

Correction on Philological Studies of Ancient Texts of Gu Shimin's Epitaph in the Tang Dynasty

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Abstract: This paper is to correct the mistakes on the textual researches and interpretations as well as punctuations in the philological studies of ancient texts of Gu Shimin's epitaph in the Tang Dynasty published in Cultural Relics of Central China in 2010.

Keywords: *Shimin Gu; epitaph; article; corrections*

Gu Shimin's epitaph, which was unearthed in Mangshan Mountain of Yanshi City in Henan Province in 1990, is kept in the Museum of Yanshi City. The paper of the Research and Explanation of Gu Shimin's Epitaph (short for REGS) was published in the 2nd issue of 2010 of Cultural Relics of Central China, making known the rubbing and interpretations of Gu's epitaph, making textual research of the official history of Gu and his father, as well as the writer of the epitaph, contributing a lot to research of the Gu Family. The paper is to deal with the errors in collating and annotating the epitaph, in the above-mentioned paper.

1. Wrong in sentences and phrases marking

Based on meaning, the first sentence, dealing with time and place of Gu's death in the paper of REGS, should be divided into five sentences. The second sentence says Gu were moved from Xuanzhou Prefecture, today's Xuancheng City of Anhui Province, to Yanshi county, today's Yanshi City of Henan Province, to be buried in the ancestral grave of the Gu Family. In the part from the fourth to the seventh sentence, the names and official posts of Gu Shimin and his father, grand father and great-grandfather were briefly introduced. The word wuhu (呜呼, means alas) in the eighth sentence indicates lament of the writer, and the sentence like Jingong yi wenxingzhongxin (敬公以文行忠信, means because of Jing gong's rich knowledge, nice behavior and moral characters) expressing respect and gratitude from the writer of epitaph, should be divided four characters in a sentence, and four sentences in all. The tenth sentence narrates that Gu Shimin attended the imperial examination and passed the Mingjing Department. In the seventeenth sentence, which means the writer of the epitaph named Fan Chuazheng attended the imperial examination and passed it and gradually go to success because of Gu Shimin's father's appreciation, hence, the sentence wenke caiba zousheng yu bushi buzhi zhizhong (文科采拔鰥生于不识不知之中, means selecting an unfamous person to be an official candidate who was unknown to the examiner) should not be divided into two sentences. Under the help from Gu Shimin's father, Fan Chuazheng gradually went to be excellent and succeeded in his career, so it's not right that the sentence hua er wo zhi yi shi er rong zhi zi (华而我之异实而荣之自) was divided like Hua er wo zhi yi, Shi er rong zhi zi (华而我之异, 实而荣之自). There are many errors in punctuation in the sentences from zi Jinggong hushi jue gongchui niannian shou tianzi juelu (自敬公华实厥躬垂廿年受天子爵禄) to wo sheng youqing citong heji (我生有情, 此恻何极) via incorrect interpretation of the characters in the rubbing. sentence 21 to 25 narrates histories of Gu Shimin's wife and sons, there is a vacancy after ciyue (次曰), where there should be two Chinese characters. the vacancy should be marked, but the paper REGS failed do it, resulting in a mistake that Gu Shimin's two sons shared one name. The right punctuation of Gu Shimin's epitaph should be in this way:

“唐元和八年，岁舍癸巳，三月四日，吴郡顾君不禄于宣州从事之官/舍，年卅二。既大殓，择其先远，将归葬于河南偃师县亳邑乡刘/村里。用其年六月廿八日，祔于先人茔。君讳师闵，字□□。/曾祖克忠，皇朝赠邵州刺史。祖望，赠秘书监。父少连，/兵部尚书，赠右仆射，谥曰“敬”。呜呼！敬公以文行忠信，光耀/明代，丰德高义，映乎时贤。君始冠，能以经明中第，脱褐授同/州参军。登拔萃科，为咸阳尉。君沉静专默，简而好退，自一尉/王畿，十岁不迁。百年几何？又钟短历。呜呼！传正，敬公之门/人也。敬公司太常，文科采拔鰥生于不识不知之中，华而茂/之，冀实而荣之。自敬公华实，厥躬垂，廿年受/天子爵禄，至于时所贵。愿分微

