

On the Character Image of Lu Xun 's *Li Shui Da Yu* Starts Here: Centered on the hero 's fall and its practical significance

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Abstract: Based on the myths and legends of Dayu 's flood control, Lu Xun created a new image of Dayu in a mixed way of ancient and modern times, skillfully criticized and satirized the cultural environment at that time, and praised the ' Chinese backbone ' hero. At the same time, as a ' Chinese backbone ' hero, he was finally assimilated by the common people and fell into degeneration. Through a comprehensive analysis and deconstruction of the image of Dayu, this paper reveals its practical significance, understands the humanistic feelings contained in the works, and encourages the current actions in China.

Keywords: Lu Xun; the image of Dayu; chinese backbone; heroes sink; practical significance.

1. Introduction

Lu Xun 's *Li Shui* was written in November 1935 and included in the *New Stories* in January 1936. In recent years, the focus of scholars ' research has mainly focused on the shaping of heroes and the narrative techniques of novels. The predecessors basically take the uniqueness of the work itself as the starting point, and there are few studies on the ideological significance of the work. Most of the protagonists in Lu Xun 's *New Stories* have the name of ' heroes, ' but because of the tragedy of reality and the times, there is no heroic reality. Although the protagonist Yu in *Li Shui* has the spirit of hard work, he eventually falls into flattery and degradation in the compliments of the people. *Li Shui* was created at the time of the deepening crisis of China, which reflects Lu Xun 's active exploration of the destiny of the nation and has a strong practical significance. Since ancient times, the transformation of the times has been accompanied by the emergence of heroes. Heroes are the necessary products of each era and the driving force for the continuous development and progress of human society. Based on the whole article, this article deeply analyzes the significance of the hero Dayu given by the author in the context of the time, and uses this to enlighten the present and fully explore its practical significance.

2. Organization of the Text

2.1. Praise the backbone of China

Dayu is a historical figure, not only oral legends, but also literature records, and has been confirmed by archaeological achievements. Because the discourse systems of these three historical narratives confirm each other, the objective existence of Dayu as an ancient historical figure of the Chinese nation is beyond doubt. With the evolution of history, Dayu culture has become an important spiritual and cultural prototype of the Chinese nation. Sinking in the deep layer of national subject consciousness and psychology, it has become the eternal inner spirit of the Chinese nation and has been continuously inherited and developed. Lu Xun is the ' national backbone ' of modern China. He admired Dayu very much. Dayu had a profound impact on him, which made him

consciously spread Dayu culture. Since his youth, he has admired Yu, a hero of water control in ancient times. He has always hoped that the people in his hometown will ' restore the style of Dayu 's hard work '. He expressed his heartfelt admiration for Yu in the ' preface ' of his compilation of *Kuaiji County Story Collection*. In his book *A Textual Research on the Stones of Yu Temple in Kuaiji*, he made a careful textual research on the origin of the stone of Yu Temple, the age of the engraved stone and the textual research of later generations. In his later discussion on how to write a history of children 's education methods, he also thought : ' then its merits should not be under Yu '. He wrote the novel *Li Shui*, which described Yu as ' the backbone of China '. As Lu Xun said : ' Since ancient times, we have had people who have worked hard, people who have worked hard, people who have served the people, people who have given up their lives and sought the Fa,... Although it is equivalent to the so-called ' official history ' for the writers of emperors and generals, they often cannot hide their glory, which is the backbone of China. ' The myths and legends of Dayu 's water control have been circulated among the Chinese people since ancient times. There are relevant records in the *Shangshu*, *Mencius*, and the most widely circulated is the *Shanhaijing*: ' The flood is huge, and the Gun steals the emperor 's soil to block the flood, and does not wait for the emperor 's command. Emperor Zhu Rong killed Gun in Yu Yujiao. Gun resurrected Yu, and the emperor ordered Yu to settle in Kyushu. ' Sima Qian 's *Historical Records* · *Xia Benji* also recorded the story of Da Yu 's flood control : ' Stayed outside for 13 years, and dared not enter the house. ' In the long-term spread, most of the myths and legends about him were ' historical ' and added magical colors. However, it is undeniable that the legendary Da Yu has the great spirit of fearing hardships and benefiting the people. In Lu Xun 's *Li Shui* article, Da Yu was injected with the spirit of the people 's hero. Dayu is the backbone of the Chinese nation and the soul of the spirit. Since ancient times, he has become an important literary prototype of Chinese literature. Lu Xun drew materials from historical documents, wrote the heroic deeds of Dayu 's flood control in the style of official history, shaped the lofty image of Dayu, and satirized and criticized the real life. It not only shows the influence of Dayu 's cultural prototype on Lu Xun 's novel

creation, but also shows Lu Xun's national historical identity and respect for Dayu, and promotes and disseminates the spirit of Dayu.

