

A New Perspective on the Authorship of the Platform Sutra: The Implications of Sanjie Ideology in the Dunhuang Text*

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Over a quarter of a century ago I published a lengthy monograph on the authorship of the *Platform Sutra*.¹ Though the *Platform Sutra* had long been regarded as a record of the words and deeds of the sixth Chan progenitor Huineng 慧能—by dividing the entire text of the Dunhuang manuscripts into its constituent sections according to content, and analyzing the terminology therein—I concluded that there was a kind of “original *Platform Sutra*” which represented the Buddhist teachings of Huineng, and proposed that the extant Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* was partially authored by members of the Heze school who made repeated additions to this original text.

I thought, after my initial investigation, that I had considered the authorship of the *Platform Sutra* from every angle, so my research

*Being a translation of “Rokuso Danyō no seiritsu ni kansuru shin kenkai: Tonkō bon Danyō ni miru Sangaikyō no eikyō to sono imi” 『六祖壇經』の成立に関する新見解—敦煌本『壇經』に見る三階教の影響とその意味.

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interests had long shifted away from this topic. However, in my recent research into the life and writings of Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (684–758), I returned to this initial study to examine how the ideology of Huineng as found in the “original *Platform Sutra*” section of the Dunhuang text had influenced the thought of Shenhui—and I realized something truly amazing—that the influence Sanjie ideology can be clearly seen in the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*.² Moreover, we find this influence not only in the parts of the *Platform Sutra* which I had considered as later additions, but also in “original *Platform Sutra*” sections.

I think a reexamination of the authorship of the oldest extant text of the *Platform Sutra*, that of the Dunhuang manuscripts, in light of the influence of the Sanjie ideology it contains is so important—for if we could show that it was entirely authored by the Heze school of central China around 770—prior explanations of the authorship of the *Platform Sutra*, including my own previous hypothesis, would be excluded from further consideration.

When we consider the fact of how Sanjie ideology influenced the composition of the *Platform Sutra*, we gain not only a new perspective on the history of Chan Buddhism in the two capitals of Luoyang and Chang’an in the wake of the An Lushan Rebellion—but in the face of other important questions which this consideration raises, such as how and why that Buddhist community reevaluated Sanjie ideology—we also find this text to be an important source which offers us other new perspectives.

1. On Sanjie Ideology in the *Platform Sutra*

Of the *Platform Sutra* passages which have seemingly incorporated Sanjie ideology, I will first discuss the account of Huineng bestowing the “bodhisattva precepts” (*pusa jie* 菩薩戒)—where Huineng refers to them as the “formless precepts” (*wuxiang jie* 無相戒)—upon a great assembly at the Dafan Temple. Readers should pay particular attention to the underlined parts of the transcribed Chinese, and to the corresponding italicized parts of the English translation.

善知識。總須自體。與授無相戒。一時逐慧能口道。令善知識見自三身佛。

Good friends: Although it is necessary to experience for yourselves, I confer to you the formless precepts. Together follow my words and speak, it will allow you good friends to see your own three-bodied buddhas.

於自色身歸依清淨法身佛

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the pure dharma bodied buddhas.*

於自色身歸依千百億化身佛

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads of metamorphosed bodied buddhas.*

於自色身歸依當身圓滿報身佛 已上三唱。

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the perfected reward bodied buddhas of this body*, recite the above three times.

色身是舍宅。不可言歸。向者三身。自在法性。世人盡有。爲迷不見。外覓三身如來。不見自色身中三身佛。善知識聽。與善知識說。令善知識於自色身見自法性有三身佛。此三身佛從自性上生。何名清淨[法]身佛。善知識。世人性本自淨。萬法在自性。思惟一切惡事。即行於惡行。思量一切善事。便修於善行。知如是一切法盡在自性。自性常清淨。日月常明。只爲雲覆蓋。

上明下暗。不能了見日月星辰。忽遇惠風吹散。卷盡雲霧。萬像森羅。一時皆現。世人性淨。猶如清天。慧如日。智如月。智慧常明。於外著境。妄念浮雲蓋覆。自性不能明。故遇善知識。開真正法。吹却迷妄。內外明徹。於自性中萬法皆現。一切法在自性。名爲清淨法身。

Our phenomenal bodies are lodgings which are impossible to return to. These three bodies above are within the inherent nature of phenomena and are possessed by everyone. It's bewilderment which causes us not to see. When we seek outside for the three-bodied arrivors to suchness, we don't see the three-bodied buddhas within our own phenomenal bodies. Listen good friends, I'll explain to you good friends, and allow you good friends to see in your own phenomenal bodies that your own qualitative inherent natures possess these three-bodied buddhas. These three-bodied buddhas arise from your own qualitative inherent natures. "What are *pure [dharma] bodied buddhas*? Good friends, the inherent nature of everyone is fundamentally itself pure, and the myriad phenomena are all within this intrinsic nature. To think of all evil-doings is itself to practice by an evil practice, and to contemplate all good-doings is itself to cultivate by a good practice. Knowing in this way that all phenomena are contained within our intrinsic nature, our intrinsic nature is eternally pure. The sun and the moon are eternally bright, and it's only the obscuration of the clouds that the above is bright, the below is dim, and we're unable to see fully the sun, moon, stars, and other celestial bodies. Abruptly encountering a breeze which disperses and sweeps away all of the clouds and mist, the myriad apparitions are arranged like a forest, all manifest at once. The inherent nature of everyone is pure like a clear sky. Wisdom is like the sun, and awareness is like the moon. Awareness and wisdom are always shining outside and revealing the world, yet the drifting clouds of our baseless thoughts obscures this intrinsic nature, and it can't shine.

If you encounter a good friend, explain the true and correct teachings which blows away bewilderment and falsehoods, shines through in and out, and manifests all the myriad phenomena of intrinsic nature. That all phenomena are contained within our intrinsic natures, we call these pure dharma bodies.

自歸依者。除不善心及不善行。是名歸依。何名為千百億化身佛。不思量性即空寂。思量即是自化。思量惡法化為地獄。思量善法化為天堂。毒害化為畜生。慈悲化為菩薩。智慧化為上界。愚癡化為下方。自性變化甚多。迷人自不知見。一念善。智慧即生。一燈能除千年闇。一智能滅萬年愚。莫思向前。常思於後。常後念善。名為報身。一念惡。報却千年善亡。一念善。報却千年惡滅。無常已來後念善。名為報身。從法身思量。即是化身。念念善。即是報身。自悟自修。即名歸依也。皮肉是色身。色身是舍宅。不言歸依也。但悟三身。即識大意。

To intrinsically take refuge is to dispel all which isn't good mind as well as all which isn't good practice. We call this taking refuge. What are the *thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads of metamorphosed bodied buddhas*? Without consideration, intrinsic nature is the tranquility of emptiness itself. Consideration is intrinsic metamorphosis itself. If we consider evil phenomena, this metamorphosis will be to hell. If we consider good phenomena, this metamorphosis will be to heaven. The venomous metamorphosis will be to animal, the compassionate metamorphosis will be to bodhisattva, the aware and wise metamorphosis will be to the upper realms, and the foolish metamorphosis will be to the lower places. The changes and metamorphoses of intrinsic nature are extremely numerous, yet the bewildered human is intrinsically without discernment. The slightest thought of good gives rise to awareness and wisdom, a lamp able to dispel a thousand years of darkness. The slightest awareness extinguishes myriad years of ignorance. Don't think of the

before, always think upon the hereafter. Ever after thoughts of good are called *reward bodies*. The slightest evil thought will be recompensed by the loss of a thousand years of good, and the slightest thought of good will be rewarded by the obliteration of a thousand years of evil. Good thoughts from this impermanent [moment of time] hereafter are termed *reward bodies*. Considered from the dharma body, this itself is a metamorphosed body, and for thought after thought to be good is itself what we term the reward body. Intrinsic awakening and intrinsic cultivation are in themselves what we call taking refuge. Our skin and flesh are our phenominal bodies. Our phenominal bodies are lodgings, and we can't return and rely [take refuge] on them. Yet, awakening to the threefold bodies is itself to have discerned the general meaning.³

I have based the above transcription on Yang Zengwen's annotated edition, yet I found many errors in this emendation. Where I have corrected a character to indicate my own reading, I have attached an asterisk. In the above passage, the underlined text *dangshen yuanman baoshen fo* 當身圓滿報身佛 (perfected reward body buddha of this body) is clearly a mistake for *danglai yuanman baoshen fo* 當來圓滿報身佛 (forthcoming perfected reward bodied buddhas). As the characters *shen* 身 and *lai* 來 were originally similar in form, it would have been a simple mistake to write the wrong character in a manuscript. With that said, the second *chuanfa ji* 傳法偈 (dharma-transmission gatha) in the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* reads:

心地正花放 五葉逐根隨
 共修般若慧 當來佛菩提

The ground of mind sprouts correct flowers, and five petals follow these roots.

They together cultivate prajna wisdom, the bodhi of the *forthcoming buddhas*.⁴

Additionally, in the thirty-two-line verse entitled, *Zixing jian zhenfo jietuo song* 自性見真佛解脫頌 (Ode to the Liberation of Seeing the True Buddha of Intrinsic Nature) is found four lines which read:

本從化身生淨性 淨性常在化身中
性使化身行正道 當來圓滿真無窮

It is originally from the metamorphosed bodies that the pure natures arise, and a pure nature everlastingly resides within metamorphosed bodies.

This nature allows metamorphized bodies to walk the correct path, *forthcoming perfected* and truly boundless.⁵

In addition to the above, we also find other places where terms such as *danglai fo* 當來佛 (forthcoming buddhas), or *danglai yuanman* 當來圓滿 (forthcoming perfected) appear in the *Platform Sutra*. Though the term *dangshen yuanman baoshen fo* 當身圓滿報身佛 (perfected reward bodied buddhas of this body) must undoubtedly be corrected, our primary concern in the “refuge of the three bodies of the buddhas” here is that in the *Qijie foming jing* 七佛名經 (Seven Buddha Name Sutra), which was produced and embraced by disciples of Sanjie teachings, is found:

十方佛名

南無清淨法身毘盧遮那佛。南無圓滿報身盧舍那佛。南無千百億化身釋迦牟尼佛。南無東方阿閼佛。南無南方普滿佛。南無西南方那羅延佛。南無西方無量壽佛。南無西北方月光面佛。南無北方難勝佛。南無上方無量勝佛。南

無下方實行佛。南無當來下生彌勒尊佛

Names of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions:

Namo [obeisance] to the pure dharma body of Vairocana Buddha. *Namo* to the perfected reward body of Rocana Buddha. *Namo* to the thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads of metamorphized bodies of Shakyamuni Buddha. *Namo* to Akshobhya Buddha of the east. *Namo* to the Universally Pervading Buddha of the south. *Namo* to Narayana Buddha of the southwest. *Namo* to the Immense Longevity Buddha of the west. *Namo* to Moonlight Faced Buddha of the northwest. *Namo* to the Adversity Conquering Buddha of the north. *Namo* to the Immense Conquering Buddha of the above. *Namo* to the Truth Practicing Buddha of the below. *Namo* to Maitreya Honored Buddha of forthcoming decent.⁶

Having matched these terms in the *Platform Sutra* to those of quoted section of the *Qijie foming jing* above, it clearly follows from this that the influence of Sanjie teachings can be seen in the *Platform Sutra*.⁷

Readers should note that the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* adds the modifier *danglai* 當來 (forthcoming) to *baoshen* 報身 (reward bodies)—a modifier not in the *Qijie foming jing*—to make the phrase *danglai yuanman baoshen fo* 當來圓滿報身佛 (forthcoming perfected reward bodied buddhas). Apparently, this phrase is synonymous with the the *danglai fo* 當來佛 (forthcoming buddhas) in the second “dharma-transmission gatha,” and to the *Danglai yuanman zhen* 當來圓滿真 (forthcoming perfected body) of the “Ode to the Liberation of Seeing the True Buddha of Intrinsic Nature.” We can see from the inclusion of this modifier “forthcoming buddhas,” that this was an important concept for the authors of the *Platform Sutra*. In fact, it was exactly this term “forthcoming buddhas” which was used by Sanjie

practitioners to express their core tenant of “universal respect” (*pujing* 普敬), as this term was used in a unique way by them as a respectful salutation for others in recognition of their forthcoming buddhahood. The authors of the *Platform Sutra*, as can be seen here, had not only adopted Sanjie terminology, but also had a fairly good understanding of Sanjie ideology.

Still, according to Ishigaki Akiko, the above *qingjing fashen Piluzhena Fo* 清淨法身毘盧遮那佛 (pure dharma body of Vairocana Buddha), *yanman baoshen Luzhena Fo* 圓滿報身盧舍那佛 (perfected reward body of Rocana Buddha), and *qianbaiyi huashen Shijiamouni Fo* 千百億化身釋迦牟尼佛 (thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads metamorphized bodies of Shakyamuni Buddha), and other such buddha names were later additions to Sanjie ideology long after the time of the movements founder Xinxing 信行 (540-594)—even though they are found in the *Qijie foming jing* above.⁸ Ishigaki argues that Xinxing would not have had the idea to distinguish between “Vairocana Buddha” and “Rocana Buddha” to represent the dharma body and the reward body respectively. Yet, the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra*—while clearly influenced by Sanjie ideology—does not use the names “Vairocana Buddha” and “Rocana Buddha,” which suggests the basis of this influence seen in Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* was of an earlier Sanjie text. I can also easily imagine that the *Qijie foming jing* had been rewritten and modified like the *Platform Sutra*, so it is questionable whether these descriptions represent the original ideology of the Sanjie movement.

Moreover, at first glance, we might even consider the term “forthcoming perfected” from the *Platform Sutra* passage quoted above to be a later addition:

於自色身歸依清淨法身佛。

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the pure dharma bodied buddhas.*

於自色身歸依千百億化身佛。

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads of metamorphosed bodied buddhas.*

於自色身歸依當身圓滿報身佛。

In my own phenomenal body, *I take refuge in the perfected reward bodied buddhas of this body.*

Although this term “forthcoming perfected” appears here, considering the character *lai* 來 (coming) was incorrectly written as *shen* 身 (body)—in Huineng’s explanation we find:

迷人自不知見。一念善。智慧即生。一燈能除千年闇。一智能滅萬年愚。莫思向前。常思於後。常後念善。名爲報身。一念惡。報却千年善亡。一念善。報却千年惡滅。無常已來後念善。名爲報身。

The bewildered human is intrinsically without discernment. The slightest thought of good gives rise to awareness and wisdom, a lamp able to dispel a thousand years of darkness. The slightest awareness extinguishes myriad years of ignorance. Don’t think of the before, always think upon the hereafter. Ever after thoughts of good are called *reward bodies*. The slightest evil thought will be recompensed by the loss of a thousand years of good, and the slightest thought of good will be rewarded by the obliteration of a thousand years of evil. Good thoughts from this impermanent [moment of time] hereafter are termed *reward bodies*.

