

## Historical and Cultural Connotation of Chinese and Western National Heroes' Loyalism: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Greek Mythology*

LEI Min<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Lecturer. College of Arts and Sciences, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, China.

\*Corresponding author.

Received 5 January 2014; accepted 16 March 2014

Published online 27 April 2014

### Abstract

*Romance of the Three Kingdoms* has given shape to a group of loyal and brave heroes of the Three Kingdoms, such as Zhuge Liang, Guan Yun etc. in Shu Kingdom, who take Confucian philosophy as the norm of their behavior. *Greek Mythology* has depicted twelve ancient Greek preminent gods under Zeus' lead, who view "beauty", "wisdom", "competition" and "individual freedom" as their main philosophic values. This paper compares and analyzes the similarities and differences of "national heroes' loyalism" in Chinese and western history and culture from the perspective of philosophy, taking the historical images, literary images and folk images of the loyal national heroes in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Greek Mythology* as examples.

**Key words:** *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; *Greek Mythology*; National heroes' loyalism; Historical and cultural connotation; Similarities; Differences

LEI Min (2014). Historical and Cultural Connotation of Chinese and Western National Heroes' Loyalism: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Greek Mythology*. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 10(2), 134-140. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/4699>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/4699>

### INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, heroes have been becoming the icons who people worship, admire and are avid for being. Literary scholars coming from different eras and countries, mold their idea hero images and icons, create

heroic images of different cultural and era connotation in vivid stories. Therefore, hero contains its special connotation in different cultural background. According to the culture of the Three Kingdoms characterized by the behavior standard of Confucian Philosophy, heroic images are the symbol of immaculate personalities and moralities represented by "benevolence" "righteousness" "wisdom" and "loyalty". This kind of heroes are honored with "loyal national heroes" who take bringing benefits to humans, protecting nation, being patriotic and loyal to the throne and country as their own responsibilities. Nevertheless, in Greek society, having "beauty" "wisdom" "competition" "individual freedom" as the main philosophic values, the ancient heroes view seeking for honor, showing off force as their utmost objectives for fighting. For them, their individual honor is above everything else rather than their lives. It seems to be the privilege for them to do any looting, carnage and carnality but not subject to moral condemnation. Occasionally, their sacrifice for humans is rewarded as the national heroes' loyalism; exactly it can be entitled as the warrior's heroic loyalism. There are similarities and differences that coexist in the historical and cultural connotation of the culture of the Three Kingdoms and Greek mythology. As for the differences, they are mainly caused by their different roots of philosophic foundation.

### 1. ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATION OF HEROIC IMAGES

Greek Mythology is stemmed from the ancient Aegean Civilization (3000-1200B.C.) which is the earliest ancestor of the western civilization and conceives an excellent nature and outstanding imagination. In the ancient time, people felt so mysterious and puzzled upon the natural phenomenon and humans' life and death that they fell into

constant deep thought, in which cosmic inventory has its own life. However, after Dorians invaded, people were forced to expand their living space because of the surplus of population on the Greek peninsula. As a result, they looked up to heroes and standouts and were eager for the assistance coming from the superman heroes, thus there came into being many stories about so called national heroes, concerning humans and gods. When time went by, the created stories about humans, gods and matters had been formed into "Greek Mythology" called by historians. Greek Mythology is the spiritual product of the primitive clan society and the earliest literature in Europe, derived form 8 A.D before, and later had been recorded in Homeric poems and Hussey Russia's "theogony" as well as ancient Greek poems, dramas, history and philosophy until it had been taken into the shape of quite a scale on the basis of folks' long-term colloquial retelling. The stories have been organized into current version of Greek Mythology which is divided into two parts: one is the story about the Gods; another is the legend of heroes. On account of the colloquial narrative feature of mythologies, the described heroic images lack historical prototype, and mainly have been passing on in the form of folk's spreading and literary depiction

