

Creation and Causes of Chivalrous Servants' Image in Tang Legends

--Discussions on Chivalrous Spirits in Middle and Late Tang Dynasty

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Abstract. Chivalry and its social and cultural behaviors in the society of the Tang Dynasty have stage characteristics, which was positive in the early and prosperous Tang Dynasty but gradually deteriorated since the middle and late Tang Dynasty. Faced with this situation, the literati in the middle and late Tang Dynasty began to explore the noumenon attribute of chivalry and started a discussion about chivalry, among which Chivalry Theory written by Li Deyu has the most typically theoretical significance. This ideological movement about chivalry also affected the overall image creation of chivalrous servants in Tang legends. Authors combined servants with chivalrous men based on their realistic connections, which made the image of chivalrous servants in Tang legends have both the loyalty of servants and the freedom of chivalrous men, responding to the chivalrous view in the middle and late Tang Dynasty in the form of literary works. This kind of chivalrous spirit contained in the "chivalrous servants" in Tang legends also provides a broad vision for shaping the characters of chivalrous novels in later generations.

Keywords: Chivalrous Spirit; Tang Legends; Chivalrous Servant.

1. Introduction

The first full presentation of chivalrous men in the history of Chinese novels can be seen in the Tang legends with flowing narration and gorgeous words. Chivalrous servants also appeared in Tang legends for the first time with excellent achievements. The success of this image lies in a tension formed by the integration of multiple identities and spirits. In terms of art, the narrative of the characters is complex and vivid. In terms of thoughts, the image of chivalrous servants has Confucian ethics of servants and the freedom and ability of chivalrous men, which reflects the individual's compliance with social ethics and role norms. As for the causes of this special image, researchers pay more attention to "the writing concept of curiosity" and "the new change in slave behavior in social reality". However, the analysis of the influence of social chivalrous spirits and the change of the author's creative intention is relatively insufficient. Therefore, starting from the inner quality change of chivalry in the social reality of the middle and late Tang Dynasty, this paper tries to explore the causes of chivalry servants in Tang legends and its common spiritual outlook. Meanwhile, it explores its significance in literary history from the perspectives of the writers' response to the discussion on chivalrous spirits based on personal communication and ideological concepts.

2. Evolution and Variation of Chivalrous Men in Tang Dynasty

Chivalrous men are a special group in the history of China. During history characterized by various stages from the pre-Qin period to the Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, different social conditions brought different modes of chivalrous men. In the Tang Dynasty, the behavior characteristics and connotation extension of chivalry were also full of sense of the times.

During Sui and Tang Dynasties, frequent wars provide chivalrous men with opportunities to serve their country, so they appeared in politics by force with a strong spirit of contribution. For example, in the thirteenth year of the ruling of Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty, a group of thieves expressed their service to Emperor Taizong of Tang. Before the outbreak of the An Lushan Rebellion, the ruling

focus of the Tang Dynasty shifted from war to stabilizing internal affairs. At this time, the chivalrous style that gave priority to positiveness still pervaded. They may play a role in maintaining social order. For example, Li Junqiu as a chivalrous man suppressed chaos. "Hearing it, Taizong of Tang Dynasty endowed him with the elementary general and still changed his county into Quanjie county."; or they take an active part in politics and seek promotion with the help of the identity and ability of chivalrous men such as Zhang Yun in Xuanzong period. "Zhang Yun who was a young chivalrous man with great ambition abandoned being a letter of man but joined the army. For his attention paid to learning swords, he was rewarded as a martial general and an official. Years of good commands of his job got him promoted." Old Book of Tang also records Yu Qian who was rich and only when he made friends with the chivalrous did he quickly progress in his career ladder." It can be seen that the application of chivalrous men in the official promotion continued until the middle Tang Dynasty.