We find the term “reward bodies” (*baoshen* 報身) here without

any modifier. Also, considering the context of this passage, we would expect another line at the beginning of this passage which would have read something like “what are reward bodied buddhas?” (*he ming wei baoshen fo* 何名爲報身佛), or “what are forthcoming perfected reward bodied buddhas?” (*he ming danglai yuanman baoshen fo* 何名當來圓滿報身佛). It seems likely to me that such a line was omitted here.

Still, if we read this explanation carefully, we find it tells us that attaining awareness and wisdom will dispel myriad years of ignorance—so we should think not of the “before” (*xiangqian* 向前), but only of the “hereafter” (hou 後)—and, from this, “reward bodies” are “ever after thoughts of good.” The authors of this explanation clearly incorporated the concept of the “forthcoming,” so this passage is obviously premised on an explanation of “forthcoming perfected reward bodied buddhas.” Moreover, it is not only this phrase “forthcoming perfected reward bodied buddhas,” but also this phrase “myriad upon myriad of metamorphized bodied buddhas” which is unique. Taken together it is difficult to deny that Sanjie teachings influenced this entire “taking refuge in the three bodies of the buddhas” section of the *Platform Sutra*.

Moreover, as I will show below, we can also find the influence of the Sanjie concept of “universal respect” in the “issuance of the four boundless vows” passage which follows the passage above. Therefore, for us to deny that the “rite of conferring the bodhisattva precepts” section of the *Platform Sutra* was written under the influence of Sanjie ideology, we would have to unreasonably assert that both the “refuges of the three buddha bodies” passage which begins this section, and the “issuance of the four boundless vows” passage which follows were both later additions. Yet, if these two passages were originally absent, there would be no point in having this “rite of conferring the bodhisattva

precepts” section to begin with.

If we accept that the influence of Sanjie teachings can be clearly seen in the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra*, as shown above, then we can regard the following two passages—which advocate that all people should be treated with respect, and not looked down upon—as incorporating the Sanjie concept of “universal respect.” Refer the underlined parts of the following passages of the *Platform Sutra*, and to the corresponding italicized parts of the English translation. I will explain the parts underscored by wavy lines below.

今既自歸依三身佛已。與善知識發四願弘大願。善知識一時逐慧能道。

衆生無邊誓願度

煩惱無邊誓願斷

法門無邊誓願學

無上佛道誓願成三唱。

善知識。衆生無邊誓願度。不是慧能度。善知識。心中衆生。各於自身自性自度。何名自性自度。自色身中邪見·煩惱·愚癡·迷妄。自有本覺性。只本覺性。將正見度。既悟正見般若之智。除却愚癡迷妄。衆生各各自度。邪來正度。迷來悟度。愚來智度。惡來善度。煩惱來菩提度。如是度者。是名真度。煩惱無邊誓願斷。自心除虛妄。法門無邊誓願學。學無上正法。無上佛道誓願成。常下心行。恭敬一切。遠離迷執。覺智生般若。除却迷妄。即自悟佛道成。行誓願力。

Good friends, having taken refuge in the three-bodied buddha, I will confer the four great vows. Good friends, recite in unison with me:

There are limitless sentient beings, I vow to save them all.

Mental anguish is unlimited, I vow to end it all.

There are limitless dharma gates, I vow to study them all.

The way of the buddhas is unsurpassable, I vow to attain it. (Recite this

three times).

Good friends, there are limitless sentient beings, I vow to save them all, yet it's not I [Huineng] who saves them. All of the sentient beings in your minds, good friends, save themselves with their own nature in their own bodies. What's "they save themselves with their own nature"? Within the physically apparent bodies of the self with its wrong views, mental anguish, ignorance, and bewilderment, is an inherent nature of original realization. It's only this inherent nature of original realization by which we're saved by correct seeing. Awakening to the correct seeing of prajna wisdom, ignorance and bewilderment are dispelled, and each being saves themselves. To wrong [views] come the correct which saves, to stupor comes the awakening which saves, and to ignorance comes the wisdom which saves. To the bad comes the good which saves. To mental anguish comes the bodhi [enlightenment] which saves. To be saved like this is called true salvation. Mental anguish is unlimited, I vow to end it all, and from my own mind I expel vacuous absurdities. There are limitless dharma gates, I vow to study them all. *I always will practice with humility, respect all*, and keep distance from bewildering attachments. In awareness arises prajna which dispels all bewilderment. To awaken to the way of the buddhas, implement the power of the vows.⁹

使君問。[和尚所說]法。可不是西國第一祖達摩祖師宗旨。

大師言。是。

[使君問。]弟子見說達摩大師化梁武帝。帝問達摩。朕一生已來造寺·布施·供養。有功德否。達摩答言。竝無功德。武帝惆悵。遂遣達摩出境。未審此言。請和尚說。

六祖言。實無功德。使君勿疑。達摩大師言。武帝著邪道。不識正法。

使君問。何以無功德。

和尚言。造寺·布施·供養。只是修福。不可將福以爲功德。功德在法身。

非在於福田。自法性有功德。是性是功。平直是德。[內見]佛性。外行恭敬。若輕一切人。吾我不斷。卽自無功德。自性虛妄。法身無功德。念念行平等直心。德卽不輕。常行於敬。自修身卽功。自修心卽德。功德自心作。福與功德別。武帝不識正理。非祖大師有過。

The prefect asked, "Is the essential foundation of [your] dharma that of the first progenitor Bodhidharma of the Western Kingdom?" The great teacher [Huineng] said, "Yes." The prefect asked, "I've heard that when Bodhidharma guided and encouraged faith in Emperor Wu of Liang, the emperor asked Bodhidharma, 'All my life I have built monasteries, made offerings, and given alms, but is there any merit in this?' Bodhidharma answered, 'No merit at all.' The emperor was disappointed and expelled Bodhidharma beyond the border. I don't understand, please explain venerable."

The sixth progenitor [Huineng] said, "Indeed, there's no merit. Don't doubt the words of Bodhidharma. Emperor Wu, attached to a false way, didn't recognize the true dharma.

The prefect asked, "Why no merit?"

The great teacher said, "Building monasteries, giving alms, and making offerings are simply ways to cultivate good deeds which are not to be confused with merit. Merit is within the dharma body, not a field of good deeds. Your intrinsic dharma nature is meritorious. Intrinsic nature is merit, and fairness and honesty are the virtues of merit. [Looking within] *we find buddha nature, and we're respectful in our external practice. If we disrespect people, we haven't ended [false views] of self, and this is ourselves having no merit* as [such a view] of the intrinsic nature of self is a vacuous absurdity. Merit is made in the mind, so merit and good deeds are different. It was Emperor Wu who didn't recognize [this] correct principle, and not the mistake of the great progenitor teacher.¹⁰

Moreover, we find throughout the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* such Sanjie ideology as criticism of “argumentation” and “winning and losing” in debates, as in the following:

善知識。我此法門。以定慧爲本。第一勿迷言定慧別。定慧體不一不二。卽定是慧體。卽慧是定用。卽慧之時定在慧。卽定之時慧在定。善知識。此義卽是定慧等。學道之人作意。莫言先定發慧。先慧發定。定慧各別。作此見者。法有二相。口說善。心不善。定慧不等。心口俱善。內外一種。定慧卽等。自悟修行。不在口諍。若諍先後。卽是迷人。不斷勝負。却生法我。不離四相。

Good friends, our dharma gate is based on meditation and wisdom. First, don't say in bewilderment that meditation and wisdom are different. The corporal essence of meditation and wisdom is singular and not dual. That is, meditation is the corporal essence of wisdom, and wisdom is the concrete expression of meditation. When there's wisdom, meditation is present. When there's meditation, wisdom is present. Good friends, this means is that meditation and wisdom are precisely equivalent. People who study the way pay attention to not speak that first there is meditation which gives rise to wisdom, or that there is first wisdom that gives rise to meditation. To hold such a view is to have a dharma with two forms—to speak of good with a mind that isn't good, this is to not equate meditation and wisdom. When mind and speech are both good, internal and external are one, and meditation and wisdom are equated. *The practice of self-awakening isn't in argumentation, to argue as to what is prior or subsequent is to bewilder people. Unceasingly winning and losing [in debates] will on the contrary give rise to [the wrong idea] of the independent existence of phenomena and is to never leave the four phenomena [self, person, sentient being, and lifespan].*¹¹

大師住漕溪山。韶·廣二州行化四十餘年。若論門人。僧之與俗。約有

三五千人。說不可盡。若論宗旨。傳授壇經。以此爲依約。若不得壇經。卽無稟受。須知去處·年月日·姓名。遞相付囑。無壇經稟承。非南宗弟子也。未得稟承者。雖說頓教法。未知根本。終不免諍。但得法者。只勸修行。諍是勝負之心。與佛道違背。

The great teacher lived in the mountains of Caoxi and practiced by guiding others, and encouraging belief in Shaozhou and Guangzhou for over forty years. In terms of [Huineng's] disciples, between the monastics and the laity, there are too many to name—about three to five thousand. As for the fundamental teaching [of Huineng], it's entrusted in his transmission of the *Platform Sutra*. If [a person] hasn't received the *Platform Sutra*, they're not endowed [with Huineng's fundamental teachings]. We must know the place, year, month, day, and full name which were mutually attached [when the text was transmitted], or the *Platform Sutra* hasn't been endowed [to that person], and they can't be considered a disciple of the Southern school. *For those not endowed, even if they preach the sudden teaching dharma, they wouldn't know the root source, and would never be able to avoid disputes. Yet, those who've received the dharma simply urge practice. Argumentation is the mind of contention, which is a betrayal of the buddha way.*¹²

時有一僧名智常。來漕溪山禮拜和尚。問四乘法義。智常問和尚曰。佛說三乘。又言最上乘。弟子不解。望爲教示。

慧能大師曰。汝自身心見。莫著外法相。元無四乘法。人心量四等。法有四乘。見閱讀誦是小乘。悟法解義是中乘。依法修行是大乘。萬法盡通。萬行俱備。一切不離。但離法相。作無所得。是最上乘。最上乘是最上行義。不在口諍。汝須自修。莫問吾也。

A monk named Zhichang once came to the mountains of Caoxi to pay his respects to Huineng and asked about the meaning of the four vehicles of the dharma. Zhichang asked the venerable, “The Buddha spoke of three

vehicles, yet another highest vehicle is spoken of. I don't understand and hope for instruction."

The great teacher Huineng said, "You look at your own body and mind, and don't grasp at external phenomena. At the source there's no dharma of the four vehicles, but the capacity of the human mind is of four grades, and thus the dharma has four vehicles. The lesser vehicle is to see, hear, read, and recite. The mediocre vehicle is to awaken to the dharma by understanding its meaning. The great vehicle is to accord to the dharma in practice where the myriad phenomena all interpenetrate, and the myriad practices are all held. The highest vehicle is to be unseparated from everything, yet separated from phenomenal appearances, where action obtains nothing at all. *The highest vehicle means the highest practice and doctrine, it isn't in argumentation. You must practice for yourselves and not ask me.*¹³

僧衆禮拜。請大師留偈。敬心受持。偈曰。

一切無有真。不以見於真。若見於真者。是見盡非真。
若能自有真。離假即心真。自心不離假。無真何處真。
有情即解動。無情即無動。若修不動行。同無情不動。
若見真不動。動上有不動。不動是不動。無情無佛種。
能善分別性。第一義不動。若悟作此見。則是真如用。
報諸學道者。努力須用意。莫於大乘門。却執生死智。
前頭人相應。即共論佛義。若實不相應。合掌禮勸善。
此教本無諍。若諍失道意。執迷諍法門。自性入生死。

衆僧既聞。識大師意。更不敢諍。依法修行。一時禮拜。即知大師不久住世。

The assembly of monastics made obeisance [to Huineng] and requested that the great teacher leave them with a gatha that they could hold in their minds with reverence. The gatha went:

"In everything non-beingness is true, so don't take what we perceive to

be true. If we take what we perceive to be truth, then everything we see won't be truth. To have true self-being, is to abandon the nominal where mind is true. If our own minds don't separate from the nominal, there's no truth, for where could this truth be? Sentience is just movement [of mind], and insentience is just the lack of movement. If we practice not moving [our minds], we lack movement in the same way as insentience. If we see stillness, then in movement will be stillness, while insentience will exactly be stillness. In insentience there's no seed of buddha [awakening]. Able to rid ourselves of a discriminating nature [of mind], the primary truth is stillness. If we awaken and adopt such a view, this is the *yong* 用 [concrete expression] of *zhenru* 真如 [true suchness]. In answering to all those studying the way, our encouragements require mental preparedness. As it's not in the gate of the great vehicle, reject attachment to wisdom of birth and death. If you get along with the person in front of you, discuss Buddhism with them. If you truly don't get along, join your palms in respect to encourage goodness. *There's fundamentally no argumentation in this teaching. If you argue you lose the meaning of the way. To grasp in bewilderment and argue about the gate of the dharma is for one's own nature to enter [the cycle of] birth and death.*" The assembly of monastics, upon hearing this, *recognized the great teachers' intentions and didn't dare argue.* They accorded to the dharma in their practice, and showed their respect by bowing in unison. They knew that the great teacher wasn't long for this world.¹⁴

Furthermore, as we can see in the following passage, where the *Platform Sutra* criticizes such "Northern school" practices of "viewing the mind," and "viewing purity," there is also a disavow of "argumentation." I will explain the places I have emphasized with dots

below.

