterns, design or colors); (over-) elaborate (such as rituals); diverse; detailed; > blended/intermingled; etc'. In contexts referring to speech acts, literature, and rhetorics, *fán* virtually never has the meaning 'numerous' (in terms of the amount of words, etc.).[49] Based on the evidence of the typical usage of *fán*, I conclude

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[47] See also Jorgensen 2005: 601.

[48] E.g. 則刑乃繁 'then punishments will be *numerous*' (Guǎnzǐ 管子 1.1). The analysis of *fán* is based on searches in the *TLS* database.

[49] E.g. 文辭繁重 'the style is *elaborate* and heavy' (*Bǎiyú jīng* 百餘經 93.3); 樂繁 'the music is *elaborate*' (*Guōdiàn yǔcóng* 郭店語叢 1.21); 多言繁程 'if one makes many words and offers *detailed* pronouncements' (*Hánfēizǐ* 韓非子 3.1/2); 繁於文采 'be *elaborate* in one's rhetorical style' (*Ibid*.); 繁辭 '*elaborate* formulations' (*Ibid*.: 6.4/1); 繁說 '*diverse* explanations' (*Ibid*.: 32.14/2); 繁文 '(*over-*)

that Huìxīn's remark probably did not refer to the length of this 'old text' but rather to its textual, literary or dogmatic structure.

In the past decade several important studies by Western scholars appeared, discussing the relationship between the different versions of the *Platform Sūtra*. In particular, Morten Schlütter, one of the most prominent *Platform* specialists in the West, recognizes a distinct influence by the Shénhuì faction in the formation of the text (Schlütter 2007), and at the same time discerns other layers in it, hence the ambivalent picture of this important monk, which is reflected in the early versions. Schlütter also tries to approach the textual problems more systematically by applying the methodology of textual criticism. Concerning the relationship between the Dūnhuáng versions and the Huìxīn edition, he writes:

> […] we cannot know for sure what Huìxīn changed and what was already different from the Dūnhuáng version in the edition or editions of the *Platform Sūtra* that Huìxīn used. The Huìxīn version pretty much follows the general outlay of the Dūnhuáng version. Overall, its biggest contribution to the text is in its 'cleaning up' the text and fixing miswritten characters as well as clarifying and expanding the many obscure or corrupt passages. However, the Huìxīn version also augments the text of the *Platform Sūtra* with various additions.   (Schlütter 2007: 395)

Another problem discussed by scholars is the comment by Nányáng who accuses disciples of Southern providence (*nánfāng zōngtú* 南方宗徒) of having altered the original version of the *Platform Sūtra*.[50]

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elaborate formulations' (*Hánshī wàizhuàn* 韓詩外傳 6.6/3); 不假繁辭 'not get idly involved in *elaborate* discussions' (*Zǔtángjí* 祖堂集 3).

[50] This criticism is recorded in *Jǐngdé chuándēng lù* 景德傳燈錄 from 1004 (T.51, no. 2076: 438a CBETA):

是南方宗旨。把他壇經改換。添糅鄙譚削除聖意惑亂後徒。 豈成言教。苦哉吾宗喪矣。 若以見聞覺知是佛性者。 淨名不應云法離見聞覺知。 若行見聞覺知是則見聞覺知非求法也。

This teaching/doctrine of the South altered that *Platform Sūtra* by adding and mixing in vulgar expressions, the saintly intent was removed and mislead later generations of disciples. How could that constitute the spoken teaching [of the Sixth Patriarch]? How painful that my teaching has been destroyed in this manner! If one regards the processes of perception (lit., seeing, hearing, cognition, knowing) as being Buddha-nature then Vimalakīrti certainly would not have stated that the dharma is separate from seeing, hearing, cognition and knowing! If one practices seeing, hearing, cognition and knowing then seeing, hearing, cognition and knowing certainly is not searching for the dharma.

Because of the many mistakes and inconsistencies in the Dūnhuáng manuscripts, Yampolsky (who only knew the Stein version of the text) regards the Northern Sòng versions as more representative of the text. The Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra* consists of ca. 12,400 characters whereas the later 'orthodox' versions consist of ca. 20,000 characters. The Dūnhuáng version consists of two main parts, the record of the sermon at the Dàfàn Temple and secondly conversations between Huìnéng and some of his disciples.

Jorgensen[51] dates the Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra* to ca. 781 (Jorgensen 2005: 577): "Evidently popular despite its parochial claims, it helped usher in a new form of 'pien-wen-style' [*biànwén* 變文] hagiographies that captivated 'Chán' audiences." Regarding the authorship of the *Platform Sūtra*, he puts forward the following argument:

> I surmise from this evidence that initially a text that Huìzhōng called a 'platform sūtra', probably connected to a sermon by Huìnéng, was produced. However, later, changes were made due to a misunderstanding of the doctrine. It was this altered text Huìzhōng criticised before 774 as the corrupted text containing the Southern heresy. The *Cáoqī Dàshī zhuàn* and Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra* have linked some of this with Shénhuì, and perhaps Dàyì in turn was attacking this material as a product of Shénhuì followers. It is possible then that this text was compiled by Zhēnshū [甄叔, d. 820] or Chéng-

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However, this criticism does not appear in the biographic entry on Huìzhōng in the earlier *Zǔtáng jí* (952), where the criticism is rather directed towards the teachings of Shénhuì (for a study of Huìzhōng's entry in *Zǔtáng jí* and his criticism of a 'Chán Master of the South' [i.e. Shénhuì], see Anderl 2004a: 149–224; for a translation of his biographic entry in *Zǔtáng jí*, see Anderl 2004b: 603–634) and the assumption that there is an eternal soul which survives the physical body. On Chinul's 知訥 (1158–1210) reaction to this criticism, see Jorgensen 2005: 598f.

[51] The recent monumental publication (close to 900 pages) of John Jorgensen (2005) on the evolution of the hagiography of the Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng provides a wealth of details on relevant material concerning the development of the early Chán School. Although the arguments are often overly complicated and not always presented in a very reader-friendly way, it is exactly this kind of meticulous scholarship which is needed at this point in medieval Buddhist studies. One of the important features of Jorgensen's work is that he tries to place the development of the Chán school within the broader context of historiography, political developments, factional and ideological disputes between Buddhists, and more generally of contemporary Buddhist and secular literary production.

guǎng [乘廣, 717–798], leaders of the southern branch of Shénhuì's lineage.   (Jorgensen 2005: 627)[52]

On the other hand, Ibuki Atsushi maintains that Fǎhǎi recorded a sermon by Huìnéng which did not reflect Shénhuì's ideas. These ideas were eventually inserted at a later date by Shénhuì's disciples (including dialogues between Huìnéng and his disciples and the hagiography of Huìnéng predicting Shénhuì). In addition, the lineage of the patriarchs was added, as well as the verses of transmission. These parts were the basis of the Dūnhuáng copies of the *Platform Sūtra*.[53]

However, Jorgensen argues that it is not likely that Shénhuì authored the *Platform Sūtra* since the Dūnhuáng versions contain criticism of Shénhuì and his teaching of *wúniàn* 無念 ('no-thinking'). It is also linked to a lineage headed by Fǎhǎi.

Therefore, the *Platform Sūtra*, at least in its Dūnhuáng version, was not written by Shénhuì, and yet it was likely used by Shénhuì's disciples, if not composed by them. Possibly, these students were connected with Wùzhēn, the last name in the transmission list from Fǎhǎi in the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra*. A monk named Wùzhēn (816–895) was renowned in Dūnhuáng and elsewhere, especially Cháng'ān, and it was in Dūnhuáng that we find the earliest extant copies of the *Platform Sūtra*.   (Jorgensen 2005: 633)

Jorgensen tries to reconstruct the complicated textual history of the *Platform Sūtra*. Some of his most important conclusions are as follows:

(a) Shénhuì influenced the ideas of the *Platform Sūtra* but did not author it directly.
(b) Based on Huìzhōng's comments, an original version of the *Platform Sūtra* had already been altered before 774.
(c) An original version was mainly based on a sermon by Huìnéng and influenced by Shénhuì's *Platform Talks* (*tányǔ* 壇語).
(d) Another version with additions from scriptural sources was maybe produced by Chéngguǎng, i.e. the 'heretical' version attacked by Huìzhōng.
(e) Based on lineage disputes, the 'autobiographical' part was added. In addition, ideas of Mǎzǔ Dàoyī 馬祖道一 (709–788) and others were incorporated. This is how the *Fǎbǎo jí tánjīng* version was created.

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[52] According to the Chán and Huáyán scholar Zōngmì 宗密, Shénhuì's lineage was considered orthodox in 796 by Emperor Dézōng 德宗.
[53] According to Jorgensen 2005: 632.

(f) As early as the 8th century, different versions of the *Platform Sūtra* were in circulation.[54]

(g) One of these versions possibly evolved into the Dūnhuáng version between 850 and 880, another version into the *Fǎbǎo jí tánjīng* version. This would be the version which the Japanese monk Dōchū mentioned as having been sent to Korea in 826 and brought to Japan in 847.

(h) The *Fǎbǎo jí tánjīng* version influenced the Daijōji, Qìsōng and Kōshōji editions.

(i) Jorgensen concludes that at least three version of the *Platform Sūtra* circulated during the Táng Dynasty:[55]

> Yet Ennin's evidence, and that of Dōchū, proves that a *Fǎbǎo jì tánjīng*, a version with a title different to that of the Dūnhuáng manuscripts, was in circulation before any of the extant Dūnhuáng manuscripts were copied. The title is unusual, reflecting possibly the hagiographical section (*fǎbǎo jì*), as in the earlier hagiographical collections like the *Lìdài fǎbǎo jì*. To this was added the '*Platform Sūtra*' or sermon section. Moreover, the title differs from the Dūnhuáng version in that it stressed 'seeing the nature' and 'becoming Buddha' rather than the 'Mahāprajñāpāramitā' and 'Supreme Vehicle.' Thus, three versions of the *Platform Sūtra* at least circulated during the Táng dynasty, one found in Cháng'ān, another in Dūnhuáng, and yet another in the South or Cáoqī.   (Jorgensen 2005: 601–602)

One of the most fascinating aspects of the text is its title, which asserted that this was a sūtra, a claim which must have felt outrageous at the time:[56]

> The authors of this text, implying that Huìnéng was a Buddha, called it a *sūtra/jīng*, and whole-heartedly adopted the stance of the Indian Buddhist cult of the book, which saw itself superior to the cult of relics.   (Jorgensen 2005: 670)
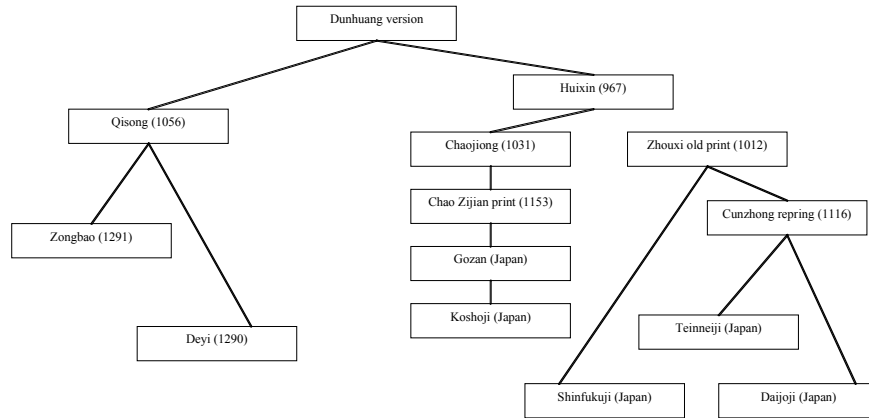
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[54] "In contrast, Dàyì attacked a northern version of the *Platform Sūtra* associated with other disciples of Shénhuì for making the *Platform Sūtra* a symbol of transmission and incorporating the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra* material from the late works of Shénhuì, thereby downgrading and removing the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. Thus, Dàyì, probably between 786 and 806, alleged also that a *Platform Sūtra* was formed or 'created' by followers of Shénhuì" (*Ibid.*: 636). In contrast with this view, I believe, as it will be discussed later in this paper, that the *Vajracchedikā* materials were the core of the at least the Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra*.

