

Fall 2020 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Heroes & Villains in Asian Art and Culture
Sponsored by the *Society for Asian Art*

***The Changing Face of Heroism and Villainy
in the Three Kingdoms Story Cycle 220-2020***

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Development of the Three Kingdoms Story Cycle: Historical Periods, Major Figures, and Literary Works

Han Dynasty 206 BCE-220 CE (Imperial Family Surnamed Liu)

Three Kingdoms Period 220-265

Kingdom of Wei

Leader: Cao Cao (155-220)

Kingdom of Wu

Leader: Sun Quan (182-252)

General: Zhou Yu (175-210)

Kingdom of Shu

Leader Liu Bei 161-223

Sworn Brothers: Guan Yu (?-219) & Zhang Fei (?-221)

Military Advisor: Zhuge Liang (181-234)

Jin Dynasty 265-420 (Imperial Family surnamed Sima)

Chen Shou (233-297) is commissioned by the Jin emperor to write the history *Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms*. Pei Songzhi (372-451) later supplemented the history with his annotations.

Tang Dynasty 618-907

Many Tang poets referred to characters and incidents within the story cycle in their poetry. The great Tang poet Du Fu (712-770 CE) who lived a number of years in Chengdu, the former capitol of the Kingdom of Shu found Zhuge Liang particularly fascinating.

Song Dynasty 960-1206

Sima Guang (1019-1086) wrote history of China from the period 403-959 titled *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*

Zhu Xi (1130-1200) wrote an abridged version of Sima Guang's history titled *Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*

Su Shi (1037-1101) wrote poetry and prose on the Three Kingdoms Story Cycle, particularly on the Battle of Red Cliff.

Yuan Dynasty 1206-1368

Plays by Guan Hanqing (c. 1231-1320) and other playwrights of this period featured figures from the Three Kingdom Story Cycle.

The Records of the Three Kingdoms in Plain Language (Vernacular fictional narrative with illustrations) pub. c. 1321-1323

Ming Dynasty 1368-1644

Earliest edition of the novel *Three Kingdoms* published in 1521

Qing Dynasty 1644-1912

The “standard” edition of *Three Kingdoms*, heavily edited and annotated by Mao Lun, and Mao Zonggang, was published in the mid-1660s.

Suggested Reading:

Kimberly Besio and Constantine Tung, ed. *Three Kingdoms and Chinese Culture*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007.

Wilt Idema and Stephen West trans. & ed., *Battles, Betrayals and Brotherhood: Early Chinese Plays on the Three Kingdoms*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2012.

Moss Roberts trans. *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* attributed to Luo Guanzhong (abridged edition). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Xiaofei Tian. *The Halberd at Red Cliff: Jian'an and the Three Kingdoms*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018.