善知識。此法門中坐禪原不看心。亦不看淨。亦不言不動。若言看心。心元是妄。妄如幻故。無所看也。若言看淨。人性本淨。爲妄念故。蓋覆真如。離妄念。本性淨。不見自性本淨。起心看淨。却生淨妄。妄無處所。故知。看者却是妄也。淨無形相。却立淨相。言是功夫。作此見者。障自本性。却被淨縛。若修不動者。不見一切人過患。是性不動。迷人自身不動。開口即說人是非。與道違背。看心看淨。却是障道因緣。

Good friends, in this dharma gate there was, in sitting meditation, originally no viewing of the mind, viewing of purity, or talk of stillness. If we speak of viewing the mind, this mind is foundationally baseless. As it's as baseless as a hallucination, with nothing [real] to view, the intrinsic nature of humans is fundamentally pure, and it's baseless thoughts which covers and obscures true suchness. If we leave baseless thoughts, our fundamental nature is pure. If we don't see that our intrinsic nature is fundamentally pure, and arouse our minds to view purity, then we on the contrary give rise to pure delusions. Delusions are unlocated [in reality], so we know that viewing them is baseless. Purity is shapeless and formless—so those who speak of establishing pure forms as a practice would on the contrary be making an impediment to [viewing] their foundational intrinsic nature, and would on the contrary become tied up in purity. *If we practice stillness, we won't see the faults and afflictions of anybody. This is inherent nature in stillness. Even if bewildered persons are themselves in stillness, if they open their mouths and speak of the right and wrong of people, this is a betrayal of the way.* Viewing the mind and viewing purity will on the contrary cause obstruction to the way.¹⁵

Sanjie disciples were very averse to disputation and criticizing others as the first prerequisite which defined their existence in the *di*

san jie 第三階 (Third Order) was the term *yayang seng* 瘡羊僧 (mute sheep monks). This term is explained in the Sanjie text *Dui gen qi xingfa* 對根起行法 (Dharma Practice Arising in Accordance to Natural Aptitude) as follows:

一者。三業性濡。從生已來。於他一切衆生。不敢共他相瞋相打。乃至不敢嫌他。[Regarding] the first [order of the mute sheep monks], the nature of their three activities [of body, speech, and mind] is yielding. They have not dared to engage in malice or contend in quarrels with the entirety of other sentient beings since from the time of their birth. They even go as far as to not even dare to dislike others.¹⁶

Moreover, in what appears to be the disciplinary manual for the disciples of Sanjie teachings—the *Zhifa* 制法 (Enacted Regulations) — the fourteenth item, entitled “ceasing disputes,” reads as follows:

一、或有忿競。不相容忍。聲色相及爲人所知者。莫問有理無理。竝出衆外。不共同住。

Item: If there are angry contestations with no mutual forbearance, and by either voice or appearance it comes to the point where people know of them, both will be expelled from the congregation and no longer communally live without any question as to whether (this angry contestation) was reasonable or unreasonable.¹⁷

Also, in the following item fifteen entitled, “not listening or speaking of the merits and demerits of the teachings of others,” we read:

一、佛滅度後。惡世界惡時惡衆生。唯得自見自說自身一切惡。不得自見自

說自身一切善。唯得見他說他一切善。不得見他說他一切惡。自今已去。二
向不得說他一切人法解行等長短。如有犯者。不共同住。唯除自呵嘖門徒弟
子及於和僧衆內治。

Item: It is only acceptable for the evil living beings of the evil world and evil time after the Buddha past into nirvana to themselves observe and themselves speak of all their evil, and it is unacceptable for them to themselves observe and themselves speak of all their good. It is only acceptable for them to observe others and speak of all the good of others, and it is unacceptable for them to observe others and speak of all the evil of others. From now and hereafter, *it is consistently unacceptable to speak of the merits and demerits of interpretation and practice of the dharma and so on of all other people*. If there is an offender, they will not live communally (with us). The only exception to this would be by the reprimanding of disciples and pupils, and the internal affairs of the community of the monastic order.¹⁸

Readers should note in particular the similarities between the “consistently unacceptable to speak of the merits and demerits of interpretation and practice of the dharma and so on of all other people” in this above section of Sanjie community regulations with the above cited passages of the *Platform Sutra* which state that to “open one’s mouth and speak of the right and wrong of others is to turn one’s back on the way,” and which urge us to “not examine the faults of anyone.” We find here clear influence of Sanjie ideology in the *Platform Sutra*.

From this perspective, we can see such Sanjie concepts as “universal respect,” “forthcoming buddhas,” and “ceasing disputes,” extend throughout the *Platform Sutra*.

2. On the Authorship of the *Platform Sutra*

That we can find influence of Sanjie ideology in the *Platform Sutra*, and that previous research on the authorship of the *Platform Sutra* have not raised this, completely overturns all of the previous theories on this topic.

Scholars, in discussions on the authorship of the *Platform Sutra*, have long noticed the similarities the Dunhuang version of this text has with the writings of Shenhui, and have questioned its relationship to Shenhui and his disciples. Hu Shi (1891-1962), who first identified Shenhui's writings among the Dunhuang manuscripts, used these similarities as evidence for his hypothesis that:

1. Heze Shenhui fabricated the *Platform Sutra*.¹⁹

In opposition to the above theory, such scholars as Qian Mu (1895-1990) and Ren Jiyu (1916-2009) proposed that:

2. We should not hesitate to recognize Huineng as the author of the *Platform Sutra* as its similarities to the writings of Shenhui are merely the result of Shenhui faithfully following the doctrine of his teacher Huineng.²⁰

Nevertheless, scholars such as Yinshun (1906-2005) and I have found this second theory difficult to accept in consideration of Shenhui's ardent self-promotion and propensity to advocate new teachings. Therefore, as we have noticed few commonalities between such sections of the *Platform Sutra* as "the rite of conferring the bodhisattva precepts"

and Shenhui's teachings, we argued:

3. There originally existed a written record of the teachings which Huineng gave at Dafan Monastery while conferring the bodhisattva precepts (provisionally called the original *Platform Sutra*), and that members of the Heze school had over the course of several expansions to this original text produced the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra*.

With this both Yinshun and I put forth this eclectic theory which combined aspects of these first two theories and took “the rite of conferring the bodhisattva precepts” as the core of a proposed “original *Platform Sutra*.”²¹

Yet, as mentioned above, if we recognize the influence of Sanjie ideology in this proposed oldest layer of the “rite of conferring the bodhisattva precepts,” we must refute this theory. The reason for this is, as I will touch upon later, is that Huineng—who was born in Lingnan (south of the range), studied under Hongren 弘忍 in Qizhou, and then returned to Lingnan where he died—would have been unlikely to have acquired knowledge about Sanjie teachings, as they were practiced only in central China.

This perspective also provides us further reason to refute the theory held by scholars such as Qian Mu. Yet, if we accepted Hu Shi's theory that Heze Shenhui fabricated the *Platform Sutra*, would that resolve the problems raised here? No, it would not. The period in which Shenhui was active was the Kaiyuan-Tianbao period (713-756), during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. As it was Emperor Xuanzong himself who had abolished Inexhaustible Storehouse Cloisters in 721,²² it is

unimaginable that Shenhui—sensitive to political power as he was—would have actively adopted Sanjie ideology in the period when the movement was already being oppressed. As I will discuss below, the Sanjie ideology incorporated into the *Platform Sutra* was in fact the exact opposite to that held by Shenhui.

Thus, having made clear that the conventional theories on the composition of the *Platform Sutra* are incorrect, how exactly should we consider this problem? My conclusion is, given these circumstances, the *Platform Sutra* was written in central China by Shenhui's pupils around 770. In other words, members of the Heze school wrote it in a relatively short period of time. I will explain my reasoning below.

2-1. The Setting of the *Platform Sutra's* Composition

We can estimate the compilation date of the *Platform Sutra* by the transmission lineage which is at the end of the Dunhuang text:

此壇經。法海上座集。上座無常。付同學道際。道際無常。付門人悟真。悟真在嶺南漕溪山法興寺。現今傳授此法。如付此法。須得上根智。深信佛法。立於大悲。持此經以爲稟承。於今不絕。和尚本是韶州曲江縣人也。

This *Platform Sutra* was compiled by Venerable Fahai. When the venerable died, it was entrusted to fellow student [of Huineng] Daoji. When Daoji died, it was entrusted to his disciple Wuzhen. Wuzhen is living in Lingnan at the Faxing Temple in the mountains of Caoxi. He's now passing on these teachings. If these teachings are to be passed down, it must be to one who has the wisdom of superior capacity, has deep trust in the Buddha's teachings, is established in great compassion, and holds this sutra as the means of preserving this tradition which is unbroken even now. The Venerable [Fahai] was a native of the Qujiang

district of Shaozhou.²³

Thus, as Huineng died in 713, if we assume that his successor would pass away thirty years later, and that the period of transmission between fellow peoples would be a decade, we would arrive at the following:

Huineng 慧能 (d. 713)
├── ①Fahai 法海 (d. 743)
└── ②Daoji 道際 (d. 713) — ③Wuzhen 悟真 (d. 783)

So, if Wuzhen died around the year 783, and as the passage above writes that Wuzhen was contemporaneously living at the Faxing Temple in the mountains of Caoxi, where he was transmitting the teachings of the *Platform Sutra*, the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* must have been composed between these approximate dates for the death Daoji in 753, and the death of Wuzhen 783. This gives us the approximate date of 770.

We can verify the validity of this dating by descriptions in the *Caoxi dashi zhuan* 曹溪大師傳 (Biography of the Great Teacher of Caoxi), which Saichō 最澄 (767-822) had brought back from China to Japan, and which are seemly based on the *Platform Sutra*. For example, in the *Caoxi Dashi zhuan*, Huineng's impetus for going to Hongren is found in the *Toutuo jing* 投陀經/頭陀經 (Dhuta Sutra):

時有惠紀禪師。誦投陀經。大師聞歎曰。經意如此。今我空坐何爲。至咸亨五年。大師春秋三十有四。惠紀禪師謂大師曰。久承蕪州黃梅山忍禪師開禪門。可往彼修學。

At that time there was a dhyana teacher Huiji who recited the *Toutuo*

jing. The great teacher [Huineng] said in admiration, “The meaning of the sutras are like this! Now, what’s to do be done about my empty of purpose sitting meditation?” This was in the fifth year of the Xuanheng period [674], when the great teacher was thirty-four [*sic*]. The dhyana teacher Huiji said to the great teacher, “I’ve long heard of a dhyana teacher named Hongren who has established the gate of Chan in the Huangmei Mountains of Qizhou, go there to cultivate and study.”²⁴

We can view this as an attempt to counter the narrative found in the *Platform Sutra* that Huineng’s impetus to study with Hongren was found in the *Diamond Sutra*. We also find in the *Caoxi Dashi zhuan* a scene of Huineng giving a prophecy that there would be a pair, a layperson and a monastic “bodhisattvas coming from the east,” seventy years after Huineng’s death. We can consider this an adaptation of the twenty-year prophecy regarding Shenhui found in the *Platform Sutra*:

其年八月。大師染疾。諸門人問。大師。法當付囑阿誰。答。法不付囑。亦無人得。神會問。大師。傳法袈裟云何不傳。答云。若傳此衣。傳法之人短命。不傳此衣。我法弘盛。留鎮曹溪。我滅度後七十年後。有東來菩薩。一在家菩薩。修造寺舍。二出家菩薩。重建我教。

In the eighth month of that year, the great teacher fell ill. All his disciples asked, “Great teacher, to whom will you entrust the dharma?” Huineng replied, “The dharma isn’t something which can be entrusted, and nobody can possess it. Shenhui asked, “Great teacher, why do you not pass on the dharma transmission kasaya robe?” Huineng replied saying, “If I passed on this garment, it’d endanger the person to whom the dharma was transmitted to an early death. By not transmitting this garment, my dharma will flourish everywhere. Keep the robe guarded in Caoxi. After I

die, there'll be bodhisattvas who'll come from the east seventy years later. The first will be a layperson bodhisattva who'll repair the lodgings of a monastery, and the second will be a monastic bodhisattva who'll reestablish my teachings.²⁵

In other words, the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* appears to have been written before the *Caoxi Dashi zhuan*. Moreover, on the period when the *Caoxi Dashi zhuan* was written, the text itself writes that:

先天二年壬子歲滅度。至唐建中二年。計當七十一年。

[Huineng] died in the second year of the Xiantian period [713], a water rat year. A total of seventy-one years can be calculated to the second year of the Jianzhong period of the Tang [781].²⁶

We can see that this year 781 derived from seventy-year prophecy after Huineng's death is perfectly consistent with my estimation that the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* was written around 770.

However, if we take the description given in the *Platform Sutra* at face value, this period of around 770 would only indicate the time when the present version of the *Platform Sutra* was entrusted to Wuzhen, and the text itself would have been compiled in Lingnan immediately after the death of Huineng. Yet, for the following two reasons, we cannot accept this description as historical fact:

1. The figure Fahai, who is mentioned as a disciple of Huineng and the compiler of the *Platform Sutra* in the lineage given at the end of text, could not be a real person. Thus this lineage itself could not be real.

2. The fact that the influence of Sanjie teachings can be seen in what was considered the earliest part of the *Platform Sutra* makes it clear that the period of around 770 was not the time when the text was copied, but the time when it was authored. Moreover, the text was written in central China.

To begin with, in consideration of the first point above, Fahai is listed in the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* as the sole successor of Huineng. However, in the “biography of Huineng” of the extant *Shizi xuemai zhuan* 師資血脈傳 (Biographies of the Teachers and Disciples of the Bloodline), which was written by Heze Shenhui (and later altered by his disciples), the following account is given:

至景雲二年。忽命弟子玄楷智本。遣於新州龍山故宅建塔一所。至先天元年九月。從漕溪歸至新州。至先天二年八月三日。忽告門徒曰。吾當大行矣。弟子僧法海問曰。和上以後有相承者否。有此衣。何故不傳。

In the second year of the Jingyun period [711], [Huineng] suddenly ordered his disciples Xuankai and Zhiben so as to dispatch them to their former residence of the Longshan Mountain of Xinzhou to build a pagoda. In the ninth month of the first year of the Xiantian period [712], [Xuankai and Zhiben] returned to Xinzhou from Caoxi. On the third day of the eighth month of the second year of the Xiantian period [713], [Huineng] suddenly told his disciples, “I’m now making the great journey.” His monastic disciple Fahai asked, “Venerable, will you later have a successor or not? Having this garment, why wouldn’t you pass it down?”