[55] For another well-grounded article tracing the evolution of the *Platform Sūtra* and discussing the different later versions, see Schlütter 2007.
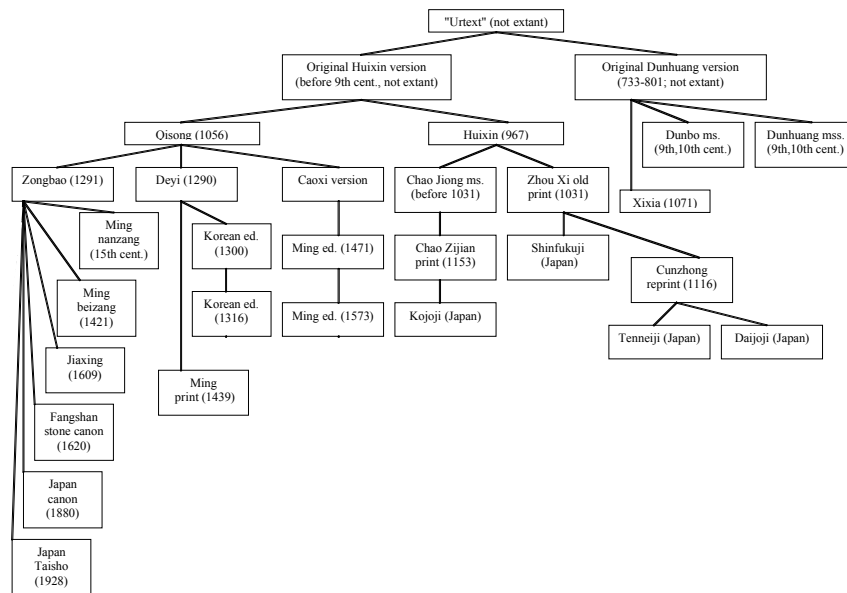
[56] In the third part of this paper, I will argue that this interpretation might not necessarily apply to the early versions of the text.

1.4 Diagrams of the Evolution of the Platform Sūtra
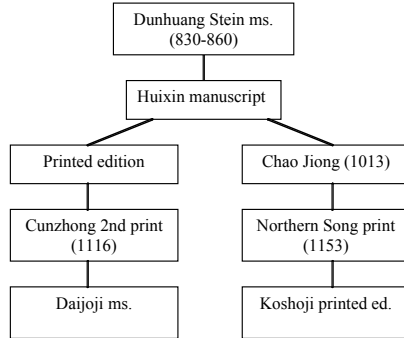
1.4.1 Ishii Shūdō's Theory (Diagram 1):

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                        Dunhuang version
              ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
                                         Huixin (967)
                                    ┌────────┴────────┐
    Qisong (1056)              Chaojiong (1031)   Zhouxi old print (1012)
   ┌────┴────┐                      │                    │
Zongbao (1291)              Chao Zijian print (1153)  Cunzhong repring (1116)
         │                          │
      Deyi (1290)               Gozan (Japan)
                                    │
                              Koshoji (Japan)

                          Shinfukuji (Japan)   Teinneiji (Japan)   Daijoji (Japan)
```

1.4.2 Yáng Zēngwén's Reconstruction of the Textual Evolution of the Platform Sūtra (Diagram 2):[57]

```
                              "Urtext" (not extant)
             ┌────────────────────┴─────────────────────┐
   Original Huixin version                    Original Dunhuang version
   (before 9th cent., not extant)             (733-801; not extant)
      ┌──────────┴──────────┐            ┌──────────┼──────────┐
 Qisong (1056)        Huixin (967)    Dunbo ms.         Dunhuang mss.
                                     (9th,10th cent.)  (9th,10th cent.)
```

1.4.3 Yampolsky's (1967) Theory (Diagram 3):

```
                    Dunhuang Stein ms.
                        (830-860)

                    Huixin manuscript

        Printed edition              Chao Jiong (1013)

      Cunzhong 2nd print           Northern Song print
          (1116)                        (1153)

        Daijoji ms.                 Koshoji printed ed.
```

1.4.4 Genealogy of the Platform Sūtra According to Morten Schlütter (Diagram 4):[58]

```
                              Early Platform sutra

          Dunhuang mss.
          9th century
                                 Fabao ji tanjing

              ?

      Qisong (1056)                  Huixin (967)

                    Chao Jiong (1031)          Proto-Cunzong
                                              (1012, Zhou Xigu)

                    Chao Zijian (1153)
                                                  Cunzhong (1116)
  Jingde chuandeng lu (1008)
  Liandeng huiyao (1189)         Gozan (Japan)
         etc.                                Tenneiji (Japan)    Daijoji (Japan)

                              Koshoji (Japan)