However, the good image of chivalrous men gradually turned to the opposite with the pacification of the An Lushan Rebellion. At this time, influenced by the aftermath of the war, "the relationship between the central and the local governments was tense, coupled with the eunuch's authoritarian power. Meanwhile, the dispute between the southern and the northern departments was heated, and the opposition between bureaucrats and the government was on the rise," which also affected the behavior of the chivalrous men at that time. Emperor Daizong of Tang was a precedent for the Tang Dynasty emperor to use chivalrous men to assassinate others. After he acceded to the throne, he was dissatisfied with Li Fuguo, a powerful eunuch, and "sent a chivalrous man to assassinate him at night." Over time, using chivalrous men to assassinate powerful officials and the crimes to offend the seniors became more serious. For example, in the eighth year of the ruling of Wenzong Emperor of the Tang Dynasty, "Li Xun would punish the officials and ordered Fan to recruit the chivalrous in the name of raising minions by appointing them as military governors." In the period of Emperor Xizong and Emperor Zhaozong of the Tang Dynasty, the chivalrous were changed from the previous assassins to a rebel force against the imperial court. For example, Huang Chao, who was "good at riding and shooting as a Ren chivalry", took the lead in rebelling. In the third year of the ruling of Emperor Zhaozong of the Tang Dynasty, Zhu Yougong who was rich for being Ren chivalry killed Emperor ZhaoZong in Luoyang Palace. It can be seen that the nature of chivalry has changed into a tool to implement the terrorist rule and will do harm to safety at that time. Its behavior of "violating bans by force" also defied the ruling order at that time.

To sum up, the chivalrous man and his social and cultural behavior in the Tang Dynasty are characterized by diverse stages and gradually become negative. Since the middle Tang Dynasty, it had become more common for chivalrous men to violate the rules indiscriminately, causing continuous discussion on "ideal chivalrous men" in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, among which Li Deyu's Theory on Chivalrous Men is representative and influential.

3. Discussion on Chivalrous View in the Middle and Late Tang Dynasty

The discussion of the righteousness of chivalry in the middle and late Tang Dynasty was first seen in the poems, essays, and novels of literati at that time, which showed the ideological tendency of standardizing chivalry with Confucian ethics and embodied the appeal that righteousness was key to chivalrous personality and spirit.

Du Fu, a poet with "a heart of righteousness", expressed his promotion and adherence to righteousness by depicting the righteous crane who avenged a goshawk and killed a white snake with a pioneering role. Liu Cha, a poet who lived under the rule of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty, was famous for his righteousness. He admonished and warned the chivalrous Confucian "gentlemen pursue righteousness while the villains pursue profits" in *Martyrs' Singing*. In addition, Liu Zongyuan also "moralized, ethicized, and politicized" the spirits of chivalry through many literary works. In the prose *Refuting the Proposal on Revenge*, Liu Zongyuan emphasized the grievances of the death of Xu Yuanqing's father, and then praised Xu Yuanqing, who took advantage of his father's hatred for "safeguarding the justice of the law and fulfilling the mission of the law with filial piety", which

promoted the faithful personality of chivalry ethically. Furthermore, Tang Huangfu's novel *Yuan Hua Records: Righteous Chivalry* which was written before the middle ruling of Emperor Wenzong of the Tang Dynasty also created a "just" chivalrous man, who has a strong chivalrous ethical spirit and can consciously distinguish good from evil, instead of simply being entrusted by others and loyal to others".

From Liu Cha's and Liu Zongyuan's expositions, it can be seen that literati pay attention to regulating chivalry with Confucian ethics such as loyalty, filial piety, and benevolence influenced by the times. However, they mainly express their appeal to the ideal man by shaping literary images. Li Deyu's special exposition on chivalry in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, *Theory on Chivalrous Men*, clarifies the combination of chivalry's Confucian ethics theoretically, which is more systematic and theoretical, further pointing out that chivalrous righteousness is essentially the maintenance of order.

Some researchers have explained the reasons for the creation of Li Deyu's *Theory on Chivalrous Men*. For example, Wang Juying believed that "from the perspective of social reality, the ethical order of monarch was gradually optimized after the middle Tang Dynasty. Meanwhile, since the An Lushan Rebellion, abnormal habits of raising scholars in the society had made them become assassins who defied, justice and truth." But these reasons are all relatively general. In this regard, the author thinks that apart from the background of the times, the specific event of the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty played a strong catalytic role in the creation of Li Deyu's *Theory on Chivalrous Men*. Clarifying this point is more conducive to our analysis of the reasons why this work really emphasizes righteousness.

On June 3rd, the tenth year of the ruling of Emperor Xianzong in the Tang Dynasty (815 AD), Wu Yuanheng, the prime minister who advocated cutting the vassal state, was tragically assassinated on the way to the levee. The *Biography of Wu Yuanheng* in the *Old Book of Tang* recorded his murder in detail. The chivalrous assassination here is the behavior of helping unjust people to assassinate important officials, so as to deter the central government and disrupt the ruling order, which is a typical example of the chivalrous alienation in the society at that time. This matter had a great impact on the court. "Consequently, the capital is afraid and the gates are guarded. Everyone's entry and exit are inspected. People who have exotic accents from Yan and Zhao Dynasties and unique belongings will be interrogated." It will inevitably stimulate the discussion of "ideal chivalry" in the society at that time.

