

FIGHTING FOR PEACE OR GREED: UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF HEROISM AND RIGHTEOUS WAR JUSTIFICATION IN ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

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Abstract

“Fighting For Peace or Greed: Understanding the Concept of Heroism and Righteous War Justification in Romance of The Three Kingdoms” is an examination of the sensitive topic regarding war: its righteousness and how the leaders involved in it gained justification and admiration for waging it. It takes example the warfare waged during the three kingdoms period as depicted in Luo Guanzhong’s all-time classic novel *“Romance of The Three Kingdoms”*. Findings suggested that the process of defining “just war” is proven to be no simple task. It is a complicated theory as there are numerous reasons and causes as a result of war, especially in a turbulence time such as the three kingdoms period. Many considerations are to be taken whether a war is just or not. Before war is to be talked about at all, it is also studied how a leader in such turbulent times emerge and how they achieved their reputation and hero status amongst their peers. These elements are also related to traditional Chinese beliefs namely Confucianism and Taoism, both serves as the main moral guide for the characters in the Romance of The Three Kingdoms novel.

Keywords: *The Three Kingdoms, Righteousness, War, Heroism, Liu Bei*

INTRODUCTION

War, war as they say, never changed. Only weapons are new, yet it is not the weapons, but the men who handle them, who win victories and take the glories, no matter the age nor the place. Wars occur and recur, especially in cases when the decisions involved are made by careful and rational actors. Nations fight for a variety of causes. It’s been argued that a nation will go to war if the benefits exceed the disadvantages and only if there is a sense that no other mutually accepted solution exists. Some have stated that war or conflicts are primarily waged for economic, religious, and political reasons. Some others wage war for ideological reasons.

According to Eagleton (1948), war is a means of reaching an end, a weapon that can be employed for good or bad. Some of the goals for which war has been utilized have been approved by humanity as worthwhile goals: indeed, war serves important functions in any human society. It has been used to settle disputes, uphold rights, and redress wrongs: all of which are unquestionably necessary roles... Without exaggeration, no more dumb, harsh, wasteful, or unfair method for such aims could have been envisaged, but this does not change the situation. Kallen (1939) states, "If war may be described as an armed confrontation between two or more sovereign institutions deploying organized military forces in the pursuit of definite purposes, the significant term in the definition is 'organized.'" He goes on to say that this structure of

conflicting armed forces extends behind the combat lines and, in modern warfare, tends to encompass all civilian enterprises, such as industrial, productive, and commercial, as well as social interests and individual attitudes. A struggle can be termed a war if the parties are sovereign political units (tribes, fiefs, empires, nation-States, etc.). A rebellion against a sovereign authority may take on the characteristics of a war, albeit an internal one, if the rebellious group is successful in constructing a system for exercising the sovereign power it claims. However, identifying the fighting parties as both sovereign and political involves some uncertainty. Each of those definitions can be found in the wars and the battles that occurred and recurred in the period of The Three Kingdoms in Imperial China. (222-280 AD)

The Three Kingdoms period in the history of China is one of the most renowned chapters of our time. The popularity of this turbulence period in the history of China was first brought to light by Chinese classic writer Luo Guanzhong (羅貫中) in the 14th century when he wrote the all-time classic Chinese novel “Romance of The Three Kingdoms”. This novel is amongst the longest ever written, its English translation by C.H. Brewitt Taylor consists of more than 1500 pages with 120 chapters. Each group of chapters, each battle, each arc, were so complex that they would make a solid book on each of their own. Hence, the novel is regarded as an all-time classic in the history of Chinese literature. This novel is a Chinese historical drama with a touch of fiction and legend. Luo Guanzhong keeps track of history to depict the political and social events of the time. Like many world epics, Romance of The Three Kingdoms take on division and unification, never-ending war, betrayals, and loyalty as its core theme. It portrays Imperial China in (Han Dynasty – Jin Dynasty), from the tyrant of Dong Zhuo, the division of the land into three kingdoms, and finally its end when the dawn of the Jin Dynasty emerges. While readers should not take every detail in this novel as the truth, they can learn the historical themes and the flow presented by Luo Guanzhong. (Choi, 2021) “*Domains under heaven, after a long period of division, tends to unite; after a long period of union, tends to divide.*” Is the opening line of the novel. It is quite the striking opening line as it captures the entirety of the +1500 pages of this novel. “Domains under heaven” refers to the kingdoms in the book. Ancient Chinese believed that the highest authority in an empire requires the “Mandate of Heaven” to ensure its legitimacy, therefore an emperor is deemed as “The son of heaven”, the true ruler of the lands. The Chinese title, *San Guo Yan Yi* (三国演义) can also be translated to “Three Kingdoms Performing Yi”. *Yi* (義) means "righteousness" or "obligation" in English. Honor, compassion, loyalty, sacrifice, and brotherhood are all part of the notion.

