

A Discussion of the Han Dynasty's Systems of Coffin Bestowal

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Introduction

Systems of coffin bestowal refer to the systems by which the central and local governments would bestow coffins to the deceased on behalf of the state. Among historical documents of the pre-Qin period (before 221 B.C.), one can find records of rituals concerning the bestowal of various gifts for the deceased and their families,¹ but there is no mention of the systems of bestowing coffins. Therefore, one can assume that, during the pre-Qin period, systems of coffin bestowal had not yet formed. Among the documents of the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.), there is a law regarding the bestowal of coffins for commoners who died in the imperial parks 禁苑 (places designed for the royal family to relax, recreate, or hunt, usually including resting palaces) during corvée. During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), because death was viewed as another kind of birth, and because tombs were considered the dwelling places of the deceased, in which the coffin was, undoubtedly, the most important item, systems of coffin bestowal were established in various forms, such as through statutes (*lü* 律), ordinances (*ling* 令), and so on.² According to these systems, the receivers of coffins included all the social ranks from commoner to prime minister

¹ According to the funeral rites of the pre-Qin period recorded in the *Liji* 禮記 and the *Yili* 儀禮, the gifts given to the deceased and the mourning family during the funeral are shells and jades, clothes, a shroud, horses, a hearse, money, and so on. The contents of these gifts and the corresponding rituals are referred to in *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), *juan* 43, p. 1218; *Yili zhushu* 儀禮注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, *juan* 35, p. 664; *juan* 39, pp. 743–47.

² The statutes and the ordinances are two different legal forms that will be elaborated on in the following chapters.

(*chengxiang* 丞相). In the Han dynasty's systems of coffin bestowal, one can see the attention that the government paid to the funerals and burials of people of various social ranks. A discussion of the aforementioned systems of coffin bestowal will be helpful to develop a deeper understanding of the broader system of funeral and burial during the Han dynasty.

Systems of coffin bestowal of the Han dynasty have been acknowledged in other studies, but there has not yet been sufficient discussion. Yang Shuda 楊樹達 enumerated a number of practices related to the Han's systems of coffin bestowal in his *Handai hun sang lisu kao* 漢代婚喪禮俗考, including examples of coffin bestowal from the state to senior officials and the types of coffin bestowed. However, Yang's research is more a collection of related documents than a systematic study, as his discussion of the system itself is not very detailed.³ Sugimoto Kenji 杉本憲司, in his investigation of funeral gift-bestowal during both the Former (206 B.C.–A.D. 8) and Later (25–220) Han, briefly discussed the systems of coffin bestowal for prime ministers' funerals in the Former Han. Sugimoto also discussed the bestowing of a coffin, or the money equivalent, by the governments of the Former and Later Han for victims of natural disasters and plagues. He was the first to address the system of coffin bestowal to commoners in the context of the gift-bestowing systems during the funeral.⁴ Du Linyuan 杜林淵 mentioned examples of coffin bestowal in his discussion but with no specific conclusion.⁵ Some research has been conducted from an archaeological perspective, such as Sun Ji's 孫機 and Li Rusen's 李如森 studies, which discuss the physical form of the high-class coffins bestowed to senior officials during the Han dynasty.⁶

The studies mentioned earlier have laid the foundation for the study of the Han's systems of coffin bestowal. However, there are still some problems that need to be discussed:

(1) Prior research has mostly relied on the examples of coffin bestowal recorded in traditional historical documents, such as *Hanshu* 漢書 and *Hou-Hanshu* 後漢書,

³ Yang Shuda, *Handai hun sang lisu kao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 54–65. Part of this book was first published under the name of “Handai sangzang zhidu kao” 漢代喪葬制度考, *Qinghua xuebao* 8, no. 1 (December 1932), pp. 8–21.

⁴ Sugimoto Kenji, “Kandai no hōfu ni tsuite” 漢代の法賻について, *Shakai kagaku ronshū* 2 (1971), pp. 31–46.

⁵ Du Linyuan, “Dong-Han fengfu zhidu yanjiu” 東漢贈賻制度研究, *Dongnan wenhua*, 2007, no. 2, pp. 49–54.

⁶ Sun Ji, *Handai wuzhi wenhua ziliao tushuo* 漢代物質文化資料圖說 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991), pp. 409–12; Li Rusen, *Handai sangzang lisu* 漢代喪葬禮俗 (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2003), pp. 75–97.

漢代贈棺制度論考

(摘要)

劉可維

棺槨是喪葬過程中最為重要的用品之一。在筆者所見的先秦史料中，沒有關於贈送給死者棺槨的禮儀或法律。然而，在漢代的律、令中，已明確規定了涉及贈棺的制度。這些制度所涉及的對象不僅限於各級官員，還包括陣亡士兵以及一般平民。此前的研究主要利用傳世文獻中的記載，考證了贈送給高等級官員棺槨的具體內容和形制，但對於面向士兵和平民的贈棺制度卻關注極少，並且完全忽略了考古出土的漢代法制史料中有關棺槨贈與的記錄。上世紀八十年代發現的張家山漢簡中的二年律令是漢代初年制定的法律，其中有專門涉及贈與各級官員和平民棺槨的律文。本文希望通過結合出土的法制史料和傳世文獻，更為全面的探討漢代的贈棺制度，並進一步闡述漢代各種贈棺制度的思想根源。

關鍵詞： 漢代 喪葬 贈棺制度 二年律令

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