Lu Xun is a writer with profound literary accomplishment, who has read classics and is familiar with Chinese traditional classical culture. He picked up ancient legends and so on, 'just take a little reason, random point dye', created a collection of historical novels *New Stories*, in which *Li Shui* is a prominent one. Lu Xun's *Li Shui* is a novel with profound social significance and artistic value. By satirizing and criticizing the autocratic rulers, it reveals the ugly face of society and the weakness of human nature at that time. Lu Xun skillfully used the elements of myths and legends in his novels, combining the image of Dayu's flood control with the social phenomena in reality, creating a unique literary world. *Li Shui* also reflects Lu Xun's attention to the social water control technology and social livelihood at that time. By describing the story of Dayu's flood control, he metaphorized the problems existing in the society at that time, and expressed his expectations for social reform and progress through imaginative brushwork. With a very high enthusiasm, he portrayed many roles such as scholars, professors, inspectors, water conservancy bureau officials on the cultural mountain, formed a grotesque world mixed with ancient and modern times, and outlined a huge historical picture. At that time, Mao Dun once commented on the *New stories* and thought that its 'heart' was 'to stimulate the hatred and love of modern people by using the body of ancient things,' but he also thought that like Lu Xun, 'the ancient and modern are mixed together. Although we can understand and chant, we can't learn much.' In *Li Shui*, Dayu did not ink much and appeared late, but Dayu placed Lu Xun's sincere respect and praise. Lu Xun placed Dayu in the harsh natural environment of 'Tang Tang Flood Fang Cui, Hao Hao Huai Shan Xiang Ling' and the dark political situation of his father Gun's ineffective nine years of water control and officials' greed for pleasure. The glorious image of Dayu's Chinese backbone was portrayed from three aspects. One is to work hard, desperately hard: 'dark face, old clothes, 'Check the situation of the mountain, the views of the people, 'Dayu's wind and rain, leading the soldiers, leading the officials to check the water situation, always fighting in the water control line, is the real hero for the people to do practical things; the second is to ask for the people's life and sacrifice themselves for the law: Dayu was keen to innovate, through in-depth field investigation, summed up the experience of water control, resolutely overthrew his father's 'annihilation method', acted decisively, did not fear, and insisted on adopting the new water control method of 'guidance'. The third is public and forgetful: Dayu 'went through his own door in order to control the water, and did not come in to see it', 'gave birth to Aqi, nor did he take him as a son to see', in order to save the people in the disaster, he ignored the family and threw himself into the great cause of water control.

In shaping the image of Yu, Lu Xun often uses contrast techniques. Yu is 'a big man like a beggar, with a dark face and worn clothes', and is 'unmoved, unspoken, unsmiling, like cast iron'. It symbolizes the glorious image of China's backbone, and is in stark contrast to the officials who are 'white-bearded, flower-bearded, small-white-faced, fat and sweaty, fat and not sweaty'. It fully reflects their corruption and despicable mental outlook of guiding the people and bowing to their superiors. In sharp contrast to Dayu's hard-working spirit and public and selfless character, he is a scholar

and professor on the cultural mountain in the work. When the flood is huge and the people are killed, Dayu leads his entourage, including Xinru, to control the flood. At the same time, a group of knowledge 'celebrities' are sitting on the cultural mountain surrounded by waves, eating the foreign bread sent by the Qibo State Flying Car once a month, wandering leisurely. After eating full stomach, he boasts, ignoring the suffering of the people, and has no sense of responsibility. At the beginning of the novel, the situation that the flood disaster was serious and the people were deeply affected was exaggerated by 'Tang Tang Hongshui Fangcai, Hao Hao Huaishan Xiangling' in *Shangshu · Yaodian*. Then it directly cut into the reality and described the ugliness of scholars gathered on 'Cultural Mountain.' It shows the harsh environment faced by Dayu: 'However, among them, they are mostly against Yu, or simply do not believe that there is this Yu in the world. The scholar who took the stick said that 'Yu to control the water must not be successful', and did not believe that he could control the water. The inspection commissioners sent by Dayu not only hounded down, but also stood high above them, and did not conduct in-depth investigations. They only listened to the false reports of the people, searched and scraped, and returned to the bureau. After a feast, wine and meat smoked the sky, tasted the people's fat and cream, and appreciated the submissions on the wooden box. Obviously, this is a sharp irony of the Kuomintang's disregard for the national crisis, corruption in politics, and a profound criticism of the decadent folk customs it caused. Lu Xun's description of these ugly acts reflects the sublime and greatness of Dayu. Yu, who appeared in Lu Xun's pen, led a group of colleagues in the cause of justice. In order to save the world and sacrifice everything of his own, he worked hard and strenuously. This glorious image, which symbolizes the backbone of our nation, is a huge impact on the old world. Compared with those scholars who are bored and have a bad stomach, officials who do nothing and do not seek change, only doers can save China; only those doers who are willing to enter the people, visit the mountains and rivers, and listen to the voice of the people are the real national backbone. Because he is willing to understand the Chinese people with his heart, dare to use action to solve the problems for the people, and truly stand with the people. The image of Dayu in Lu Xun's works is not only loyal to the basic style of historical figures, but also abandons the absurd superstition of the ancients attached to the characters. It is a hero and leader who is down-to-earth for the benefit of the people and is the backbone of China, not the omnipotent god above the people.