                                    Shinfukuji (Japan)
                early long edition

      Zongbao (1291)        Deyi (1290)
```
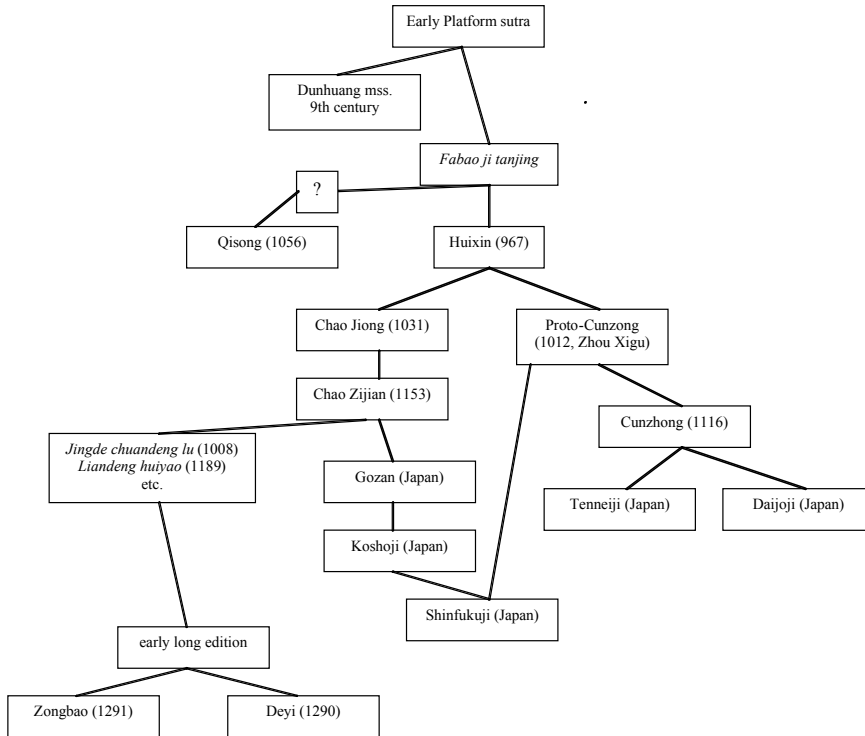
[58] Based on Schlütter 2007: 385.

Part II:
The Textual and Visual Features of the Manuscripts

In particular manuscript S.5475 from the Stein collection is characterized by having been copied rather sloppily, without much consideration for the aesthetic outcome. There are many copying mistakes, the characters are often not aligned, their size differs, and their number per line varies considerably. There are also variations in the number of lines on a page (for example 8 lines per half-page on page 20 as compared to 7 lines on most other pages), or – as on page 31 of the Stein manuscript – 6 lines on the right half-page and 5 lines on the left half-page. After the blank page 54, the number of lines is reduced to 5 per half-page.

In contrast with other manuscripts where the verses are usually aligned correctly, in our case some poems seem to have been copied in a great hurry (e.g. S.5475: 27 and 28, see Figures 1 and 2), with significant differences in spacing, and a number of missing or amended characters.

The calligraphy on Dūnbó 77 is much more tidy and visually appealing, with 6 lines per half-page and 24 to 26 characters per line. By and large, the text is vertically aligned, and on some pages we can still discern the vertical grid lines which aid the copyist in keeping the text aligned. As in the Stein manuscript, the verses are visually distinct from the narrative parts and the copyist uses repetition markers. At the same time, there are fewer insertions and scratched out characters.

2.1 Markers and Scribal Interventions[59]

The *Platform Sūtra* manuscripts use a variety of markers, including spaces, varying character size, repetition markers, sequence markers, and added or deleted characters. These scribal interventions, which in most cases were probably added by the owner or reader of the text, are an important feature of the manuscripts. Below is a short enumeration of some of these features.

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[59] For a general study of scribal markers in Dūnhuáng texts see Galambos (forthcoming). The markers used in the *Platform Sūtra* manuscripts are typical of those used in Dūnhuáng manuscripts, yet it is surprising how many of them are used here in one text. In addition, the 'boxing in' of characters in the Běijīng manuscript appears to be particular.

2.1.1 Repetition Markers

Repetition markers can be inserted between more than one character, as in the following example where four repetition markers inserted after four characters indicate that the string of these four characters (and not each character separately as 弘弘忍忍和和尚尚) is to be repeated:

弘忍和尚 弘忍和尚 (S.5475: 04.03–04.04; see Figure 3)

Curiously, the same repetition marker also appears in Dūnbó 77 (94-47.08; see Figure 4), in the phrase inserted in small characters on the right side of the text. Repetition markers can be also be inserted beyond (unmarked) phrase borders:

各作一偈呈吾。吾看汝偈。。。 (S.5475, see Figure 5)

The following is an interesting way of using repetition markers (rm):

甚rm甚rm難rm難rm

The phrase should be read:

甚難 甚難 甚難 甚難

In the Dūnbó parallel passage (94–49) the markers look somewhat different (and there is only one repetition; see Figure 6). However, a repetition marker may or may not be used when two identical characters follow each other. In the following passage the first repeated character is written out whereas the second one is marked by a repetition marker:

修修行rm > 修行修行 (S.5475: 47.07; see Figure 6)

2.1.2 Scratched Out Characters

In the Stein manuscript, characters are occasionally scratched out (e.g. [scratched character] S.5475: 03.01 and [scratched character] S.5475: 20.04.03). The Dūnbó manuscript copyist usually avoided this technique for deleting characters, probably because it is visually unappealing.

2.1.3 Empty Spaces Inserted in the Text

In S.5475, besides the spaces inserted in the title, only poems are marked by an insertion of a new line; spaces are also inserted between each verse of the poems, as in S.5475: 06.06–06.07 (see Figure 8); 06.09 (see Figure 9) and 23.08–12 (see Figure 10).

In Dūnbó 77, spaces are sometimes inserted in the text, for example before the beginning of the introduction of direct speech (spoken by Huìnéng: 大師說/言 'the Master said…' 94–63; 94–65; 94–68) or before a new section in the narrative (94–76.11 時有 'at that time there was…', or 94–77.05 又有一僧 'there was another monk who…'). BD.48 rarely has spaces inserted, and these sometimes indicate the beginning of direct speech by the Sixth Patriarch (e.g. BD.48: 29, 31, and 76, before the word *shànzhīshí* 善知識 'good friends'), or between verses of poems (e.g. BD.48: 121–124). There are also some occurrences where the text is 'boxed in' (e.g. BD.48: 46 佛者覺也 'Buddha means *awakened*;' 127: 西國第一師宗旨大師; and right at the top of line 128: 達摩祖師 'Patriarch [Bodhi]dharma').

2.1.4 Inserted Characters

Occasionally, missing characters are inserted in small writing, usually to the right side (e.g. S.5475: 10.03, see Figure 11). On rare occasions they may also be added at the top before the first character of a line.

In S.5475: 20.06 the passage reads 少(小)根智(之)人 'persons of dull capacity (lit. 'small roots;' see Figure 12):[60] the inserted small character is a phonetic loan (智 for 之). This somewhat unusual loan might have been motivated by the wording of the phrase right above containing a 智 (大智上根人 'persons of superior roots with great wisdom'). The insertion of 智 was really not necessary, since 小根人 'persons of minor capacity' also makes sense. The 智 was probably inserted in an attempt to construct the phrase parallel to the previous phrase. However, strictly parallel, the passage should have read 小智下根人 ('person of minor wisdom and inferior roots'). Not surprisingly, the passage 此是最上乘法，為大智上根人說，小根智人若聞法，心不生信 was rephrased in later editions, i.e. T.48, no. 2008: 350c12–13(CBETA):

此法門是最上乘。為大智人說。為上根人說。小根小智人聞。心生不信。

This teaching is the Superior Vehicle (Mahāyāna) and is expounded for persons with great wisdom, is expounded for people with superior capacity. If persons of minor capacity and small wisdom listen [to this teaching] their minds will produce disbelief.

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[60] For other examples of inserted characters see Figure 13 (S.5475; 汝心不見 '…your mind does not understand…' > 汝心迷不見 '…[if] your mind is confused it does not understand…;' see Figure 13) and Dūnbó 77: 94–69 where the conjunction *yǔ* is inserted after Huìnéng (Figure 14).

2.1.4 Small-sized Characters

Small characters can have the function of marking a new section in the text such as in 下是法 'below is [an account of his] teachings' (S.5475: 10.07.03; see Figure 15), introducing the section dealing with the teachings of Huìnéng and concluding the biographical section. Occasionally, small characters are also used to indicate to the reader how the text should be used in ritual contexts, e.g. how often a passage should be read aloud. As such, they function as a sort of 'performance marker.'

In the following example from S.5475, two missing characters are inserted in the text. This shows that the text was either checked by the copyist after copying (which I consider unlikely because of the presence of many other mistakes) or that the text was compared to another text and amended accordingly:

萬法人興 > 萬法本從人興 (see Figure 16) '…the 10,000 dharmas arise from men'

Both in the Stein and Dūnbó manuscripts a few characters are singled out and defined as the 'correct teaching' by a phrase inserted afterwards in small characters:

已上十六字是正法 'the above 16 characters are the correct teaching' (see Figure 17)

Stein has a mistake (which would render the passage oblique without the existence of other copies): 家 'family' instead of 字 'character'; the mistake is generated by a certain graphical similarity of the two characters. By the above method the preceding 16 characters are marked as especially important: 諸佛世尊唯以一大師因緣故出現於世 (S.5475: 32.01, see Figure 18 and Dūnbó 94–75.10). It is not quite clear why these characters are singled out. Possibly, they played an important role in the rituals connected to the use of the *Platform Sūtra* or to the bestowal of formless precepts.

Generally, the size of characters is much more even and consistent in Dūnbó 77 as compared to the Stein manuscript. It is quite obvious that aesthetic considerations were more important for the copyist of the Dūnbó manuscript.

2.1.5 Missing Characters

The textual features of the manuscripts are further complicated and some passages appear to be corrupted because of missing characters. As described above, missing characters were occasionally amended. However, especially in the Stein manuscript there are many missing characters with no omission marked. The most likely reason is that they were overlooked by the

copyist. If the omissions remained undetected, such mistakes could accumulate by being transmitted from one copy to the next. For example, in S.5475: 21.08.01–03 there is a missing 人 (see Figure 19) and the passage should read 皆因人置 'all are established based on men', the way this occurs in the other manuscripts.

2.1.6 Superfluous Characters

There is a superfluous 法 in the phrase on Dūnbó 77: 94–47.11 (see Figure 20). In addition, the small 未 inserted on the right side does not seem to fit. Such superfluous characters are a common feature of manuscripts.

2.1.7 Marking Superfluous Characters

The marker ⬛ indicates a mistaken character that should be deleted from the text as the 國 in Dūnbó 77: 94–48.02.05 (see Figure 21): 心量國大 > 心量大. The marker is also used in the Stein manuscript, e.g. the character 座 is deleted (S.5475: 47.02.19, see Figure 22). Although this method seems to have the same effect as scratching out a character it might be sometimes preferred as an aesthetically more appealing way.

2.1.8 Marker for Reversing the Sequence of Characters

The marker ✔ indicates that two characters have to be read in reversed sequence. For example, in Dūnbó 77: 94–47.06 (see Figure 23): 吾弘祖忍 > 吾祖弘忍 'our patriarch Hóngrěn' and Dūnbó 77: 94–52.03 (see Figure 24) 法受 > 受法 'receive the dharma.' This marker is used frequently in all three manuscripts.

2.2 Textual Discrepancies

The following are specific textual features of the *Platform Sūtra* manuscripts:

(1) Considering the relatively short length of the Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra*, it has a large number of phonetic loans. Interestingly, many loans seem to be based on the language spoken in the Northwestern regions during the late Táng Dynasty.[61] It is also interesting that there are 'clusters' of loan characters.

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[61] For a list of these phonetic loans and other features of the characters, see Anderl *et al*. 2012: 30–44.

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(2) Another feature is the large number of corrupted characters, usually generated by the close resemblance of handwritten forms of some characters.

In S.5475 the number of horizontal strokes in square 'boxes' that form the structural part of characters is often reduced; for example, 自 ('one-self') is often written as 白 白 ('white'), e.g. S.5475: 05.02.10 白 (> 自).

In S.5475: 10.04.18 奪 寮 ('steal') should be 寮 (> 僚 'official'). S.5475: 11.08 has *shùn* 順 順 'accord with' for *xū* 須 'should', which appears correctly in the Dūnbó and Kōshoji versions. Examples like this are numerous, particularly in the Stein manuscript.

(3) In all manuscripts – but particularly in the Stein one – there are passages where characters are *left out*, *superfluous*, or written in a *wrong sequence*.