During the period of Three Kingdoms (220A.D-280A.D), both officials and folks believe in and observe Confucian culture, which advocates "benevolence", "righteousness", "morality", "etiquette", "honesty", "loyalty", "chastity", "filial piety", "probity", "goodness", "beauty" and "trueness", and fully reproduces Chinese culture. Romance of the Three Kingdoms is the first traditional chapter-stylistic Chinese novel of historical romance, which focuses on the depiction of the war between such three political groups as "Shu", "Wei" and "Wu" and the portraying of nearly five hundred heroic figures. Not only does it reflect the real history of the Three Kingdoms, but also adopt certain literary interpretation including exaggerating, beautifying, and even defaming the heroic figures of the Three Kingdoms on the basis of the social reality of Ming dynasty.

The heroic images may fall into three types: one is the historian-entitled historical images which reflect the true nature of heroes, such as the heroes recorded in Records of the Three Kingdoms; the second one is the literary images portrayed by literature and artists, who remold the hero prototype into a new one in literary and artistic works; the third one is the folk images, living in civilians' hearts. The first type of heroic images reproduces the original personality of heroes, while the other two are the creative works in the process of its heritage and innovation. Among so many heroic images in the culture of the Three Kingdoms and Greek mythology, the specific heroic images (the major heroes Zhuge Liang, Guan Yu in the culture of the Three Kingdoms, the twentieth Gods in Greek mythology) have been selected to do an analytical

comparison of the common similarities and separate differences between Chinese and western historical and cultural connotation of the national heroic loyalism, (a comparison of Chinese and western style of the historical images of loyal heroes ) as well as their cultural inheritance (a comparison between Chinese and western literary and folk images of loyal heroes). Furthermore, the historical connotation of the national heroic loyalism in Chinese and western cultures will be put into the comparison in terms of three different heroic images: the historical images, the literary images and the folk images.

In the narrow sense, "the national heroic loyalism" refers to "the collective heroic loyalism", which is a kind of virtue to fight bravely, to keep duty intensively, to restrain and abide the law, to be loyal to the throne and the country for the benefits of their own group and country, but have to be at the expense of other groups' or other countries' interests. In the broad sense, "the national heroic loyalism" means a kind of virtue to be dedicated to one's duty, to take delight in devotion, to spare no sacrifice striving for the goal of prosperity and harmonious happiness of the entire human race and nationality without national boundaries.

---

## **2. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONNOTATION OF THE IMAGES OF NATIONAL HEROIC LOYALISM**

---

In the culture of the Three Kingdoms, Zhuge Liang and Guan Yu were two of the greatest loyal national heroes who devoted themselves to their duties, were loyal to their throne, country, friends and wives. In Greek mythology, there have national heroic gods who were dedicated to their duties represented by Hestia, the Goddess of the family health, and other national heroic gods who were loyal to their marriage, master and country respectively represented by Hera, the goddess of the heavens, women and marriage, all of the gods under Zeus, Athena, the goddess of war and crafts, Hephaestus, the god of fire, volcanism, smiths and craftsmen.

### **2.1 Being Attentive to Duties**

In the period of the Three Kingdoms, Zhuge Liang (the prime minister of Shu country), one of the greatest folks-respected loyal national heroes, being known as an outstanding statesman, militarist, essayist, calligrapher, exerted his utmost efforts in the performance of his duty until his death in the process of restoring Shu regime. He devoted all his life to help Liu Bei establish Shu regime, govern the territory, withdraw southern invaders, lead northern expedition of six battles on Qishan mountain. Until August of 234 A.D, on the way of the last northern

expedition, even though fell sick to dying in overwork, he still pondered in how to fight the enemy back. On the death was coming, he was still thinking over so many public affairs such as how to settle the monarch, subordinates, how to attack away the enemies, what about the development strategies of the future etc. but took few consideration of his family. Hence, Zhu Ge's common-well-known loyal heroic images had been recorded in historical and literary works as well as folklores.

