Kneeling Women, Blinded Slaves

Character Interpretation and the Historical Semantics of Chinese Terms of Dependency

International Workshop of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies

Ruhr-Universität Bochum
12.07. – 13.07.2019

Conference Languages: English and Chinese

Contact

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www.dependency.uni-bonn.de

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Semantic analysis based on character interpretation once formed an indispensable part of traditional Chinese lexicography and has led to many fanciful claims and speculations. Thus, the character for the word nü, "woman", 女, has been argued to depict a kneeling woman, a posture that reflects women’s generally inferior position in pre-modern Chinese society. Or Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892–1978) once came to the conclusion that the term min 人, "people", must originally have designated slaves who had been punished by having had one of their eyes gouged out.

Several leading international experts in the field of Chinese paleography and historical semantics have been invited to address the question of correlations between semantic value and orthographical form of Chinese characters with regard to the semantic field of asymmetrical dependency in Classical Chinese. The workshop will provide valuable insights into the traditional Chinese social construction of reality and help to deconstruct existing concepts and narratives of “freedom” and “slavery”.

**Friday, July 12, 2019**

10:00 – 10:15
Welcome Address and Introduction
歡迎詞
Christian Schwermann (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

10:15 – 11:00
Inauguration of the Center for the Study of Traditional Chinese Cultures
中國傳統文化研究中心揭牌儀式
Axel Schölmerich (Rector of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum),
Christian Schwermann (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

11:00 – 11:45
古文字字形與詞義的關係
The Interrelation between Form and Meaning of Ancient Chinese Characters
Liu Zhao 劉釗 (Fudan University, Shanghai)

11:45 – 12:30
漢字闡釋的若干問題
Issues in the Explanation of Chinese Characters
Li Shoukui 李守奎 (Tsinghua University, Beijing)

12:30 – 13:45
Lunch Break

13:45 – 14:30
西周金文賞賜品中的‘人’
人 (ren, “People”) as Gifts in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions
Wang Ping 王平 (Shanghai Jiaotong University)

14:30 – 15:15
漢語詞彙的四節遞進與漢字
Chinese Characters and the Four Stages in the Development of the Chinese Lexicon
Wang Guiyuan 王貴元 (Renmin University of China, Beijing)

15:15 – 15:45
Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:30
‘奴僕’ 類詞語的形義關聯
Relations between Form and Meaning in the Semantic Field of Slavery
Li Yunfu 李運富 (Zhengzhou University)

16:30 – 17:15
新出土簡牘與古書詞義合證舉隅
An Exemplary Collation of Word Meanings in Traditional Texts and in Newly Excavated Manuscripts of the Qin Dynasty
He Yuhua 何余華 (Zhengzhou University)

18:00
Dinner

**Saturday, July 13, 2019**

09:15 – 10:00
The Myth of the Kneeling Woman
跪女形字的迷思
William G. Boltz (University of Washington, Seattle)

10:00 – 10:45
Ears Wide Shut: On jianyi 兼意 and the Non-Suppressibility of Latent Semantics in Chinese Word and Character Formation
‘大開耳戒’：‘兼意’ 與漢語構詞造字中潛在語義的不可抑制性
Wolfgang Behr (University of Zurich)

10:45 – 11:15
Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:00
Palaeography, Historical Phonology, and Historical Semantics: "Kneeling Women with Wrist Crossed" and "Slaves with Eye Gouged"
古文字學、歷史音韻學及歷史語義學：‘雙手交叉之跪女’ 與 ‘單眼刺瞎之盲奴’
Ken-ichi Takashima 高嶋謙一 (University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

12:00 – 12:45
Character Interpretation and Semantics of Chinese Terms Used for Different Categories of Convicts in Qin and Early Han Time Manuscripts
泰漢晚期簡牘所見囚犯類術語的語義及其文字解釋
Ulrich Lau (University of Hamburg)

12:45 – 14:00
Lunch Break

14:00 – 14:45
Bodily Submission: The Chinese Art of Bowing and Kneeling
屈伏的身姿：中國跪拜禮藝術
Françoise Bottéro (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris)

14:45 – 15:30
The Cultural History of the Concept of chen 臣
說‘臣’的範疇文化史
Christoph Harbsmeier (University of Oslo)