Secondly, from a personal point of view, the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty shocked Li Deyu, which was related to the close relationship between Wu Yuanheng and Li Jifu, his father. On the one hand, when summing up Li Jifu's achievements, Fu Xuancong mentioned that "in view of the greed and authoritarian power of vassal, the power of regional governors should be weakened to strengthen the central government's control over the political power of local counties." It can be seen that both of them were prime ministers at that time, Li Jifu and Wu Yuanheng were tough toward the region. Moreover, Li Jifu and Wu Yuanheng also have a good personal relationship. According to the *Chronological Life of Li Deyu*, Li Jifu and Wu Yuanheng had many singing activities during the Yuanhe period. In October of the ninth year of the ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty (814) when Li Jifu died, Yuan Heng wrote *Sacrifice to Li Jifu* to mourn him. He also wrote a poem to memorize *North Garden* written and sent by Ji Fu before his death in the winter of the same year, which witnessed their bosom friendship. Therefore, this case inevitably brought a great blow to Li Deyu, who was 29 years old and had worked in the region for many years. That was why he deeply thought about what characteristics the ideal chivalrous man should have.

The core point put forward by Li Deyu in *Theory on Chivalrous Men* is that righteousness is intertwined with chivalry. How does Li Deyu discuss this point of view? That is to come up with the opposite "chivalry—thief" to explain the righteousness of an ideal chivalrous man from both positive and negative aspects.

First of all, Li Deyu listed Ji An, Yuan Ang, Chu Kun, and others. Ji An was politics-oriented in Confucian and loyal with “direct admonition, hatred of evil, loyalty to the monarch, righteousness, and responsibility.” In addition to “emphasizing hierarchy, daring to speak out”, Yuan Ang was also “kind to chivalrous men and helped the weak and poor.” Chu Kun who “killed himself after knowing that the assassination target is a loyal official had independence and a sense of justice.” All of these are in line with the righteousness of chivalry. Moreover, praising these three chivalrous men before Han Dynasty implies the recollection of the chivalrous men who had integrity and maintained the ruling order in the early and prosperous Tang Dynasty.

Then, the author turns his perspective to the opposite of righteousness and denies theft. In fact, as Liqun Luo discussed in the History of Chinese Martial Arts Novels, “Chivalrous men and thieves as two sides of the same body are originally homologous.” Chivalrous men and thieves are unities opposite in their different values. Chivalrous men abide by chivalrous spirit and principles, do good for people in need, and ignore their benefits, while thieves who only care about their own and others’ self-interest are violent and shameless to invade the lonely and weak. Therefore, Li Deyu, who hopes to establish chivalrous spirits through Theory on Chivalrous Men, focuses on the opposition between the chivalrous and thieves.

“The so-called people who don’t know righteousness or the friendship but fulfill monarch’s orders are also Gao Guan who killed Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty and those who pursued benefits and hurt the right, killing Gu Ang for the King.” Li Deyu specially cited Guan Gao and those who killed Yuan Ang as thieves in Theory on Chivalrous Men, which supports the above-mentioned view that Li Deyu created Theory on Chivalrous Men stimulated by the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty. Guan Gao went to assassinate Emperor Gaozu of Han for the king of Zhao because “the king was very respectful and the emperor was rude when he met the king”; In order to maintain the order of ruling and inheriting, Yuan Ang opposed the establishment of Liang Wang as the king, which was hated by Liang Wang and killed by assassins. The chivalrous men in these two things are reflecting the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty. All three of them committed the crimes after being employed by local forces and assassinated officials and even emperors, which showed that they who had no sense of justice and how to distinguish right from wrong violated the Confucian ethics and moral spirit, endangering social order and hierarchical order. Although they were brave, they were not true righteous chivalrous men.

After analyzing the difference between a chivalrous man with righteousness and a thief without righteousness, Li Deyu put forward that a chivalrous man must be both bold and righteous, and expounded on what is chivalrous righteousness by discussing the relationship between righteousness and boldness.