As the title suggests, this research intends to study how morality is seen in war in the Three Kingdoms period and how it is deemed righteous at the time through the eyes of Confucian, Daoism, and Legalism criticism all in their own respective philosophical studies as the most prominent views that can be seen from the characters in the story. This research also employs the theory of Heroism, widely used in literature to study the *Yi* in the story of Romance of The Three Kingdoms. The definition of heroism simply varies, as it is tricky to identify and settle on a mutually acceptable operational definition of heroism has proven difficult, as some researchers insist that heroes incur no real benefits from heroic action (actually often suffering for these actions), while others argue that it is difficult to conceive of any action that does not

offer some form of reward. (Franco et al., 2016) Heroism and heroic stories can be found in the earliest written works of Western civilization, including Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Achilles, the most revered Greek hero, exemplifies how the perfect battlefield legend challenges his commanders while simultaneously highlighting the sadness of a young man who recognized his own mortality and could personally sympathize with his foes. The Platonic dialogues, through Socrates, suggest that anyone seeking to foster military virtue in the ideal soldiers of a city would need a different view of the ideal of heroism than what was found in Homeric times; through Socrates, the Platonic dialogues suggest that anyone seeking to foster military virtue in the ideal soldiers of a city would need a different view of the ideal of heroism than what was found in Homeric times. (Bloom, 1991)

This paper will construct its own concept of heroism seen through the characters in the story (namely generals and warlord), and the way the people of the Han dynasty and the three-kingdom era in the story reflects to them. Considering the book to have over 1000 characters, the research narrows down the numbers to only some of the most notable and important characters in the book. Although it is a historical novel, the book places its protagonist emphasis on Liu Bei and the entire Shu Han kingdom in general. Thus, many war generals such as Guan Yunchang or Zhao Zilong is regarded by the people as “heroes”, some even regarded Guan Yu as their god, this belief even holds up to this day. The antagonist of the novel would initially be Dong Zhuo as the most obvious one, being a tyrannical corrupt chancellor that he is. But then this emphasis eventually shifts towards Cao Cao and the Wei kingdom in general after they abdicated the last emperor of Han. At this point, each three kingdoms formed their own concept of heroism, claiming that they received the “mandate of heaven” to legitimate their act. A Shu Han general for the people of Shu is hero, for the two others, a villain and vice versa. From this then the question would expand to the *Yi* (義) or righteousness of the war as a result of their different concept of heroism. The people of this era developed different concept of heroism that is achieved through winning battles and serving the people, however, it differs because each kingdom are enemies to one another, and the righteousness of those concept war itself is questionable.

METHODOLOGY

This research is concerned with understanding the concept of heroism and its righteousness. It hopes to analyze how the concept of heroism is developed particularly in the late Han dynasty and during the three kingdoms period. This section of the study then explains the methodology employed to achieve that goal. The novel is a complex and long one so the right method and approach is required, otherwise it would be unreadable. So, in order to keep the information light and easily receivable, the following is to be done.

Data Collection

This research employs qualitative descriptive study. In the novel's enormous entirety, some characters may be significant at the start of the story, while others may become significant until later in the novel, or even in the last chapters. The text should be examined in sections to acquire a better idea of the characters' development. The reader would be able to follow the

characters more easily and see how they changed during the novel. Important battles and/or wars will be selected and analyzed. As for the characters, out of all the +1000, the numbers would be narrowed down according to their significant appearance in each part. The main characters to be analyzed are the main three leaders of the three kingdoms, which are Liu Bei of Shu-Han, Cao Cao of Cao-Wei, and Sun Quan of Sun-Wu. The data collected are in form of dialogues and narration quoted straightly from the book.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Defining The Meaning: Righteousness in the Concept of Yi (義) in Confucianism and China.

