

## On Reflection of History in Tang *Chuanqi* Tales

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### I. Introduction

In the Tang dynasty(618~907), *chuanqi* 傳奇 tales<sup>1)</sup>

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1) *Chuanqi* 傳奇 tales in the the history of Chinese literature can be defined as short stories written in classical Chinese during the Tang dynasty. The term *chuanqi* was first used by Pei Xing (裴興, 825~880) as title for a collection of his short stories. It came into use as a generic term during the Song 宋 dynasty (960~1279). See William H. Nienhauser et al., comps., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 356. See also Wu Zhida 吳志達, *Tangren chuanqi* 唐人傳奇 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 1; Li Zongwei 李宗爲, *Tangren chuanqi*

(tales of the marvelous or transmission of the strange) reached its maturity as a literary form. The various earlier types provided themes and contributed to the narrative technique of the *chuanqi*, but the stimulus for the production of this more sophisticated narrative came from factors new to Chinese society.<sup>2)</sup>

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唐人傳奇 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 1. However, it is not Pei Xing's invention that Tang short stories were named *chuanqi*. It is the reason why Tang writers chiefly described the marvelous and the strange under the influence of the Six dynasties' *zhiguai* 志怪 (tales of the supernatural or describing anomalies). The term *chuanqi* was also used to designate "Yingying zhuan" 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Yingying) written by Yuan Zhen (元稹, 779~831). See Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 1.

- 2) Many reason for the rise of Tang *chuanqi* have been hypothesized by scholars. For more information, see Liu Kairong 劉開榮, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu* 唐代小說研究 (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1947), 1~44; Zhu Xiuxiao 祝秀俠, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu* 唐代傳奇研究 (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua, 1957), 19~44; Wang Yunxi 王運熙, "Shi lu Tang chuanqi yu guwen yundong de guanxi" 試論唐傳奇與古文運動的關係, in *Wenxue yichan xuanji* 文學遺產選集, vol. 3 (Peking: Zhonghua, 1960), 321~32; Wu Gengshen 吳庚舜, "Guanyu Tangdai chuanqi fanrong de yuanyin" 關於唐代傳奇繁榮的原因, in *Wenxue yanjiu jikan* 文學研究集刊 (Peking: Renmin wenxue, 1964), 70~100; Wu Zhida 吳志達, *Tangren chuanqi* 唐人傳奇 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 2~25; Tschen Yinkoh (Chen Yinko), "Han Yu and the T'ang Novel," trans. by James R. Ware, *HJAS* 1 (1936): 39~43; E. D. Edwards, *Chinese Prose Literature of the T'ang Period A.D. 618~960*, 2 vols. (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1937~38), 2:11~18; James R. Hightower, "Fiction in the Literary Language," in *Topics in Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 77~79; Winston L. Y. Yang, et al., eds., *Classical Chinese Fiction: A Guide to its study and appreciation: Essays and Bibliographies* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978), 19~20; Sarah M. Yim, "Structure, Theme and Narrator in T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i*" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979), 2~4; Kam Tak Him, "The Rise of T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i* and Its Narrative Art" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1979); Y. W. Ma, "Prose Writings of Han Yu and *Ch'uan-ch'i* Literature," *JOS* 7 (1969): 195~223, and "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," *CLEAR* 2.2 (1980): 179; Karl S. Y. Kao, ed., *Classical*

Before Mid Tang dynasty(766~835), the literary world had respected only poem, and disregarded short stories as *chuanqi*. The writer did not create short stories consciously or unconsciously until Tang dynasty. Tang *chuanqi* became closer to the real life in its content and the writers deliberately wrote fiction. Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551~1602) of the Ming 明 dynasty(1368~1644) said: "Tales of miracles and the other world were popular during the Six dynasties, but these were not entirely imaginary: Tang dynasty scholars, on the other hand, deliberately invented strange adventures and wrote them as fiction."<sup>3)</sup> In other words, even when the writers seemed to be reporting actual events, their imaginations shaped and structured the narration, and their literary talents gave it a refined style.<sup>4)</sup> Furthermore, Lu Xun pointed out that: The Tang *chuanqi* had their origin in the *zhiguai* 志怪 (tales of the supernatural or describing anomalies) of the Six dynasties, but with their more distinguished style and more complex plots they constituted a distinctive literary form.<sup>5)</sup> Occasionally, it's

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*Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 22~27.

3) "變異之談，盛于六朝，然多是傳錄舛訛，未必盡幻設語，至唐人乃作意好奇，假小說以寄筆端." in *Shaoshi shan fang bicong* 少室山房筆叢, *juan* 36. The translation is quoted from Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* trans. by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), 80.

4) Andre Levy, *Chinese Literature, Ancient and Classical* trans. by William H. Nienhauser, Jr. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), 110.