和上謂曰。汝今莫問。以後難起極盛。我緣此袈裟。幾失身命。汝欲得知時。我滅度後四十年外。豎立宗者即是。

The venerable said of this, “You shouldn’t ask of this now. Henceforth,

hardships will arise in great profusion. How many times have we lost our lives due to this kasaya robe? If you want to know the time of obtainment—it'll be more than forty years after my death, and it'll be exactly the one who establishes the principal doctrine.²⁷

Note that this “more than forty years” has been changed by Shenhui's pupils for what was originally “more than twenty years.”²⁸ In the “biography of Huineng” of the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma Treasure Throughout the Ages), which conveys the original form of the *Shizi xuemai zhuan*, we read:

曹溪僧玄楷智海等問。和上已後。誰人得法承後。傳信袈裟。和上答。汝莫問。已後難起極盛。我緣此袈裟。幾度合失身命。在信大師處三度被偷。在忍大師處三度被偷。乃至吾處六度被偷。竟無人偷。我此袈裟。女子將去也。更莫問我。汝若欲知得我法者。我滅度後二十年外。豎立我宗旨。即是得法人。The Caoxi monks Xuanjie, Zhihai, and the others asked, “After you, Venerable, who'll obtain the dharma, and after this inheritance be transmitted the kasaya robe of verification?” The venerable replied, “You shouldn't ask, as henceforth hardships will arise in great profusion. How often have we faced death on account of this kasaya robe? During the time of the great teacher Daoxin it was stolen three times, and during the time of great teacher Hongren it was stolen three times, so that by my time it's been stolen six times. In the end nobody has stolen my kasaya robe, and a girl will take it away. Don't ask me this at all. If you want to know who obtains my dharma—it'll be more twenty years after my death, and it'll be exactly the one who establishes our principal doctrine.”²⁹

In other words, Shenhui himself remembered that the

representative senior disciples of Huineng were Xuankai 玄楷 and Zhihai 智海, and thought to mention them in his biography of Huineng. Yet, at some point in the future, Shenhui's heirs altered this; they changed the name of "Zhihai" to "Zhiben" 智本, introduced "Fahai" 法海 as another one of Huineng's top disciples, and made it so that it was Fahai who inquired about Huineng's successor.³⁰ The Heze school did this to portray the *Platform Sutra* as a secret book transmitted in the south, so it was necessary to have the transmission of the text begin with the sole successor of Huineng and compiler of the text itself. In other words, it was the existence of the *Platform Sutra* itself which provided the context whereby Huineng's senior pupils were changed from being "Xuankai, Zhihai, and others," to solely "Fahai."

As I will explain below, as we can see that the Heze school clearly authored the *Platform Sutra*, it follows from this point that the alteration of the *Shizi xuemai zhuan*, and the compilation of the *Platform Sutra*, was a concerted effort. Thus, this monk Fahai—who I think had derived his name from Zhihai—is a fictional person fabricated by the Heze school. We can see, from this point of view, that the transmission lineage beginning with Fahai in the *Platform Sutra* is implausible. We also, by this, cannot accept Yanagida Seizan's argument that this Fahai here is Helin Fahai 鶴林法海 (Wuxing Fahai 吳興法海/Jinling Fahai 金陵法海), and that original form of the *Platform Sutra* was connected to the Oxhead school.³¹

Next, concerning the second point above, the time when this book was written—during the Dali (766–779) period, or the Zhenyuan period (785–804)—has traditionally been regarded as a time of revival for the Sanjie teachings for the following such reasons:³²

1. According to the *Chang'an zhi* 長安志 (Gazetteer of Chang'an), a courtyard and pagoda for Xinxing were built in 771 at the Baita Temple of the Zhongnan Mountains.
2. At the end of the *Datang Zhenyuan xu kaiyuan shijiao lu* 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 (Great Tang Zhenyuan Period Supplement to the Catalog of Buddhist Teachings from the Kaiyuan Period) of 795, the compiler Yuanzhao 圓照 (dates unknown) had himself compiled a five fascicle *Da Tang zaixiu Sui gu chuanfa gaoseng Xinxing Chan Shi ta beibiao ji* 大唐再修隋故傳法高僧信行禪師塔碑表集 (Collection on Restoration in the Great Tang period of the Epigraph of the Pagoda of the Eminent Monk Dhyana Teacher Xinxing Who Formerly Transmitted the Teachings in the Sui Period).
3. In the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Zhenyuan Period Revised List of Canonical Buddhist Texts) compiled by Yuanzhao in the year 800, it is written that there are thirty-five texts of Sanjie teachings in a total of forty-four fascicles, and it is recorded that these texts were to be popularized by imperial decree.
4. The *Nianfo sanmei baoweang lun* 念佛三昧寶王論 (Treatise on the Invoking of the Buddha Samadhi Treasure King) by Feixi (dates unknown), who is assumed to have been in communication with Yuanzhao, displays strong influence of Sanjie ideology.

In other words, that the *Platform Sutra* was influenced by Sanjie ideology should be regarded as reflecting the Sanjie ideology characteristic of its revival at that time.

Thus, in asking the question of where the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* was written, it is difficult to imagine that this place could have been anywhere other than central China. The reason for this is, such practices of the Sanjie movement including “universal respect,” “recognizing evil,” and such relief projects representative of the Inexhaustible Storehouse Cloister would all be dependent on proselytizing in urban areas which would likely limit the spread of this movement anywhere outside of central China. In fact, the list of adherents to the Sanjie movement which has been composed by Nishimoto Teruma includes figures who almost invariably were born in central China and active in central China.³³ All the above examples which I have given for the revival of the Sanjie movement during the period in question were also from central China (and particularly Chang’an).

Furthermore, as I have argued in my previous article mentioned at the beginning of this paper, an examination of the spread of the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra*, and other old versions of the *Platform Sutra* reveals that in this earliest period (of the early ninth century) these texts can only be confirmed as circulating in central China.³⁴ This implies that, contrary to the claim that the *Platform Sutra* began as a secret book transmitted from the south, the text rather began to circulate from central China. In other words, we should regard the *Platform Sutra* as having been written in central China around 770.

We should note that this argument invalidates the previous argument proposed by Yinshun and I, that the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* was produced incrementally over an extended period. On the other hand, the part of this text which I previously considered to have been later incremental additions by the Heze school included those

concerning the authority to transmit the text, which I also considered to have been written around 770. Moreover, the period when the Sanjie movement experienced a resurgence in popularity occurred some years after this. Nevertheless, as the influence of Sanjie teachings can be found in the part of the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* which I and others had previously considered oldest, we must conclude that the entire Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* was compiled in a short time.

Previously, I advocated the theory of a gradual production of the Dunhuang text of *Platform Sutra* because of its redundant descriptions, inconsistent naming of Huineng, and the generally unnatural structure of the text as a whole—and I accepted these features to indicate a gradual production since many gradual additions to the *Platform Sutra* can be seen throughout the other extant versions of this text. Now, however, we can no longer accept this argument. So then, how can we explain the inconsistencies found in this text? In my view, the only possible explanation for this is that several people combined their own ideas and information to author the *Platform Sutra*. Moreover, there was no leader with the literary talent among them to combine everything together into a single coherent work.

If we are to be more imaginative, we must also consider the possibility that the *Platform Sutra* was deliberately written in an inconsistent manner. If the disciples who had studied under the illiterate Huineng had compiled their master's words and deeds, it would be unnatural for the text to be written with the same degree of competence as the foremost intellectuals of central China. Therefore, it is conceivable that the authors intentionally wrote in this way so that the text would seem more real. Furthermore, scholars have sometimes referred to the

Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra* as “the worst book in the world,” because the text has so many problems. Therefore, we must consider the possibility that at least some of these problems were intentional.

Thus, if we take it that the *Platform Sutra* was compiled around 770 by a group of people in central China (and particularly in Chang’an), who were they exactly? I will consider this question below.

2-2. The Authors of the *Platform Sutra*

The *Platform Sutra* was clearly written by members of the Heze school as clarified by the following points:

- a. Among the disciples of the sixth progenitor Huineng, only Heze Shenhui is given preferential treatment.
- b. The ideology of Heze Shenhui and Huineng were written to be the same.
- c. Heze Shenhui’s disciples introduced their own ideas into the text.

a. The Privileging of Heze Shenhui Among Huineng’s Disciples

First, as for point “a,” the “privileging of Heze Shenhui among Huineng’s disciples” can be seen, for example, in the following section of the text:

大師先天二年八月三日滅度。七月八日喚門人告別。大師先天元年於新州國恩寺造塔。至先天二年七月告別。大師言。汝衆近前。吾至八月。欲離世間。汝等有疑早問。爲汝破疑。當令迷盡。使汝安樂。吾若去後。無人教汝。
法海等衆僧聞已。涕淚悲泣。唯有神會不動。亦不悲泣。六祖言。神會小僧。

却得善不善等。毀譽不動。餘者不得。數年山中。更修何道。汝今悲泣。*更憂阿誰憂吾。不知去處在。若不知去處。終不別汝。汝等悲泣。即不知吾去處。若知去處。即不悲泣。性無生滅。無去無來。汝等盡坐。吾與汝一偈。真假動靜偈。汝等盡誦取此偈。意與吾同。依此修行。不失宗旨。

The great teacher [Huineng] died on the third day of the eighth month of the second year of the Xiantian period, and on the eighth day of the seventh month summoned his disciples to bid farewell. In the first year of the Xiantian period the great teacher built a pagoda at the Guoen Temple. By the seventh month of the Xiantian period when he bid farewell, the great teacher said, "All of you come forward, on the eighth month I wish to depart from this world. If any of you has an uncertainty, ask soon and I'll clear that up to give you peace of mind. If I'm already gone, there'll be nobody to teach you."

Having heard this, Fahai and the monastic community shed tears of sorrow. Only Shenhui was in stillness of mind, and didn't shed tears of grief. The sixth progenitor [Huineng] said, "The novice monk Shenhui has put into practice the stillness to praise and blame where good and bad are equal. As for the rest who haven't realized this, just what have you been practicing at the temple these years? You now shed tears of sorrow, but just who are you worried about? Is it about me not knowing where I'm going? If I didn't know where I was going, I'd never depart from you. You shed tears of sorrow because you don't know where I'm going. If you knew where I was going, you wouldn't shed tears of sorrow. Inherent nature is without ceasing or arising, and is neither coming nor going. All of you sit down, I have a gatha for you, a true-false movement-stillness gatha. All of you, recite this verse and think as I do. Follow this in practice, and don't lose the source teaching."³⁵

Here, when Huineng bade farewell to his disciples, while all of the other disciples wept, it was only Shenhui who remained unperturbed and was praised by Huineng. Also:

上座法海向前言。大師。大師去後。衣法當付何人。大師言。法即付了。汝不須問。吾滅後二十餘年。邪法繚亂。惑我宗旨。有人出來。不惜身命。定佛教是非。豎立宗旨。即是吾正法。衣不合傳。

Venerable Fahai then stepped forward and said, ‘Great teacher, after you leave who will be entrusted with your robe and dharma? The great teacher [Huineng] said, “The dharma has already been entrusted, you need not ask. *More than twenty years after I die, there’ll be a turmoil of false dharmas which will bring confusion to the source teachings of our school. There’ll be a person who comes forward with no regard for their own life to determine the true and false of Buddhism, and establish the source teaching of our school. This will be my true dharma, but the robe won’t be transmitted with this.*”³⁶

In this passage, Huineng prophesizes that twenty years after his death, amid the spread of false dharmas, one would emerge who would establish his dharma, and be his successor. This is clearly a reference to the 732 “Huatai debate” between Heze Shenhui and Suiyuan 崇遠, and if we are to go by this record, we must be clearly recognize Heze Shenhui as Huineng’s successor.

b. The Unification of the Ideology of Heze Shenhui and Huineng

Next, as for point “b,” with the following quote of the *Platform Sutra* I will show how the “ideology of Heze Shenhui and Huineng were written to be the same”:

世人盡傳南能北秀。未知根本事由。且秀禪師於南荊府當陽縣玉泉寺住持修行。慧能大師於韶州城東三十五里漕溪山住。法卽一宗。人有南北。因此便立南北。何以頓漸。法卽一種。見有遲疾。見遲卽漸。見疾卽頓。法無頓漸。人有利鈍。故名漸頓。

People of the world all teach of a “Huineng of the south” and “Shenxiu of the north” without knowing the original reason. While Chan teacher Shenxiu supervised practice at the Yuquan Temple in the Dangyang district of southern Hubei, the great teacher Huineng resided thirty-five li to the east of Shaozhou in the mountains of Caoxi. There’s only one source dharma, yet the northern and southern exists in people, and that’s why the Northern and Southern [schools with different source teachings] were established to accommodate them. What is sudden and gradual [enlightenment]? There’s only one dharma, but understanding is fast or slow. Fast understanding is sudden, and slow understanding is gradual, but there’s no sudden and gradual in the dharma. It’s people who are sharp or dull, so there are the terms “sudden” and “gradual.”³⁷

We find adopted in this passage the concept Huineng of the south and Shenxiu of the north,” which we can also find in Shenhui’s *Putidamo Nanzong ding shifei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論 (Treatise on the Determination of the True and False in the Southern Principle of Bodhidharma):

遠法師問曰。何故不許普寂禪師成為南宗。

和上答。爲秀和上在日。天下學道者號此二大師爲南能北秀。天下知聞。因此號。遂有南北兩宗。普寂禪師實是玉泉學徒。實不到韶州。今日妄稱南宗。所以不許。

Dharma teacher Fayuan asked, “Why don’t you permit dhyana teacher

Puji to be of the southern lineage.”