“Boldness” emphasizes that chivalrous men must stress spirits, respect integrity, and rely on courage. Born in the troubled times of striving for life, a chivalrous man was born with a brave personality. What we should pay more attention to is that it is precisely the catalysis of the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty that we implore chivalrous assassination only has courage and boldness but lacks righteousness. Thus, chivalrous righteousness is what Li Deyu wants to highlight here. According to the Anthology of Li Deyu’s Collections, Theory on Chivalrous Men comes from Poor Sorrow and was created during Li Deyu’s relegation period in his later years. When Li Deyu with a strong orthodox thought reviewed his political experience in his later years, “I think about the doubts of the present world and what the former sages didn’t have. And each of them has its theory, which is simple and important.” His ideological position will reflect the righteous persuasion of chivalry. The righteousness here mainly refers to the appropriateness of standing and acting within the scope of Confucian ethics, sticking to ideal principles such as justice and order. It also means taking on the responsibility of serving the interests of the country, the nation, and the people all over the world without hesitation. Therefore, under this transformation, chivalry was brought into the orthodox system and gradually realized the maintenance of the official and orthodox Confucian ethics; Chivalrous culture will also “return to the

mainstream culture in the constant opposition and integration with the upper-class culture of orthodox society.”

From the above discussion, we can see that Li Deyu explained the standard of persuading chivalry from the theoretical expounding and appeal. In the Song Dynasty, Cefu Yuangui, which was revised by the emperor and has official attributes, further continued the viewpoint in Li Deyu's Theory on Chivalrous Men and reiterated that chivalry should have righteousness, which is mainly reflected in the exposition of chivalry in the first paragraph of Cefu Yuangui. This book praises the righteous chivalrous men from the Warring States Period to the Five Dynasties for “making an effort to brush up the national humiliation, forming an alliance to restore personal grievances in disregard of death.” Meanwhile, they were complimented by “making friends with each other, paying attention to money and valuing promises”, “helping those in need and paying back without self-interests,” which shows that the Northern Song Dynasty official continued Li Deyu's righteousness towards chivalry, taking a sense of social responsibility and justice, loyalty to the imperial court, and caring for confidants as a principle for chivalrous men. In this way, they introduced a Confucian sense of benevolence, righteousness, and ethics into the atmosphere of chivalry.

Till then, from demonstrating and appealing new ideas to expounding systematic theories and reaffirming the official position on the Northern Song Dynasty, the righteous persuasion of chivalrous men since the middle Tang Dynasty has been completed. In this process, there are also other scholars who joined this discussion through literary works and were deeply influenced by Li Deyu's chivalrous thoughts in Theory on Chivalrous Men, among which Tang legends initially known as novels are one of the most important.

4. Creation and Causes of Chivalrous Servants Image in Tang Legends

In the middle and late Tang Dynasty, there were many works advertising chivalry in Tang legends. Therefore, when we combine the legendary works containing such images with the above-mentioned discussion on chivalrous righteousness, we can clearly see that the concepts embodied in Theory on Chivalrous Men have penetrated into the legendary works in the middle and late Tang Dynasty. Specifically, the righteousness persuasion of chivalry has affected the characterization of Tang legends.

First of all, according to Taiping Guangji, complemented by Novels of the Whole Tang and Five Dynasties and Novels of Tang Dynasty, the author selected the works that can best reflect the righteous persuasion of chivalrous men. For example, in Liu Cheng's Notes of Regular Servants: Biography of Shang Qing, civilian Shang Qing paid back the kindness of Dou Shen, his master, and secretly went into the court to redress the grievances; Yuan Jiao's Ganze Ballad: Biography of Hong Xian, in which civilian Hong Xian expressed her gratitude to the kindness of her master Xue Song by stealing gold boxes at night, which deterred hostile forces and eliminated the war between two regions; Pei Xing's Legend: Kunlun Slave, in which Kunlun solved sign language and killed evil dogs to help his master Cui Sheng get red gauze. He even rested his life on prostitutes many times and finally helped Cui Sheng achieve his dream; Kang Ping's Record of Drama Talk: Tian Penglang, in which the servant told the master the name and trace of the pillow thief, and then helped the master capture Tian Penglang.