5) Simply speaking, *chuanqi* is fiction consciously created by the literary imagination, in contrast to the Six Dynasties *zhiguai* considered as tale which simply reports or transcribes something "given" or "found." See Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 22.

true, *chuanqi* also use parables to convey a mood or speak of divine retribution, yet on the whole the aim is to write tales of imagination, where as the earlier tales recorded supernatural happenings as warnings to men.<sup>6)</sup>

As a matter of fact, even though in the aspect of the content and story plot, the Tang *chuanqi* was directly influenced by the Six dynasties *zhiguai*,<sup>7)</sup> *chuanqi* in the aspect of formation and character description was influenced by *shizhuan wenxue* 史傳文學 (historiographical literature) such as *Shiji* 史記, *Zuochuan* 左傳 and *Zhan'guo ce* 戰國策 etc. The character description, however, was more elaborate than before, so *chuanqi* had more fiction factors.<sup>8)</sup>

## II. The Formation of History and *Chuanqi* Tale

Generally, in the formation of history or historical biography, it opens with the person's full name and cognomen, his native so as to identify his particular family, and some details of his immediate ancestors where these had

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For information on the differences between *chuanqi* and *zhiguai*, see Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 8~10 and 19~27; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 3 and 25; Winston Yang, et al., eds., *Classical Chinese Fiction: A Guide to its study and appreciation: Essays and Bibliographies* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978), 21~22; Lu Hsun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, 80~85; Yim, "Structure, Theme and Narrator in T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i*," 10, 52, 84, 106, 130, 158; Curtis Peter Adkins, "The Supernatural in T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i* Tales: An Archetypal View" (Ph. D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1976), 19~20.

6) See Lu Xun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, 81.

7) See Nienhauser, *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 356.

8) See Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 6~10.

been in any way notable. Next follows the account of the subject's career, from his examination successes, though his *curriculum vitae* as he ascends in the official hierarchy, to his retirement or death and the bestowal of posthumous honors. This formation of historical biography have influenced the formation of the *chuanqi* genre as well as that of the Six Dynasties *zhiguai*. But the formation of historical biography started to be codified and regularly observed like a generic convention in Tang *chuanqi*.

As for the reason why Tang *chuanqi* writers used this kind of formation, in the "General Introduction" to his *Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural*, H. C. Chang says: "Though fantasy is the keynote to the T'ang supernatural tale, its writers often give the impression that they are more concerned with veracity. Chronology is careful and exact, sources are authenticated, subsequent happenings briefly recounted for the sake of completeness, and a final comment added, in which the narrator pronounces judgment as in treating real persons and events. This is because the writers were, consciously or unconsciously, modelling themselves on the historical biography, as created in the Han by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (b. B.C. 145) in his 'Records of a Historian' with its scores of lively character portrayals in a historical context."<sup>9)</sup>

Y. W. Ma also points out, in his article "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tale," that the use of historical facts, such

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9) H. C. Chang, *Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 26. See also Y. W. Ma, "Prose Writings of Han Yu and *Ch'uan-ch'i* Literature," 206~207.

as real events, genuine dates, and geographical location, increases the credibility and the realistic quality of a fantasy tale.<sup>10)</sup> Contained in the historical framework, fantasy has thus assumed the authenticity of fact. This is one of the role of historical writing in the formation of the *chuanqi* genre. Though all make-believe schemes may elevate the fantastic elements to the level of internal or figurative "fact," most Tang story writers want their works to be recognized as historical documents.

Besides the formation of historical biography, the historical biography classifies its subjects not only by status or role, but also by ethical judgment of performance; "hence such categories of biographies as "principled officials" (*hsün li*), "oppressive officials" (*k'u li*), "filial sons and faithful friends" (*hsiao yu*), "traitors" (*chien ch'en*), and "virtuous women" (*lieh nü*),"<sup>11)</sup> as Robert Ruhlmann indicates in his "Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction." Through these categories, we can see that the historical biography has been used to the certain purpose of social, political ethics. Moreover some *chuanqi* tales were drawn from these categories of historical biography including other officers' biography in the history. For this reason, *chuanqi* writers reveals some argumentation for didacticism at the end of the *chuanqi* tale. On the other hand, this didacticism has been related to *wenjuan* 溫卷 (practice composition, scroll presentation or warming-up of scrolls) demanding three

10) See Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 176.

11) Robert Ruhlmann, "Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction," in *The Confucian Persuasion* ed. by Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), 148.

elements such as composing poetry, expository, and historical writing, because the didacticism usually results from the expository part and historical writing part in the *chuanqi* tale.<sup>12)</sup>

Therefore, I believe that the role of historical writing in the formation of the *chuanqi* genre was to increase the authenticity and the realistic quality of a tale, and to reveal a certain didactic purpose. From now on, let us see how

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12) The link between *chuanqi* and *wenjuan* was first suggested by Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛 (fl. 1195) in his *Yunlu manchao* 雲麓漫鈔 and advance in modern times by Chen Yinko. "唐之舉人，先籍當世顯人以姓名達之主司，然後以所業投獻，踰數日又投，謂之溫卷，如幽怪錄傳奇等皆是也。蓋此等文備衆體，可以見史才詩筆議論。" (Tang dynasty candidates, relying upon an illustrious contemporary, would first have their names brought to the attention of the chief-examiner and would later present some of their writings to him. A few days later, they would again present some of their writings, and this was called "keeping the scrolls warm" (*wenjuan*). *The Youguai lu*, the *Chuanqi* and the like were all used for this purpose. Possibly this sort of literature embraces a variety of styles and can be used to demonstrate historical talent, poetic flair, and expository skill.) See *Yunlu manchao* 雲麓漫鈔 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 8.111. The translation is slightly modified from Victor H. Mair, "Scroll Presentation in the T'ang Dynasty," *HJAS* 38 (1978): 41. And see Tschen Yinkoh (Chen Yinko), "Han Yu and the T'ang Novel," 40. See also Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 33~40; Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 10; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 23; Lo Longzhi 羅龍治, *Jinshi ke yu Tangdai de wenxue shehui* 進士科與唐代的文學社會 (Taipei: Taiwan University Press, 1971), 81; Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 179~80; Y. W. Ma, "Prose Writings of Han Yu and *Ch'uan-ch'i* Literature," 204~205, and "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 179~180; Karl Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 24~25; Lee Yu-hwa, *Fantasy and Realism in Chinese Fiction* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1984), 31. However, it has been contested by most scholars. See Mair, "Scroll Presentation in the T'ang Dynasty," 40. Yim, "Structure, Theme and Narrator in T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i*," 166; Robert Joe Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall'," *JAOS* 106.3 (July-Sept. 1986): 505.