2.2. Lament the fall of heroes

The end of *Li Shui* reads: 'But fortunately, since Yu Ye's return to Beijing, his attitude has also changed a little: eating and drinking are not exquisite, but it is generous to do sacrifices and rituals; clothes are very casual, but the court and the guests to wear, is to be beautiful,' has always been, the academic community has been controversial. One view is that the hero has fallen into a tragedy. 'Lu Xun used this image to summarize the tragic fate of many 'Chinese backbones' in Chinese history, which were surrounded and killed and lost their heroic glory, and discussed the reasons why China always took the old road. 'Dayu is so, his heroic heart was slowly shaken by others, and finally became useless. This is the sadness between the current situation and the hero. 'Another view is that the change of Dayu's behavior and attitude is the adaptation to the real world, not the

degeneration. ' At this time, Dayu has followed the social atmosphere, but we can 't just say that he has become extravagant and luxurious, because as one of the social groups, it is unrealistic to be out of touch with the society forever, let alone the ' market '.The change of Dayu 's living habits reflects his adaptability as a human being. ' But I think that although Yu 's status has changed after the success of water control, he still ' eats and drinks without being fastidious ' and ' clothes are very casual '. It shows that he still maintains the hard and simple nature in the new situation. As for ' to do sacrifices and rituals, it is lavish ', ' the dress of the court and the visitor is to be beautiful ' is a symbol of politeness, not something corrupt. ' Dayu in Lu Xun 's works is praised as a hero. He took over his father 's flood control in the face of the world 's crisis and relieved the country and the people. He proved his determination and courage with practical actions, which is admirable. Despite being slandered, he never compromised on the conservative forces, and firmly said : ' Some people say that I am seeking fame and profit, that is. What I want to say is that I checked the situation in Shanze, consulted the people 's opinions, and deeply realized the reality and made decisions. In any case, I must ' guide '. It was precisely because Dayu had such a valuable spirit of selfless dedication, pragmatism, reform and struggle that he finally led the people to successfully ' dredge the nine rivers ' and triumphantly returned to Beijing to win the cheers of the people. Lu Xun created a heroic image of the people, which is beyond doubt, and the behavior of Dayu in the later period has undergone tremendous changes. Unlike the previous arduous and simple, it may be that Dayu had to make changes in order to adapt to the environment of political officialdom, but this does not become an excuse for him to lose himself and indulge in other people 's compliments. The real hero is a person who always adheres to his inner beliefs, so I prefer that Dayu finally fades the hero 's brilliance and sinks. The fall of Dayu is not only a personal tragedy, but also a tragedy of the times. This tragedy is the reason why Chinese society continues to take the old road.

'Taiping to even a hundred beasts will dance, Fenghuang also fly to make a lively ', Dayu successful water control, the world peace, everywhere is a thriving scene, the reality and the past has undergone earth-shaking changes. Emperor Shun called the people to learn Yu 's behavior. After Yu had a reputation and status, he became vain and lost the goal of struggle. He did not eat and drink well, and did sacrifices and rituals. It was also very generous. The dress should be beautiful, which is in stark contrast to the original Chinese hero who was down-to-earth and running for water control. The hero fell into the fall. He did not find a feasible way in reality. He lost his original ideals and beliefs. In the political officialdom where hypocritical praise and extravagance prevailed around him, he lost himself. It can be imagined that in the end, Dayu would degenerate into a bureaucratic politician who did nothing.