There is a superfluous 作 in the right vertical line (S.5475: 04.6.13; see Figure 25) which in the Stein manuscript may be explained by an appearance of another 作 in the line to the left. This form of miscopying is not unusual in the Dūnhuáng manuscripts since the copyist in the process of copying occasionally inserts a character which appears to the right or left in the adjacent line ('mistake generated by the context'). However, this interpretation would not work in this case since this 作 also appears in the Dūnbó manuscript (and in the later Huìxīn version).[62] Yampolsky (1967: 127, fn. 19) explains the 作 the following way:

> The text reads: *wéi qiú Fó-fǎ zuò* [為求佛法作]. Since we have a series of four-character phrases, it would seem best to regard the *zuò* as an extraneous character. Kōshōji, however, renders the clause: *wéi qiú zuò Fó* 為求作佛 (I seek only to become a Buddha), and since later in this section of the Dūnhuáng text we read: 'How can you become a Buddha?' it would appear very likely that the original wording of the clause is as found in the Kōshōji edition.

In the following passage, a superfluous 買 is inserted (Dūnbó 77: 94–53.01; see Figure 26). In S.5475:10.04 (see Figure 27) a superfluous 來 is inserted below 人.

In the passage 內外一種 'inside and outside are of one kind (i.e. the same)' (S.5475: 11.02; see Figure 28) there is a superfluous 眾 'mass (of

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[62] The explanation might still work if the Dūnbó 77 manuscript was copied on the basis of the Stein manuscript, however, the Dūnbó manuscript is usually regarded as an earlier copy.

people)' homophone to the correct 種 'kind; sort' following it. The loan character 眾 is not marked as superfluous.[63] The Dūnbó has the correct phrasing 內外一重.

A quite common mistake is the *wrong sequencing* of characters. Also this mistake can sometimes be explained by the process of fast copying: certain combinations of Chinese characters have been internalized by the copyist and are performed automatically in the process of copying ('mistake generated by internalized conventions'). In the following example, the frequently used compound 自心 'one's own mind'[64] is found in a wrong sequence of characters: 自心淨神 should be 自淨心神 'one's own pure mind.'

The same might also apply to the following passage in S.5475: 於一切法無上有執著 (S.5475: 11.07; see Figure 29), correctly written as 於一切法上無有執著 'towards all dharmas there is no grasping' in Dūnbó 77: 94–54.04. Yampolsky follows Kōshōji in skipping 上 which in the Dūnhuáng text is used as part of a somewhat unusual coverbal construction (於…上) 'localizing' (and as such topicalizing) an abstract object: 一切法 'all dharmas.' Kōshōji opts for a more 'regular' construction by omitting 上, and in addition preserving a 4+4 characters sequence.[65] As for changing the sequence, the copyist might have unconsciously done so since the sequence 無上 'unsurpassed, unexcelled' is a very frequently used compound term in Buddhist texts.

In S.5475: 11.10 (see Figure 30) we have the following phrase: 心住在 (=在住)[66]即通流住即彼縛 'If the mind is in stagnancy then it is in free flow; if it is stagnant (abiding) then it is tied up (bound)' which seems to be corrupt in both manuscripts. The (reconstructed) Huìxīn reading is 心不住… 'if the mind is not abiding (stagnant)…' which fits the context well.[67] The pronoun 彼 should probably also be read as passive marker 被 (according to Suzuki's edition), since the two characters look similar in handwriting and can be easily confused. Yampolsky regards the Dūnhuáng version as not readable and adopts the stylistically elaborate Kōshōji version of the passage (which also uses a 4+4+4+4 characters structure):

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[63] According to Dèng and Róng (1999: 402, n. 5) this is a North-Western dialect loan.

[64] The sequence 自心 'one's own mind' is very common in Buddhist texts and specifically in Chán texts (a count in CBETA amounts to nearly 4,700 occurrences).

[65] A typical example of 'text sanitation' in order to make it acceptable among educated Sòng readership.

[66] The reverse reading is marked by a diacritic on the right side in Stein, making the passage identical with Dūnbó 77: 94–54.06.

[67] See Dèng and Róng 1999: 256, n. 13.

心不住法　道即通流　心若住法　名為自縛

If the mind does not abide in things the Tao circulates freely; if the mind abides in things, it becomes entangled.

(Yampolsky 1967: 136)

(4) Occasionally, whole passages are corrupted and rendered illegible by such features. During the 1960s, when Yampolsky translated the Dūn-huáng version of the *Platform Sūtra* into English, only the Stein manuscript was available. Thus, many passages remained unresolved. Since then, based on comparisons with the Dūnbó 77 and Běijīng manuscripts several passages were successfully resolved or alternative readings established. Below are only a few examples:

五祖忽見惠能但(但)即善知識大意 (S.5475: 09.01)

Yampolsky considers the passage corrupt and translates it as "The Fifth Patriarch realized that I had a splendid understanding of the cardinal meaning." (Yampolsky 1967: 132).

The parallel passage in Dūnbó clarifies the meaning, at least to a certain degree:

五祖忽來廊下見惠能偈即知識大意 (Dūnbó 77: 94–51.12)

The Fifth Patriarch unexpectedly came to the lower part of the corridor and when he saw Huìnéng's *ghātā* he immediately knew that he had realized the cardinal meaning.

The corruption in the Stein manuscript might be partly due to mistakenly copying 但但 ('only') in place of 偈偈 ('verse'). In addition, through automatism in the copying process, the frequently used 善知識 'good friend/teacher' replaced the rarer combination 知識 ('knew that [he] realized').

In the passage 欲擬頭惠能奪於(衣)法 (S.5475: 09.11.12) '… planned to hurt Huìnéng and steal his robe and dharma' the copyist mistakenly wrote 頭 'head' which possibly resembled 損 'damage' in the manuscript. In the Yampolsky edition the phrasing is as such: 欲擬害惠能 (Yampolsky replaces 頭 with 害, another word for 'to damage'). The parallel passage in the Dūnbó manuscript 欲擬損惠能奪衣法 (Dūnbó 94: 52.09) is correct, however, a space is mistakenly inserted between 損 and 惠 (ironically turning 惠能 into the subject of the phrase: 惠能奪衣法 'Huìnéng stole the robe and dharma' instead of '…wishing to hurt Huìnéng and steal the robe and the dharma').

The next passage has a particular phrasing:

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能於嶺山上便傳法惠惠順順得聞言下心開 (see Figure 31)

It shoud read …惠順惠順[68] … 'Thereupon [Huì]néng transmitted the dharma to Huìshùn on top of Mt. Líng. When Huìshùn heard it he became enlightened.' The sequence 惠順惠順 possibly derives from the fact that in an earlier version repetition markers were used after 惠 and 順 in order to mark the repetition of the whole phrase. However, in the process of copying the repetition was resolved in a mistaken way, instead of repeating the two characters as a whole each of them was repeated individually. This is supported by the fact that Dūnbó uses repetition markers (see Figure 32).

The last part of the 'autobiographic' section has several textual problems.[69] At the same time, although there are problems, some passages in the Dūnhuáng versions do make sense:

Stein (10.06-07) has the following phrasing:

願聞先**性**教者各須淨心聞了願**白餘**迷**於**先代悟

Compare this with the phrasing in Dūnbó (94-53.03-04):

願聞先**聖**教者各須淨心聞了願**自除**迷**如**先代悟

性 'nature' is a (dialectal) phonetic loan for 聖 'sage;' in previous passages, the Stein copyist often wrote 自 similar to 白 'white' or 'to say' (as a comparison of character forms reveals, the Stein calligraphy tends to reduce the number of vertical strokes in 'boxes'). In addition, in Dūnhuáng manuscripts determinatives in the characters are frequently exchanged (in this case 餘 > 除 which obviously leads to a mistaken reading). 於 is a (dialect) loan for *rú* 如 'be like; resemble', however, I suspect that it also could be read as loan for *yī* 依 'be based on' (as exemplified in other passages). Thus, a tentative translation of the passage would be as below:

> "If you wish to listen to the teaching of the former sages each of you has to purify the mind and after having listened [to the teaching] you will produce the wish to eradicate your delusions by yourself and be enlightened in the same way as the former generations" (or a possible reading in Stein: "be enlightened in accord to the former sages").

The passage in the Yampolsky edition, amended with Kōshōji, is as follows:

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[68] In later editions the name of the person is Huìmíng 惠明.

[69] Yampolsky 1967: 134, fn. 51: "The Dūnhuáng text is unreadable here; Kōshōji, p. 18, has been followed."

願聞先聖教者各須淨心聞了願自除迷如先代聖人無別

"If you wish to hear the teachings of the sages of the past, each of you must quiet his mind and hear me to the end. Please cast aside your own delusions; then you will be no different from the sages of the past." (Yampolsky 1967: 134; ed. page 五)

The following passage is of great interest since the differences between the Stein and Dūnbó manuscripts are usually rather minor. However, in this case 18 characters are missing from Stein. This suggests that probably a complete line was omitted by the copyist (or by a copyist of an earlier copy, and the omission was preserved in this particular line of text transmission):

善知識遇悟即成智 (S.5475: 10.09)

And here is the Dūnbó version:

善知識愚人知人仏性本亦無差別只緣迷悟迷即為愚悟即成智

There are a few passages where both Stein and the other manuscripts are corrupt, as it is the case in the following example. Both S.5475: 10.12 and Dūnbó 77: 94–53.09–10 have 此義即是惠等 which makes little sense. Kōshōji resolves the passage in the following way:

此義即是惠定等 "[…] this means that wisdom and meditation are alike." (Yampolsky 1967: 135)

Part III:
A Few Textual Problems and Reflections on the Background of the *Platform Sūtra*

3.1 The Problem of the Title Page

Although the title of the Dūnhuáng version of the *Platform Sūtra* is the part which was transformed most radically in later versions of the text – abbreviated to the simple title *Liùzǔ tánjīng* is some editions – it poses numerous problems and there are surprisingly few studies on it.[70] Problems

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[70] There is, for example, a study by Fāng Guǎngchāng (1999), primarily discussing the question into how many sections the title should be divided, which phrases/parts

are already encountered in the visual presentation of the title on the title page. Characters on the title page of the Stein manuscript (see Figure 33; for the Dūnbó 77 title, see Figure 34) are of larger size as compared to the following pages. The title consists of three parts:

南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經
六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經一卷
兼受無相戒弘法弟子法海集記

Yampolsky translates the title the following way:[71]

> "*Southern School Sudden Doctrine, Supreme Mahāyāna Great Per-*
> *fection of Wisdom:*
> *The Platform Sutra Preached by the Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng at the*
> *Dàfàn Temple in Shàozhōu, one roll,*
> *recorded by the spreader of the Dharma, the disciple Fǎhǎi, who*
> *at the same time received the Precepts of Formlessness.*"

In the Stein manuscript the title consists of three lines, the first beginning on the top of the page, whereas the other two are indented, probably indicating that copyists considered the first part as the 'primary' title and the other two as 'secondary' ones. Interestingly, all the Dūnhuáng manuscripts have a break after 兼受無相 'all received the formless…' (the

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belong together, and where spaces should be inserted. He concludes that the title should be read in two parts:

南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經
六祖惠能大師於韶州大梵寺施法壇經一卷兼受無相戒弘法弟子法海集記