*chuanqi* writers used the formation of history in their works.

Most of the pseudo-biographical tales, like the historical biographies, typically started with a brief introduction of the character's background, in which information like cognomen and place of origin is given. For instance, the cognomen and the place of origin of the protagonist are mentioned right at the beginning of "Li Zhangwu zhuan" 李章武傳 (The Biography of Li Zhangwu) by Li Jingliang 李景亮 (fl. 9c.) and in the beginning of "Feng Yan zhuan" 馮燕傳 (The Biography of Feng Yan) by Shen Yazhi 沈亞之 (c. 770 ~ c. 830), besides the place of origin of the male protagonist, his ancestor's background is briefly summarized.

Li Zhangwu, whose cognomen was Fei, came from a family from Zhongshan.

李章武, 字飛, 其先中山人.<sup>13)</sup>

Feng Yan was a hero of Wei, the names of his father and ancestors were unknown.

馮燕者, 魏豪人, 父祖無聞名.<sup>14)</sup>

As early as *Shiji* 史記 (Record of History), the authors of the biographies in the official histories like to

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13) Wang Bijiang 汪辟疆 comp., *Tangren xiaoshuo* 唐人小說 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 67. For translation, see Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 197.

14) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 198. For translation, see Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978), 50, Yim, "Structure, Theme and Narrator in T'ang *Ch'uan-ch'i*," 107.



devote a brief section at the end of a biography to describe the destiny of the protagonist's children. In the Tang tales, we may also detect this influence of the historiographer's formation. For example, the achievements of the white monkey's offspring and Li Wa's 李娃 sons are briefly mentioned at the end of "Bu Jiang Cong baiyuan zhuan" 補江總白猿傳 (The White Monkey) by unknown writer and "Li Wa zhuan" 李娃傳 (The Story of Li Wa) by Bo Xingjian 白行簡 (775~826) respectively, while at the close of "Nie Yinniang" 聶隱娘 by Pei Xing 裴鉞 (fl. 878), there is a short description of the sad fate of Liu Zong 劉縱, the son of the warlord Liu Changyi 劉昌裔<sup>15)</sup> whom she served.

In a year's time Ouyang's wife gave birth to a son, and the child took after the monkey. Later Ouyang was condemned to death by Emperor Wu of the Chen dynasty. But an old friend of his, Jiang Zong, was partial to Ouyang's son on account of his outstanding intelligence and took him into his house. Thus the boy escaped death. He grew up to become a good writer and calligrapher and a well-known figure in his time.

紇妻周歲生一子，厥狀肖焉。後紇爲陳武帝所誅。素與江總善。愛其子聰悟絕人，常留養之，故免於難。及長，果文學善書，知名於時。<sup>16)</sup>

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15) He was a military governor supportive of the central government and died in 813. For his biographies, see Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007~1072) et al., comps., *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New Tang History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 170.5166 and Liu Xu 劉煦 (887~946) et al., comps., *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old Tang History) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 151.4056.

16) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 20. This translation is quoted from Yang

Li Wa was honored with the title of Lady Qian. They had four sons, and all of them attained high office, the lowest being prefect of Taiyuan. The sons all married girls of the most illustrious of families. Thus their entire household flourished, and no families were on a par with them.

娃封汧國夫人。有四子，皆爲大官；其卑者猶爲太原尹。弟兄姻媾皆甲門，內外隆盛，莫之與京。<sup>17)</sup>

During the Kaicheng reign period [836~840], the viceroy's son Liu Zong was made governor of Lingzhou [roughly the area of modern Szechwan province]. In his travels, he met Yinniang on a plank-trail along a precipice in the Shu [Szechwan] mountains. Her countenance was as it had been in earlier days, and she still rode a white donkey. She was pleased to see him, and said, "Don't go to Lingzhou. A great calamity is in store for you there." Liu Zong was not much of a believer in such things. He offered her colored silk, but Yinniang did not accept any of it. Instead, she drank with Zong and left only when she was inebriated. One year later, Liu

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Xianyi and Gladys Yang, trans., *Tang Dynasty Stories* (Beijing: Chinese Literature, 1986), 149.

17) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 126. This translation is quoted from Ma and Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, 170. See also Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa: Study and critical edition of a Chinese story from the ninth century* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), 183; Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 86.

Zong still had not resigned, and indeed soon died at his post in Lingzhou.