Righteousness, which is etymologically related to "to fit" (yi), can be defined as "what is proper to do" or "the quality of doing things adequately." In the first definition, appropriateness is an attribute of ethical behavior; in the second, it is a quality of the agent (the ability to judge and choose what is appropriate). These two elements are, of course, linked. A virtuous actor can decide how to act appropriately if they have a sense of what is acceptable. In Chinese culture, the word "righteousness" is derived from a compound word Yi (義) that looks like "man" and "sheep." It means that a man's exterior and internal qualities must be like sheep's tenderness, kindness, and good will because people admire sheep so much that they adopt "sheep" as one of the parts of new characters that represent positive things. Furthermore, prior to the sacrifice, sheep blood was used to symbolize one's righteousness. Yi denotes moral wisdom that extends beyond basic rule following to include a balanced knowledge of a circumstance and the "creative thoughts" required to apply virtues "without losing sight of the entire good." Yi embodies this totality ideal as well as the decision-making skill to apply a virtue correctly and suitably in a scenario." In practice, Yi is a "complex concept" that comprises the following: competence in creating behaviors that have moral fitness in a particular concrete scenario the wise recognition of such fitness the intrinsic satisfaction that comes from that recognition. Yi implies that one should always do what is proper and appropriate for the occasion, without fuss, and by truly holding on to the duty one has for others.

2. Constructing and Identifying the Idea of Hero and Heroism in The Characters in The Romance of The Three Kingdoms.

2.1 Cao Cao vs Liu Bei, a Tendency for People to Align Towards Idealism.

"Why do you malign him so bitterly? Everyone knows he is a descendant of one of the Han princes and so related to the House. He has condescended to take a lowly office and is respectful to all people. He has a reputation for benevolence. Everyone, young and old, cowherds and firewood cutters, all know him by name and know that he is the finest and noblest man in the world. If my son is in his service, then has he found a fitting master. You, under the name of a Han minister, are really nothing but a Han rebel. Contrary to all truths, you tell me Liu Bei is a rebel, whereby you try to induce me to make my son leave the light for darkness. Are you devoid of all sense of shame?"

-Lady Xun, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

Although it is a historical drama where it is built around actual historical events, Liu Bei is deemed as the main protagonist in the whole book. He has the potential to become a legitimate emperor someday because he is a truly moral man; but he faces the impossible fate of attempting to maintain this virtue (and thus legitimacy) in a harsh world that promotes deceit and violence. Liu Bei is the main leader of the kingdom of Shu-Han in the three kingdoms period, he gained his followers through ideas that are in the notions of the Yi (義). Liu Bei in the novel is described as trustworthy and kind to his people, and he is well-liked by them. He is well renowned as a nice and humanitarian lord, one who cares for his people and surrounds himself with brilliant advisers. He is a modest and merciful warrior who respects his dedicated followers. He is a talented politician and leader whose loving demeanor inspires powerful heroes to join his cause. Liu Bei fixes his gaze on his prize. He sees the Han dynasty disintegrating and falling apart, and as a Han scion, he wishes to rebuild it. He sees warlords consolidating control and wishes to depose them and restore the Han dynasty's rule. To that purpose, he fights in the name of the Han against the Turbans, Dong Zhuo, Cao Cao, and a few others. In comparison to his other warlords, particularly his adversaries, Liu Bei was compassionate. Cao Cao perpetrated repeated killings and looting, and Sun Quan regularly raided Jiangxia and committed massacres. To Liu Bei, his idea of benevolent and virtue is most important to win the heart of the people. Liu Bei's main mission is to preserve the state from annihilation, and in order to do so, he must be the type of leader that the troops will follow into battle and trust to minimize unnecessary carnage. This fighter understands the critical value of establishing a reciprocal bond with the people. To do so, he understands that a great leader must first capture the hearts of his followers before walking onto the battlefield. A great leader according to him must have the most important of the characteristics he claims are required to win battles to restore the balance. With this link to the universe, one will benefit from "heaven and earth" and model compassion, a trait that is strongly related to the other four factors: wisdom, credibility, courage, and strictness. Benevolence, the human aspect, distinguishes and characterizes Liu Bei and Cao Cao in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