He also thinks that the small characters of 兼受無相 possibly indicate the 'topic' of the scripture and that the space inserted after the phrase symbolizes 'emptiness' (i.e. the 'formless' precepts; another interpretation is 'honorific space' after an important term; this was suggested by Christian Wittern in a personal discussion). However, these conclusions by Fāng Guǎngchāng remain tentative.

[71] Yampolsky 1967: 125. Although the contents of the *Platform Sūtra* is not the focus of this article, it should be noted that the self-reference '*jīng* 經' ('*sūtra*') must have felt outrageous to many contemporary readers, since there was no precedence for calling the work of a Chinese monk by this name (of course, *jīng* has been used many times previously for apocryphal scriptures which pretended to be translations of *sūtra*s but were in reality authored by Chinese monks), thus directly placing the sermon of the monk Huìnéng on the same level as the words of the Buddha. Even hundreds of years later, at a time when the Chán School had become deeply rooted in Chinese society, the monk Qìsòng had to justify the reference to this scripture as '*sūtra*' (see Yampolsky 1967: 125, fn. 1), and the scripture was in addition purged by a Liáo emperor because of this reason.

Stein version uses also smaller characters for the phrase),[72] although the break should be after 戒 and the phrase should read 兼受無相戒 'simultaneously received the formless precepts.' On the one hand, this seems to be a clear indication that the manuscripts belong to the same text family. In addition, it might also indicate that the copyist could not make sense of the phrase either. 'Formless precepts' was a relatively new term which had arisen as part of the practice of administering the Buddhist vows to lay persons during large congregations (壇 referring to the raised platform for delivering sermons and administering the precepts) and might have been unknown to the copyists. On the other hand, 無相 'formlessness' (Skr. *alakṣaṇa*) was a Mahāyāna Buddhist term frequently used in medieval Chinese Buddhist scriptures. This sequencing possibly reflects an attempt to make sense of the phrase. Since this break appears in all extant manuscripts it could be that the initial mistake, *if* it was indeed a mistake, became customized by successive copyists or that it was eventually even regarded as a special feature of the title. These conclusions, however, are tentative.[73]

There are also problems related to the translation of the title by Yampolsky. The word 受 'to receive' in 兼受無相戒 is most probably a phonetic loan for 授 'to bestow', and as such it should be read as 'to bestow the formless precepts.' This reading is also supported by the starting section and some other passages in the text:[74]

惠能大師於大梵寺講堂中昇高座說摩訶般若波羅蜜法受 (＝授) 無相戒 (S.5475: 02.04.01–03.01.10)

Great Master Huìnéng ascended the high-seat at the lecture hall of the Dàfàn Temple and expounded the teaching of the Great Perfection

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[72] In manuscript Dūnbó 77 兼受無相 is directly connected to the second part of the title, written in regular size letters. After an empty space of about 5 characters the phrase 戒弘法弟子法海集記 is added in smaller letters. The title in Dūnbó 77 consists of 2 lines. The title of the Lǚshùn manuscript consists, similar to the Stein manuscript, of three lines, all in large characters. The second line is indented and starts two characters below the first. The third part of the title is further indented and starts two characters below the second, suggesting a 'hierarchy' of titles. Above the second and third lines markers are inserted (in order to mark the separate titles in addition to the new line?). The title page of the Běijīng manuscript has not survived.

[73] On the other hand, the very length and unclear structure of the title invites ambiguity. Another rather outrageous feature of the title section is the inclusion of a conjunction (*jiān* 兼) which usually has the function of coordinating verbal phrases.

[74] On this point, see also Dèng and Róng 1999: 217–218, n. 2.

Ill. 1

Ill. 2

Ill. 3

Ill. 4

Ill. 5

Ill. 6

Ill. 7

Figures 1–7.

of Wisdom (Skr. *mahāprajñāpāramitā*) and *bestowed the Formless Precepts*.

Indeed, a more thorough philological/linguistic analysis of the title reveals that its meaning and structure is by no means trivial and straightforward. It is also possible that the first line of the title (i.e. 南宗頓教最上大乘摩訶般若波羅蜜經) does not refer to Huìnéng's text at all. Indeed,

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Ill. 8

Ill. 9

Ill. 10

Ill. 11

Ill. 12

Ill. 13

Ill. 14

Ill. 15

Ill. 16

Ill. 17

Ill. 18

Ill. 19

Figures 8–19.

it is unlikely that the *Platform Sūtra* would categorize itself as a *prajñā-pāramitā sūtra* which is a clearly defined category of scriptures in Indian and Chinese Buddhism. I think that this line – which is also the main part of the title – raises the possibility that it refers to the *Diamond Sūtra* (in one fascicle!) which constitutes the central doctrinal framework[75] of the text, as well as other texts in Dūnbó 77 where its doctrine and the *sūtra* itself is described with the highest attributes (see below). Thus, the first part of the title might have originally referred to the central scripture of the

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[75] Also, Jorgensen thinks that the parts concerning the *Diamond Sūtra* are among the earliest in the build-up of the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra*: "Therefore, although it is not possible to definitely produce a sequence in Shénhuì's corpus, it is most unlikely that the *Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* was interpolated into his works. Rather, it was a core foundation for his practice, and it therefore came to influence some elements of the creation of the *Platform Sūtra*, at least in its Dūnhuáng versions." (Jorgensen 2005: 611).

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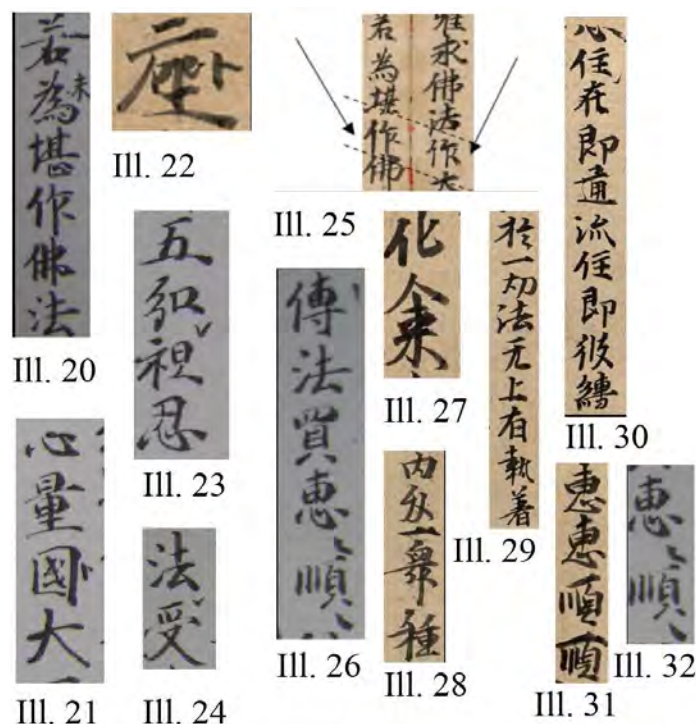
Figures 21–32.

text which also provides the doctrinal framework of the 'Southern School', i.e. the *Diamond Sūtra*. This sūtra also plays a crucial role in the rituals surrounding the bestowal of the precepts. The phrase 最上大乘[76] is in fact rare in canonical literature.[77] A possible reading of the first part of the

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[76] It should be also noted that in the text itself the teaching of the *Diamond Sūtra* is referred to as 最上乘法 'the teaching of the Highest/Supreme Vehicle'!

[77] There is also external evidence for this: in the commentary text *Xiāoshì Jīngāng jīng kēyí huìyào zhùjiě* 銷釋金剛經科儀會要註解 the term '最上大乘' is directly interpreted as referring to the *Diamond Sūtra* (CBETA, ZZ. vol. 24, no. 467: R092_p0434a18); see also *Ibid.*: R092_p0437b18: 夫欲了最上大乘。須具金剛正眼 'If you want to understand/complete the Supreme Mahāyāna you are obliged to be fully endowed with the *Diamond*-like True Eye (i.e. true understanding);' and *Ibid.*: R092_p0438a05: 夫欲了最上大乘。金剛經者。此經乃大乘終實之教。即般若大慧也 'If you wish to understand/complete the Supreme Mahāyāna, [this is] the *Diamond Sūtra*; this *sūtra* is the ultimately real teaching of Mahāyāna, it is the great wisdom of *prajñā*.' The phrase also appears in other commentaries to the *Diamond Sūtra*, the *Jīngāng jīng zhùjiě* 金剛經註解 (CBETA, ZZ. vol. 24, no. 468:R038_p0845a03) and the *Jīngāng jīng yǐng shuō* 金剛經郢說 (CBETA,
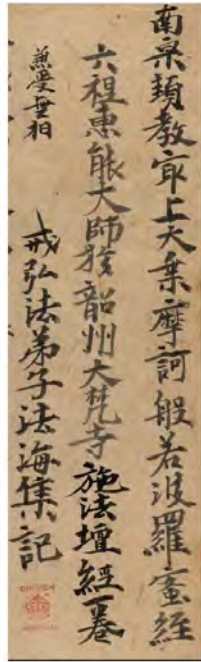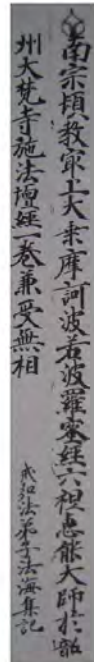
Figures 33–34.

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ZZ. vol. 25, no. 488: R039_p0624a16). In canonical literature, the phrase appears for example in the *[Mahā]ratnakūta* (*Dàbǎojí jīng* 大寶集經), T.11, no. 310: 543a3. However, most frequently the term appears in texts of 'esoteric' Buddhism, for example in the *Dàshèng yújiā jīngāng xìnghǎi mànshūshìlì qiānbì qiānbō dàjiào wáng jīng* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經.

"The *Dàshèng yújiā jīngāng xìnghǎi mànshūshìlì qiānbì qiānbō dàjiào wáng jīng*. 10 fascicles (T 1177A.20.724–776), abbreviated as *Great Tantra of Mañjuśrī* 文殊大教王經, and as *Thousand Bowls Sūtra* 千鉢經, trans. unknown (attributed to Amoghavajra 不空 and Hyecho 慧超 in colophon). The unique form of Mañju-śrī it describes is represented in art dating from the late Táng, Xīxià and Northern Sòng. […] this is an apocryphon based partly on the *Avataṃsaka* 華嚴, […] The account given in the colophon (probably also apocryphal) states Hyecho was working on it with Vajrabodhi for several years when Vajrabodhi died, the later sections still untranslated. Per Vajrabodhi's instructions, the Sanskrit text was sent back to India. Subsequently Hyecho worked on this text with Amoghavajra, with whom the translation was completed. Hyecho's relation with Amoghavajra is on firmer footing, confirmed by additional primary sources, although there is no confirmation of their having worked on the *Mañjuśrī Sūtra*" (*Digital Diction-ary of Buddhism* [I. Sinclair, D. Lusthaus]).

title[78] would be 'The Supreme *Mahāyāna Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (referring to the *Diamond Sūtra*) of the Southern School's Sudden Teaching.' Since the hybrid structure of extant versions of the Dūnhuáng *Platform* scripture suggests that certain parts had been added later (e.g. the 'autobiographical' part,[79] the transmission verses), the passages with *prajñāpāramitā* text references and teachings must have been the very nucleus of the text.

Seen from a linguistic point of view, even the second part of the title could be interpreted as containing no direct reference to Huìnéng as the author of the *Platform Sūtra*. Along the lines of the interpretation of the first part of the title one could interpret it as referring back to the *prajñāpāramitā* (*Diamond*) *sūtra* mentioned in the first line:

> [This is] the *sūtra* [used at the occasion] *of the Platform* [precept ceremonies] (or: the *Platform Sūtra*, meaning the *Diamond Sūtra*) in one fascicle [used by] the Sixth Patriarch Great Master Huìnéng when bestowing the dharma at the Dàfàn Temple in Shàozhōu.

I also want to challenge the translation of the third line by Yampolsky ("…*recorded by the spreader of the Dharma, the disciple Fǎhǎi, who at the same time received the Precepts of Formlessness*"). As mentioned above, 受 'to receive' is probably 授 'to give, to bestow', as evidenced by later parts of the text. Thus, the scope of the conjunction 兼 has to be interpreted differently:

Bùkōng 不空 (i.e. Amoghavajra), the alleged translator of this esoteric text, was active in the Northwestern area (Héxī 河西) around the year 753. Could it be that the compilation of the Dūnhuáng versions of the *Platform Sūtra* was directly influenced by 'esoteric' Buddhist practices? This interpretation seems even more likely considering the status of the *Diamond Sūtra* described as important mantra in the *Platform Sūtra* and the other texts on Dūnbó 77.

Most prominently – and in combination with the term 金剛 'Diamond' – the phrase appears many times in the late tantric text *Zuìshàng dàshèng jīngāng dàjiào bǎowáng jīng* 最上大乘金剛大教寶王經 (T.20, no. 1128; *Vajragarbharatnarājatantra*?, translated in the late 10th century by Fǎtiān 法天).

[78] Yampolsky avoids the problem of the title's first line by (rather arbitrarily) separating it into two parts.

[79] This part is embedded as direct speech by the Sixth Patriarch, although it is written partly in the style of Buddhist historiographical writings. Suspicious is also the self-reference 'Huìnéng' instead of the pronoun 我 which is used in later parts of the text when direct speech of Huìnéng is recorded (sometimes the pronoun 吾 is also used and this seems to have an emphatic function is many Chán texts). In addition, the structure of the 'autobiographical' part is unresolved, being featured as direct speech in which other layers of direct speech are embedded.