Lu Xun wrote *Li Shui* in November 1935. At that time, the national political situation was dark, the people 's livelihood was depressed, the Japanese army stepped up its aggression, China was facing a critical situation of internal and external troubles, while the people were ignorant, and the society was filled with pessimism. The end of *Li Shui* also suggests that the people are still ignorant, the officials still have nothing to do, and Da Yu is also ' unprotected in the evening ', which are inseparable from the background of Lu Xun 's writing *Li Shui* at that time. ' For Lu Xun, the essence of tragedy is not the

pain and death of the protagonist, but a person 's absurd and isolated consciousness, he can not break with the surrounding society ', the hero falls into the end, between the ideal and the reality, Da Yu chose the reality, which is clearly a close-up of the revolutionaries who participated in the revolution and transformed the society at that time and were helpless and hopeless. Attaching importance to sacrifice and paying attention to appearance is actually a symbol of showing politeness to others. It should go beyond luxury and corruption without restriction. As far as possible, what kind of status is allowed, and what kind of living treatment is enjoyed. These seem to be the established things in the social consensus. Individuals in this position do not have the ability to completely subvert. This controversial conclusion also reflects Lu Xun 's anxiety about the future and destiny of the hero, and has a forward-thinking direction and concern for the society at that time. Mr. Lu Xun once said : ' Tragedy is the destruction of valuable things in life to people to see, ' Dayu was not defeated by the flood he fought for many years, but the despicable side of human nature, the so-called hero, but also the cruel reality, Lu Xun used the most ancient ' reality ' to reflect the saints in the history of the story, reflecting only the tragic color of almost boring heroism, this tragedy pushed human society to a higher level of the pioneer 's tragedy.

2.3. Praise the fighting spirit of reality

Lu Xun 's early works reveal his criticism and satire of the passion of the real society as a Chinese awakening and pioneer. The *New Stories* is Lu Xun 's profound reflection on the meaning of life based on reality. It was created in Lu Xun 's later years. At this time, Lu Xun was in a difficult and sick situation. ' Lu Xun had an unavoidable ' twilight ' consciousness in his helplessness and sadness, which inevitably brought a tragic color to the novel. Lu Xun wrote in the preface of the *New stories* that ' I am not thin 'vulgar ', but also willing to 'vulgar ' ; for historical novels, it is thought that there must be evidence in the literature, even if someone sneers as ' teaching novels ', it is actually difficult to organize the work. As for only a little reason, random point dye, paved into a piece, there is no need for what kind of wrist ', Lu Xun from the myth of ' take a little reason, random point dye ', relying on the careless and accidental leisure pen, in fact, ' by the body of the ancient things to stimulate the modern people should hate and love '. Starting from the purpose of historical reflection and allegorizing reality, Lu Xun created a Chinese backbone image of a water control hero Dayu in *Li Shui*. The image of Dayu is Lu Xun 's belief in inspiring the awakening and struggle of the people by praising ancient heroes. The scholars, professors, inspectors, water conservancy bureau officials and other figures on the cultural mountain in the novel are alive and well, and finally the hero is assimilated by the philistines and is mixed with the old forces. It also reflects the dangerous situation of China in the 1930 s, the ignorance and pity of the people and the corruption of the national government.

Li Shui was created under specific historical conditions. It was written in 1935. Two years ago, in 1933, the Yellow River burst more than 50 places, inundated more than 60 counties such as Hebei, Shandong and Henan, and affected more than 3 million people. Floods seriously threaten the lives of the majority of the people. In the face of the disaster, the Kuomintang reactionaries turned a blind eye, regardless of the lives of the people, in the name of ' inspection ' and ' trafficking ', they profited from the disaster and brutally

plundered the people's grease. The tragic situation of Shunye's people struggling in the 'flood' was actually the epitome of the miserable life of the broad masses of working people in the Kuomintang-ruled areas at that time. In the article, after three tours of wine, the officials talked about some scenery along the way of water towns. The reeds are like snow, the mud is like gold, the eel is plump, and the moss is slippery..... 'and so on' actually refers to the reality of the Kuomintang in the name of 'inspection', 'trafficking' to scrape the people's grease cream. Lu Xun witnessed the Kuomintang reactionaries' cruelty to the people, felt great indignation, and felt infinite sympathy for the painful life of the people in the disaster area. With the pen as a weapon, he sprinkles his full blood between the pen and ink, and creates a short story *Li Shui* with a very realistic fighting spirit. In 1931, Japan launched the Mukden Incident, and the Kuomintang government adopted a negative non-resistance policy, resulting in the three northeastern provinces falling into the hands of the Japanese. In January 1932, the insatiable Japanese invaded Shanghai again. In March of the same year, they established a puppet 'Manchukuo' in the three northeastern provinces and supported the puppet emperor Puyi to come to power. After gaining a firm foothold in the three northeastern provinces, the Japanese began to play the abacus of North China again. From January to May 1933, the Japanese army successively occupied Jehol, Chahar provinces and most of the northern part of Hebei Province. During this period, although a group of patriotic anti-Japanese generals rose up to resist and gave a great blow to the Japanese army; however, the Kuomintang government signed the *Tanggu Agreement* with Japan on May 31 to restrict the withdrawal of Chinese troops under the consideration of 'fighting against foreign aggression.' The agreement actually recognized the Great Wall as the boundary between China under the rule of the Kuomintang and the Manchukuo supported by Japan. But even so, Japan has continued to make small moves. In May 1934, the Japanese army built airports in Nankai, Tianjin and Yilan County, Jilin Province, and injured more than 20,000 civilians with aircraft. In November 1935, they also instigated the traitors to set up the 'Jidong Defense Communist Autonomy Committee', which induced many counties in Jidong to break away from the jurisdiction of the Chinese government and become occupied areas.