開成年，昌裔子縱除陵州刺史，至蜀棧道，遇隱娘，貌若當時，甚喜相見，依前跨白衛如故。語縱曰：郎君大災，不合適此。出藥一粒，令縱吞之，云：來年火急拋官歸洛，方脫此禍。吾藥力只保一年患耳。縱亦不甚信。遺其繒綵，隱娘一無所受。但沉醉而去。後一年，縱不休官，果卒於陵州。<sup>18)</sup>

A few of the biographically oriented *chuanqi* tell us the stories of real persons who existed. For instance, the tale of "Wu Baoan" 吳保安<sup>19)</sup> by Niu Su 牛肅 is not mere fiction but is based on facts recorded in *juan* 191 of the *Xin Tangshu*.<sup>20)</sup> Li Gongzuo's 李公佐 (c. 770 ~ c. 848) "Xie Xiaoe zhuan" 謝小娥傳 (The Story of Xie Xiaoe)<sup>21)</sup> refers to what were supposed to be real events which are recorded in *juan* 205 of the *Xin Tangshu*.<sup>22)</sup>

It should be noted that as far as *chuanqi* writing is concerned, a convincing presentation of an imaginary character illustrated by imaginary events is considered as one sufficient way to demonstrate a writer's talents in historical writing. For this reason, fact in fiction like *chuanqi* tales, in the interest of establishing a stable frame of reference, does not necessarily tally with mundane reality; it

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18) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 329. This translation is quoted from Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 361~62.

See also Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 117.

19) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 291~296.

20) For Wu Baoan's biography, see *Xin Tangshu*, 191.5509.

21) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 111~116.

22) The biography of Xie Xiaoe is found in the *Xin Tangshu*, 205.5827.

must only be consistent and coherent with its context.<sup>23)</sup>

### III. Historical Facts in *Chuanqi* Tales

Now, I try to analyze *chuanqi* tale with the periodical and thematic category in order to see how to use the historical facts such as real figures, genuine dates, geographical locations, and real events, etc.

#### 1. Supernatural tales

Tang dynasty in Early (618~712) and Flourishing (713~765) period was the period of transition from *zhiguai* to *chuanqi*. The object of description has been changed from *guai* 怪 to *qi* 奇 of human being's affairs. In addition, it became much more factors of imagination and fiction, and the description became comparatively detailed.

"The White Monkey" by unknown writer is the story of a white monkey who carries off the beautiful wife of General Ouyang He 歐陽紇.<sup>24)</sup> With the help of the other women whom the white monkey has carried off, the general and his troops eventually manage to rescue his wife and kill the monkey. The story takes place in southwest China, a border region unknown to most Tang readers and hence helps to increase the credibility of the white monkey's power and deeds. This story, as has been suggested by some critics, was composed to ridicule Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢

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23) Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 168.

24) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 18~22. For translation, see Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 144~149.

(557~641) for his looks.<sup>25)</sup> So one may say that the story was used pragmatically like "Zhou Qin xing ji" 周秦行紀 (Journey in the Zhou and Qin region),<sup>26)</sup> which was said to have been attributed to Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (779~847) by his political enemy as a way of implicating him.<sup>27)</sup>

In the period of Mid Tang dynasty (766~835), after the reign period of Kaiyuan 開元 (r. 713~742) and Tianbao 天寶 (r. 742~756) especially through An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion<sup>28)</sup> in 755, all kinds of social contradiction were exposed; corruption of the ruling class, the political darkness, party struggle and gentry struggle between the old gentry of Shandong and the new noble from common people,<sup>29)</sup> local

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25) The biographies of Ouyang Xun are found in the *Xin Tangshu*, 198.5645 and *Jiu Tangshu*, 189a.4947.

26) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 182~188.

27) "More specifically, stories may be used pragmatically for entertaining one's superior, courting favors from someone in power, or attacking one's political enemies, the last of these often appeared in allegorical mode." See Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 25.

28) For information on An Lushan and the rebellion, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

29) On the party struggle between Niu Sengju 牛僧孺 (780~848) and Li Deyu 李德裕 (787~849), see Zhang Rongfang 張榮芳, "Niu Li dangzheng dui shixue de lunzheng" 牛李黨爭對史學的論爭, in *Zhongguo shi xinlun* 中國史新論 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1985), 533~46; Zhu Gui 朱桂, *Niu Sengru yanjiu* 牛僧孺研究 (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1976); Feng Chengji 馮承基, "Niu Li dangzheng shiyin zhiyi" 牛李黨爭始因質疑 in *Wenshizhe xuebao* 文史哲學報, 8 (1985): 136~46; Fu Xiren 傅錫壬, *Niu Li dangzheng yu Tangdai wenxue* 牛李黨爭與唐代文學 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1984), and "Liang Tangshu suo lun 'Niu-Li' dangzheng qi yikao" 兩唐書所論“牛李”黨爭歧異考, *Danjiang xuebao* 淡江學報 20 (May 1983): 133~44; Luo Liandian 羅聯添, "Tangdai Niu Li dangzheng shi yin wenti zai tantao" 唐代牛李黨爭始因問題再探討, *Guoli bianyiguan*

military governor's (*fanzhen* 藩鎮) domineering and eunuch's usurpation – these all pressed and exploited the people heavily. At the same time, it was along with the practice of the Two Tax Law (*liangshui fa* 兩稅法), manor economy and city manufacture, and the development of commerce. Even the prevailing civil service examination system and the rise of the *guwen* 古文 (ancient-style prose) movement<sup>30)</sup> influenced on every aspect of the art.<sup>31)</sup>

Thereupon, *chuanqi* tale was fit to reflect the complicated and varied life of the Tang society. Moreover it was well received by the civil class and the scholars. Under

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*guankan* 國立編譯館館刊 14.2 (Dec. 1985): 15~24; Wang Yanping 王炎平, "Niu Li dangzheng shiyin bianxi" 牛李黨爭始因辨析, *Sichuan daxue xuebao* 四川大學學報 46 (July 1985): 99~106; Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589~906, Part I*, ed. by Denis Twitchett (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 639~54. For the relationship between rise of *chuanqi* and party struggle, see Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 1~13, 26~30, 76, 100, 142 and 165; Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 36; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 15~17 and 24.