The Venerable replied, “Because in the days when Venerable Shenxiu was around, all who studied the way everywhere called these two great teachers : “Huineng of the south,” and “Shenxiu of the north.” Everyone knew and heard of this, and for this reason there were the two schools of the north and south. Dhyana teacher Puji was a student (of Shenxiu) at the Yuquan Monastery, and he in fact never went to Shaozhao (to be a student of Huineng). Now he falsely proclaims to be of the Southern school, so I don’t permit this.”³⁸

In quoted section of the *Platform Sutra* above, we can find mention of the so-called “Bodhidharma no merit” story, which first appears in the preface to the *Putidamo Nanzong ding shifei lun* written by Dugu Pei 獨孤沛:

梁朝婆羅門僧。字菩提達摩是南天竺國國王第三子。小少出家。智慧甚深。於諸三昧。獲如來禪。遂乘斯法。遠涉波潮。至於梁武帝。武帝問法師曰。朕造寺·度人·造像·寫經。有何功德不。達摩答。無功德。武帝凡情不了達摩此言。遂被遣出。

The Liang period Brahmin monk named Bodhidharma was the third son of the king of the Kingdom of Southern India who became a Buddhist monk at a young age. His wisdom was incredibly profound, and of the various samadhis, he obtained the meditation of the thus come one. Thereupon, to transmit this dharma, he crossed the waves from afar to arrive to the Emperor Wu of Liang. Emperor Wu asked the dharma teacher [Bodhidharma], “I’ve built temples, ordained persons, built statues, and copied sutras, but does this have merit or not?” Bodhidharma replied, “No merit.” Emperor Wu was of an ordinary mental state which didn’t

understand these words of Bodhidharma, so he expelled Bodhidharma.³⁹

Again, in the *Platform Sutra* we find discussion of “meditation and wisdom” in the following passage:

善知識。我此法門。以定慧爲本。第一勿迷言定慧別。定慧體不一不二。即定是慧體。即慧是定用。即慧之時定在慧。即定之時慧在定。善知識。此義即是定慧等。學道之人作意。莫言先定發慧。先慧發定。定慧各別。作此見者。法有二相。口說善。心不善。定慧不等。心口俱善。內外一種。定慧即等。自悟修行。不在口諍。若諍先後。即是迷人。不斷勝負。却生法我。不離四相。 Good friends, our gate of the dharma is founded on meditation and wisdom. Don't say in bewilderment that meditation and wisdom are separate. The corporal essence of meditation and wisdom is neither one nor two. *Meditation is the corporal essence of wisdom, and wisdom is the concrete expression of meditation. At the time of wisdom itself, there's meditation within this wisdom. At the time of meditation itself, there's wisdom within this meditation. Good friends, this means that meditation and wisdom are equivalent.* People who study the way pay attention to not speak that first there's meditation which gives rise to wisdom, or that there's first wisdom that gives rise to meditation. To hold such a view is to have a dharma with two forms—to speak of good with a mind that isn't good, this is to not equate meditation and wisdom. When mind and speech are both good, internal and external are the same, and *meditation and wisdom are equated.* The practice of self-awakening isn't in argumentation, to argue as to what is prior or subsequent is to bewilder people. Unceasingly winning and losing [in debates] would, on the contrary, give rise to [the wrong idea of] the independent existence of phenomena, and would be to never leave the four phenomena [self,

person, sentient being, and lifespan].⁴⁰

善知識。定慧猶如何等。如燈光。有燈卽有光。無燈卽無光。燈是光之體。光是燈之用。名卽有二。體無兩般。此定慧法。亦復如是。

Good friends, in what way are *meditation and wisdom equivalent? like a lamp and illumination, if there's a lamp there's illumination, and with no lamp there's no illumination. The lamp is the corporal essence of illumination, and illumination is its concrete expression.* Although there are these two terms, their corporal essence isn't of two kinds. *These phenomena of meditation and wisdom are also like this.*⁴¹

This concept of the “equivalence of meditation and wisdom” is also found explained in almost the same way in the writings of Heze Shenhui:

哲法師問。云何是定慧等義。答曰。念不起。空無所有。卽名正定。以能見念不起。空無所有。卽名正慧。若得如是。卽定之時。名爲慧體。卽慧之時。卽是定用。卽定之時。不異慧。卽慧之時。不異定。卽定之時。卽是慧。卽慧之時。卽是定。卽定之時。無有定。卽慧之時。無有慧。何以故。性自如故。是名定慧等學。

Venerable Zhi asked, “What’s the meaning of *the equivalence of meditation and wisdom?*” Answer: “No thoughts arising, and the emptiness of nothing, this is called correct meditation. It’s the capacity to understand no thoughts arising, and the emptiness of nothing, which is called correct wisdom. If one obtains [meditation and wisdom] like this, *the time of meditation itself will be termed the corporal essence of wisdom. The time of wisdom itself will be termed the concrete expression of meditation.* The time of meditation itself is no different from wisdom. The time of wisdom

itself is no different from meditation. *The time of meditation itself is wisdom, and the time of wisdom itself is meditation.* At the time of meditation itself there's no meditation, and at the time of wisdom itself there's no wisdom. Why is this so? It's such that inherent nature is of itself like this. This is called the study of the *equivalence of meditation and wisdom.*" (Ishii Mitsuo edition of *Shenhui yulu*)⁴²

經中不捨道法而現凡夫事。種種運爲世間。不於事上生念。是定慧雙修。不相去離。定不異慧。慧不異定。如世間燈光不相去離。即燈之時光家體。即光之時燈家用。即光之時不異燈。即燈之時不異光。即光之時不離燈。即燈之時不離光。即光之時即是燈。即燈之時即是光。定慧亦然。即定之時是慧體。即慧之時是定用。即慧之時不異定。即定之時不異慧。即慧之時即是定。即定之時即是慧。即慧之時無有慧。即定之時無有定。此即定慧雙修。不相去離。The "mundane affairs which appear while not abandoning teachings of the path" [mentioned] in scripture operate in the mundane world in a multiplicity of ways, yet to not give rise to thoughts while engaged in these affairs is the dual practice of meditation and wisdom with no separation between them. Meditation isn't different from wisdom, and wisdom isn't different from meditation. *This is like, in the mundane world, a lamp and illumination having no separation between them. At the time of the lamp itself, isn't the corporal essence of illumination. At the time of illumination itself, isn't the concrete expression of the lamp.* The time of illumination itself isn't different than the lamp. The time of the lamp itself isn't different than the illumination. The time of the illumination itself isn't separate from the lamp. The time of the lamp itself isn't separate from the illumination. The time of the illumination itself is just the lamp. The time of the lamp itself is just the illumination. Meditation and wisdom are also like this. The time of meditation itself is

the corporal essence of wisdom. The time of wisdom itself is the concrete expression of meditation. The time of wisdom itself isn't different than meditation. The time of meditation itself isn't different than wisdom. The time of wisdom itself is meditation. The time of meditation itself is wisdom. At the time of meditation itself there's no meditation, and at the time of wisdom itself there's no wisdom. This itself is the dual practice of meditation and wisdom with no separation between them. (Platform Talk)⁴³

Again, in the *Platform Sutra* we find the following:

善知識。若欲入甚深法界。入般若三昧者。直須修般若波羅蜜行。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。經中分明讚嘆。不能具說。此是最上乘法。

*Good friends, if you want to enter the incredible profound phenomenal realm and enter prajna samadhi, you absolutely must practice prajnaparamita. With only the single fascicle of the Diamond Prajnaparamita Sutra, one understands inherent nature and enters prajna samadhi, and it's of course understood that this person will have immense merit. Although this is clearly praised in scripture, it can't be fully explained. This is the highest vehicle of the dharma.*⁴⁴

This passage above can basically be viewed as a summary of the following passage of the *Putidamo Nanzong ding shifei lun* wherein the “samadhi of one practice” has been changed to “prajna samadhi”:

和上言。告諸知識。若欲得了達甚深法界。直入一行三昧[若入此三昧]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。爲從最尊最貴處來。誦持金剛般若波羅蜜經。亦復如是。是故金剛般若波羅蜜經云。不於一佛二佛三四五佛而種善根。已於無量百千萬佛所種諸善根。得聞如是言說章句。一念生信。如來悉知悉見。何況全得書寫受持讀誦爲人演說。

The Venerable said, *“I tell all learned friends, if one wants to attain and reach the incredibly profound phenomenal realm, [and enter this samadhi], one must directly realize the samadhi of one practice. One must first recite and hold [in one’s mind] the Diamond Prajnaparamita Sutra to learn prajnaparamita. Why? Those who recite and memorize the Diamond Prajnaparamita Sutra will of course understand that they’re not coming to this by little merit. For example, it’d be impossible for a monarch gives birth to a prince who was the same as commoners. Why? For [that prince] would come from the most respected and most noble place. Reciting and memorizing the Diamond Prajnaparamita Sutra is indeed the same as this. Thus, the Diamond Prajnaparamita Sutra says, “The cultivation of good roots is not with one buddha, two buddhas, or three, four, or five buddhas—the various good roots have already been cultivated with hundreds and thousands of myriad buddhas. And to give rise to a single thought of belief when hearing this line will be completely known and completely seen by the buddhas.” How much more could this be said for those who’d copy this sutra, memorize it, recite it, and explain it to others?”*^{m15}

Again, in the *Platform Sutra*, we read:

善知識。摩訶般若波羅蜜。最尊最上第一。無住無去無來。三世諸佛從中出。將大智慧到彼岸。打破五陰煩惱塵勞。最尊最上第一。讚最上乘法。修行定成佛。無去無住無來往。是定慧等。不染一切法。三世諸佛從中出。變三毒

爲戒定慧。

Good friends, *great prajnaparamita is the noblest, the highest, and the foremost. It neither stays, nor comes, nor goes—yet all the buddhas of the three worlds emerge from it* to take their great wisdom from the other shore and break the mental anguish and defilements of the five aggregates. As the noblest, the highest, and the foremost—it's praised as the highest vehicle of the dharma, and its meditative practice leads to buddhahood. Neither leaving, nor staying, nor coming and going—it's the equivalence of meditation and wisdom, and the undefiled totality of all phenomena from which all the buddhas of the three worlds emerge from to transform the three poisons to morality, meditation, and wisdom.⁴⁶

This, again this passage clearly appears to be following in the footsteps of the following passage of the *Putidamo Nanzong ding shifei lun*:

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

Dharma teacher Fayuan asked, “Why only cultivate prajnaparamita dharma and only practice prajnaparamita, without cultivating other dharmas and practicing other practices?” The Venerable replied, “By cultivating prajnaparamita all dharmas are combined, and the practice of prajnaparamita is the foundation of all practices.”

Diamond prajnaparamita.

The noblest, the highest, and the foremost.

Unborn, undying, not coming or going.

From this all buddhas emerge.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, in this case, there is a strong possibility that the line on the passage above which reads *jin'gang bore boluomi* 金剛般若波羅蜜 (diamond prajnaparamita) is in less of an original form than the *mohebore boluomi* 摩訶般若波羅蜜 (mahaprajnaparamita) in the *Platform Sutra*.

c. The Introduction of the Thought of Heze Shenhui's Disciples

Finally, concerning point “c” on the “introduction of the ideology of Shenhui’s disciples,” this can be plainly seen in the absolutist view which the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* takes towards the *Diamond Sutra*.

For example, in the autobiographical section at the beginning of the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra*, Huineng describes the turning point at which he goes to study under Hongren as hearing the *Diamond Sutra* recited:

慧能幼少。父又早亡。老母孤遺。移來南海。艱辛貧乏。於市賣柴。忽有一客買柴。遂領慧能至於官店。客將柴去。慧能得錢。却向門前。忽見一客讀金剛經。慧能一聞。心明便悟。乃問客曰。從何處來。持此經典。客答曰。我於蘄州黃梅縣東馮墓山。禮拜五祖弘忍和尚。*見今在彼。門人有千餘衆。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。慧能聞說。宿業有緣。便即辭親。往黃梅馮墓山。禮拜五祖弘忍和尚。

When I was a young child, my father died an early death, and bereaved, I

was left to my old mother. We moved to Nanhai, and in arduous poverty sold firewood at the market. Then, suddenly, there was a customer buying firewood who ushered me to the official hotel for merchants. The customer left with the firewood and having received payment I turned towards the gate—but just then, I saw a guest reading the *Diamond Sutra*. Upon hearing this my mind was enlightened and awakened. I then asked the guest, “Where’d you get this scripture?” The guest replied, “I paid my respects to the fifth progenitor Hongren at the East Fengmu Mountain in the Huangmei district of Qizhou, where there’s now an assembly of over a thousand disciples. While I was there, I heard the great teacher encouraging both monastics and the laity that merely by memorizing the single fascicle of the *Diamond Sutra* they’d be able to see intrinsic nature and become buddhas in direct understanding. I’d an affinity from my past karma to hear this. I immediately bid farewell to my mother and went to Fengmu Mountain in Huangmei to pay respects to the fifth progenitor, Venerable Hongren.”⁴⁸

Additionally, when Hongren transmits the dharma to Huineng, we find the following typical description:

五祖夜至三更。喚慧能堂內說金剛經。慧能一聞。言下便悟。其夜受法。人盡不知。便傳頓教及衣。以爲六代祖。將衣爲信稟。代代相傳。法卽以心傳心。當令自悟。五祖言。慧能。自古傳法。氣如懸絲。若住此間。有人害汝。卽須速去。

At the third watch of the night, the fifth progenitor summoned me into the hall to explain the *Diamond Sutra*. Upon hearing him finish speak, I’d an awakening, and that night I received the dharma. Nobody knew this, but the sudden teaching and the robe were transmitted to make me the

sixth progenitor—with the robe as proof of the successive transmission throughout the generations—and with the dharma itself transmitted by mind to mind, as one must awaken for themselves. The fifth progenitor said, “Huineng: since ancient times, the fate of the transmission of the dharma has been hanging by a thread. If you stay here, people will harm you. You must leave quickly.”⁴⁹

As I have already discussed,⁵⁰ though Shenhui himself attached great importance to “prajnaparamita,” he did not regard the *Diamond Sutra* as the ultimate scripture. During the reign of Shenhui’s dharma heirs, when the *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 (Record of the Teachers and Disciples of the Lankavatara) by Jingjue 淨覺 (dates unknown) began to circulate, opposition to this led to a view wherein the ideology of prajna was seen as concentrated within the *Diamond Sutra*—it being regarded as the ultimate scripture, an idea which must be regarded as reflecting the thoughts of Shenhui’s disciples.

