Venue

Ruhr-Universität Bochum
Universitätsstraße 134
TestDaF Ground Floor
44799 Bochum

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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All welcome. Please contact Tobias Wilke,
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www.dependency.uni-bonn.de

The Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn is supported by
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 nǚ, “woman”, female, 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 (1892–1978) once came to the conclusion that the term min 民, "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
Christian Schwermann (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

10:15 – 11:00
Inauguration of the Center for the Study of Traditional Chinese Cultures
Axel Schölmerich (Rector of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum),
Christian Schwermann (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

11:00 – 11:45
The Interrelation between Form and Meaning of Ancient Chinese Characters
Liu Zhao (Fudan University, Shanghai)

11:45 – 12:30
Issues in the Explanation of Chinese Characters
Li Shoukui (Tsinghua University, Beijing)

12:30 – 13:45
Lunch Break

13:45 – 14:30
Wang Ping (Shanghai Jiaotong University)

14:30 – 15:15
Wang Guiyuan (Renmin University of China, Beijing)

15:15 – 15:45
Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:30
Li Yunfu 李運富 (Zhengzhou University)

16:30 – 17:15
He Yuhua 何余華 (Zhengzhou University)

18:00
Dinner

Saturday, July 13, 2019

09:15 – 10:00
The Myth of the Kneeling Woman
William G. Boltz (University of Washington, Seattle)

10:00 – 10:45
Wolfgang Behr (University of Zurich)

10:45 – 11:15
Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:00
Paleography, Historical Phonology, and Historical Semantics: "Kneeling Women with Wrist Crossed" and "Slaves with Eye Gouged"
Ken-ichi Takashima (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
Ulrich Lau (University of Hamburg)

12:45 – 14:00
Lunch Break

14:00 – 14:45
Bodily Submission: The Chinese Art of Bowing and Kneeling
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)