Textual Criticism and the Turbulent Life of the Platform Sūtra*

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The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch is one of the most widely known and beloved texts produced by Chinese Buddhism. However, what makes the Platform Sūtra especially interesting is the fact that uniquely among Chinese Buddhist texts it is extant in a number of editions that differ significantly from one another, spanning the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. Thus the Platform Sūtra is not just one single, stable text, but rather an amorphous textual entity that has gone through a number of manifestations. In this essay, I revisit an earlier study and in the light of recent research and textual finds discuss the different editions of the Platform Sūtra and what can be learned about their relationships with one another. Emphasizing the important role of the methodology of textual criticism, I present data that suggests how the different versions are related to each other, and discuss how we can proceed with our study of the text.

Key words: Platform Sūtra, Huinéng (638-713), Chán Buddhism, textual criticism

*I respectfully dedicate this essay to my colleague and friend South Coblin on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, in the hope he will find something of interest in it.
文獻校勘法與《六祖壇經》諸版本之研究

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《六祖壇經》是中國佛教最廣為人知推崇的經文之一。在中國佛經中，惟《六祖壇經》現存諸多版本，涵蓋 8 世紀至 13 世紀，且各版本間差異顯著，故特爲有趣。因此，《六祖壇經》並非僅是一個單一固定的文本，而是一個呈現多樣的文本本體。本文將重新審視早期的研究，並就目前研究及發現，來討論《六祖壇經》諸版本間的差異及其之間的關係。本文將著重文獻校勘方法，呈現指出各不同版本是如何相互關聯，並探討將如何繼續進行本研究。

關鍵詞：《六祖壇經》，慧能 (638-713)，禪宗，文獻學