[…] and [at the same time of bestowing the dharma he] administered the Formless Precepts; [the sermon helt at that occasion of] being recorded by his disciple Fǎhǎi.

3.2 Prajñā Thought in the *Platform Sūtra*

References to the *Diamond Sūtra* and *prajñā* thought are abundant:[80]

[…] 同請大師說摩訶般若波羅蜜法 (S.5475: 03.02.18–03.03.07)

[…] [they] all asked the great master to expound the *prajñāpāramitā* teaching

能大師言：“善知識，淨心念摩訶般若波羅蜜法。” (S.5475: 03.05.06–03.06.01)

Master Huìnéng said: “Good friends, purify your minds and re-cite/contemplate the *prajñāpāramitā* teaching.”

In the episode where Huìnéng as a boy sells firewood and gets enlightened when hearing the *Diamond Sūtra* being recited by a customer:

卻向門前忽見一客讀金剛經；惠能一聞心名（明）便悟。
(S.5475: 03.09.17 –03.10.16)

Just when turning towards the front of the gate I saw a customer reciting the *Diamond Sūtra*; the moment I heard it my mind cleared up and thereupon was awakened.

The passage continues with Huìnéng inquiring from where the customer had brought the scripture, whereupon the man informs him that he had brought it from Mt. Huángméi, the residence of the Fifth Patriarch Hóngrěn. Thus, this scripture plays a crucial role in directly connecting Huìnéng with his future teacher. The customer continues telling Huìnéng about his visit at Hóngrěn's and the large assembly gathered there. Again, he stresses the central role of the *Diamond Sūtra in one fascicle* (remember the title!) and concludes:

我於彼聽見大師勸道俗但持金剛經一卷即得見性直了成佛。[81]

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[80] If not otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

[81] Note this construction: indirect speech embedded in a pivot construction, the whole being part of direct speech (by the 'customer'); this direct speech is again embedded in direct speech (by Huìnéng)!

At that place I heard the Great Master [Hóngrěn] convincing monks and lay persons that by just reciting/upholding the *Diamond Sūtra* in one fascicle they would be able to see their nature, gain direct understanding and become a Buddha.

五祖夜知(至)三更喚惠能堂內說金剛。惠能一聞言下便伍(悟)

When the night reached the third watch the Fifth Patriarch called Huìnéng into the Hall and expounded the *Diamond Sūtra* [for him]. The moment when Huìnéng heard it he was enlightened by its words.

Also the section on Huìnéng's teachings, immediately following the 'autobiographical' section, is introduced with a reference to *prajñāpāramitā*:

惠能大師喚言：“善知識，菩提般若之知世人本自有之

Great Master Huìnéng called [his students] and said: "Good friends, the knowledge of *bodhi-prajñā* is something which all persons are naturally endowed with."

Note the multilayered (and redundant) usage of 'knowledge/wisdom' in this phrase: enlightenment (菩提, Skr. *bodhi*), wisdom (般若, Skr. *prajñā*), and 知 (knowledge/wisdom);[82] it seems as if the author was playing with the foreign sounding transliterations here; there is additional emphasis by topicalizing this phrase at the beginning of the sentence; it is resumed as an object by 之 after the main verb 有.

In the following passage, *prajñā* is defined as the absence of thinking processes:

何名 「般若」？ 般若是智惠。 一時中， 念念不思， 常行智惠， 即名般若行。

What is called '*prajñā*'? *Prajñā* is wisdom. At all times and every thought moment one does not engage in reflection (thinking) but constantly practices wisdom; this is called the practice of *prajñā*.

何名「般若波羅蜜」？ 此是西國梵音，唐言彼岸到。

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[82] The combination 菩提般若 is also very rare in Buddhist literature. There is an example in the *Jīngāng sānmèi jīng* 金剛三昧經論 (attributed to the Silla monk Yúanxiǎo元曉, T.34, no. 1730: 974c09) in the term *ānòuduōluó-sānmiǎosānpútí-bōrě* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提般若.

What is called '*prajñāpāramitā*'? This is a Sanskrit sound (lit. 'Brahma-sound') from the Western country (i.e. India), in the language of the Táng (i.e. Chinese) [it means] 'arrived at the other shore.'

The *Diamond Sūtra* is also described as essential for entering the ultimate Dharma-realm and the '*prajñā-samādhi*' (based on S.5475):

善知識， 若欲入甚深法界， 入般若三昧者， 須修般若波羅蜜行， 但持《金剛般若波羅蜜經》一卷， 即得見性入般若三昧。 當知此人功德無量。 [...] 此是最上乘法， 為大智上根人 說。

Good friends! If you wish to enter the very deepest Dharma-realm and to enter the Samādhi of Prajñā you have to cultivate the practice of *prajñāpāramitā*. Just keep in mind (lit. hold; i.e. to recite) the *Vajracchedika prajñāpāramitā sūtra* in one fascicle and you will be instantly able to see your [Buddha-]nature and enter the Samādhi of Prajñā. You should know that such a person's merits are countless. [...] This is the dharma of the Supreme Vehicle and expounded for men of great wisdom and superior capacity.[83]

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[83] Compare the later version in T.48, no. 2008: 350a10–23:

師陞座。 告大眾曰。 總淨心念摩訶般若波羅蜜多。 復云。 善知識。 菩提般若之智。 世人本自有之。 只緣心迷。 不能自悟。 須假大善知識。 示導見性。 當知愚人智人。 佛性本無差別。 只緣迷悟不同。 所以有愚有 智。吾今為說摩訶般若波羅蜜法。 使汝等各得智慧。 志心諦聽。 吾為汝 說。善知識。 世人終日口念般若。 不識自性般若。 猶如說食不飽。 口但說空。萬劫不得見性。 終無有益。 善知識。 摩訶般若波羅蜜是梵語。 此言大智慧到彼岸。 此須心行。 不在口念。 口念心不行。 如幻. 如化. 如露. 如電。口念心行。 則心口相應。 本性是佛。 離性無別佛。 何名摩訶。 摩訶是大。心量廣大。 猶如虛空。

The master ascended the seat and addressed the assembly, saying: "All of you, purify your mind and recite the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*." He continued and said: "Good friends! As for the wisdom of *bodhi-prajñā*, worldly people are naturally bestowed with it, they are just deluded because of their mind and are unable to be enlightened themselves. They have to rely on a great teacher who guides them to see their [Buddha-] nature. You should know that Buddha-nature of an ignorant person and a wise person is fundamentally not different. Only in terms of 'delusion' and 'enlightenment' they differ [from each other]. Therefore there exists ignorance and there exists wisdom. Today, I expound the dharma of *prajñāpāramitā* to you, causing all of you to attain wisdom. Concentrate your mind and listen carefully, I am going to expound [it] for you. Good friends, worldly people recite *prajñā* in their mouth until the end of their days and they are not aware of that their own nature is *prajñā*. It is like talking about food but not being satiated. If one talks about emptiness only with one's mouth then one will not be able to see one's Nature for 10,000 kalpas and there will be no profit in the end. Good friends,

S.5475: 20.08.05-17 (Dūnbó 77: 94-125.03.05-17):

若大乘者，聞說《金剛經》，心開悟解。

As for the Great Vehicle, if one listens to the *Diamond Sūtra*, the mind opens and one is awakened.

S.5475: 21.06-08 (Dūnbó 77: 94-127.03-04):

心修此行，　即與般若波羅蜜多心經本無差別，　一切經書及文字，小大二乘，十二部經，皆因人置。

[If] one cultivates this practice in the mind, then there is fundamentally no difference to the *Heart Sūtra* (*Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra*); all scriptures and written words, the Small and Great Vehicle, the scriptures in the twelve divisions, all are established based on men (i.e. they are expedient means). [?]

Interestingly there are also differences in the concluding phrase of the *Platform Sūtra* texts: Dūnbó 77 has 南宗頓教最上大乘壇經一卷 'The *Platform Sūtra* in one fascicle of the Greatest Vehicle of the Sudden Teaching of the Southern School', whereas the Stein manuscript has 法 inserted after 壇: 'The sūtra of the *teachings of* the *Platform* [i.e. *Diamond Sūtra* in my interpretation]…', in other words a sermon held on the occasion of lecturing on the *Platform Sūtra* and administering the precepts.

3.2 *Prajñā* Thought in the Writings of Shénhuì

The great interest in the *Diamond Sūtra* is also reflected in texts attributed to or associated with Shénhuì. In the *Pútídámó nánzōng dìng shìfēi lùn* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論 the importance of the *Diamond Sūtra* is described the following way:[84]

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mahāprajñāparāmitā is a Sanskrit word. It means 'to reach the other shore with great wisdom.' It should be practiced in the mind and not only recited in the mouth. If one recites it in the mouth and does not practice it in one's mind it is like a delusion, like a transformation, like dew, like lightening. If one recites it in one's mouth and practices it in one's mind then mind and mouth correspond. The original Nature is Buddha, apart from the Nature there is no other Buddha. What does '*mahā*' mean? '*Mahā*' means 'great.' The mind capacity in vast and great, like empty space."

[84] Dūnbó 77, based on the collated edition Dèng and Róng 1999: 63–66.

師曰：『禪何行？』 和上答： 『修般若波羅蜜法， 行般若波
羅蜜行。』 遠法師問曰： 『何故不修餘法， 不行餘行？唯獨
修般若波羅蜜法（＋行般若波羅蜜行）？』 和上答： 『修學
般若波羅蜜者， 能攝一切法， 行般若波羅蜜行， 是一切行之
根本。 金剛般若波羅蜜， 最尊最勝最第一， 無生（＋無） 滅
無去來， 一切諸佛從中出。』 和上言： 『告諸知識， 若欲得
了達甚深法界， 置入一行三昧者， 先須誦持 《金剛般若波羅
蜜經》， 修學般若波羅蜜。 何以故？ 誦持 《金剛般若波羅蜜
經》者， 當知是人不從小功德來。 譬如帝王生得太子， 若同
俗例者， 無有是處。 何以故？ 為從最尊最貴處來。 誦持《金
剛般若波羅蜜經》， 亦復如是。 […]

The master said: "What does one practice in Chán?" The Preceptor
answered: "One cultivates the *prajñāpāramitā* dharma (teaching) and
performs the *prajñāpāramitā* practice." Dharma Master Yuán asked:
"Why does one not cultivate any additional dharma and performs
any additional practices? Does one exclusively cultivate the *prajñā-
pāramitā* dharma (teaching) and perform the *prajñāpāramitā* prac-
tice?" The Preceptor answered: "If one engages in the cultivation and
study of *prajñāpāramitā* one will be able to combine all dharmas
(teachings) [in this practice]; to perform the practice of *prajñāpāra-
mitā* is the foundation of all practices. The *Vajracchedikā (Diamond)-
prajñāpāramitā* is the most honoured, the most excellent, the ulti-
mate, it does not arise and does not perish and without leaving and
coming, all buddhas emerge from it." The preceptor said: "Good
friends, I tell you: If you want to thoroughly understand the very pro-
found dharma-realm and directly enter the One-Practice *samādhi*, you
first have to recite and (mentally) hold on to the *Diamond Sūtra*
(*Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), cultivate and study the *pra-
jñāpāramitā*. What is the reason for this? As for those reciting and
(mentally) holding on to the *Diamond Sūtra*, you should know that
this person does not come from [a position of] minor merits. It can be
likened to a king who gives birth to a prince. [This prince] being equal
to regular people, there is no such a thing (i.e. this is utterly impossible)!
What is the reason for this? It is because [the prince] comes from a
place (i.e. origin) which is most excelled and most noble. Reciting and
(mentally) holding on to the *Diamond Sūtra* is exactly like this! […]"

The text continues[85] with a thorough account of the merits accumulated
through the possession, recitation and concentration (誦持), practice and

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[85] See *Ibid.*: 66–94.

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study (修學) of the *Diamond Sūtra*, with citations from *prajñāpāramitā* literature. Among other aspects *prajñāpāramitā* and especially the *Diamond Sūtra* are likened to a 'precious jewel' (如寶), 'unchangeable' (不變異), pertaining to 'thusness' (如如), 'beyond all duality, form and no-form' (離相無相), 'transcending thought' (遠離思量) and 'going beyond written words' (過諸文字), being the foundation for collecting unfathomable merit (所獲功德不可思量), the 'mother scripture' of all buddhas (一切佛母經), the 'patriarch of all dharmas' (一切諸法祖師), the 'secret repository of all buddhas' (一切諸佛秘密藏), the 'dharma of magical formula' (Skr. *dhāraṇī*, 總持法), the 'spell/*dhāraṇī* of great magical power' (大神咒), the '*dhāraṇī* which is unsurpassed' (無上咒) and 'without equal' (無等咒), capable of removing all suffering; 'real and not unsubstantial' (真實不虛), the foundation of the 'supreme enlightenment' (阿耨多羅三藐三菩提, Skr. *anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi*) of all the buddhas, etcetera. The *Diamond* scripture is also said to have the power of extinguishing all sin in every person practicing its teaching (是人其罪即滅) and eventually enables a person to receive the prediction of enlightenment and become a Buddha himself. The text continues elaborating the merits which are gained by teaching the *Diamond Sūtra* to others.