As Chen Pingyuan put forward in Dream of Chivalrous Men of Letters through the Ages — Chivalry in Literary Works, “when the task of expressing chivalrous men shifts from historians to poets, novelists, and dramatists, the subjective styles of this chivalrous image is greatly strengthened.” The chivalrous men in Tang legends initially as novels are more divorced from the real world of existence and bear the creators' ideals. Therefore, the political and ideological tendency and social interaction of the authors of Tang legends will deeply influence the characterization and spirit of their works. The authors of the above-mentioned Tang legends either had close contact with Li Deyu or showed their support for the imperial court in their personal political behaviors and literary works.

Therefore, facing the deterioration of Tang Chivalry in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, they also participated in the discussion about chivalry and would respond to the appeal of righteous chivalry.

Then, how is the author's response reflected in the creation of Tang legends? That is to say, introducing servants into chivalrous men creates chivalrous servants, which made this special image appear in the novel for the first time and bloom. Because Tang legend is an art that originates from life and is higher than life, there is a realistic connection between chivalrous men and servants in the middle and late Tang society, which makes it possible to shape the image of chivalrous servants.

On the one hand, in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, slaves did have realistic conditions to be chivalrous. At that time, some handmaidens actively advised their masters and were familiar with military and political events. For example, Li Shidao strengthened his submission to the court under the persuasion of his handmaiden that "It's not too late to cede land after losing these three lands and failing this battle". In addition, in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, some slaves entrusted with secrets by their masters acted as messengers and emissaries or were used as tools for assassination activities. On the other hand, slaves not only participate in politics and military affairs but also have loyalty to their masters. Just like in the Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of the Tang Dynasty, there is another servant Wang Yi who was chivalrous. Wang Chengzong and Li Shidao sent assassins to stab Prime Minister Wu Yuanheng and Pei Du. Fortunately, Wang Yi, the servant of Pei Du, was desperate to protect his master faithfully. "It was urgent for Wang Yi to hold back a thief who turned against the blade and broke his hand." Taiping Guangji also listed Wang Yi in the category of loyalty. "This year, governors even wrote Biography of Wang Yi complimented by many people."

From this point of view, the social reality provides the space for the creation of the chivalrous servants' image, enabling the men of letters to introduce servants to chivalrous men in Tang legends, which has brought changes to the narrative techniques of characters to a certain extent and has a long-term impact on the trend of chivalrous themes. Reflecting on these chivalrous men with special identities and analyzing the author's creation methods and value judgments are also suitable perspectives to investigate the new quality of chivalrous men's world brought by chivalrous servants.

Restrains to slaves brought by the social system and norms lead to the change of novel spirit. The servant attribute of the slave must appear with the setting of character identity. When it comes to servants in the Tang Dynasty, one of the most frequently quoted definitions is "handmaidens and slaves are no less than animals and goods according to law." This shows that the handmaiden only has the attribute of things without independent personality in the most official and authoritative cognition. In addition, in the records of unofficial epitaphs such as Tomb Inscriptions of Lin Cun in the Tang Dynasty, the images of handmaidens are mostly attached, loyal, and filial, while the chivalrous servants in Tang legends retain the above characteristics of servants, the most prominent of which are gratitude and loyalty.

In the related works of Tang legends, the direct motive of chivalrous servants is repaying an obligation when practicing various chivalrous deeds. For example, when Hong Xian in Biography of Hong Xian declined the reward and retention of the master after the completion of his job, he emphasized that "going to Wei City yesterday was to repay gratitude." When stating his willingness to help his master catch the person who stole the emperor's white jade pillow, the servant in Tian Penglang said, "There is one thing I need to repay." But in fact, these works only emphasize the intention of repaying the kindness of chivalrous servants but do not explain the kindness of their masters. In other Tang legends with the image of a chivalrous man, Wu Baoan repaid Guo Zhongxiang's kindness of recommendation; Nie Yinniang paid back Liu Changyi's appreciation and recognition. By comparison, it can be said that as long as the master does not harm the interests of the national monarch, the master-servant relationship was innate with kindness. Serving the master was an unconditional, one-way, and absolute loyalty and dedication. Furthermore, the unanimous confession of these characters also expressed their subjective moral determination. In addition, when their masters were in trouble or need help, the chivalrous servants all emphasize their willingness to unconditionally help out their masters. For example, Shangqing in the Biography of Shangqing cried

when facing the entrust of his master Dou Shen, saying, “If so, I would die and pay your kindness.” Hong Xian in *Biography of Hong Xian* said, “As an ignoble and cheap creature, I can also solve the master’s worries.” When Mo Le in *Kunlun Slave* encountered his master’s disbelief that he could make a difference, he stressed that “he would make it no matter what happened.” A servant in *Tian Penglang* also said, “he would try his utmost.”