While on the other side, Cao Cao, a charismatic leader whose acts constructed the image of a villain in the novel, but he does have his own idea of hero and benevolence. He lay the groundwork for the eventual state of Wei as Chancellor of the Han Dynasty. Cao Cao excelled in military and politics as a cunning guy. He was both admired and feared for his astuteness and fast reprisal, as well as his close relationship with many of his retainers. With his charisma, he was a leader with a distinct mindset and an eternal hero for his people. The Romance of the Three Kingdoms notoriously villainizes him as a hot-blooded, crafty, but occasionally befuddled schemer who sometimes survived his hardships solely on luck, thought to come from the heavens themselves standing there beside him.

“A dragon can assume any size, can rise in glory or hide from sight. Bulky, it generates clouds and evolves mist; attenuated, it can scarcely hide a mustard stalk or conceal a shadow. Mounting, it can soar to the empyrean; subsiding, it lurks in the uttermost depths of the ocean. This is the midspring season, and the dragon chooses this moment for its transformations like a person realizing his own desires and overrunning the world. The dragon among animals

compares with the hero among people. You, General, have traveled all lakes and rivers. You must know who are the heroes of the present day, and I wish you would say who they are."

-Cao Cao, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

Cao Cao described heroes as "dragons", a creature that is a symbol of glory. According to tradition, Dragons are descended from fish. If a fish is brave and skilled enough, it can transform into a dragon. According to the narrative, the fishes can prepare for the ultimate test at any point in their lives. And that exam begins with a long travel across rivers. The fish must swim upstream until they reach the Beginning of Water, or the beginning of existence. They are constantly threatened by predators and barriers such as rapid currents and waterfalls. When they encounter predators, they flee; when they encounter rapid currents, they swim faster; and when they encounter waterfalls, they jump. Of course, many fish fail the test. However, a fish that reaches the highest stream in the highest mountain will be able to convert into a dragon. A dragon is an extraordinary beast. It has high expectations and dreams, and it leads a fantastic life full of exciting activities. Dragons, despite their incredible talents, do not take anything for granted. They have lofty ambitions, and they must work hard to reach their goals. Dragons understand what happiness is, thus they provide mankind water and money. Dragons comprehend justice; therefore, they punish corrupt areas with drought and retribution. And because dragons crave triumph, they fight or court one another. Dragons are symbols of victory. Humans adore dragons not only for their majestic forms and remarkable talents, but also for their lofty dreams and persistent endeavors.

"In peace you are an able subject; in chaos you are a crafty hero!"

-Xu Shao to Cao Cao, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

In defining heroes and benevolence, Cao Cao and Liu Bei is two different side of a same coin. In chaos, Liu Bei believes the problem lies within the people, to him, it is more important to build or rebuild faith and principles in order to restore the order in the middle of the chaos, while at the same time, serving in the name of honor of the Han dynasty for benevolence and virtue while keeping loyalty, justice, and righteousness in the notion. This is a big part of the reason to why so many people believed and followed Liu Bei, hence making him the 'protagonist' of the story.

"Rather we let down the world than the world let us down!"

-Cao Cao, Romance of The Three Kingdom (Luo Guanzhong)

While at the other side, Cao Cao sees beyond the beauties of thing and lies his focus on creating an entirely new order to deal with chaos. Cao Cao was not afraid to show his ruthlessness and cunning persona and would not hesitate to use his resourcefulness to outwit his enemies. He is ready to do or sacrifice anything to get things done. Cao Cao and Liu Bei is the two examples of how people at the period choose who their heroes are. Cao Cao won his people by his ingenious ability to manipulate his power into great use, even when it means he does not abide to "benevolence and virtue" the way Liu Bei does. While Liu Bei won the people by winning their hearts through ideas that are in notion of *Yi* (義). The two is an example of Pragmatism vs

Idealism. Cao Cao takes a philosophical approach to evaluating theories or beliefs based on their practical application success. Liu Bei, on the other hand, is more of an idealist, a philosophical theory that says that reality is mentally produced or immaterial.