The interest in *prajñāpāramitā* thought might be also the reason why a text by an author who was usually associated with the 'Northern School' of Chán was appended to Dūnbó 77. Thus the sequence of the texts compiled in this manuscript might not only be motivated by the wish to harmonize the teachings of the northern and southern branches (as was suggested by a number of scholars) but the text was rather appended since it was a commentary on a *prajñāpāramitā* text. As such, Dūnbó 77 is a collection of treatises and sermons connected to *prajñāpāramitā* teachings. As was already noted by Yáng Zēngwén, Jorgensen, and other scholars, *prajñāpāramitā* thought plays a prominent role in the *Platform Sūtra* and other texts related to early Chán school. There is also great emphasis on the notion of textual transmission which is usually interpreted as a shift away from 'concrete' transmission symbols such as the monk's robe and monk's bowl to (moveable and easily reproducible and distributable) texts in the form of the *Platform Sūtra*. It is well-known that in medieval China the possession and reproduction of texts was of paramount importance in the practice of Buddhism and associated with the accumulation of great merit.[86] An analysis of the build-up of the Dūnhuáng *Platform*

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[86] The importance of text reproduction is evidenced by the large number of copies of canonical scriptures among the Dūnhuáng findings. Also 'non-canonical' apoc-

Sūtra suggests that its composition is layered and that it is not the 'original' version of the text. What is striking is the length of the title and that there is a definite ambiguity concerning the way the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra* uses the word 'sūtra'. In several passages it does not seem quite obvious whether the 'sūtra' is referring to itself or rather to the *Vajracchedikā* which is the central doctrinal foundation of the text. Is it possible that originally the text was not meant to constitute the 'sūtra' spoken by the Sixth Patriarch at all? Was it rather a sermon given on the occasion of administering the precepts at large gatherings of lay believers, with other elements being eventually added to it (such as parts of the 'biographical/autobiographical' section and, for example, sections concerning Huì-néng's students)? As was demonstrated above, *prajñāpāramitā* thought, and specifically the *Vajracchedikā*, were of great importance for the early Chán community and especially the circle around the monk Shénhuì, as well as being connected to precept rituals mixed with esoteric elements. It seems possible that the *Vajracchedikā* was used as central texts at these gatherings, being recited and lectured upon. Thus it seems possible that the original reference to a text to be transmitted signified the *Vajracchedikā* in one fascicle rather than the sermon itself. The structure of the title supports this possibility: First, the title is constructed in a way that it is not obvious at all whether the text refers to itself as 'sūtra'; second, the wording is unusual and ambiguous in terms of the referent. It should be noted that the title of the text was the part which was most radically restructured and changed when the text was expanded and altered during the Sòng dynasty, finally leaving no doubt that 'sūtra' refers to the text itself. However, this probably was a gradual development and motivated by changes within the Chán movement's doctrinal and ideological framework.

It should also be noted at this point that this transformation – which gives evidence to a radically changing self-image and public perception of Chán – is also notable in the development of new literary genres and the status of the 'Chán master'. Parallel to the development of the *Platform Sūtra* into a scripture on the level of those spoken by the very Buddha, we see a transformation of the image of the Chán master – following in the footsteps of Huìnéng – into a person embodying the very mind of the Buddha, this mind being transmitted from generation to generation as outlined in the Chán transmission texts. One of the causes of this develop-

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rypha enjoyed enormous popularity and many of these scriptures provide detailed instructions concerning their copying as well as the merits resulting from it.

ment is possibly found in the *prajñāpāramitā* scriptures which were so important for Chán adherents during the 8th century and later periods.

Although there might have been several versions of the *Platform Sūtra* circulating during the Táng, there is no indication that the text was widely known and there are very few sources connecting Huìnéng to a *Platform Sūtra* dating from the Táng Dynasty.[87] Probably its influence was restricted to certain factions of Chán (such as the faction of Shénhuì and his disciples) or was circulating only in local environments such as in the Dūnhuáng region.[88] In addition, a scripture authored by a Chinese monk and boldly claiming to be a 'sūtra' without doubt had caused strong reactions within Buddhist communities in Táng China, occasionally generating responses during the Sòng dynasty.[89] As was demonstrated above, in the Dūnhuáng version of the Táng dynasty the title of the text is constructed in a way that Huìnéng's 'authorship' is not easy to deduct. In contrast to this, later versions clearly refer to the text as *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriach* (*Liùzǔ tánjīng* 六祖壇經), leaving no doubt that Huìnéng was considered the author of the sūtra. During that time the text was already edited, polished, and expanded, making it acceptable to the Chán community in terms of the doctrinal framework, and to Sòng literati in terms of its literary structure. As was noted previously, the *Platform Sūtra's* use of poetry in particular had a lasting influence on Chán literary expression. Although the text's claim of being a 'sūtra' entailed sporadic reactions during the Sòng Dynasty, this claim must have had a different impact when advanced by the Chán School than during the Táng Dynasty. By Sòng

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[87] The question whether there were several versions of the text circulating during the Táng dynasty remains unresolved.

[88] A possible explanation for the fact that the text is not mentioned in Táng sources could be that it started circulating in Dūnhuáng during the period after the Tibetan invasion, when communication between the region and other parts of China was cut off.

[89] For example, the scripture was banned from the Buddhist canon (together with the *Bǎolín zhuàn* 寶林傳 from 801) shortly after Qìsōng's death (Yampolsky 1967: 106). Several hundred years after the emergence of the Dūnhuáng version of the text, in the postface to the Zōngbǎo edition the appellation 'sūtra' is justified the following way:

六祖大師平昔所說之法。　皆大乘圓頓之旨。故目之曰經。其言近指遠。詞坦義明。

"The Dharma always preached in the past by the Sixth Patriarch, the Great Master, was entirely the perfect and sudden teaching of the Mahāyāna. Therefore, it is called a 'sūtra'. Its words [use] what is close to point to what is remote; its phrases are straightforward (literally, 'level') and its meaning clear." (T.48, no. 2008: 364c; tr. in McRae 2000: 108)

times Chán had become the dominant Buddhist school, with close ties to the court and the literati, as well as an organized institutional framework. By contrast, Chán during the Táng dynasty was by and large a phenomenon associated with different factions and places, particular practices and doctrinal frameworks often being tied to certain localities, often with only regional significance. These groups were engaged in factional disputes and competed with many other equally influential Buddhist schools of thought.

4.3 Some Final Reflections

Although these conclusions must remain tentative, an analysis of the textual features of the *Platform Sūtra* suggest the following possibilites:

It is possible that the *Platform Sūtra* in an earlier (and shorter) form was not composed as a 'sūtra' spoken by the Sixth Patriarch at all, but was rather a transcription of a sermon given at the occasions of mass congregations centered around the bestowal of precepts, with rituals focused on the immensely popular *Diamond Sūtra*[90] and its mantric power of salvation. These rituals were in accordance with Buddhist practices connected to the bestowal of the Bodhisattva precepts to large congregations. Accordingly, this was the 'sūtra' used at the occasion of the Platform precept ceremo-

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[90] "For instance, Yáng Zēngwén thinks that Huìnéng's *Platform Sūtra* made use of the *Vajracchedikā* name and ideas, something also found in the works of Dàoxìn and Hóngrěn. Yáng considers that Shénhuì developed this use much further because of its increased popularity due to imperial sponsorship of the *Vajracchedikā* from 732, and that Shénhuì hoped to gain court approval thereby." (Jorgensen 2005: 607, based on Yáng Zēngwén 1993: 274–275). "Indeed, the *Vajracchedikā* was most popular in the Táng, with at least several thousand copies or fragments found in the Dūnhuáng collections" (*Ibid.*: 607). The importance of the *Diamond Sūtra* in the teachings of Shénhuì is described in the following way by Jorgensen:

"Shénhuì's use of the *Vajracchedikā* shows he was also aware of the 'popular' conceptions of the magical properties of the sūtra. […] he states that a reader or reciter of the *Vajracchedikā* can remove all previous evil karma and gain supreme insight (*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*). He mentions its magic properties as a great *dhāranī* and *mantra*, and that by faithfully accepting it one will have limitless merit. He called it the mother of all sūtras and the 'patriarchal teacher of all the dharmas.' Only by reciting it could one directly enter into the *yìxíng sānmèi* (Samadhi) [一行三昧 'One Practice Samadhi' referring to an important term in the early Chán School] etcetera." (Jorgensen 2005: 609; based on Yáng Zēngwén 1996: 35–36 and Dèng and Róng 1998: 66–73.)

nies.[91] The extant Dūnhuáng versions of the text reflect a transitional state of the text with ambiguous references to 'sūtra', a hyper-complex title (as

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[91] For a very good description of these mass congregations, see Adamek 2007: 67ff. As van Schaik has pointed out, 壇 (Skr. *maṇḍala*, Ch. *màntúluó* 曼荼羅) refers to the raised platform which was built for rituals related to the bestowal of the precepts (van Schaik, forthcoming: 16). These practices (described in the *Lìdài fǎbǎo jì* 歷代法寶記) were an important part of the Bǎotáng 寶唐 School of Chán: "These practices included mass ordinations into the lineage of the bodhisattva vow, performed at night on rituals platforms referred to as maṇḍala." (*Ibid.*). This Sìchuān lineage of Chán had a great impact on Tibetan Chán. In terms of the connection between Chán and the *Diamond Sūtra*, it is noteworthy that Pelliot tibétain 116, one of the most important manuscripts for the reconstruction of Tibetan Chán, contains in addition to Chán materials a copy of the *Vajraccedika* (*Ibid.*).

