Origins of the Image of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng at Mount Lu

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Prajñā is not inherently abstruse; yet deluded people rely on words to interpret meaning, and their deluded minds grow ever more entrenched through kalpa after kalpa. Bodhi was originally a burden, yet sentient beings mistake the false for the true; wishing to escape afflictions, they instead become entangled by them. Thus the World-Honored One held up a flower, Mahākāśyapa smiled; the patriarchs transmitted the lamp, illuminating antiquity and shining upon the present. After four times seven patriarchs in India and two times three in China, Master Neng appeared in the world. He overturned the three worthy stages and ten bhūmis, and set aside scriptural teachings and literary writings. When transmission of the robe ceased, the flower blossomed into the five houses; though unable to recognize a single written character, he silenced every tongue under heaven. From this time, the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye flourished greatly in China, and outstanding monastics appeared far and wide in every direction.

Now, in this harmonious and prosperous age, Lay Practitioner Lushan of Shandong first aroused the unsurpassed resolve and established this site; afterward, worthy people from the great assemblies in every region practiced the bodhisattva path by raising donations. As causes and conditions converged, dragons and devas joined in support. Thus, the completion of the statue of Practitioner Lu at Lushan Temple on Mount Lu became the origin of this great undertaking.

In former times there was a monk named Fangbian, who once presented Master Neng with a sculpted likeness, exquisitely wrought in every detail. The Master said: “You understand only the nature of sculpting, not the Buddha-nature. You will forever be a field of blessings for humans and devas.” Now that the sculpted image has been erected, where is the Buddha-nature? Is there anyone who can break the shackles of humans and devas and recognize the true mind of the Sixth Patriarch?

How many dust-laden affairs there are at Caoxi—swept without end even to this day. Take care!

Midsummer, the Gengyin Year

Respectfully inscribed, after washing his hands, by Qi Zhijun, a student of the Buddha Heart-Center Dharma

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