2.2 Heroism Research: A Review of Theories, Methods, Challenges, and Trends

The defining process of hero in the Romance of The Three Kingdoms novel is in line with the research conducted by Franco et al. (2016). Heroism is a broad category of behavior. A hero can be good or bad, and being a hero once does not make you a hero forever. Being admired is a distinguishing attribute of heroism. If someone admires another, chances are they consider them a hero to the admirer. Heroism sometimes is not an acquired trait; rather, it is innate from birth. This is the case with Romance of The Three Kingdoms, especially with the existence of characters like Lu Bu, a general serving under the tyrant Dong Zhuo.

"I am a bold hero,"

-Lu Bu, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

Lu Bu is considered the most powerful general according to the novel, he has won many battles, thus killing many in the process. His impressive feats in battle made him the hero among men, feared by many in the three kingdoms period. Heroes are defined as "those who faced the fact of their mortality, who accepted considerable risks and/or conquered major difficulties, and who did so in the service of a principle," according to Kohen (2013). Someone who acts in accordance with Kohen's concept may be declared a hero by one or more bystanders and therefore become a hero. Generals that had stared death right in the eye in the middle of a battle fits this description, no matter which sides they are fighting on.

"Because in the whole land there is no hero your equal. Poor Wang Yun bows not to an officer's rank; poor Wang Yun bows to his ability"

-Wang Yun to Lu Bu, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

This specific lines also conveys the opinion of the people on generals with the reputation as great as Lu Bu, having bested many great warriors in battles means he is a hero worthy of respect. Sullivan and Venter (2010) conducted a study that asked participants to identify a personal hero and to explain the reason for their hero status. In that study, heroes were described as intelligent, loving, caring, talented, hardworking, a role model, creative, motivated, and religious. Kinsella et al. (2015a) examined lay conceptions of heroes across seven studies using a rigorous prototype methodology, and the results show some overlap with the Great Eight qualities. Bravery, moral integrity, conviction, courage, self-sacrifice, protecting, honesty, selfless, determined, rescues others, inspiring, and useful were selected as the most central (i.e., paradigmatic) characteristics of heroism. Of all the eight qualities of hero according to Kinsella et al. (2015a), there are at least one character for every quality in the novel. Then there are characters like Zhao Zilong, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei, who have similar qualities and feats like those of Lu Bu, they are also deemed heroes by the people, but with better image because they serve under Liu Bei who in his wars and battles continuously promotes benevolent and virtue.

It can be pretty much said that how heroes are defined in the three kingdoms period according to the novel is in line to the defining process that are conducted in modern research. The main elements that build up the character of a hero is a personal quality in which is according to the people worthy of admiration and followings. This concept of hero is used by characters such as Liu Bei and Cao Cao to gather their followers in order to build their empire. Thus, heroism is strongly used to describe the characters and how the people in the characters described their leaders and lords in the story.

3. Understanding “Mandate of Heaven” as Political Legitimacy in The Period of The Three Kingdoms.

The Mandate of Heaven (*Tian Ming*) is a Chinese political doctrine that was used to legitimize the reign of the King or Emperor of China in ancient and imperial times. According to this concept, heaven bestows the mandate on a rightful ruler of China, the "Son of Heaven," who embodies the natural order and will of the universe. When a ruler was deposed, it was taken as a sign that the ruler was worthless and had lost the mandate. Natural disasters such as starvation and flood are widely believed to be divine retributions bearing signals of Heaven's dissatisfaction with the ruler, hence there are often revolts following significant disasters as the people see these tragedies as signs that Heaven's mandate has been removed. The Mandate of Heaven does not need a legitimate king to be of noble birth; rather, it is determined by how successfully the monarch can rule. The Han Dynasty was created by men of common backgrounds, yet they were considered successful because they received the Mandate of Heaven.