On these platforms the precepts were conferred during the *guàndǐng* 灌頂 (lit. 'sprinkling water on the forehead'; Skr. *abhiṣeka*) ceremony (an activity which the charismatic monk Shénhuì was known for). In his article on Dūnhuáng Chán manuscripts, Sørensen discusses the syncretic features of many Dūnhuáng Chán scriptures and mentions a rather long text which seems to be an almalgation of practices conventionally referred to as Esoteric and Chán Buddhism. This scripture (claiming to be authored by the Esoteric Master Amoghavajra) on P.3913 with the elephantine name (which I will not attempt to translate here…) *Jīngāng jùnjīng jīngāng dǐng yīqiè rúlái shènmiào mìmì jīngāng jiè dà sānmèiyé xiūxíng sìshíèrzhǒng tánfǎjīng zuòyòng wēi fǎ yízé dà Pílúzhēnà jīngāng xīndì fǎmén mìfǎ-jiè tánfǎ yízé* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來甚妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二重壇法經作用威法儀則大毗盧遮那金剛心地法門秘法戒壇法儀則 is written in the style of a sūtra but has been indentified as an apocryphon probably dating from the late Táng. The text is more concisely also referred to as 'Ritual Guidelines for the Platform dharma' (*Tánfǎ yízé* 壇法儀則). The text is divided into thirty-five sections, each section dealing with a specific function of the Platform ceremonies. The instructions are very detailed and include the exact size and material for building the platforms, as well as the dates when the rituals should be performed for the specific purposes. In addition, the decoration and the rituals to be performed are described in great detail, as well as the merits achieved through the perfomance of the rituals. In many sections the role of the ruler is emphasized and many rituals are connected to the protection of the state (*hùguó* 護國) and its people. The last part of the text is the longest and most elaborate and deals with the transmission of Chán (from page 113, line 5 onwards in the Dūnhuáng booklet). After the description of the transmission of the Indian patriarchs, the Six Chán patriarchs from Bodhidharma (the 32rd Patriarch, page 138 of the booklet) to Huìnéng (37th Patriarch) are described. It is interesting that not the appellation *zǔ* 祖 'patriarch' (or *zǔshī* 祖師) is used, as it is typically done in Chán transmission texts, but the rather long appellation *fù fǎzàng rénshèngzhě* 付法藏仁聖者 'benevolent sage transmitting the Dharma-treasure'. The transmission between the patriarchs takes place after they ascended to the 'Diamond Realm of Vairoccana' (*Dà pílú jīngāng jiè* 大毗盧金剛界). As such, Chán transmission is placed in a somewhat esoteric framework. The transmission is also placed at the stage of attainment of the '8th

commonly also found in esoteric scriptures), and additional elements rather clumsily integrated in the text (especially parts of the section with Huì-néng's autobiography, but also the lineage list and the transmission verses, and possibly the passages eluding to the inferior practices of the Northern School). Subtracting all these parts, the sections on precept rituals and the *Diamond Sūtra* with its teachings and powers become the core message of the text.[92] The Dūnhuáng versions also contain specific markers which indicate the ritual function of the text in the performance of the precept bestowal. After the introductory section with the (auto)biographical information and the account of the 'poem competition' with Shénxiù, the text focuses on the 'Formless Precepts.' The 'performance markers' (written in small characters) indicate how many times specific parts of the text have to be chanted *unisono* (by the congregation). The conferral of the precepts is performed in several stages, each section followed by a short sermon in which the precepts are explained with metaphorical language and in terms of the functioning of the mind/nature. First, the bestowal of the 'formless precepts' is invoked three times: 於自色身歸衣 (依) 清淨法身佛，於自色身歸衣 (依) 千百億化身佛，於自色身歸衣 (依) 當來圓滿報身佛。已上三唱 "'I take refuge in the pure Dharmakāya Buddha in my own physical body. I take refuge in the ten thousand hundred billion Nirmāṇakāya Buddhas in my own physical body. I take refuge in the future perfect Sambhogakāya Buddha in my own physical body. I take refuge in the future perfect Sambhogakāya Buddha in my own physical body.' *Recite the above three times*." (S.5475, ed. Yampolsky 1967: 八, tr. in *Ibid*.: 141; emphasis added). During the next step the 'four great vows' (四弘大願) are invoked three times: 眾生無邊誓願度，煩惱無邊誓願斷，法門無邊誓願學，無上佛道誓願成。三唱。 "'[Although] the sentient beings are countless I vow to save them [all]; [although] the afflictions are countless, I vow to cut them [all]; [although] the dharma teachings are countless I vow to study them [all]; I vow to complete the unsurpassed Way of the Buddha.' *Chant three times*." (S.5475, ed. Yam-

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level of Bodhisatvahood'. After the description of this transmission the text returns to the 'Platform dharmas' (the text enumerates 42 of these) as the essence of the Buddhist teachings and the foundation of attaining 'unexcelled bodhi' (*wú-shàng pútí* 無上菩提). More along the line of esoteric interpretations, the object of transmission is identified as 'the secretely transmitted mind-seal' (蜜傳心印地相, p. 142); see also Anderl 2012: 5, fn. 9.

[92] At a second thought it seems even more unlikely that such a text stripped down to a version including so many passages dealing with *prajñāpāramitā* thought should claim to be a 'sūtra' in its own right!

polsky 1967: 九). During the last part the 'formless repentances' (無相懺悔) are invoked three times.[93] Central terms in the explanation of the precepts and in the following passages are the apophatic *wúniàn* 無念 ('no thought'), *wúxiàng* 無相 ('no-form; formlessness') and *wúzhù* 無住 ('non-abiding'), expressions which also figure prominently in the Bǎotáng School and the teachings of Shénhuì.[94]

The extant textual features also suggest that all Dūnhuáng versions belong to the same original stemmata, although there are significant differences in their use of phonetic loans and other textual features. The Dūnhuáng versions indicate that the text had distinctly oral features and was copied in this context. Of special interest are the passages where *all* manuscripts are corrupt. This is on the one hand proof of the interdependence of the manuscripts, on the other hand the textual features also witness of an extended process of copying and the accumulation of mistakes. Since mistakes and corrupted passages are only fragmentarily identified and corrected by respective copyists and/or readers there is a progressive degeneration of the textual features in the course of time. Naturally, the Stein manuscript contains most textual problems.[95] This brings up the more general question in what context were the manuscripts copied and how they were used, since the many corruptions render extensive part of the manuscripts unintelligible?

Another feature of the Dūnhuáng *Platform Sūtra* discussed here is its close connection to precept practices[96] and esoteric practices, an aspect which deserves a more elaborate investigation in the future studies. More generally, in his study of Chán Dūnhuáng texts, Sørensen emphasizes the textual problems related to many Chán texts as well as their hybrid and syncretic features:

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[93] This passage contains many corruptions in the S.5475 version. For a translation see Yampolsky 1967: 144.

[94] Compare, for example, the central terms in the *Lìdài fǎbǎo jì*: *wúyì* 無憶 ('no-recollection'), *wúxiǎng* 無想 ('no-thought'), and *mòwàng* 莫妄 ('not allow the unreal') (van Schaik, forthcoming: 16).

[95] It will be exiting to compare the textual features of the newly discovered Lǚshùn manuscript which is also of late origin (10th century).

[96] E.g. the many references to the *Diamond Sūtra* and its power of salvation, the many sections aimed at promoting its recitation and worship of the text. A common feature with esoteric scriptures is the very title of the *Platform* Dūnhuáng version, including its length and terminology. In the Shénhuì sermon immediately preceding the Platform scripture in the Dūnbó manuscript, references to the mantric power of the *Diamond Sūtra* are even more numerous and direct.

> One of the main characteristics of the Dūnhuáng Chán manuscripts is their great diversity in terms of literature. Despite the fact that several manuscripts testify to a relatively high literary standard, a large number of them have been written in a decidedly provincal or even countrified form, not to mention the countless basic scribal errors, something which can only be explained as a lack of proper schooling on the part of the writer.   (Sørensen 1989: 117)[97]

As such, the Dūnhuáng versions of the *Platform Sūtra* possibly constitute a transitional phase in the formation of the text. A phase when originally 'external references' to 'sūtra' (i.e. directly referring to the *Diamond Sūtra*) gradually shifted or were interpreted as 'internal references' (i.e. identifying the sermon/text as 'sūtra' itself). The structure of the title, the terminology used, as well as the performative instructions in the text and the prominent role of the mantric power of the *Diamond Sūtra* suggest a close connection to practices centered around rituals performed at the occasion of the bestowal of Bodhisattva precepts at large congregations of lay followers. As was demonstrated, this connection of Dūnhuáng Chán and Platform ceremonies can be evidenced by a number of other Dūnhuáng texts. This amalgation of Chán and esoteric practices might have been a feature typical for Dūnhuáng Chán and needs further investigation in future studies. This regional signifance of the *Platform* texts in Dūnhuáng and their gradual development into a 'sūtra' – which was maybe triggered and accompanied by other factors in the development of the Chán schools during the late Táng and the Five Dynasties period – may also explain the nearly complete absence of references to this text during Táng times.

It should also be noted that seen from a doctrinal and even literary viewpoint, the *Platform Sūtra* in its Dūnhuáng versions must have been

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[97] Based on the studies of Tanaka Ryōshū (e.g. 1983: 135–166), Sørensen focuses on the esoteric features found in many Dūnhuáng Chán texts. Esoteric masters such as Amoghavajra (705–774) enjoyed immense popularity from the 8th century onwards and the influence of Zhēnyán 真言 (Jap. Shingon) teachings spread also to the Northwestern region. Dūnhuáng Chán received initial influence from the Sìchuān Bǎotáng Chán School (Sørensen 1989: 129) and many copies and fragments of the *Lìdài fǎbǎo jì* 歷代法寶記 can be found among the Dūnhuáng Chán treatises. The Chán master Móhēyán (Mahāyāna) was a second generation disciple of the Northern School master Shénxiù 神秀 (which figures as the famous antagonist of Huìnéng in the *Platform Sūtra*) and spent several years in Dūnhuáng during the 8th century. More recently, the convergence of Chán and Esoteric Buddhism is elaborated on by Van Schaik (forthcoming: 26–31).

rather unappealing for Chán adherents at the beginning of the Sòng. Consequently, the text had to be heavily revised and 'spiced up' with dialogues in the style of the *Recorded Sayings* and other materials from *Transmission Texts* (the two core genres of the Chán School and focus of attention for the literati during the Sòng period). As such, the 'sūtra's' significance during Sòng times was symbolical, cementing the image of the illiterate but genial Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng as founder of the 'Southern School of sudden enlightenment', being the last in a sequence of Indian and Chinese patriarchs who transmitted the mind of the Buddha.

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