



Self-Salvation

The Fifth Patriarch continued, “When the great master Bodhidharma came to this land, people did not believe him. So he handed on the robe and the bowl as the concrete symbol of faith. It has been inherited through many generations. As for the *dharma*, it is transmitted from heart to heart (mind to mind) and to be self-realized. Since the robe is the focus of contention, it stops with you and is not to be handed on anymore. If you continue to pass on the robe, your life may be in danger. Now you should leave here immediately, otherwise someone may harm you.”

Hui Neng asked, “Where should I go?” The Fifth Patriarch replied, “Stop at Huai, hide at Hui.”

Hui Neng said, “I am a southerner and do not know the way.” The Fifth Patriarch said, “Don’t worry, I’ll take you there.”

So the Fifth Patriarch took Hui Neng to Chiu-chiang where they boarded a boat. The Fifth Patriarch took up the oars and started to row. Hui Neng said, “Please sit down, let your disciple row.”

The Fifth Patriarch said, “It is appropriate that I ferry you across.” Hui Neng said:

“When the disciple is at a loss,
The teacher ferries him over.
When the disciple is enlightened,
He ferries himself across.”

The Fifth Patriarch said, “It is so, it is so.” The Fifth Patriarch continued, “From now on Buddhist *dharma* will be spread widely through you. Three years from now I’ll depart from this world. Now you should go to the south but do not start promoting the *dharma* too soon. It is a difficult task.”

After he bade farewell to the Fifth Patriarch, Hui Neng headed south. He came to Mount Ta Yu two months later.