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Analysis of the Meaning of *Gujiu Shifu Bushi* 沽酒市脯不食

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Venerable Shengmiao, Miss Deng, good afternoon. My name is Feng Ying ran and I would like to share with you the topic on analysis of the meaning of *Gujiu Shifu Bushi* 沽酒市脯不食

The presentation will be divided into five parts. To explore the true meaning of this sentence, we first analyze the meaning of characters, next explore relevant historical records of the same period, then study the historical and cultural background of this sentence, and finally draw a conclusion.

1. Introduction

The sentence *gujiu shifu bushi* 沽酒市脯不食 has always been interpreted in different ways. Now we understand the meaning of this sentence from the point of exegesis. 'The character *xun* 訓 means explaining and teaching',[1] which is aimed at concrete things. 'The character *gu* 詁 means to interpret ancient language',[2] and its objects are mostly abstract things. 'The two characters were originally used separately and were not combined until at least the end of the Western Han Dynasty'.[3] We now use the method of exegesis to explain the meaning of the sentence, from the meaning of the characters, and then go deep into exegesis materials, to find out the meaning of

[1] Translated by myself, Duan Yucai, *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi*. (Taipei: The Yiwen Press, 2007)， p91

[2] Translated by myself, Duan Yucai, *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi*.， p93

[3] Translated by myself, Zhou Bixiang 周碧香, *Practical Exegesis.* (Taipei: Hong Ye Publishing House, 2015)， p4

the sentence.

2. Semantic expression

In interpreting the sentence *gujiu shifu bushi* 沽酒市脯不食, we find that the meanings of the other characters are easy to understand, but the meaning of the first word *gu* 沽, is not appropriate. 'The character *gu* 沽 is the name of a river, the river flows east into the sea after leaving Yuyang 漁陽 county'.[4] However, if the word is interpreted this way, it does not fit the meaning of this sentence. Therefore, we should use the method of exegesis to explain the meaning of words. There are three ways of exegesis, *xingxun* 形訓, *shengxun* 聲訓 and *yixun* 義訓. These three ways explore the original meaning of characters from the three aspects of graphic shape, pronunciation of characters and semantic respectively. According to exegetical materials, we can find the homophone of this character in *guangyun* 廣韻. That is the character *gu* 酤. *Fanqie* 反切 of *Gu* 沽 and *gu* 酤 are same, this shows that the initials and the final of two words are the same. Therefore, the two characters have a great relationship in pronunciation, which is also in line with the rules of *shengxun* 聲訓. Then, we can find 'the meaning of *gu* 酤 is buying rice wine'.[5] 'The character *gu* 酤 and the character *shi* 市 both mean purchase'.[6] 'The character *fu* 脯 means dried meat'.[7] The character *shi* 食 can mean eating or drinking. In ancient times, there was also have a phrase *shijiu* 食酒. Putting the meaning of these characters into the original

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[4] Translated by myself, Duan Yucai, *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi*.，Shuowen, p546

[5] Translated by myself, Duan Yucai, *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi*.，Shuowen, p755

[6] Translated by myself, Zhuxi 朱熹, *Sishu Jizhu* 四書集註 (Taipei: The world publishing company, 2016)，P125

[7] Translated by myself, Duan Yucai, *The annotation of Shuowen Jiezi*.，Shuowen P176

sentence will clarify the meaning of it. This sentence means that Confucius did not consume rice wine or meat bought from outside. In this way, the meaning of the original sentence will become clear and coherent. What should be noted here is that 'not all exegesis with the same or similar pronunciation are *shengxun* 聲訓'.[8] This is just an external form, not the essence of *shengxun* 聲訓. Because the etymology is the same, the ancient pronunciation of the two characters is the same or similar. Just because of this, two words with similar pronunciation can be interpreted. Other similar forms, such as borrowed graph, although the pronunciation is similar, but the two words have different etymology, they do not belong to this category.