*“That rebel Dong Zhuo outrages **Heaven** and has deposed his ruler. Common people dare not speak of him: That is understandable. Yet you suffer his aggressions as if you knew naught of them. How then are you a dutiful and loyal minister? I have assembled an army and desire to sweep clean the royal habitation, but I dare not lightly begin the task. If you are willing, then find an opportunity to plot against this man. If you would use force, I am at your command.”*

-Wang Yun, Romance of The Three Kingdoms (Luo Guanzhong)

The right to rebel against an unjust ruler was inherent in the concept of the Mandate of Heaven. In a society with few other constraints, philosophers and scholars in China frequently invoked the Mandate of Heaven to limit the ruler's misuse of power. A successful uprising was understood by Chinese historians as proof that Heaven had removed its mandate from the monarch. Throughout Chinese history, times of hardship and natural disasters were frequently interpreted as signals from heaven that the present king was unjust and hence ought to be replaced. In the novel, many characters claim they have the favor of the Heaven (天), when in dire conditions, they numerously pleas to the heaven regardless of the sides they are fighting for. Each kingdom would claim mandate of heaven to legitimize any of their political action that includes war, battles, or invasion.

Above all, the common people believed in and benefited from this imperial rite. With the notion of order inextricably linked to Mandate of Heaven, the state religion, albeit constructed during Han, created a sense of security and survival during natural disasters. A number of factions developed in response to the "Mandate of Heaven" versions. In Confucian attitude, one

may genuinely know who has been appointed by heaven because "Heaven watches through the eyes of our people" marked a significant divergence from the classic Confucian ideal of the leader being the embodiment of Heaven. For the Han, the people's opinion was the mandate, and we see this contradictory viewpoint play out in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

4. Exploring and Understanding the Righteousness of Wars in Romance of The Three Kingdoms.

In the previous chapter, it is known that Leaders in *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* understand the importance of possessing the Mandate of Heaven, or the appearance of having it, in order to win the hearts of their followers. Those who believe in Heaven's moral agency (Tian ming) seek one individual to be chosen by Heaven to embody its cosmic order since his benevolence legitimizes the Mandate. Throughout the story, Liu Bei appears to be the good leader, and hence the recipient of the Mandate. Cao Cao, on the other hand, attempts to demonstrate the Mandate of Heaven while his true purpose is the mandate of power. In truth, both are concerned with their own personal gain.

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms is set after the fall of the Han empire in 220. The once-united China has devolved into bloody battles and wars amongst warlords, all of whom are determined under one same mission: to reunify the country. Three kingdoms eventually emerge as the principal contenders: the Wu, Wei, and Shu. The Wu kingdom represents regional hegemony. Sun Quan, the Wu monarch, had no big plans to conquer the land; all he desired was to safeguard the Riverlands, his family's ancestral dominion. Wu, on the other hand, battled tooth and nail to maintain its independence and dominion over its sovereign region. When the Wei kingdom launched an attack on the Riverlands during the Battle of Chibi (also known as Red Cliff), Wu allied forces with Shu to maintain its regional dominion.

4.1 Liu Bei vs Cao Cao Conflict: Discrepancy Between Imperial Rites and Righteousness.

The novel's principal focus is the rivalry between Liu Bei and Cao Cao. Three Kingdoms' basic assessment is that Liu Bei is Han's lawful heir, whereas Cao Cao is a usurper. At first glance, this perspective appears to be excessively biased. Cao Cao has the Han emperor in his grip, but he stops short of establishing himself as emperor. In contrast, when Liu Bei claims to be restoring Han's collapsing house, it is no secret that what this truly implies is electing Liu Bei himself as Han's emperor rather than restoring the dignity of the incumbent Han monarch. The narrative establishes Liu Bei's desire in the first chapter, when we learn that when Liu Bei was a boy playing with other children, he climbed up into a large mulberry tree near his house and declared himself emperor, mounting his chariot. Given his passion and true objective, one could wonder how Liu Bei's pursuit could reconcile with rites' requirements. Seeking to be a ruler as a subject is a rebellious deed for Liu Bei.

In waging his war, Liu Bei used two main strategies to pursue his means. The first one is to use pains to construct an idea of a righteous ruler within him. His leadership characteristic to lead with benevolence rather than by force serves as a moral base for his legitimacy in doing the necessary means to achieve his ambition as a ruler.

“When Liu Bei asked what Zhuge Liang meant to do, Zhuge Liang replied, ‘We shall abandon Fancheng and take Xiangyang.’ ‘But what of the people who have followed us? They cannot be abandoned.’”