It is self-evident that the *New Stories* borrows the ancient satire, the human world, the ideological struggle and other phenomena in the real social and cultural life, as the source of the material into the novel. In *Li Shui*, Yu, as a doer, was repeatedly discriminated and ridiculed. After his success, people's praise of him 'being compatible with the public' not only isolated him by singing praises, but also eclipsed Dayu's simple spirit and behavior. Clothing is very casual, but when the up and worship wear, is beautiful. This is really a close-up of the people who participated in the revolution and transformed the society at that time and finally became helpless in the times. In the gallery of the negative image of *Li Shui*, compared with the serviles and the philistines, Lu Xun's most disgusted is the 'nihilistic party' who plays with the literati and officials as the main body. They are drowsy, stubborn, self-righteous, deceiving, clever, upside down, right and wrong, pedantic, obscene, shameless, empty and boring, which is extremely ridiculous. They can actually see the 'water landscape' of reeds like snow, mud like gold, rice field eel plump and mossy slippery in the flood. They actually use the people to be good at taking pains and shirking

responsibilities and ignoring the death and life of 'fools'. They adhere to the feudal traditional culture and block the real Chinese cultural blood. They are the waste of 'full of food all day long and have no intention' and the stumbling block hindering social development and progress. *Li Shui* is a true reflection of the real life under the specific historical background at that time. When satirizing the ugly social phenomenon, it also guides people to pay attention to the chronic diseases of Chinese society at that time. Since the Opium War, Chinese society has fallen into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Under the severe situation of internal and external troubles, the problems of Chinese society have come one after another and intensified. Lu Xun's 'modern people's soberness, the rationality of thinkers, the keenness of revolutionaries, and the passion of writers, to systematically, meticulously and continuously 'study' the Chinese people and carry out unprecedented and thorough national introspection, *Li Shui* is full of realistic fighting atmosphere. As far as the image of Dayu is concerned, on the one hand, Lu Xun shapes the heroic image of Dayu, promotes the lofty spirit of Dayu, and inspires the people to face the real disaster. Absorbing the power of progress from the heroes shows Lu Xun's strong national pride and self-confidence, which encourages the Chinese people's national awakening and struggle; on the other hand, Dayu's 'late holidays are not guaranteed' also makes us reflect on the bad habits of heroes. This is the reason why Chinese people continue to follow the old path, and it is also the tragedy of Chinese society and Chinese people at that time. The history of the ancient times was created by countless characters like Dayu. Dayu was a people who came out of the tens of millions of people who worked hard to control the water. He and the people were not antagonistic, but mutually transformed. The relationship is both a knowledge person and a laborer, both a saint and a civilian, both a hero and a mortal. 'There are thousands of willows in the spring breeze, and six hundred million Shenzhou do Shunyao'. In 1935, Lu Xun used *Li Shui* to provide a possible path for the future rebirth of the nation.

3. Conclusion

Lu Xun, with a mixture of ancient and modern writing, realized the historical figures, eulogized Dayu's heroic achievements, spread Dayu's great spirit, and criticized the national inferiority by Dayu's fall, pointing out the tragedy of Chinese society. With his sharp point of view, fighting enthusiasm and superb creative art, Lu Xun endowed *Li Shui* with profound ideological content and great historical significance, and inspired the people's courage to promote the progress of history. In the current China, in the face of many difficulties and crises, *Li Shui* also has its unique significance. Da Yu is desperate to devote himself to the cause of benefiting the people, which is worthy of our study. After gaining fame and wealth, Da Yu's sinking shows the inferiority of the hero, which is also worthy of our reflection and study.

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