3. Analysis of the historical materials

After we understand the basic meaning of the original sentence, we need to make further analysis according to historical materials. Zhu Xi 朱熹 believed that 'Confucius did not consume rice wine and meat from outside because they were not clean'.[9] Because Zhu Xi 朱熹 was a famous Confucian master, this view was also recognized and accepted by many later generations. They think this is a concern about food safety, but is the truth so simple? When we investigate the history, we find that this is not the case. In *the Analects of Confucius*, 'Confucius said that life was difficult in his childhood, then he could do some rough work'.[10] It can be seen from this that the living conditions of Confucius were not good when he was a child, then Confucius knew that people's livelihood was difficult. Besides, Confucius traveled around

[8] Sun Yongchang 孫雍長, 'Discuss the Origin of Shengxun 聲訓'，*Dictionaries Research*, 03 (2002), pp. 127-136

[9] Translated by myself, Zhuxi 朱熹, *Sishu Jizhu* P125

[10] Translated by myself, Zhuxi 朱熹, *Sishu Jizhu* p116

various countries and often had food shortages. Therefore, it can be inferred from this aspect that Confucius did not consume rice wine and meat bought outside not because it was not clean.

What is the real reason? It is recorded in *Mozi* 墨子 that when Confucius and his pupils were trapped between the states of Chen 陳 and Cai 蔡 and had no food, Confucius consumed rice wine and meat without asking where it came from. When Ai Gong of Lu welcomed Confucius, he would not seat if the mat was not put straight or eat food if the meat was not cut square. Zi Lu, one of Confucius' students, asked why. Confucius told him, 'In the past we did it to survive, now you and I do it for etiquette'.[11] Therefore, what Confucius said and did could reflect he paid great attention to etiquette. Compared with the reason that rice wine and meat bought outside is not clean, it is more likely that Confucius thought it was not proper behavior.

Why did Confucius think it was not proper to consume meat and rice wine from outside? It is recorded in *Hanshu shihuozhi* 《漢書·食貨志》that 'rice wine was sold by the feudal official in the Zhou Dynasty. In the Spring and Autumn Period, when the Zhou royal family was in decline, rice wine was sold by the people'.[12] At that time, the purity and quality of rice wine was not as good as before. 'Confucius suspected that the quality of rice wine was not good, since he did not consume rice wine and meat bought outside'.[13] Is it true that Confucius did not consume meat and rice wine bought outside because of the inferior rice wine? Confucius was a native of the state

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[11] Translated by Yangyong 楊勇, Mozi 墨子 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011),p323

[12] Translated by myself, Bangu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962), p1182

[13] Translated by myself, Bangu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書, p1182

of Lu 魯, and naturally the rice wine he drank was mainly from the state of Lu 魯. In *Zhuang Zi* 莊子, there is a story called lujiubo er handanwei 魯酒薄而邯鄲圍. The rice wine sent by the state of Lu 魯 was of low quality and tasted like water mixed with it. Therefore, the state of Chu 楚 thought it was being insulted and decided to send troops to attack the state of Lu 魯. At the banquet, King Hui of Liang had long wanted to attack the state of Zhao 趙, but he was afraid that chu 楚 might attack his state by surprise. Now he knew that Chu 楚 was angry with Lu 魯 for its inferior rice wine, so he set his heart at rest to attack the state of Zhao 趙 and besieged handan 邯鄲, the capital of zhao 趙. After this incident, it became a common understanding that rice wine of state lu 魯 was of poor quality. Since the alcohol of Lu 魯 is known to be inferior, there is no record of Confucius hating rice wine of Lu 魯 in later records. It can be seen that the view in *Hanshu shihuozhi* 《漢書·食貨志》 is not correct. The quality of rice wine in the Spring and Autumn Period was not as good as before, which reflects that the folk customs of that period were not as simple as in the Zhou Dynasty. People were not as sincere and honest as before, which was contrary to etiquette. Therefore, in this respect, Confucius thought it was not appropriate to consume meat and rice wine bought outside.

4. Historical background

As mentioned above, Confucius did not consume rice wine and meat bought outside because of the inferior quality of rice wine, which reflected that people were not sincere as before. In addition, when we continue to look for historical materials,

we find that there are other reasons. Therefore, 'the investigation of historical and cultural background is also an important exegetical method'.[14] According to *the Book of Han*, the sale of rice wine was controlled by the feudal official in the Zhou Dynasty, that is *gujiuzaiguan* 沽酒在官. This was to carry out Zhou Gong's prohibition of rice wine. In *Shangshu jiugao* 《尚書·酒誥》, Zhou Gong explicitly stated that rice wine could be drunk only during the sacrificial ceremony. That is '*sizijiu* 祀茲酒'[15]and '*yinweisi* 飲唯祀'.[16] This was because during the Shang Dynasty, the previous dynasty of the Zhou, all the princes and ministers were addicted to drinking, and drinking became common throughout the court, resulting in neglect of government affairs. In the end, the Shang dynasty collapsed because of addiction to drinking. Therefore, Zhou Gong was afraid that if the Zhou dynasty did not forbid drinking, it would follow the same path as the Shang Dynasty. Then there was a government decree that rice wine could only be sold by the feudal official. At the same time, Zhou Gong hated the phenomenon of group drinking. In *Shangshu jiugao* 《尚書·酒誥》, he said to Kang Shu 康叔, 'if you find the phenomenon of group drinking, do not hesitate to arrest them and bring them back to Zhou, I will kill people who have committed serious crimes as a warning to others'.[17] This shows Zhou Gong 's determination to forbid drinking. As recorded in *the Book of Rites*,

