

Buddhist Terms and Expressions in Chinese Burial Inventories

ASAMI Naoichirō

This paper focuses on text added to fourth to sixth-century Chinese *suizang yiwushu* 随葬衣物疏 (burial inventories), aiming to do the following. First, while referring to Buddhist scriptures, concretely examine the Buddhist terms that appear in *suizang yiwushu*. Second, unravel difficult terms and expressions found therein by referring to those in *muquan* 墓券 (grave deeds). Third, and related to the above, engage in a preliminary analysis of the few *muquan* that contain Buddhist terms.

Suizang yiwushu were lists of the furnishings placed alongside the deceased when they were buried, and are rooted in the pre-Common Era *qiance* 遣策. To these lists were sometimes added text praying for the peace of the deceased in the afterlife, which reflect views of the world, birth, and death held at that time. In the sixth century one begins to find Buddhist terms in these lists. This paper's first task is to examine them via comparisons with Buddhist scriptures.

Another kind of funerary document with ancient roots is *muquan*, pseudo-land deeds stating that the entombed purchased their grave's plot from the god of the land, thereby trying to secure the peaceful afterlife of the entombed. *Muquan* use many expressions similar to those in *suizang yiwushu*, and there are numerous extant examples of them. Examining how expressions are used in the former can aid our understanding of difficult terms found in the latter. This is the second task of this paper.

While *muquan* generally do not include Buddhist terms, it has become clear that there are exceptions. The third task of this paper is to examine such *muquan*.

The results of this paper's investigation are as follows.

(1) The content of sixth century *suizang yiwushu* is very similar to that of Buddhist scriptures written in China, such as Xi Chao's (Jin dynasty) overview of Buddhism *Fengfayao* 奉法要 and the *Tiwei boli jing* 提謂波利經. This indicates that so-called "Han Chinese Buddhism" or "Chinese Buddhism" had permeated into folkways, such as funerary ritual.

(2) Commonalities between *muquan* and *suizang yiwushu* include idiomatic expressions describing death—such as "drunk" (*zuijiu* 醉酒) and "[The deceased] met the Buddha and immortals and thus will not come back"—as well as the attempt to guarantee the content of added text via the power of those in another world. These concretely express part of the shared worldview of this particular era's people that transcended the frameworks of "Buddhism" and "Daoism."

(3) *Muquan* were very common documents made to be like land deeds. While sometimes Buddhist terms appear, they do not reflect a worldview that can be characterized as particularly Buddhist. In other words, while the basic framework of *muquan* remains essentially unchanged from those before the introduction of Buddhism, Buddhist terms found their way into them in a fragmentary fashion. However, with that said, further research is needed to determine the reasons that such Buddhist terms came to appear in certain *muquan* while not existing in others.