From the above analysis, we can see that the characteristics of slaves penetrate into chivalry, and then instill the image of chivalrous servant with the chivalrous spirits reformed by Confucian ethics, which reflects the individual’s compliance with social ethics order and role norms. The relationship between master and servant belongs to the Confucian ethics category. It is said in the *Book of Rites* that “a national official is a minister, and a family official is a servant”. Servant can be regarded as a reduced version of the loyal minister in the imperial court, whose contribution to the lord of justice can be pushed to loyalty to the autocratic emperors controlling the world. When analyzing Tang chivalry such as *Kunlun Slave*, Volume 4 of Li Zhi’s *Burning Books*, we can see miscellaneous descriptions of *Kunlun Slave*. In this book, “since ancient times, loyal ministers, filial sons, righteous husbands, and virtuous women are all the chivalrous men.” Here, Li Zhi thinks that being called a martyr only by fencing is not a real chivalrous man. Only loyal ministers, filial sons, righteous husbands, and virtuous women who “help the people in danger and work hard faced with difficulties” for the realization of ethical values can be called chivalrous men. The chivalrous servant with these characteristics shows that the chivalrous man who used to break the ban with force was gradually disciplined by the society and became a just chivalrous man in line with Confucian social ethics and the concept of monarch and minister.

In addition, the author also preserved the characteristics of chivalry when introducing servants into chivalry, such as superpower and autonomy. Because a chivalrous servant entered the legendary world as an extraordinary person, although the author conveys chivalry through this image, magical skills and extraordinary actions beyond slave norms are also the focus of the novel narrative. In order to achieve the effect of mystification and not completely enslave the chivalrous servant, this image goes beyond the restriction of servant status on his behavior in many aspects.

First of all, the chivalrous servants inherited superb martial arts, extraordinary courage, and chivalrous wisdom. At the same time, fencing and martial arts are stimulated to develop strange abilities and fantasy, so as to make up for the weakness of servants. For example, the chivalrous men and assassins recorded in *Records of the Grand Historian* and *Book of Han* are not famous for their high martial arts, nor do they involve strange things. However, when the image of the chivalrous servant was created in Tang legends under the cultural background of immortal Taoism in the Tang Dynasty, it was naturally given superpowers by the author to break through the shackles of the slave. For example, Mo Le as a *Kunlun slave* had superb skills. When he was rounded up by the soldiers, he “flew out of the high wall with a dagger like an eagle and falcon, fending others arrows like rain with no one hurting him. In an instant, he disappeared.” Hong Xian “went back and forth for 700 miles at three o’clock that night, entered the dangerous state, and passed through five or six cities.” Wang Jinghong’s servant “hit himself with his staff but only hurt his left foot.” It is precisely their superpowers that the chivalrous servants can complete their chivalrous deeds and become heroes and idols of folk worship who pacified the good and abode by laws.

Secondly, the autonomy of chivalrous servants is mainly manifested in two points. First, their actions are all self-selected without restriction from the master’s instructions or social pressure. Even after the chivalrous servant expressed his determination to dedicate himself, the master was still disbelieved or even contempt. For example, Xue Song in *Biography of Hong Xian* told Hong Xian that “the evolution of things is not predictable.” Cui Shengyun in *Kunlun Slave* said, “What do you know as a slave but ask me about my personal matters?” Wang Jinghong in *Tian Penglang* also said “You even didn’t see the ordinary, how ridiculous for you to find out this big matter?” Because in terms of the role played by slaves in society, it is the duty to obey the master and serve the master. The chivalry embodiment in the above-mentioned characters is to a great extent that the behavior they choose transcends the logic of ordinary slaves, which is the combination of life and death, the future

and destiny of the master. Even, their ability has been extended to maintain social stability, reflecting the sense of justice and positive political attitude toward helping the weak in difficulty. For example, Hong Xian was to maintain Xue Song who resisted the annexation of the region, while Xue Song's political correctness has been discussed in detail in Bian Xiaoxuan's *Novels and Politics of the Tang Dynasty*. Tian Penglang helped his master recover the emperor's jade pillow and safeguarded the royal interests and dignity.

