

「番僧」與「蕃僧」解微—— 旁論「胡僧」、「梵僧」和「西僧」

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摘要

「番僧」和「蕃僧」是中國佛教史上頗具深蘊的兩個關鍵詞。番僧與蕃僧群體在佛法傳承層面往往扮演著使者的角色，此已為各類史籍所證明。不過時人常將「番僧」和「蕃僧」視若同義詞，遂致理解史事時疑竇叢生。本文以「番」、「蕃」所係詞彙之分析作為鋪墊，進而探索「番僧」與「蕃僧」的精微內蘊，冀望由此廓清這兩個詞語的歷史本真。論述含納「西番」、「蕃將」、「胡僧」、「梵僧」、「西僧」等稱謂，隨之點出外來文化對於語言建構的意義。

關鍵詞：番僧、蕃僧、外族、外國、西域

A Meticulous Analysis of *West Monks* and *Foreign Monks* in the History of Chinese Buddhism: Including an In-depth Exploration of *Exotic Monks*, *Pure Monks*, and *Western Monks*

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Abstract

West monks (番僧) and *foreign monks* (蕃僧) are two keywords with deep implicitness in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Many of the *west monks* and *foreign monks* have taken the messengers' role in Dharma transmission that has been verified by a variety of historical records. Nonetheless some scholars regard *west monks* and *foreign monks* as synonyms so that it is impossible for others to understand exactly the relevant meanings in the materials. This thesis aims at an analysis of the lexicon based on *west* (番) and *foreign* (蕃) in order to clear the implications and even the truth of the two words in historical context. The arguments also refer to other keywords such as *western Tibeto-Burman peoples* (西番), *tribal generals* (蕃將), *exotic monks* (胡僧), *pure monks* (梵僧) and *western monks* (西僧) before interpreting the significance which alien culture contributed to the linguistic construction.

Keywords: *west monks*, *foreign monks*, other peoples, foreign countries, Xiyu (Western Regions)