荣，仰答知遇，愿祈筹画，以/禫不逮。此心始谐，死生间之，我生有情，此恻何极！夫人清河张氏，/故河南尹式之女也。先君而逝，有二男三女。长男曰承庆，次曰□□。/承庆年十七，已知恭顺。诸女皆稚孩。呜呼！存歿一指，余非斯人。於/是收无从之，涕志君之墓，铭曰：/藻身以文兮，文既彰；廿而仕兮，卅而亡。旅魂之飘飘兮，/归洛之邙；祔先人兮，松柏乡；泣志贞石兮，终古茫茫。/前后二娶，皆河南女，今后夫人祔焉。”

2. Mistakes in interpretation of characters, words and phrases of Gu Shimin's epitaph

2.1 Confused si (巳) with yi (己) because of the similar character forms

It is a phrase in the first sentence in the paper REGS: "in the eighth year of Yuanhe in the Tang Dynasty, of which, the day was also the in the *guiyi* (癸巳)." That is not the right use, and should be *guisi* (癸巳). It is *si* (巳) not *yi* (己) that is included in *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* (说文解字, first Chinese dictionary, compiled by Xu Shen, 121 A.D.), which says *si* (巳) is a pictographic Chinese character, one of the six categories of Chinese characters (六书) and that in April, yang energies rise, and yin energies hide, all things with life appear, coming into beautiful scene, thus, *si* (巳) is the shape of snake. *Shuowen Tongxun Dingsheng* (说文通训定声) says thing which is unborn in belly is called *si* (巳). *Si* (巳) has kinds of meanings such as counting month, Mundane Branches, the Chinese Zodiac, and fetus. In ancient time, *si* (巳) is equal to *yi* (己), for instance, *Shiming* (释名) says *si* (巳) is to *yi* (己). *Yunbo* (韵补) says in ancient time, *si* (巳) of *siwu* (巳午) can also be read like *yi* (己) of *yiyi* (己矣). *Yunbo* (韵补) is a book of the Song Dynasty, that shows *si* (巳) and *yi* (己) are similar in ancient Chinese phonology. *Guiyi* (癸巳) is a way of numbering the years in ancient Chinese, Heavenly Stems (天干) and Mundane Branches (地支) were used together to number years, so we should interpret epitaph in right way.

2.2 Fu (袱) and fu (祔) have similar character forms but mean differently

Gu Shimin's epitaph says he was buried in his ancestral grave of his family on 28th in the June of that year. But the paper REGS interpreted all 3 *fus* (祔) in the sentence as *fus* (袱) in mistake. *Fu* (袱) and *fu* (祔) sound similar, having same sound and vowel, differing in tail vowel, for example, *Zhengzitong* (正字通) says *fu* (袱) is *fang liu qie* (房六切), and *Song Rhyming Dictionary* (广韵) says *fu* (祔) is *fu yu qie* (符遇切). *Fu* (袱) is an entering tone, having a plosive tail vowel. In contemporary Chinese language, *fu* (袱) sounds rising tone, but *fu* (祔) sounds falling tone. But *Fu* (袱) and *fu* (祔) are different in meaning. Originally, *fu* (袱) referred to headcloth, so *Literary Expositor* (尔雅) says women's headcloth is called bridal veil. *Hao Yixing* (郝懿行) in the Qing Dynasty said: "The women in Dengzhou prefecture wrapped their heads with handkerchieves and when they married, their head were wrapped with red handkerchieves called *fuzi* (袱子). It also refers to burden, for instance, *Zhengzitong* (正字通) says *fu* (袱) is burden (包袱). *fu* (祔) means the newly-dead were offered a sacrifice with his or her dead ancestors, so *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* (说文解字) says *fu* (祔) means the laterly dead share the sacrificial offerings with their dead ancestors. In the epitaphs, there are expressions like *fu* (祔) to some place or someone *fu* (祔) to somebody, etc, so *fu* (祔) is a frequently-used Chinese character in epitaphs, but the paper REGS used *fu* (袱), it's wrong obviously, and should be corrected.

