



"Indian and Confucian text-critical methodologies in Chinese Buddhism"

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India and China separately developed methods for text-criticism, including collation and judgements on the correct version in order to create reliable texts, and etymological glossing as part of commentaries. India developed an method of exegesis on the Vedas, which probably was adapted by the Sthaviravaadins to create a methodology (netti) in their handbook, the "Petakopadesa". This book is mentioned in Kumaarajiva's "Ta Chih-tu lun". In China, the Confucians created Han-hsueh or the study of the Confucian Classics through means such as bibliography, palaeography, phonology, etymological glossing (hsun-ku) and collation scholarship (chiao-k'an), all of which overlapped with philology (hsiao-hsueh).

It is likely that these two sets of methodologies, merged or at least provided an avenue for mutual acceptance in the first commentaries on Buddhist translations into Chinese during the early fourth century, and in translations or with translators originating from Liang-chou, men such as Chu Fo-nien. Liang-chou, in the far northwest of China, preserved the orthodox Han-hsueh which was undergoing transformations elsewhere, and was a point of contact with Central Asian Buddhism.

This paper will trace some of these historical developments, and conclude by demonstrating how important it became in some aspects of Ch'an and Zen, especially as Zengaku (the systematic, scholarly study of Zen).