

## Abstract of Doctoral Thesis

### **Title: The Research of *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty ——Base on the Relationship among Fiction, Detail Description and the Group of Similar Novels**

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This thesis, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Program of Literature Studies in the Ritsumeikan University, consists of two selected published articles and one presentation.

The first chapter, "The Group of Similar Novels in *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty—A Reflection on Fiction Based on Detail Description", was published on the *Gakurin* No.71(2020). Recent previous research revealed that most *Chuanqi* Novels were created at banquets. In order to enhance the atmosphere of the banquet and show their literature talent, the authors of *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty usually paid attention to the literary quality of their tales instead of the truthfulness. Therefore, detail descriptions were used in *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty extensively. These detail descriptions are not always truth. Sometimes, it was necessary to tell a strange experience in the banquet, and if attendees who did not have a strange experience would usually share tales that they had heard from other places and changed some details such as time, place, and characters' name to make the tales their own. When the details were changed, the nature of the tales changed from truth to fiction. The original tale and these modified tales are recorded, so there are many groups of similar novels in the *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty. In this chapter, the situation of fiction based on detail description by different authors in the *Zhangliergong* group of similar novels is analyzed, as an example. First, by analyzing the change between two stories, we can clarify the development of the story of this group. Then, changes in each work indicate different purposes of their authors. So, the fact that authors created fictions consciously can be inferred. Finally, the discussion at the end of *Guxuanji*, which is a work belongs into the *Lieshichi* group of similar novels, by its recorder, shows that the authors of *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty were already aware that their narratives were fictional.

The second chapter, "A Creative Method of *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty, Combining Elements from Former Works, with an Analysis of *Lingyingzhuan*", was published on the *Gakurin* No.73(2021). After the Anshi Rebellion, as the movement of people became more frequent, tales also spread widely throughout the country. Therefore, when an author borrowed a story from one of the former works, the listeners were immediately aware that what was being told was fictional, which makes using the method

of "the group of similar novels" to create tales became out of vogue. Instead, novels were created by the novel method of combining elements from several former works. This chapter uses *Lingyingzhuan* as an example to analyze the use of elements borrowed from former works in this novel, to specifically explain the *Chuanqi* Novel creating method which emerged in the late Tang Dynasty, by combining elements from former works.

The third chapter, "The Functions of Poems in Novels of the Tang Dynasty", was presented orally at Chinese Literature Association on the July 31st, 2022. This chapter examines the development of poems in *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty, which can be regarded as detail description. The poems are not so common in the *Zhiguai* Novels of the Six Dynasties, but they appear more frequently in *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty. This chapter studies the function of poems in novels, not only in the *Chuanqi* Novels, but also in all novels of the Tang Dynasty. The poems performed a variety of functions in Tang Dynasty novels. These poems can be divided into five types according to the degree of intervention in the story of the novel. They are: poems that do not intervene in the story at all, poems that are just one part of the plot of the story, poems that affect the plot before and after this poem, poems that play an important role in the story, and poems that are the subject of the story. With the passage of the period, the functions of poems in novels became more complex and the degree of intervention in the story became deeper. In the late Tang Dynasty, novels that perfectly integrated poems and story appeared, such as *Zhengdelinzhuan*.

Although it is widely accepted by scholars that Tang Dynasty novels were the first true novels in China, there has been little research on why the authors of Tang Dynasty novels began to create fictions, and how their conscious fictions were manifested in their novels. This thesis discusses the reasons why the authors of the *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty began to consciously create fictions and how their fictions are embodied in their novels, focusing on the changes in the detail descriptions in the groups of similar novels, using non-original novels that have not received much attention in the previous research. Basically, the three elements of fiction, detail description, and the group of similar novels are connected, and therefore, by analyzing the group of similar novels, which is one of the creative methods used in *Chuanqi* Novels of the Tang Dynasty, we can show the phenomenon that conscious fiction emerged from detail description.