

Welcome to the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast.

So, what is this thing? Well, this podcast is my attempt to tell the story of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms in a way that is accessible and interesting to a Western audience who didn't grow up in a culture that has been infused with characters and tales from the novel for centuries.

If you are not familiar with the novel, here's a very quick primer. If you want more information than what I provide here, there are certainly many sources of information about online, so I'm not going to read the Wikipedia entry to you. The book is considered one of the four great classic Chinese novels. It covers a period of almost a hundred years, from 184 to 280. That takes us from the last days of the Han dynasty to the founding of the Jin dynasty. The novel has often been called 70 percent history and 30 percent fiction. Many of the characters from the novel are as familiar to the Chinese as Romeo, Hamlet, and Julius Caesar are to Westerners. In fact, I would say that to know the Romance of the Three Kingdoms is akin to knowing Shakespeare in terms of how much the work has influenced the culture.

Just to give you an example: You know how we say "Speaking of the devil"? Well, the Chinese equivalent of that is "As soon as you mention Cao Cao, Cao Cao is here." Cao Cao is one of the characters from the novel, and he was famous for how swiftly he moved his army.

That's why I want to do this podcast, to help a Western audience understand a key piece of Chinese culture and history. Now, there ARE several English translations of the book. I got one of them for my wife a few years back. But when I flipped through the book, it struck me how boring a faithful translation of the novel was to read. It was just a neverending barrage of strange and similar-sounding names of people and places, mixed with dry accounts of military campaigns. That is not the novel I remember growing up with. And I think the reason is that by the time I started reading the novel, I had already become so well acquainted with the main characters, because they had become a part of popular culture and taken on a life of their own, which is not necessarily reflected in the text of the novel.

So I'm going to try to tell the story with more color instead of just reading straight from a translation

of the novel. I think this will make the story more interesting and help my listeners gain a better understanding of the various characters.

In addition, I plan to post supplemental material such as maps and images to the website for the podcast, which is [3kingdomspodcast.com](http://3kingdomspodcast.com), spelled with the number 3. I will also post links to other relevant material that will help you get a better idea of certain aspects of the book or the historical era we are dealing with.

As for how often I will put out a new episode, I'm thinking probably every ten days or so, which means we're looking at three episodes a month. I would love to do it on a weekly basis, but I think that would burn me out pretty quickly, and I want to pace myself for the long haul, because this is a long novel and I don't want to stop the project halfway. So yeah, this is definitely a big project.

Finally, there are a couple caveats: I'm not a professional storyteller or voice actor. I'm not even that good of a public speaker. I also haven't done a ton of audio recording and editing. So that means the early episodes will likely be a bit rough as I try to find my way in terms of style and techniques. But again, we're talking about a LONG novel here, so there will be plenty of time for me to figure things out. Bear with me in the early going, and I promise I'll try very hard to make it worth your while.

Alright, so that's a brief overview of what I'm planning to do with this podcast. I hope you will give it a chance. I can't wait to dive into the story in the next episode. In the meantime, check out the website, [3kingdomspodcast.com](http://3kingdomspodcast.com), spelled with the number 3. Thanks for listening. See you next time on the Romance of the Three Kingdoms Podcast.