30) It is significant that the great development and widespread popularity of the *chuanqi* coincides with the rise of the *guwen* movement. See James R. Hightower, "Fiction in the Literary Language," in *Topics in Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 77. See also Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 18~33; Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 14; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 21; Y. W. Ma, "Prose Writings of Han Yu and *Ch'uan-ch'i* Literature," 207~211. For more information on Han Yu 韓愈 and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元, see Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 179; Karl Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 23; Y. W. Ma, "Prose Writings of Han Yu and *Ch'uan-ch'i* Literature," 195~217; Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 16~38; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 1; Tschen Yinkoh (Chen Yinko), "Han Yu and the T'ang Novel," 41.

31) See Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 31.

these circumstances, *chuanqi* tale had enjoyed a golden period from 776 to 859. Most of works handed down to us are produced at these days. Most of writers are literati and officials, but the greater part of works they wrote came from the affairs which they had felt, listened and seen by themselves. Some of works were still drawn from several folk stories and legends. Although the protagonists are kings and officials, the gifted scholars and beautiful ladies, supernatural and immortal beings, fox-fairies and ghosts, but they reflected much more real life, and touched on many dimensions of society.

Among writers of Tang tales who flourished in the later half of the eighth century was Shen Jiji 沈既濟 (c. 740 ~ c. 800). His "Zhen zhong ji" 枕中記 (The World Inside a Pillow),<sup>32)</sup> which is based on his personal experience, certainly has relation to the thought of the Buddhism and Daoism which flourished in those days. Based on the real life, he relied on the artistic imagination and fiction, and made the concrete and vivid image. Moreover, through the development of plot and the moving artistic image, he expressed his thought in the religious background. This is a big progress of *chuanqi*. "The World Inside a Pillow", with all the official positions occupied by the protagonist Lu Sheng 盧生在 his dream recorded in detail, was regarded by contemporaries as a work which demonstrated the author's ability in historical writing. Like "Nanke taishou zhuan" 南柯太守傳 (The Prefect of South Bough)<sup>33)</sup> by Li Gongzuo's 李公佐

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32) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 45~51. For translation, see Ma and Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, 435~438.

(c. 770 ~ c. 848), whose thought was also influenced by Buddhism and Daoism, the author reveals the moral satire on the emptiness of secular achievement at the end of the story as follows:

For, as Li Zhao, former adjutant general of Huazhou commented:

His reputation reaches to the skies,  
His influence can make a kingdom fall,  
And yet this pomp and power, after all,  
Are but an ant-beap in the wise man's eyes.

前華州參軍李肇贊曰：貴極祿位，權傾國都，達人視此，  
蟻聚何殊。<sup>34)</sup>

Both authors of the two tales, though those must be fiction, obviously described the real life style of the most people who pursued the official life for wealth and honor in the Tang times. For the realistic setting, the tales contained real historical facts such as historical figure, official titles, official life, chronological and geographical details, social and political situation.

## 2. Love stories

In *chuanqi* tales of Mid Tang period (766~835), there are large number of love stories. It has relation with the civil service examination system,<sup>35)</sup> the clan and marriage system

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33) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 101~110. For translation, see Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 56~69.

34) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 107~108. The translation is quoted from Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 69.



and the women emancipation.<sup>36)</sup> As a result of this, love stories generally stress romantic attachment in realistic settings.

"Yingying zhuan" 鶯鶯傳 (The Story of Yingying)<sup>37)</sup> by Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779~831) is an unhappy love story between Yingying and a scholar named Zhang Sheng 張生. The episodes unfold mainly in the Pu 蒲 area (modern Shansi). In the story, to emphasize the contrast between Zhang and Yingying and the values they are associated with, the author very skilfully establishes two opposing points of view, one favoring Zhang and upholding the primacy of *li* 禮 (propriety) an element of Confucian society in those days, and the other view, based more on human terms, favoring Yingying and sympathetic to the individual's spontaneous response to his inclinations. "The Story of Yingying", which abounds in poetry, has an argumentative section on the bad effects of beautiful women on men, and is initially set against a military revolt in the Pu area which did actually take place in the Zhenyuan 貞元 reign period (785~805).<sup>38)</sup> The military revolt

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35) For the civil service examination system, see Lo Longzhi, *Jinshi ke yu Tangdai de wenxue shehui*, 81~85. Also see Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 26~33; Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 33; Wu Zhida, *Tangren chuanqi*, 22~24.

36) For woman's emancipation of the Tang, see Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 10, 103 and 139; Zhu Xiuxiao, *Tangdai chuanqi yanjiu*, 15.

37) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 162~181. For translation, see Ma and Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, 139~145.

38) “是歲，渾瑊薨於蒲。有中人丁文雅，不善於軍，軍人因喪而擾，大掠蒲人。” (This year Hun Zhen died in Pu, and the eunuch Ding Wenya proved unpopular with the troops, who took advantage of the mourning period to mutiny. They plundered the citizens of Pu.) See Wang, *Tangren*

which occurred in the Zhenyuan reign period is used to reflect the disturbed mind of Yingying in her breaking propriety despite her awareness of it.

"Huo Hsiaoyu zhuan" 霍小玉傳 (The Story of Huo Hsiayu)<sup>39)</sup> by Jiang Fang 蔣防 (fl. 9th c.) is also an unhappy love story between courtesan Hsiaoyu and heartless young man named Li Yi 李益. The concern of Wei Xiaqing 韋夏卿 and the young knight-errant in yellow<sup>40)</sup> for Hsiaoyu casts light on Li Yi's heartlessness to the sufferings of his lover. The author criticizes the hard-hearted, cowardly hero because Li abandoned Hsiaoyu without any reason. The source of the story was drawn from the biographies of Li Yi (748~827) in *the Xin Tangshu*, and *the Jiu Tangshu*.<sup>41)</sup> This story is written pragmatically as the same case as "The White Monkey," and "Journey in the Zhou and Qin region."

"The Story of Li Wa"<sup>42)</sup> gives us a truthful and vivid

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*xiaoshuo*, 162. The translation is quoted from Ma and Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, 139~145. Hun Zhen, who was the regional commander of Jiangzhou, died in Puzhou in 799.

39) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 92~100. For translation, see Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 209~221. See also Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 43~55.

40) “有京兆韋夏卿者，生之密友。．．．忽有一豪士，衣輕黃紵衫，挾弓彈，” (Among Li's companions that day was his close friend Wei Xiaqing. . . a knight-errant suddenly appeared, wearing a light yellow tunic and wielding a bow and arrow.) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 96. The translation is quoted from Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 217.

41) For his biographies, see *Xin Tangshu*, 203.5784 and *Jiu Tangshu*, 137.3771.

42) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 119~127. For translation, see Ma and Lau, eds., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*,

picture of the Tang society. The heroine of the story was a courtesan in the capital. The hero, a young man, squandered all that he had for love of her, then became a beggar and suffered all kinds of hardships. Later the girl took him in again and encouraged him to study hard, so that finally he passed the civil service examinations and became an official. This story is the one in which the author takes the greatest care in the use of chronological and geographical details to create formal realism. The rise and fall of the hero's fortunes are carefully recorded in units of months and days and the journeys he takes when travelling to and away from the capital are adequately indicated. Moreover, his movements in various locales of Chang'an 長安 are carefully documented. Besides very careful in the use of temporal and geographical details to generate a verisimilitude of reality, the author is also adroit in using place names to cast light on the personality of his characters. Unlike the above two love stories - "The Story of Yingying" and "The Story of Huo Xiaoe," the author, through the first two thirds of the story, sympathizes the young man who recklessly turns his back on conventional success for the love of a courtesan, Li Wa, in accordance with conventional morality. But at the last part of the story, after the young man passed the civil service examination with Li Wa's virtuous behavior, the author highly praises her although she is a courtesan. Finally, Li Wa married to the young man and was ennobled

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163~171; Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa: Study and critical edition of a Chinese story from the ninth century* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), 105~185; Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 70~86.

as the Lady of Qian'guo 汧國夫人. According to Liu Kairong, it was the result of women emancipation of the Tang time S.<sup>43)</sup>

### 3. Historical stories

Some stories, in accordance with vivid historical background, exposed the feudal rulers who were in luxury and pleasure, and reflected the contradictory struggle of the inside ruling class. Here are two famous works known as short historical stories.

One is "Dong cheng laofu zhuan" 東城老父傳 (The Old Man of the Eastern Wall)<sup>44)</sup> by Chen Hong 陳鴻 (fl. 9 c.). This is the story of Jia Chang 賈昌 and of the reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712~756) as seen through his eyes. The story begins before Emperor Xuanzong ascends the throne. It is written in Jia Chang's melancholy mood, describing how Jia Chang recalls the good old days before An Lushan rebellion and contrasts past splendor with the more recent decline. The story mainly chronicles the events of the years from 713 to 810. It must be noted in the first part of the story that the author focuses his tale on Jia Chang, richly rewarded cock-fighter, precisely in order to criticize the extravagance and luxury for which Emperor Xuanzong's court came to be famous in its later years. In contrast with the gorgeous days, after An Lushan rebellion, in the last part of the story, Jia Chang complains and laments

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43) see Liu Kairong, *Tangdai xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 103.

44) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 134~138. For translation, see Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall'," 508~515.

the dynasty's decline from the splendor of the Kaiyuan period (713~742). Jia Chang's complaint and lamentation must be used as the author's didactic purpose. For this reason, Robert Joe Cutter indicates that: "The connection between historical and fictional narrative in the Chinese tradition has often been noted, and it is seldom clearer than in fictional biographies like this one. Even so, the influence of history is present to a superlative degree in this tale. Not only does it display formal elements with roots in the traditional art of history writing, it is full of references to real people, events, and conditions of the periods in which the tale transpires. It is with this aspect of the tale, the author's use and manipulation of historical details."<sup>45)</sup>

Another historical story is "Chang hen ge zhuan" 長恨歌傳 (The Tale of the Song of Eternal Remorse)<sup>46)</sup> by Chen Hong. This is also very famous love story between Tang Emperor Xuanzong and his favorite concubine Yang Guifei 楊貴妃 with the background of An Lushan rebellion. The author explains that Bo Juyi 白居易 (772~846) wanted to deliver through his poem, "Chang hen ge" 長恨歌 (The Song of Eternal Remorse), a message against the danger of beautiful women. According to Y. W. Ma, "the author reached the peak of his career in the years 785~829; this story covers the years between 713 and 749. If these dates are of any use at all, they seem to suggest that these tales were intended to be regarded as records of actual happenings in

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45) Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall'," 505.

46) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 139~161. For translation, see Elizabeth Te-chen Wang, trans., *Ladies of the Tang; 22 Classical Chinese Stories* (Taipei: Heritage press, 1961), 109~132.

the recent past rather than as fictional fabrications."<sup>47)</sup> However, unlike the first part of this story, the second half no longer relies on proven data.

#### 4. Knight-errant stories

In the period of Late Tang (836~907), party struggle or class contradiction was more intensified, and after the reign of Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806~821), eunuch's usurpation of the inside ruling class and the military governor's domineering suppressed people more severely until it led to the great rebellion headed by Huang Chao 黃巢 in 875. The local military governors of this period kept knights-errant and assassins, while the suffering people hoped that superhuman champions would come forward to right their wrongs and overthrow the tyrants. This accounts for the popularity of stories about superhuman champions or knights-errant. The middle-upper class believed in Daoism and Buddhism, and the general mood of superstition was prevalent. Such a great disorder was naturally reflected in *chuanqi* tales. In this way, knight-errantry passed from the realm of fact to that of fiction. Knight-errant stories flourished for the first time towards the end of the Tang dynasty, though their prototypes can be traced back many centuries earlier. James Liu points out that: "Knight-errant stories occupy an intermediate position between popularizations of history on the one hand and tales of the miraculous on the other."<sup>48)</sup>

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47) Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 175.

48) See James J. Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant* (London: Routledge

"Qiu ran ke zhuan" 虬髯客傳 (The Curly-bearded Hero)<sup>49)</sup> by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850~933) is famous for its portrayal of the chivalrous character of the Curly Beard and the elopement of the heroine, Hongfu 紅拂, who foresees the bright future of Li Jing 李靖 (571~649).<sup>50)</sup> The story is set in the last days of the Sui dynasty (589~618) before the founding of the Tang. The hero Li Jing is a real historical figure who later helped Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 627~650) to establish the Tang dynasty. In the story, Curly Beard is described as an ambitious man of a rough appearance and a generous heart. The author, Du Guangting, portrays him as an ideal hero personifying the Confucian virtue of "yielding" to men of equal or greater virtues and abilities. The author maintains that the Tang emperors ruled by divine right and must not be overthrown. It is to defend a legality and consolidation of the Tang royal court and to advocate the concept of "the Mandate of Heaven" (*tianming* 天命).

"Hong Xian" 紅綫 (Red Thread)<sup>51)</sup> by Yuan Jiao 袁郊 (fl. 9 c.) is the story of a maid, Hong Xian, in the household of Xue Song 薛嵩 (d. 773),<sup>52)</sup> military governor of Luzhou 潞

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and Kegan Paul, 1967), 81~82.

49) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 214~221. For translation, see Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, *Tang Dynasty Stories*, 97~105.

50) For his biographies, see *Xin Tangshu*, 93.3811 and *Jiu Tangshu*, 67.2475.

51) Wang, *Tangren xiaoshuo*, 314~317. For translation, see Kao, *Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic*, 363~370.

52) Xue was a participant in the An Lushan rebellion. Like other rebel generals, he was allowed to retain command of his army and govern a large tract of land after his surrender to the Tang court. His biographies are found in *Xin Tangshu*, 111.4144 and *Jiu Tangshu*,

州.<sup>53)</sup> The introduction to the story contains a description of the local military governor's violence and political situation in north and south of the Yellow River soon after the An Lushan rebellion, which seems motivated as much by the narrator's interest in that situation as by any necessity for setting the background for the plot. Hong Xian was a remarkably gifted girl who could travel very swiftly, and thanks to her skill as a swordswoman she succeeded in stopping a war between two rival military governors Xue Song and Tian Chengsi 田承嗣 (704~778).<sup>54)</sup> The conflict between the military governors portrayed here, as has been pointed out by critics, closely reflects the political realities of the time. Thus the author reveals how military governors domineered and what people wanted at the time through Hong Xian's remarkable activity. James Liu points out that: "The story bears some resemblance to that of Nie Yinniang, but is more credible. The character of the heroine, too, is more sympathetic and convincing."<sup>55)</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Besides how the *chuanqi* writers used the formation of history or historical biography for their works, through the

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124.3525.

53) Modern Changzhi 長治 prefecture in Shansi province.

54) Tian served as a general under An Lushan. After surrendering, Tian was made a military governor, but still proved to be unruly. In 775 he annexed the territories which had been under Xue Song's jurisdiction. His biographies are found in *Xin Tangshu*, 210.5923 and *Jiu Tangshu*, 141.3837.

55) Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant*, 91.



periodical and thematic category of *chuanqi* tales, I have analyzed how the *chuanqi* writers used the historical facts such as real figures, genuine dates, chronological details, geographical locations, and real events, etc. The reason why Tang *chuanqi* writers used historical facts in the formation of history or historical biography was simply because they tried to strengthen the authenticity and the realistic quality of the tales and they want their works to be recognized as historical documents. Sometimes the historical fact is used primarily to the specific end of socio-political commentary.<sup>56)</sup>

As a matter of fact, many Tang and later writers of tales adhered rigidly to the biographical style with no concession to the demands of narrative art, even though some writers had abandoned the pretence of writing history.<sup>57)</sup> Robert J. Cutter points out: "Fact plays a role in even the most imaginative kinds of fiction, so it is to be expected that it would be still more important in a pseudo-biographical framework."<sup>58)</sup>

Although some writers had particular talent in history like Shen Jiji and Chen Hong, the historical facts in their works are sometimes incorrect. It means that fact in fiction like *chuanqi* tales does not always necessarily tally with mundane reality. Y. W. Ma points out that "the fantasy world in T'ang tales, in spite of all its factual claims, is only a product of the imagination patterned after its own laws of reality. It offers the reader the satisfying experience of a

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56) Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall'," 507.

57) Chang, *Chinese Literature 3: Tales of the Supernatural*, 26.

58) Cutter, "History and 'The Old Man of the Eastern Wall'," 507.

carefully wrought mythological perception of wish-fulfillment and redeemed settlement."<sup>59)</sup> From this point of view, one may say that all of the historical facts must be good medium for *chuanqi* writers to construct an "autonomous reality."<sup>60)</sup>

In general, *chuanqi* carried on and developed the tradition of historiographical *shizhuan* literature's realism, and also drew romanticism from the myths and *zhiguai*. Thus the realism and the romanticism of Tang *chuanqi* had been offered to the later stories and drama as good reference.

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59) Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 180.

60) The term "autonomous reality" is cited from Y. W. Ma, "Fact and Fantasy in T'ang Tales," 169. "The fantasy brought about by this shift in plot allows the story writer to "subcreate" a "secondary world" with its own set of governing laws different from that of the "primary world," - the human world. This secondary world is not necessarily an "unreal" one; through an artistic blending of fact and fantasy, it assumes the form of what we can call an "autonomous reality."

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### <한글초록>

唐傳奇는 中國文學史上 작가가 意圖의으로 虛構의 내용을 小說로서 創作하기 시작한 최초의 문학장르이다. 이런 傳奇 혹은 傳奇 小說은 그 形式이나 登場人物의 描寫 등에 있어서 史記, 左傳, 戰國策 등과 같은 史傳文學 (historiographical literature)의 영향을 받았다. 일반적으로 歷史 혹은 列傳과 같은 歷史的 傳記(historical

biography)는 그 形式에서 登場人物의 姓名과 字, 出身地, 및 先祖 등을 먼저 紹介한다. 그 다음에 人物의 科擧及第를 시작으로 官僚 經歷, 隱退, 死亡, 및 諡號 등의 순서로 나열된다. 바로 傳記의 이러한 形式이 六朝의 志怪는 물론이고 唐代의 傳奇에까지 영향을 미쳤던 것이다. 그 이유는 傳奇作家들이 歷史的 事實인 實存人物, 實在事件, 정확한 날짜와 地理的 位置 등을 이야기 속에 使用함으로써 虛構의인 小說을 事實感和 信賴性を 強調함으로써 史實的 構造 속에서 虛構가 아닌 진짜 事實인 것으로 꾸미고자 했기 때문이다. 다른 한편으로는 社會 政治的 倫理의 목적으로 歷史에서 列傳이 자리를 차지하고 있는 것처럼, 傳奇 역시 現實에 대한 敎訓的 目的으로 創作되기도 하였다.

本稿에서는 이러한 唐 傳奇가 形式(formation)에 있어서 歷史的 傳記를 어떻게 模倣하고 있는지를 먼저 살핀 후, 唐代의 時代的 背景과 時代順을 우선하여, 편리상 이야기의 內容別로 神怪 (supernatural story)·愛情(love story)·歷史(historical story)·豪俠 (knight-errant story) 등 4가지로 나누어 그에 代表되는 作品들을 예로 들면서 登場人物, 事件, 날짜, 실제 地名 등의 歷史的 事實 (historical fact) 여부를 파악하고 또한 이를 어떻게 使用하고 描寫하였는지를 考察하였다. 간혹 이야기 속의 歷史的 事實이 史實과 부합되지 않는 점이 발견되기도 하는데, 이는 傳奇라는 虛構的 틀에서 그 내용이 반드시 實在 事實과 일치해야할 필요가 없기 때문이다. 사실, 傳奇는 일종의 似而非 傳記인 까닭에 이야기 속에서 인용되는 歷史的 事實은 虛構 속에서 假想의 現實性を 構築하는 役割을 하여 作家의 意圖를 반영하기만 하면 충분하기 때문이기도 하다. 이를 통해, 唐 傳奇는 中國 史傳文學의 寫實主義 전통을 계승 발전시키고, 후세의 문학에도 영향을 미친 것으로 보인다.

**Key words** : chuanqi history formation fact biography

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