When Liu Bei is beaten by Cao Cao in Chapter 41, he insists on departing with his people rather than abandoning them. It is a decision that will put him in grave peril. In the face of severe opposition from his generals, Liu Bei stressed that the human dimension is the most important aspect of any endeavor. To him, a leader cannot leave people who have made their commitment. This image of Liu Bei's kindness is strongly maintained in Three Kingdoms by its frequent and sharp contrast with Cao Cao's actions, who is characterized as having the slogan "Rather we let the world down than the world let us down!" The narrative employs Liu Bei's own words to characterize how he differs from Cao Cao; he describes Cao Cao as his antithesis, who strives against him like fire against water. Where his means are haste, Liu Bei's are moderate; where his means are brutal, Liu Bei's are compassionate; and where his means are shrewd, Liu Bei's are truthful. He may prevail if he maintains his opposition to Cao Cao.

Whereas the second strategy is by emphasizing how he is an imperial scion to the Han Dynasty. As a member of the Liu house (Liu Bang established the Han Dynasty), he feels the duty to restore and maintain the glory of the crumbling Han Dynasty. This relation is mentioned several times throughout the text. The scenario in Three Kingdoms is that Liu is recognized by the emperor as an uncle through descent and thus becomes the "imperial uncle." Liu Bei is regarded as a legitimate authority due to his exceptional benevolence. He is afforded some political legitimacy as a scion of the Han family. A method of winning the people; gain their hearts, and you will win the people. There is a technique to capture their hearts; collect what they desire for themselves; and do not push what they despise on them." Clearly, Liu Bei adopts this strategy in Romance of the Three Kingdoms to increase his moral strength. Liu Bei keeps on mentioning a mission of restoring order within the Han Dynasty, this is in contrast with Cao Cao who prefers to create an entirely new order. However, Liu Bei also ignores the fact that the Han dynasty is probably not the best hope in reuniting China as the dynasty is already crumbling with corruption, betrayals, and other dirty tricks by the people within it.

4.2 Battle of Red Cliff, The Decisive Battle of The Three Kingdoms.

The Battle of Red Cliffs (also known as the Battle of Chibi) was a crucial encounter between Northern Chinese forces headed by warlord Cao Cao and allied southern defenses led by Liu Bei and Sun Quan. The fight is regarded as a pivotal point in the conflict between numerous warlords who took control of their own regions and subsequently expanded their power in the last days of the Han Dynasty. Cao Cao was defeated by the southern coalition and pushed north, effectively putting an end to his dream of uniting China under his authority. The engagement balanced the playing field between the main antagonists, as Cao Cao had previously been the most powerful and controlled the largest army. After Cao Cao was defeated and forced to flee with great losses, Liu Bei and Sun Quan consolidated their domains, resulting in the Three Kingdoms Period following the collapse of the Han Dynasty, with Cao Cao governing Cao Wei, Liu Bei controlling Shu Han, and Sun Quan dominating Eastern Wu. The Three Kingdoms maintained an often-tense ceasefire until they were united under the Jin Dynasty.

Traditional Confucianism and other Chinese traditions agree that war is not to be taken lightly and should be avoided at all costs. This fundamental nonviolent component of Chinese strategy is consistent with Confucianism's "Mean" theory. The Mean is the way that lies between two extremes, in this case, hard power and inaction. This type of "soft power," which includes nonviolent conflict resolution methods, advances China's goals while maintaining equilibrium and conserving resources. Furthermore, Confucianism considers an emperor who is compelled into war action to be a man whose virtue is called into question alongside the disharmony of international relations. Though this does not fully rule out aggressive military action, it does provide more motivation for defensive or nonviolent wars. Chinese combat likewise adheres to Confucianism's philosophy in only engaging in righteous conflict. War is just if it is fought between two rulers as a final resort, justifiable retaliation, or a revolution to depose an inept administration. This could be a result of Confucianism's emphasis on ethical behavior combined with a desire to avoid costly, violent confrontations. Regardless, Chinese strategists have to reconcile their opposition to war as a political tool with the fact that war is not always avoidable. The essential notion of righteous war was acknowledged by the classics.