The various points mentioned above are the strongest arguments for Hu Shi’s assertion that the *Platform Sutra* was a fabrication of Heze Shenhui, yet at the time when Hu Shi and Qian Mu for making their arguments it had not yet become an issue to distinguish the teachings of Shenhui from those of his disciples. In contrast, other scholars such as Qian Mu and Ren Jiyu criticized this assertion of Hu Shi by claiming that it went against common sense, as it would be natural to consider that Shenhui had inherited the ideas of his teacher Huineng. Now, although neither of these theories can be accepted, these above points nonetheless make it clear that the Shenhui faction of the Heze school played a central role in the production of the *Platform Sutra*. Consequently, while we may conclude that the *Platform*

Sutra was authored by the Heze school in central China (and especially Chang'an) in the period after Shenhui's death, there remains here a single major problem. This is, although the *Platform Sutra* teaches that its transmission was essential, Heze Shenhui's name is absent from the transmission lineage which is given at the end of the text itself. This would mean that Heze Shenhui was not a legitimate disciple of Huineng, but how could such a contradiction arise? In closing, I would like to consider this issue.

2-3. On Heze Shenhui's Absence from the Transmission Lineage of the *Platform Sutra*

While I argued in my previous study mentioned above that the text of the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* itself strongly suggests the meddling of the Heze school, I explained the contradiction of the omission of Shenhui's name from the transmission lineage therein writing that the lineage of the postface of Dunhuang version ends with the transmission to Wuzhen. The Dunhuang text additionally states:

悟真在嶺南曹溪山法泉寺。現今傳授此法。

Wuzhen is living in Lingnan at the Faxing Temple in the mountains of Caoxi. He's now passing on this dharma.

According to this lineage, many people believed that the *Platform Sutra* was in fact handed down in this way, and that Wuzhen was active in Lingnan when it was written. However, I think this description should on the contrary be regarded as evidence that this kind of transmission had never occurred. This description agrees in the many ways in which the *Platform Sutra* itself demands to be taken as a

“secret book,” as in the following passage:

若論宗旨。傳授壇經。以此爲依約。若不得壇經。卽無稟受。須知去處·年月日·姓名。遞相付囑。無壇經稟承。非南宗弟子也。

If one were to talk about the central teaching, it's transmitted in the *Platform Sutra*, and by this it's inherited. Unless a person has received the *Platform Sutra*, they haven't received the sanction. The place, date, and the name of the recipient must be made known, as these are attached to it when it's transmitted. Someone who doesn't have the *Platform Sutra*—the sanction—isn't a disciple of the Southern school.

In other words, here *quchu* 去處 seems to mean entering nirvana, and this can be seen as a claim that the *Platform Sutra* must be transmitted upon death. Yet this interpretation does not fit with this further description where Wuzhen is still alive.⁵¹

Furthermore, even if it would have been acceptable for Wuzhen to transmit the teachings before his death, it would of course be difficult to imagine that the date when Wuzhen entrusted the teachings, and the disciple who received the transmission would not have been recorded. If the *Platform Sutra* had in fact been a secret book, in such an arrangement a clear continued line of its transmission would have been crucial to its value as a secret book. Therefore, circumstances such as these are surely inconceivable.

Moreover, as I have already shown, this further note to the transmission lineage here was, by all indications, written for outsiders. From the outset it is obvious that the text was clearly written on the assumption that it would be widely read.

From such various matters as these, despite this lineage and

the further description of it which appears in the *Platform Sutra*—rather than taking these at face value, it is precisely in these places that we can see that the *Platform Sutra*'s own insistence of being a book which was secretly transmitted can by no means be recognized as true.

In particular, the *zai Lingnan* 在嶺南 (living in Lingnan) here indicates that this lineage was not written in Lingnan, and would not have been meaningful in Lingnan. Yet, this lineage would have been meaningful to the Shenhui faction, which was active in central China.

I think that that the Heze school of Shenhui's lineage was motivated to fabricate this story so blatantly because they were attempting to enhance the *Platform Sutra*'s authority by establishing that the book was secretly transmitted in Huineng's remote and inaccessible hometown of Lingnan. Therefore, far from keeping this a secret, they must have been attempting to spread this narrative. Otherwise, there would have been no motive for them to have inserted this content, and their Heze school the ideology, into the text.

This time, by pointing out influence of Sanjie teachings in the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra*, I have confirmed that the original text of the *Platform Sutra* was itself written in central China. This also verifies that my above conjectures were basically correct.⁵²

Nevertheless, as I had considered this issue under the premise that there had been an "original" *Platform Sutra* at the time of that study, I could still not fully understand the meaning of this transmission lineage. Yet, now that I have made clear that there never was an "original" *Platform Sutra*, and that the entirety of this text was initially written by the Heze school in central China, I now understand why such a lineage was necessary. As I have argued before, the story that the *Platform Sutra* was handed down as a secret book in the south is

significant, as it seems that this certainly played a great role in increasing its value. Yet, even prior to this, the Heze school had to explain why this “record of the words and deeds of Huineng” was completely unknown, and had only then appeared. It was also important to ensure that the text seemed authentic. Thus, while they sought to explain the new emergence of the *Platform Sutra* with the story that it was a “secret book,” it would have naturally raised suspicions that the text was authored by the Heze school if they had portrayed the book as being transmitted through their Shenhui lineage. To avoid such suspicions, the Heze school authors had to make it so that it was a “secret book” transmitted in the far-away south.

From the omission of Shenhui from this lineage, although a fundamental inconsistency arises in Huineng’s statement that only those who had received transmission of the *Platform Sutra* could be considered disciples of the Southern school, it seems that perhaps these authors were so focused on enhancing the credibility of their fabrication that they did not even notice this contradiction.

As for the motive of the Heze school to fabricate the *Platform Sutra*, this should already be clear. The text was fabricated to prove that Huineng was the only legitimate successor to Hongren, that the ideology of Shenhui was undoubtedly inherited from Huineng, and that Shenhui was the legitimate disciple to whom Huineng entrusted the preservation of his dharma. Furthermore, that the Heze school needed such a text to exist suggests something of the situation in which the Heze school was positioned at that time in central China. In essence, I think that the *Platform Sutra* was created by the Heze school as part of their efforts to maintain the foundations of their school after they had been banished by the state, and lost the powerful leadership of the

formerly banished Shenhui with his death during the period when Shenhui's disciples such as Huikong 慧空 (dates unknown), and Huijian 慧堅 (719-792), had been actively restoring Shenhui's lost authority.⁵³

Ultimately, the Heze school wrote the *Platform Sutra* in response to setbacks they faced in the Buddhist community of central China when they wrote it. If so, Sanjie ideology was part of this response. But why Sanjie ideology?

3. On the Motive for Incorporating Sanjie Ideology into the Dunhuang Platform Sutra

As seen above, the Sanjie ideology in *Platform Sutra* includes:

1. That others are buddhas to come, and must be saluted as “forthcoming perfected buddhas.”
2. That others should be respected and not looked down upon.
3. That one should refrain from all criticism and disputes with others.

All this ideology fundamentally concerns respecting others, and warns against criticizing or engaging in disputes with them. In my previous monograph on the creation of the *Platform Sutra*, I argued that this reflects that conflicts between the Heze school and other schools were so frequent that it hindered practice. Yet, in the above examples, these disputes were concerned with the equivalence of meditation and wisdom, or on the correctness of *kanxin* 看心 (observing the mind). We can say that these disputes proved that, at least initially, there was a “rivalry between the Northern and Southern” schools which had been provoked by Shenhui—and this idea was carried into the future Heze

school. Yet it seems to me that the object of dispute from the Heze school was carried over to other schools, such as the Oxhead school.

Furthermore, we can say that these descriptions show the attitude which Shenhui's disciples in the Heze school had held towards the disputes which their teacher Shenhui had provoked—they did not want to further amplify these disputes, and we can see that they were at a loss of how to deal with the repercussions of these provocations after they had lost the strong personality of their leader Shenhui with his death.⁵⁴

While I would still maintain that my understanding at that time was basically correct, this point above that the object of the disputes from the Heze school had shifted from the Northern school to the Oxhead school should be reconsidered. While the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* certainly contains a number of passages which appear to be based on ideologically discrepancy with the Oxhead school, and while I consider the fact that Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714-792) had been revered in the imperial court, first by Emperor Daizong (r. 762-779) during the Dali period (766-779), had a great influence on the Buddhist world of the two capitals, Li Jifu 李吉甫 (758-814) writes in his *Hangzhou Jingshan si Daxue Chanshi beiming bing xu* 杭州徑山寺大覺羅師碑銘并序 (Preface to the Epitaph of Chan Master of Great Enlightenment Jingshan Faqin of the Jingshan Monastery of Hangzhou):

大曆初代宗睿武皇帝高其名而徵之。授以肩輿迎於內殿。既而幡幢設列。龍象圍繞。萬乘有順風之請。兆民渴灑露之仁。問我所行。終無少法。尋制於章敬寺安置。自王公逮於士庶。其詣者日有千人。司徒楊公綰。情遊道樞。行出人表。大師一見於衆。二三目之。過此默然。吾無示說。楊公亦退而歎曰。此方外高士也。固當順之。不宜羈致。尋求歸山。詔允共請。因賜策曰國一

大師。仍以所居爲徑山寺焉。

In the beginning of the Dali period, the Daizong Emperor of Farsighted Valiance revered Jingshan Faqin and summoned him. A palanquin greeted and brought Faqin to the inner palace and drawing closer there were pennants and streamers which had been set in rows so that he was surrounded by dragons and elephants. The emperor had a smooth welcoming for Faqin, having the benevolence to sprinkle dew to the thirsty masses. He inquired into his personal actions, and in the end, he was of no lack in the dharma. *Daizong sought to make it so that Faqin would live at the Zhangjing Monastery.* From the nobility to the scholars and commoners, there were a thousand persons who went to pay their respects to Faqin that day. Yang Gongwan, minister over the masses, played in his mind with the essence of the way by making a list of exceptional persons. As soon as the great teacher saw him in the crowd, he looked at him two or three times and passed by in silence. He did not teach us, but Master Yang indeed returned to exclaim, “This is an eminent scholar beyond our world. We of course must yield to him, and it would be unsuitable to restrain him.” *He made an address to seek for him to return to the mountains. An imperial edict permitted this request, and by this [Faqin] was bestowed the title of the principle national preceptor and henceforth would live at the Jingshan Monastery.*⁵⁵

From the description here, it appears that Faqin’s proselytizing activity at the Zhangjing Monastery in Chang’an was only temporary. Moreover, it is said that Fanqin’s disciple Chonghui 崇慧 (dates unknown) also went to Chang’an at almost the same time, and it is said that he stayed there in Zhangxin Monastery and the Anguo Monastery.⁵⁶ The historicity of these accounts is unclear, and even if they were true,

the influence which the Oxhead school would have had in the capital at that time is also unclear. I think, therefore, that the influence which the Oxhead school would have had in the two capitals around the 770 period, when the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* was written, was likely quite limited.

In contrast, the Northern school still held considerable influence in the two capitals. For example, the epitaph by Dugu Ji 獨孤及 (d. 777) for the third Chan progenitor Sengcan 僧璨 entitled, *Shuzhou Shangusi jueji ta suigu jingzhi chanshi beiming bing xu* 舒州山谷寺覺寂塔隋故鏡智禪師碑銘并序 (Epitaph with Preface for the Former Mirror Cognition Chan Master Sengcan of the Shu Prefecture Shangu Monastery Jueji Pagoda) gives the following description:

其後信公以教傳宏忍。忍公傳惠能神秀。能公退而老曹溪。其嗣無聞焉。秀公傳普寂。寂公之門徒萬人。升堂者六十有三。得自在慧者一曰宏正。正公之廊。廡龍象又倍焉。或化嵩洛。或之荆吳。

Later Master Daoxin transmitted the teachings to Hongren, and Master Hongren transmitted the teachings to Huineng and Shenxiu. Master Huineng retired to Caoxi where he passed away, and it is unknown who inherited (his teachings). Master Shenxiu transmitted the teachings to Puji, and Master Puji had many disciples. Puji personally trained sixty-three of these disciples, one of these disciples who had obtained unobstructed wisdom was named Hongzheng. There is an even greater multiplicity of eminent monks occupying the side rooms of Master Hongzheng hall. The teachings may have been spread in Songluo or may have prospered in Jingwu.⁵⁷

Such hostile expressions seen here towards Huineng's disciples

makes clear that, viewed from the other side, Shenhui's provocations had a great impact on the Northern school—this epitaph shows that despite criticism from the Southern school, the Northern school still retained a great deal of influence which was centered in Puji's 普寂 disciple Hongzheng 宏正 (dates unknown), and Hongzheng's disciple Yunzhen 曇真 (704-763). As a matter of fact, other disciples of Puji, including such figures as Tongguang 同光 (700-770), Fawan 法玩 (715-790), such disciples of Hongzheng including Qiwei 契微 (720-781), and such disciples of Fawan including Mingwu 明悟 (dates unknown), can also be confirmed from this epitaph, and other such sources.⁵⁸

What is very interesting is that the imperial conference of a posthumous title to the third ancestor Sengcan in the seventh year of the Dali period (772) was a result of the efforts of the Northern school, and this was in fact the very same year when the pagoda of Shenhui was bestowed with the imperially given posthumous title "Great Teacher of Prajna."⁵⁹ Around the same time, Shenhui's disciple Huijian was ordered by imperial decree to reside at the Zhaosheng Monastery in Chang'an, and he was provided government funds to construct a Guanyin Hall, at that temple, in which there was a depiction of the seven progenitors.⁶⁰ In short, during the period around 770 when the *Platform Sutra* appears to have been written, there was a mutual contestation for Chan orthodoxy between the so-called Northern and Southern schools.