Secondly, the autonomy of chivalrous servants is also reflected in their destination after the completion of their work. According to *Family Marriage Law in the Tang Dynasty*, in historical reality, there are clear administrative regulations on the release and the recovery of slaves. In the Tang legends, when the chivalrous servants chose to break away from the relationship between master and servant after ending the world of mortals, it was independent and convenient for them to be a recluse. Hong Xian died after only getting the consent of Xue Song, his master; Shangqing who was pardoned after changing from a private slave to an official slave "finally married as Jin Zhongyi's wife"; Wang Jinghong's servant "told Jinghong to return to Shu in sincerity". In addition, *Kunlun Slave* also involves the escape of slaves in Tang Dynasty. According to the restoration of the Tang Order in King's Edict: Arrest and Death Order, when slaves escaped, their owners would often report to neighboring officials, and then hand them over to the arrests. Mo Le in *Kunlun Slave* fled after killing 50 or so soldiers sent by governors. His owner Cui Sheng did not know where he was going, so "for more than ten years, some people in Cui's family saw Mo Le selling medicine in Luoyang City as young as before."

It demonstrates that images of chivalrous servants, such as Mo Le, Hong Xian, Shang Qing, and Jinghong's servant both considered slave personalities and chivalrous spirits. It not only endows the works with double artistic characteristics full of artistic tension but also gives servants Confucian moral value and the attitude of maintaining order to the chivalrous man besides retaining his freedom and ability, which strongly responds to the discussion on the noumenon attribute of chivalrous man in the middle and late Tang Dynasty.

The image of chivalrous servants in Tang legends appeared in large numbers for the first time in the middle and late Tang Dynasty, which provided a model for the image-building of chivalrous servants in later chivalrous literature. For example, in Volume 27 of *Surprise in the Second Moment*, the generous and righteous family member helped Wang Xiucui regain his love for his concubine. Another example is *Complete Biography of the Powder Makeup Building*, in which family Luo, the home of an important minister, was about to be beheaded because of the framing of the adulterer Shen Qian. The servant Wang who volunteered to take the place of his mistress to die assassinated Shen Qian in the Golden Temple, and committed suicide after failure. In addition, the literary-historical significance of the image of chivalrous servants in Tang legends lies not only in providing a reference for later novels but also in the chivalry spirits, which provides a broad vision for the creation of later chivalrous novels. What is particularly prominent is that the literati in Qing Dynasty created a large number of images of official chivalrous men in chivalrous case-solving novels. For example, in *Three Chivalrous Men and Five Righteousness* which aims to promote chivalrous courage and praise coarseness, loyalty, and righteousness, Zhan Zhao was named as an authoritative guard with a knife, Lu Fang, Xu Qing, and Jiang Ping were also endowed with senior captains, becoming social justice and justice. In *Seven Swords and Thirteen Heroes*, all the righteous men got a promotion. These images of official chivalrous men have been further incorporated into the state machine, with a strong thought of repaying kindness and loyalty to the monarch together with consciousness to maintain social order, which clearly reflects the continuation and deepening of the chivalrous men with righteousness and persuasion in Tang legends.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, in the Tang Dynasty, the chivalrous man in historical reality and his social and cultural behavior showed stage characteristics. Facing the phenomenon of deterioration of chivalrous man in

the aftermath of the An Lushan Rebellion, the literati in the middle and late Tang Dynasty represented by Liu Cha and Liu Zongyuan took the lead in launching the initiative of righteous chivalrous man; Since then, Li Deyu, who was touched by Assassination Case in the Ruling of Emperor Xianzong of Tang Dynasty, has systematically expounded this issue with Theory on Chivalrous Men; The re-emphasis in Cefu Yuanguai in Northern Song Dynasty shows that the chivalrous man of righteousness has won the official recognition. The authors of Tang legends were also influenced by the great discussion on chivalrous spirits in the middle and late Tang Dynasty. They created an artistic and ideological image of chivalrous servants based on reality by means of introducing servants into chivalrous men. From the aspect of causes and overall creation of the chivalrous servant image, Tang legends have a strong flavor of strange things from the early stage to the prosperous Tang Dynasty when they are mostly “curious about meaning” and “expressing talents.” Then comes the middle and late Tang Dynasty when they also “describe strange things and show their talents in harmony,” they increased their worries about the country, elucidation of political views, and promotion of Confucian ethics at the same time. The image of chivalrous servants in Tang legends containing chivalry also influenced the creation of a series of images such as chivalrous servants and official servants in later novels, which is significant in literary history.

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