In this case, the cause to this battle leads way back to Cao Cao's ambition to unite China by means of conquering surrounding commanderies. During the dying days of the Han Dynasty, cunning Prime Minister Cao Cao persuaded Emperor Han that the only way to unite all of China was to make war on the kingdoms of Xu in the west and East Wu in the south. Thus began an extraordinary military effort commanded by the Prime Minister himself. With no other option for survival, the Xu and East Wu kingdoms established an unexpected alliance. Several confrontations of strength and wit ensued, both on land and on water, culminating in the Battle of Red Cliff. Two thousand ships were destroyed during the conflict. Whereas in the defenders' side, Liu Bei dispatched Zhuge Liang to urge Sun Quan in Jiangdong to forge an alliance in order to repel Cao Cao's invasion. Zhuge Liang persuaded Sun Quan to join forces with Liu Bei against Cao Cao and remained in Jiangdong as a temporary counselor. Sun Quan put Zhou Yu in command of the Jiangdong (East Wu) soldiers to repel Cao Cao's invasion. Zhou Yu feared that the gifted Zhuge Liang might become a future threat to East Wu and attempted multiple times but failed to murder Zhuge. He had no alternative but to work with Zhuge Liang for the time being because Cao Cao's soldiers were approaching the border.

Cao Cao, with the emperor's reluctant assent, launches a campaign to remove the southern warlords Sun Quan and Liu Bei under the pretense of removing rebels. Cao Cao's strong army quickly conquers the southern province of Jingzhou, igniting the Battle of Changban when Cao Cao's cavalry unit begins slaughtering citizens on an evacuation commanded by Liu Bei. During the conflict, Liu Bei's troops, notably his sworn brothers Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, demonstrate their famed combat prowess by holding off the enemy while allowing the villagers to flee. Zhao Yun fights valiantly to save his lord Liu Bei's ensnared family, but only manages to save Liu Bei's infant son. Following the fight, Liu Bei's main advisor Zhuge Liang embarks on a diplomatic journey to Eastern Wu in order to forge an alliance between Liu Bei and Sun Quan in order to deal with Cao Cao's invasion. Sun Quan was originally torn between surrendering and resisting Cao Cao, but his desire to resist hardens following Zhuge Liang's brilliant persuasion and a subsequent tiger hunt with his Grand Viceroy Zhou Yu and his sister Sun Shang Xiang.

Meanwhile, Jingzhou naval commanders Cai Mao and Zhang Yun pledge allegiance to Cao Cao and are enthusiastically welcomed by Cao, who places them in command of his navy.

This is obviously not in line with the Confucian beliefs. Cao Cao, as the perpetrator may use an excuse of “unification” to wage his war, his ambition had led him beyond the point of diplomacies. While at the other side, Liu Bei may be able to use diplomacy to set the differences between him and Sun Quan apart, but again, it is done to protect their best interest, after the coalition had managed to resist Cao Cao’s invasion, the two began to wage war against each other. Cao Cao is frequently portrayed in the novel as the ultimate villain, intent on uniting China, at any cost, however, uniting and conquering is a similar yet very different means. Whilst Liu Bei and Sun Quan are portrayed as patriotic heroes protecting their homeland's freedom against a merciless tyrant. In actuality, none of the groups involved in the Battle of Red Cliffs had the best interests of the Chinese people in mind, and none of them had a genuine claim to the Mandate of Heaven. Each competed solely for their own self-interest, and the people they were supposed to be fighting for suffered as a result.

CONCLUSION

Righteousness as defined by the findings mean a man's exterior and internal qualities must be like sheep's tenderness, kindness, and good will because people admire sheep so much that they adopt "sheep" as one of the parts of new characters that represent positive things. But the further findings of this research had proven that righteousness is not something that can be easily defined, especially when war is brought into the notion. War is a very serious thing that cannot be taken lightly, both modern views and Confucianism as the ancient and imperial China beliefs both agreed on this. In waging wars, leaders have all kinds of reason to justify their act. In the Romance of The Three Kingdoms novel, Liu Bei, the main protagonist used his status as an imperial scion and his ideology of benevolence to wage his war. This reason alone is enough to prove that no war is ever righteous. If one thrives to end war with another war, to stop bloodshed with another bloodshed, it can never be deemed righteous. In this novel, each leader has the ambition of unification, at a fast glance, it can be seen that each and every warrior, warlords, and emperors in this novel are honorable and patriotic men who strive to unite, but in their act of wars, there isn't a clear distinction between unification and conquer.

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