2.3 Taking yuan (願) as yuan (原) in mistake

The paper REGS took the *yuan* (願) in the phrase of *zhi yu shi suo gui* (至于时所贵), *yuan fen wei rong* (願分微荣) in Gu Shimin's epitaph as *yuan* (原), but, in fact, it should be *yuan* (願), because *yuan* (原) originated from both *yuan* (願) and *yuan* (愿) in inscriptions on ancient bronze objects (金文), and in *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* (说文解字), it's written as *quan* (𠄎), meaning the beginning of spring. According to the character form of *yuan* (願), it means the big head, so *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* (说文解字) says *yuan* (願) refers to a big head, taking *ye* (页) as the radical, i.e., Chinese character component, and sounding *yuan* (原). *Yuan* (願) also means willing, and *Song Rhyming Dictionary* (广韵) says *yuan* (願) means willing. In the Book of Songs (诗经), there is *xiehou xiangyu, shi wo yuan xi* (邂逅相遇, 适我愿兮), here *yuan* (願) refers to willing.

Yuan (愿) means honesty or cautiousness, so *Analytical Dictionary of Characters* (说文解字) says *yuan* (愿) means cautiousness, taking *xin* (心) as the radical, and sounding *yuan* (原). When we study the formation of the character of *yuan* (愿), we can know that *yuan* (愿) is closely related to heart, the Chinese character 心, *yuanlai zhi xin* (原来之心, means original willing) is the first wish, so *yuan* (原) is the symbol of sound, and it also become a part of meaning of the Chinese character 愿. *Master Zuo's Spring and Autumn Annals* (左传)

says: "I like honesty, because it won't betray me." (愿, 吾爱之, 不吾叛也) the Chinese character "愿" in the sentence means honesty. In contemporary Chinese language, yuan (愿) is the simplified form of yuan (願). In the ancient documents, yuan (原) can also be used as yuan (愿). For instance, Mencius says: "The people of a countryside all said the person was a man of yuan (原), that is, an always-good man, who was also shown to be a person of yuan (原), but Confucius said he was damaging moral morality" (一乡皆称原人焉, 无所往不为原人, 孔子以为德之贼). In the above sentences, yuan (原) is used as its original meaning of honesty and cautiousness, so *Shuowen Tongxun Dingsheng* (说文通训定声) says yuan (原) is used as yuan (愿) sometimes. In the Gu Shimin's epitaph, Fan Chuanzhen, the writer said: "It's 20 years that I have been an official since Mr Jing gong helped me, and took good models for me. Now I've gotten to succeed in my career, and I'm willing to share my success with his offsprings to reciprocate Mr Jing gong's appreciation, so I write this epitaph." It's not right to use yuan (願) as yuan (原) in interpreting the above-mentioned sentences in the paper REGS, and it should be corrected.

2.4 Taking wo (我) as mao (茂), yi (异) as ji (冀) in mistake

Fan Chuanzhen also said in Gu Shimin's epitaph that: "I, Fan Chuanzhen, used to be a disciple of Mr Jinggong, who was the head of Taichang office, and selected an unfamous person to be an official candidate who was unknown to the examiner, helping me to become an official and came to succeed step by step for the hope that I could do better in my career." (传正, 敬公之门人也。敬公司太常, 文科採拔鰥生于不识不知之中, 华而茂之, 冀实而荣之) The above-mentioned statement showed Fan Chuanzhen's deep gratitude that he was selected to be an official candidate via the imperial examination presided by Gu Shimin's father, the Taichang (太常, means an official who controls ritual, god of land and god of grains) Gu Shaolian, who was also named Mr Jinggong by the official after his death. In the above sentences, hua (华) and mao (茂) are the causative use of adjectives, that shows the writer Fan Chuanzhen thanked a lot to the help from Gu Shimin's father. But the paper REGS devided the above-mentioned sentences as following: "传正, 敬公之门人也。敬公司太常, 文科採拔鰥生, 于不识不知之中, 华而我之异, 实而荣之自." which means that: "I, Fan Chuanzhen, used to be the disciple of Mr Jinggong, who was the head of Taichang office, and selected an unfamous person to be an official candidate who was unknown to the examiner, and gradually, I became successful in my career via great efforts and talent of myself without the help from others." It's obvious that the writer of the paper REGS misunderstood the original meaning of Gu Shimin's epitaph, and it should be corrected. In addition, the paper REGS also confused bei (碑) with bei (裨), and chou (筹) with chou (筹) for the similar character forms, resulting in a lot of mistakes in understanding the content of Gu Shimin's epitaph, so those should be corrected.

Appendix: the rubbing of Gu Shimin's epitaph:



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