Amid this ongoing contestation, while neither side could concede their own legitimacy, both the Northern and Southern schools seem to have begun to consider that they had no choice but to acknowledge the existence of the other school. The reason for this, as has already been pointed out, is that it can be seen in the discourse of Shenhui's disciples which might be called "an ideology of reconciliation

between the Northern and Southern schools.”⁶¹ To begin with, the *Tang gu Zhaosheng Si Dade Huijian Chanshi bei bing xu* 唐故招聖寺大德慧堅禪師碑 (Preface to the Epitaph of Dade Huijiang), which is the primary text Huijian is known for, reads as follows:

貞元初詔譯新經。俾充鑒義大德。皇上方以玄聖沖妙之旨。素王中和之教。稽合內典。輔成化源。後當誕聖之日命入禁中。人天相見。龍象畢會。大君設重雲之講。儲后降雷雨之貴。乃問禪師見性之義。答曰。性者體也。見其用乎。體寂則不生。性空則無見。於是聽者郎然。若長雲秋霽。宿霧朝徹。又奉詔與諸長老辯佛法邪正。定南北兩宗。禪師以為開示之時。頓受非漸。修行之地。漸淨非頓。知法空。則法無邪正。悟宗通。則宗無南北。孰為分別而假名哉。其智慧高朗。謂若此也。

In the beginning of the Zhengyuan period there was an edict for the translation of new sutras. [Huijian] was appointed to serve as the high monk of confirming the interpretation [of the translations]. The emperor then used the sense of mixing the profound held by the mystical sage [Laozi], and the teaching of temperance and harmony of the uncrowned king [Confucius], and the verified Buddhist scriptures to complement each other as sources of [moral] transformation. Later [Huijian] was ordered to come to the inner palace for the emperor's birthday, and Human-Meeting-Heaven [the emperor] and Dragon-Elephant [the venerable Huijian] were together at last. The emperor arraigned for a talk [with Huijian] in the high depths of the inner court. The crown prince belittled his own nobility as successive thunder [crown prince] by going so far as to ask the Chan teacher the meaning of *jianxing* 見性 [seeing intrinsic nature]. [Huijian] replied: "This intrinsic nature is *ti* 體 [corporal essence] itself and seeing [conscious recognition] is its *yong* 用 [concrete expression]. Corporal essence is unmoving and, therefore is not produced; intrinsic

nature is empty [of independent existence], and therefore unseen.” Upon this the audience understood like the clarity of a clear autumn day after a long rain, or like the morning penetrating through the mist of night. [Huijian] *again received an imperial order to debate the right and wrong of the Buddhist dharma with various elder monks. To settle the unrest between the two schools, Northern and Southern, Chan teacher [Huijian] took it that, “Understanding of the teachings is sudden and not gradual, but actual practice purifies gradually and not suddenly.* If one realizes that dharmas are empty, there are no right and wrong dharmas; and if one awakens to the interpenetration of the *zong* 宗 [central source tenets of these schools], *there are no Southern or Northern [central tenets of Chan] What reason is there for discriminatory thinking and false names?”* Huijian was distinguished in wisdom, and so he would say this.⁶²

From this passage we can see that when Emperor Dezong of Tang (r. 780-805) ordered Buddhist elders to discuss the right and wrong of Buddhist teachings, Huijian not only adopted the theory of “sudden enlightenment and gradual practice” after the passing of Shenhui, but also opposed differentiating between the Northern and Southern schools. Additionally, Chengguang 乘廣 (717-798), who had taught at Mount Yangxi in Yuanzhou (Jiangxi province)—had also studied under Heze Shenhui, and in his epitaph by Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) is written:

至洛陽。依荷澤會公以契真乘。洪鍾蘊聲。扣之斯應。陽燧含焰。晞之乃明。始由見性。終得自在。常謂機有淺深。法無高下。分二宗者。衆生存頓漸之見。說三乘者。如來開方便之門。名自外得。故生分別。道由內證。則無異同。

Arriving in Luoyang, [Chengguang] followed Master Heze Shenhui to

accord with the true teachings that although a great bell holds sound, it is striking it which causes it to resonate; and although a solar fire-starting mirror contains flame, it is exposing it to the sun which allows it to ignite. Only by first seeing inherent essence is freedom finally obtained. [Chengguan] *always said that the abilities of persons are shallow or profound, but there is no superiority or inferiority within the dharma. Those who divide Chan into the Northern and Southern schools are imprisoned within the views of “sudden” and “gradual.” The explanation of the three vehicles is only the gateways opened by the Buddha in methods [provisionally] beneficial. As names are externally obtained, they give rise to discriminatory thinking. The way follows inner awakening, so there is no opposition.*⁶³

Chengguang is portrayed here as always teaching that although people have different aptitudes (in understanding Buddhism), there is no difference in the dharma. Therefore, the division of the Northern and Southern schools in Chan is only caused by everyone being stuck in the ideas of “sudden” or “gradual” enlightenment, and the explanation of the “three vehicles” was only taught by the Buddha to be provisionally beneficial.

In these two epitaphs, the differences between the Northern and Southern schools are portrayed as merely provisionally beneficial gateways, and any such distinctions would disappear with the attainment of “enlightenment.” This ideology can be seen as a reflection of the circumstances by which the Northern and Southern schools coexisted in the two capitals of Chang’an and Luoyang. From these words attributed to Huijian, for the Heze school in the period after Shenhui died, the ideological basis for the reconciliation of the Northern

and Southern schools was the theory of “sudden enlightenment and gradual practice.”

What is noteworthy, reflecting a position which is almost the same as that of Huijiang and Chengguan 乘廣, in the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* we find the following passage:

善知識。法無頓漸。人有利鈍。迷即漸勸。悟人頓修。識自本心。是見本性。悟即元無差別。不悟即長劫輪迴。善知識。我此法門從上已來。頓漸皆立無念爲宗。無相爲體。無住爲本。

Good friends, the dharma is without sudden or gradual, yet people are either sharp or dull. The bewildered undertake the gradual, while awakened persons cultivate the sudden. Awareness of one's original mind is seeing intrinsic nature. Awakening itself is originally without any distinctions, and to not awaken is itself a long kalpa of cyclic existence. Good friends, our dharma gate has always taken “no thought” as its source teaching, “no form” as its body, and “無住=non-abiding” as the foundation of both the sudden and gradual.⁶⁴

法即一宗。人有南北。因此便立南北。何以頓漸。法即一種。見有遲疾。見致遲即漸。見疾即頓。法無頓漸。人有利鈍。故名漸頓。

There's only one source teaching, yet the northern and southern exists in people, and that's why the Northern and Southern were established to accommodate them. What is sudden and gradual [enlightenment]? There's only one dharma, but understanding is fast or slow. Fast understanding is sudden, and slow understanding is gradual, but there's no sudden and gradual in the dharma. It's people who are sharp or dull, so there are the terms sudden and gradual.⁶⁵

We can take these passages as compelling evidence that my

above arguments on the authorship of the *Platform Sutra* are basically correct.

We might imagine that it would have also been the so-called “Northern school” which advocated for this reconciliation between the Northern and Southern schools, and a Chan Buddhist manuscript which is thought to have been composed at this time—the *Dasheng kaixin xianxing dunwu zhenzong lun* 大乘開心顯性頓悟真宗論 (Treatise on the True Principle of the Sudden Enlightenment of the Awakening of the Mind and Revealing Intrinsic Nature by the Great Vehicle)—seems to prove this. This unique manuscript is an amalgamation of various early Chan texts such as the *Dunwu zhenzong jin’gang bore xiuxing da bi’an yaojue* 頓悟真宗金剛般若修行達彼岸要訣 (The Essential Teachings According to the True Principle of Sudden Enlightenment Through the Practice of Diamond Prajna to Reach the Other Shore) by Houmochen Yan 侯莫陳琰 (660–714)—who had studied with Shenxiu (606–714), and Hui’an—the *Lengqie shizi ji* by Xuanze’s 玄蹟 (dates unknown) disciple Jingjue (dates unknown), the *Guanxin lun* 觀心論 (Treatise of Observing the Mind), and other Buddhist texts such as the *Yuzhu jin’gang bore jing* 御注金剛般若經 (Imperially Annotated Diamond Sutra), and the *Dasheng qi shilun* 大乘起世論 (Awakening the Worldly Theories of the Great Vehicle).⁶⁶ In the preface of this text, we read that the dharma name of the author Huiguang was Dazhao 大照, and that he first studied under Hui’an before studying under Shenhui.

This preface of the *Dasheng kaixin xianxing dunwu zhenzong lun* was copied from the *Dunwu zhenzong jin’gang bore xiuxing bi’an famen yaojue*, and not only this personal history of Huiguang, but even this figure himself should be considered a fabrication. This dharma name “Dazhou” 大照 seems to have been written on the basis of the

posthumous name of Puji, and although the lineage of the author of this work is unclear, that this work cites the *Guanxin lun*, and other texts related to the Northern school, allows us to see that the author was close to the “Northern school.” Thus, it was not only members of the “Southern school,” but also members of the “Northern school” who did not necessarily see the two schools as being in conflict.⁶⁷

Therefore, if there was a growing awareness at this time among Chan Buddhists living in central China that the conflict between the Northern and the Southern schools should be ended, we can say that the incorporation of such Sanjie ideology as respecting others, ceasing disputes, and so on into the Dunhuang *Platform Sutra* was in response to this.

4. On the Revival of Sanjie Teachings in Late Eighth-Century Central China

As I have mentioned above, the fact that the influence of Sanjie ideology can be seen in the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* not only clarifies the authorship of this text, but also allows us to understand the position of the Heze school which wrote it, as well as the situation of Chan Buddhism in the two capitals of Chang’an and Luoyang at that time. This perspective not only sheds new light on the history of Chan Buddhism, but also has the potential to transcend the framework of a “Chan school” to answer larger questions on the history of Chinese Buddhism, as it offers a clue to understanding the exact ideology conditions which allowed for this revival of Sanjie ideology.

All things considered, I view the inclusion of Sanjie ideology in the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* as an indication that Heze

Shenhui's heirs wished to mend the divisiveness which the founder of their lineage had brought to Chan Buddhism. That such Northern school figures as Shenxiu and Puji were imperially recognized with such titles as Liangjing Fazhu 兩京法主 (Dharma Master of the Two Capitals) and *San di guoshi* 三帝國師 (National Preceptor of the Three Emperors), and revered as the state-sanctioned leaders of the East Mountain school, created a situation for the Heze school wherein continuing to echo Shenhui's dismissive rhetoric towards the Northern school would have become viewed as imperial defiance. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Shenhui had once been ordered into exile by the state. The problem is, it was only the result of the efforts by Shenhui's heirs to honor him that the state once again recognized Shenhui's authority, and this in turn led to imperial recognition of the division which had occurred within Chan Buddhism. In other words, the reconciliation between the Northern and Southern schools was not merely a problem within Chan, but had become a problem for the entirety of the state-sanctioned Buddhism which was centered in the capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang. If, in the latter half of the eighth century, it had become an urgent task for the Buddhist community in central China to mend the schism and antagonism which Heze Shenhui and his disciples had provoked, it would be perfectly conceivable that Sanjie ideology could have been adopted as a useful tool for this purpose—and if this was in fact the case, I suppose it would have been not truly a revival of Sanjie ideology. I have, in a previous article on the trend of Chan Buddhism as seen in the *Nianfo sanmei baowang lun* 念佛三昧寶王論 (The Jeweled Kingly Treatise on the Samadhi of the Recollection of Buddhas), discussed the thought of Feixi 飛錫—one of the leading figures of this revival of the Sanjie teachings. In that article I wrote:

As mentioned above, Feixi's thought differed from that of Sanjie ideology in important ways, so I think it would be a mistake to consider that the ideology of the Sanjie school had at this time experienced a revival to the exact form in which it had previously existed. In the case of Feixi, if anything, it would surely be more appropriate to refer to this as a "reevaluation."⁶⁸

I would say that we should accept this previous point of mine as is, even from the new perspective I offer in this paper. Furthermore, the motive by which Feixi attempts to integrate Tiantai, Pureland, and Sanjie teachings in his *Nianfo sanmei baowang lun* should be understood from the perspective of the unification of state-sponsored Buddhism. In the *Nianfo sanmei baowang lun*, I discovered not only criticism of the "Northern school" as found in early works of Pure Land teachings such as the *Jingtu cibei ji* 淨土慈悲集 (Pure Land Loving Kindness Collection), and the *Nianfo jing* 念佛鏡 (Buddha Recollection Mirror), but also recognized criticism of the Heze school which are not found in these texts⁶⁹ I understand that I must connect this fact with the issues I have raised in this paper.

To recap, I think the confrontation between the Northern and Southern schools as provoked by Shenhui developed into the greater problem of the disunion of the entirety of the state-sponsored Buddhism centered in the two capitals of the Tang, and Sanjie ideology attracted attention and was adopted as a means of dealing with this problem. In my previous article cited above on the *Nianfo sanmei baowang lun*, I paid attention to the Sanjie teachings of this period to find its commonalities with the idea of human respect in the Chan of Mazu Daoyi, as it seems that both captured the zeitgeist of that time. I wrote:

I think that one of the characteristics of Feixi's thought was that he rejected such idealistic and transcendental concepts as the *rulai zang* 如來藏 (matrix of the thus come one, *foxing* 佛性 (buddha nature), and *li* 理 (inherent principle), or at least did not emphasize them. Instead, Feixi affirmed the absolute value of the people encountered in the moment, and concrete everyday practice of the dharma. I would say nobody can deny that this philosophy is remarkably close to that of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一, who completely affirmed the ordinary as symbolized in his phrase *pingchang xin shi dao* 平常心是道 (the ordinary mind is the way). I would go as far as to say that the idea that humans are buddhas, just as they are, transcends the thoughts of Mazu, and can be connected to the idea of the "human" advocated by Liji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 867).⁷⁰

It is extremely important that Feixi and Mazu, who did not know each other, shared such ideological similarities. For this shows that we should not simply understand Mazu's thought as a development confined to Chan, but as something which emerged in response to the social demands of that period. The subsequent dramatic development of the Hongzhou school cannot be understood outside of this context.

Although I cannot deny that there is a common theme which runs through my research here, the most pressing issue which the figures of that time faced was the mending of the schisms in state-sponsored Buddhism.

Conclusion

In this paper I have pointed out the influence which Sanjie ideology have had on the *Platform Sutra*, and from this I have clarified

my opinion that the Heze school wrote the *Platform Sutra* in central China around the year 770. Furthermore, I have discussed such points as the motivation behind incorporating Sanjie ideology into the *Platform Sutra*, as well as issues surrounding the “revival of Sanjie ideology” at that time.

Although the veracity of the assessment which I present in this paper still await further investigation, even if my ideas here come to overturn my initial research into the origins of the *Platform Sutra*, it is important that I note that my initial study of the Dunhuang text of the *Platform Sutra* still holds many valuable clues concerning the relationship between that text and other related texts. Based on the conclusions of my initial monograph, I have already formed new perspectives on texts such as the *Caoxi Dashi zhuan* and the *Neng Dashi zhuan* 能大師傳 (Biography of Huineng), and I plan to hereafter publish separate studies concerning these texts.