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[14] Tang Zhonghai 唐忠海, 'Review of Exegesis Research'， Journal of Jiangxi Radio and TV University, 01 (2005), pp. 24-27

[15] Translated by myself, Kong Anguo 孔安國，Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Shangshu Zhengyi* 尚書正義 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2000),p441

[16] Translated by myself, Kong Anguo 孔安國， *Shangshu Zhengyi* 尚書正義,p443

[17] Translated by myself, Kong Anguo 孔安國， *Shangshu Zhengyi* 尚書正義,p451

‘bite and sup should not be sold in the market’.[18] To some extent, this prevents people from getting into the habit of drinking rice wine.

In the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty, Zhou Gong strictly banned rice wine, and the nobles did not dare to drink openly. However, in the middle and late period, drinking into drunkenness is more common. As recorded in *Yili* 儀禮, ‘People do not count how much they drink, they stopped until they get drunk’.[19] This reflects the gradual relaxation of the prohibition system in the middle and late Western Zhou Dynasty, and drunkenness after drinking became a common phenomenon.

‘After Zhou Gong, rice wine became more and more important in maintaining the social relations of the patriarchal system of the Western Zhou Dynasty’.[20] Influenced by this, Confucius' attitude towards drinking was not completely consistent with that of Zhou Gong. In t*he Book of Rites*, Confucius mentioned that ‘clans could meet to achieve harmony through the medium of rice wine and meat’.[21] This is because of the change of times, rice wine is also known as an important part of the etiquette, since Confucius did not strictly forbid people to drink. However, Confucius took Zhou Gong as his model all his life, and he also took the restoration of The Rites of Zhou as his responsibility.

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[18] Translated by myself, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄，Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Liji Zhengyi* 禮記正義 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2000),p483

[19] Translated by myself, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄，Jia Gongyan 賈公彥, *Yili Zhushu* 儀禮註疏 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2000),P198

[20] Zhou Weifengzhou 周葦風, ‘Why Confucius Gujiu Shifu Bushi 沽酒市脯不食, Chinese Social Science Newspaper, 10 (2012)

[21] Translated by myself, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, *Liji Zhengyi* 禮記正義,p1649

In the Spring and Autumn Period, rice wine was no longer sold by the feudal official, but by the people themselves. In fact, this way of selling violated the Rites of Zhou. In the same way, meat was bought as food with rice wine, in violation of the rule that food with rice wine should not be sold in the market. Therefore, Confucius did not consume meat and rice wine bought from outside because the sources of these foods violated the rules of The Rites of Zhou. Confucius' attitude towards these foods, in fact, expressed his infinite yearning for and firm defense of the Rites of Zhou.

5. conclusion

To sum up, to understand the true meaning of a sentence, we first need to understand the original meaning correctly. On this basis, we should also explore historical documents of the same era, or various annotations, so that we can understand the meaning of sentences from all angles. In addition, the historical and cultural background is also an important part. Languages are endowed with different meanings because of different times, different regions, and different people. This should not be overlooked when exploring the text. This is the case in this article, starting from Zhu Xi's opinion that Confucius did not consume meat and rice wine bought outside because they were not clean. Step by step, we get to the another meaning. That is because rice wine during the spring and autumn period was inferior, which reflects that the folk customs of that period was not as simple as in the Zhou Dynasty. People were not as sincere and honest as before, which was contrary to etiquette, then Confucius did not consume such rice wine and meat. After an in-depth study of the

historical and cultural background, we know that the phenomenon of selling rice wine and meat in the market violates the Rites of Zhou, therefore, Confucius' attitude is the maintenance of the Rites of Zhou. Therefore, exegesis is a comprehensive subject, which requires us to study deeply to understand the true meaning of classics.

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