Notes

- 1 Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “Tonkō bon *Dangyō* no keisei: Enō no genshisō to Jinne ha no tenkai” 敦煌本『壇經』の形成: 惠能の原思想と神會派の展開, *Ronsō Ajia no bunka to shisō* 論叢アジアの文化と思想 4 (1995): 1-266.
- 2 See Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “*Shishi ketsumyaku den* no seiritsu to henka, narabini hoka no Jinne no chosaku to no kankei ni tsuite” 『師資血脈傳』の成立と變化、並びに他の神會の著作との関係について, *Tōyō shisō bunka* 東洋思想文化 7 (2020) : 116-188; and Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “Kataku Jinne no chosaku *Dangyō* seiritsu jiki ni tsuite” 荷澤神會の著作『壇語』の成立時期について, *Indogaku Bukkyō gaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 (2020): 69-1.
- 3 Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, *Dunhuang xinben Liuzu Tanjing* 敦煌新本六祖壇經, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), pp. 21-22.
- 4 Yang, *Tanjing*, 65 (emphasis mine).

- 5 Yang, *Tanjing*, 69.
- 6 Yabuki Keiki 矢吹慶輝, *Sangaikyō no kenkyō* 三階教之研究, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927), p. 518 (emphasis mine).
- 7 I should note that we can find the terms “pure dharma body of Vairocana Buddha,” and “the thousands of hundreds of myriads upon myriads of metamorphized bodies of Shakyamuni Buddha” in the *Qingjing fashen Piluzhena xinda famen chengjiu yiqie tuoluoni sanzong xidi* 清淨法身毘盧遮那心地法門成就一切陀羅尼三種悉地 (Accomplishing All Dharanis and the Three Siddhis by the Dharma Gate of the Mind Ground of the Pure Dharma Body of Vairocana), so I assume this text has some kind of relationship to the *Qijie foming jing* and the *Platform Sutra* even though that relationship is not currently clear. Regardless, this text makes no mention of such terms as “forthcoming perfected reward bodies,” so it is hard to imagine that it had a direct influence on the *Platform Sutra*. See *Taishōshinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, 85 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924-1932) [hereafter *T.*], v. 18, p. 518.
- 8 Ishigaki Akiko 石垣明貴杞, “Sangaikyō bunken no butsumyō to shokyō no kōshō” 三階教文獻の佛名と諸經の交渉, *Indogaku Bukkyō gaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 (2017): 65-2.
- 9 Yang, *Tanjing*, 23-24.
- 10 Yang, *Tanjing*, 37-38.
- 11 Yang, *Tanjing*, 14-15.
- 12 Yang, *Tanjing*, 46.
- 13 Yang, *Tanjing*, 53-54.
- 14 Yang, *Tanjing*, 61-62.
- 15 Yang, *Tanjing*, 18-19.
- 16 Nishimoto Teruma 西本照眞, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū* 三階教の研究, (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1998), p. 498.
- 17 Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō*, 589.
- 18 Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō*, 589.
- 19 Hu Shi 胡適, *Shenhui heshang yiji: Hushi jiao Dunhuang Tang xieben* 神會和尚遺集: 胡適校敦煌唐寫本, (Shanghai: Yadong tushuguan, 1930), pp. 76-90.

- 20 See Qian Mu 錢穆, “Shenhui yu Tanjing” 神會與壇經, *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 14 (1945); Zhang Mantao 張曼濤 et al., *Liuzu Tanjing yanjiu* 六祖壇經研究論集, (Taipei: Dasheng wenhua chubanshe, 1980), pp. 97-98; Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, “Lun Hu Shi zai Chan zong shi yanjiu zhong de miuwu” 論胡適在禪宗史研究中的謬誤, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 5 (1955); and Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, trans. Koga Hidehiko 古賀英彦 et al., *Chūgoku Bukkyō shisō ronshū* 中國佛教思想論集, (Tokyo: Tōhō shoten, 1980), pp. 209-210.
- 21 See Yinshun 印順, *Zhongguo Chan zong shi: cong Yindu Chan dao Zhonghua Chan* 中國禪宗史: 從印度禪到中華禪, (Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1971). Below citations will be from Yinshun 印順, trans. Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, *Chūgoku Zenshū shi: Zen shisō no tanjō* 中國禪宗史: 禪思想的誕生, (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1997). See the second part of Chapter 6 of my translation of *Chūgoku zenshūshi* on the oldest parts of the *Platform Sutra*, pp. 301-305.

For other studies on the authorship of the *Platform Sutra* see, Matsumoto Bunzaburō 松本文三郎, *Kongōkyō to Rokuso dangyō no kenkyū* 金剛經と六祖壇經の研究, (Kyoto: Baiyō shoin, 1913); and Ui Hakuju 宇井伯壽, “Dangyō kō,” in *Daisan Zenshū shi kenkyū* 第三禪宗史研究, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1941). Matsumoto’s book is interesting, but he wrote it before the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Platform Sutra*, so it cannot answer the questions raised by Dunhuang sources. However, Ui’s study attempts to restore the original form of the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*—concluding that even though the Dunhuang text is the earliest edition that it contained many later additions—yet I think that Ui’s judgement of the older and newer parts of the text seems arbitrary, and I would hesitate to call his research objective. Apart from these is, Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究, (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1967), p. 203, which argues that the original form of the *Platform Sutra* was related to the Oxhead school—yet Yanagida makes so many leaps of logic, that its hard to agree with him.

Furthermore, the studies on this topic published after my initial monograph include:

Matsuoka Yukako 松岡由香子, “Enō to busshō” 慧能と佛性, *Zen bunka*

kenkyū kiyō 禪文化研究所紀要 31 (2011): 75-198.

Kogachi Ryo 古勝亮, “Tonkō bon *Dangyō* no henshū: denbō hyōgen oyobi ge no chōfuku kara mita keisei shi no suitei” 傳法表現および偈の重複からみた形成史の推定, *Shūkan Tōyōgaku* 集刊東洋學116 (2017): 118-132.

Although these studies offer new interpretations, they are insufficient to negate consideration of prior research such as my own initial study of this topic, yet these new interpretations are also plausible. Still, all of these studies since Yinshun’s monograph are based on the gradual composition of the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Sutra*, which I have shown in this paper to be untenable.

22 Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō*, 136.

23 Yang, *Tanjing*, 73.

24 Yang, *Tanjing*, 113.

25 Yang, *Tanjing*, 121.

26 Yang, *Tanjing*, 122.

27 Shenhui 神會, *Shenhui heshang Chanhua lu* 神會和尚禪話錄, ed. Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), p. 110.

28 For details on the alterations in the extant *Shizi xuemai zhuan* and the restoration of its original form, see Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “*Shishi ketsumyaku den* no seiritsu to henka, narabini hoka no Jinne no chosaku to no kankei ni tsuite” 『師資血脈傳』の成立と變化、並びに他の神會の著作との關係について, *Tōyō shisō bunka* 東洋思想文化 7 (2020): 111-102.

29 Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbō ki* 初期の禪史 II: 歷代法寶記, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1976), p. 99.

30 I did not discuss this point in my article “*Shishi ketsumyaku den* no seiritsu to henka, narabini hoka no Jinne no chosaku to no kankei ni tsuite,” but we should add this point for a reconstruction of the *Shizi xuemai zhuan*. However, as there is a unique rewriting of this part in the *Lidai fabao ji* where Empress Wu Zetian confiscates Bodhidharma’s robe, it is possible that it was the *Lidai fabao ji* which was rewritten and that the *Shizi xuemai zhuan* retains its original form.

31 See endnote 21.

- 32 Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “*Nenbutsu sanmai hō ron ni miru Zen no dōkō*” 『念佛三昧寶王論』に見る禪の動向, *Tōyōgaku kenkyū* 東洋學研究 41 (2004): 139.
- 33 Nishimoto, *Sangaikyō*, 87-114.
- 34 Ibuki, “*Dangyō no keisei*,” 14-18.
- 35 Yang, *Tanjing*, 60-61. (the parts marked by asterisk is transcribed incorrectly as: 更憂阿誰憂吾。不知去處在。若不知去處; the correct transcription is: 更有阿誰憂吾。不知去處在。若知去處).
- 36 Yang, *Tanjing*, 63.
- 37 Yang, *Tanjing*, 47.
- 38 Yang, *Shenhui*, 31.
- 39 Yang, *Shenhui*, 18.
- 40 Yang, *Tanjing*, 14-15. This text has already been cited above.
- 41 Yang, *Tanjing*, 15.
- 42 See the section on Venerable Zhi (*Zhi Fashi* 哲法師) in the *Tonkō shutsudo Jinne roku* 敦煌出土神會錄, annot. Ishii Mitsuo 石井光雄 (Tokyo: 1932); and Yang, *Shenhui*, 79.
- 43 Yang, *Shenhui*, 10-11.
- 44 Yang, *Tanjing*, 29-30.
- 45 Yang, *Shenhui*, 45; and Ishii, *Jinne roku*, 73.
- 46 Yang, *Tanjing*, 27-28.
- 47 Yang, *Shenhui*, 34-35.
- 48 Yang, *Tanjing*, 5 (the parts marked by asterisk is transcribed incorrectly as: 見今; the correct transcription is: 現今).
- 49 Yang, *Tanjing*, 12-13.
- 50 See Ibuki, “*Shishi ketsumyaku den no seiritsu*,” 36-37. The privileging of the *Diamond Sutra* seen in such texts as the *Putidamo ding shifei lun* should be regarded as a development which occurred after the death of Shenhui, yet Yinshun attributes this as development of Heze Shenhui’s thought in his later years. See Yinshun, *Zen shisō no tanjō*, 201-202. Takeuchi Kodo also finds no evidence for this to be the case; see Takeuchi Kodo 竹内弘道, “*Nanshū jō zehi ron no seiritsu ni tsuite*” 『南宗定是非論』の成立について, *Indogaku Bukkyō gaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 (1981):

29-2.

- 51 Although *quchu* 去處 is written as *fachu* 法處 (phenomenal place) in the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Platform Sutra*, I have followed Yang (1993) to interpret this term for now as *quchu* 去處.
- 52 Ibuki, “*Dangyō no keisei*,” 116–117.
- 53 For more on the efforts of Huijian and Huikong to restore Shenhui’s authority after his death while in exile in Jingzhou, see Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, “‘Tōsan hōmon’ to kokka kenryoku,” 「東山法門」と國家權力, *Tōyōgaku kenkyū* 東洋學研究 49 (2012): 148–153.
- 54 Ibuki, “*Dangyō no keisei*,” 132.
- 55 *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 512.
- 56 A passage of the 961 *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (Source Mirror Record) by Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975) reads: 如西京崇慧法師。於大曆四年。在京與道士鬪。能入火不燒。是求觀音之力。何況自證。證得已後。入地獄中。皆不被燒。 (T. 48, 806a21–24). In the 1269 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 by Zhipan 志磐 (dates unknown), a line on the year 765 reads: 章敬沙門崇慧與道士角法告勝。勅賜紫衣。 (T. 49, 378a12–13). Chonghui is famous for his involvement in the power struggle between the Daoist and Buddhist clergy, but little else is known about him.
- 57 *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 390.
- 58 For information on Puji’s disciples, see Tong Ran 通然, “Hokushū Zen to Tōdai shakai: Fujaku no katsudō to sono eikyō o chūshin ni shite” 北宗禪と唐代社会: 普寂の活動とその影響を中心にして, *Komazawa Daigaku Zen kenkyūjo nenpō* 駒澤大學禪研究所年報 30 (2019): 201–205. Incidentally, Tong Ran notes that the arithmetic average time of death of Puji’s disciples was in the second week of November, 769. And from this the average difference in the time of death between teacher and disciple was determined to be thirty years.
- 59 Ibuki, “‘Tōsan hōmon’ to kokka kenryoku,” 157 and 152.
- 60 Ibuki, “‘Tōsan hōmon’ to kokka kenryoku,” 152.
- 61 See Ogawa Takashi 小川隆, *Jinne: Tonkō bunken to shoki no Zenshu shi* 神會: 敦煌文獻と初期の禪宗史, (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 2007), pp. 155–159. Ogawa argues that Huijian’s reconciliation of the conflict between the

- Northern and the Southern school was in fact a unilateral concession to the authority of the Northern school, yet this is problematic in that it seems to trivialize the issue that both the Northern and the Southern school had to remain within the framework of state-controlled Buddhism.
- 62 See Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, “*Shenhuui beimin he Huijian beiming de zhushi*” 《神會塔銘》和《慧堅碑銘》的注釋, *Fojiao yanjiu* 佛學研究 7 (1998): 32-33; and Ran Yanhua 冉雲華, “*Tang gu Zhaosheng Si Dade Huijian Chanshi bei bing xu kao*” 《唐故招聖寺大德慧堅禪師碑》考, *Zhonghua Foxue xuebao* 中華佛學學報 7 (1994): 106-107.
- 63 *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 610.
- 64 Yang, *Tanjing*, 16.
- 65 Yang, *Tanjing*, 47.
- 66 Cheng Zheng 程正, “*Daijō kaishin kenshō tongo shinshū ron no ikyo bunken nit suite*” 『大乘開心顯性頓悟眞宗論』の依據文献について, *Komazawa Daigaku Zen kenkyūjo nenbō* 駒澤大學禪研究所年報 69 (2011): 121-141.
- 67 The first to indicate that the *Dasheng kaixin xianxing dunwu zhenzong lun* was a treatise on the reconciliation between the Northern and Southern schools was the Hong Kong scholar Jao Tsung-I. See Jao Tsung-I 饒宗頤, “*Shenhui menxia Moheyen zhi ru Zang jian lun Chanmen nan bei zong zhi tiaohewenti*,” in *Xianggang daxue wushi zhounian jinian lunwen ji* 香港大學五十週年紀念論文集, 1. (Hong Kong, Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue, 1964). Although from today’s point of view Jao’s study contains many issues such as the placement of Moheyen 摩訶衍 (Tibetan: Mahayana), and its objectivity towards Huiiguang, its pioneering view is commendable.
- 68 Ibuki, “*Nenbutsu sanmai hōō ron ni miru Zen no dōkō*,” 139.
- 69 Ibuki, “*Nenbutsu sanmai hōō ron ni miru Zen no dōkō*,” 139-135.
- 70 Ibuki, “*Nenbutsu sanmai hōō ron ni miru Zen no dōkō*,” 138-139.