Same as Zhu Ge, Guan Yu was another great loyal national hero. When Liu Bei raised an army, Guan Yu followed him, spared no efforts to perform his duty, and won Liu's deep trust. When Liu Bei and Zhu Ge entered into Shu, Guan Yu was safeguarding Jingzhou; after Liu captured Hanzhong city, Guan Yu launched an expedition northward to Cao Cao; He ever besieged Xiangyang city, and then caught Yu Jin, hacked off Pang De, which made her become so famous and fear-inspiring throughout China, that for several times, Cao Cao desired to move the capital to another place for fear of her deterrence; unfortunately, when Eastern Wu made a sneak attack against Jingzhou, Guan Yu was failed and murdered. As *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* depicted, Guan Yu's heroic deeds such as his "drunk-chopped Huaxiong", "rode alone for thousands of miles", "started a solo run", "flooded enemies from seven directions", and also his failures of "lost Jingzhou by carelessness" and "defeated in Mai city" was mentioned together. It is obvious that Guan Yu's loyal heroic image of devoting to his duties has been affirmed both in historical and literary works, but his carelessness to lost Jingzhou left a regret. In the civil society, Guan Yu is the mass-worshiped embodiment of the god of "loyalty", "righteousness", "Honesty", "wisdom", "benevolence" and "courageousness", but his personality weakness of arrogance has been faded away, thus he become to the faultless folk loyal heroic image.

In Greek Mythology, there exist a group of heroic gods who took humans' happiness as their own duty. They were dutifully dedicated to perform their priesthood. **Artemis** was the greatest Olympian goddess of hunting, wilderness and wild animals. She was also a goddess of childbirth, and the protectress of the girl child up to the age of marriage. Being chaste, beautiful and courageous was her great virtue, and she was always selflessly busy in protecting the breeding of future generations. **Apollo** was the god of prophecy, music and healing (the god of the sun). He brought medicine to human race and did his best to keep people healthy and also was always praised for his virtue of being upright and outspoken, being capable of distinguishing the good from the bad and never lie. **Hermes** was the god of husbandry, trade messengers and travel. He carried out his duty of protecting travelers safe. **Demeter**, the goddess of agriculture and the fertile and her daughter **Persephone**, the queen of underworld and wife of hades (she was dignified and elegant and good at

agriculture, but was unfortunately tricked and captured to the underworld by hades) spared no efforts bringing food to humans and teaching people how to do cultivation and harvest, they brought people agricultural knowledge and technology by which people survived. **Hestia**, the goddess of hearth and home, was gentle and elegant, honest and sympathetic. Her name represented the happiness and harmony of the family and also the symbol of the newborn baby becoming the family member. As the hearth was looked upon as the sacred center of domestic life, so Hestia became the goddess of domestic life and the giver of all domestic happiness and blessings, and as such she was believed to dwell in the inner part of every house, and appears often together with **Hermes**, who was likewise a god of the family (Mao, Li 2009). In ancient Greece, nearly all of the towns and cities had their public hearths, where the fire never went out all year round to symbolize a harmonious community of citizens and a common worship of **Hestia** who not only passed on humans the method of how to make family foods, but also instructed people how to prepare collective communion which was an important means of sacrificing the gods. As such **Hestia** became the widely known heroic goddess. Thus it can be seen that the ancient Greek people collectively respected and worshiped all of the selfless heroic gods who were dedicated to perform their priesthood to protect and safeguard the happiness and harmony of their family and town.

## 2.2 Being Loyal to One's Marriage

There was a marriage story about Zhuge Liang in the folk tales: Zhu Ge's wife was the daughter of Huang Chenyan who once said to Zhu Ge, "I heard of that you are intended to marry, I'd like to recommender you my ugly daughter. She is black with yellow hair but so talented that match to you." Zhu Ge agreed without any hesitation and married her at once. When they married, Huang Yueying (Zhu Ge's wife) gave a goose feather fan as the gift to Zhu Ge who cherish the fan as a pearl in the palm and took it along anytime anywhere. Thus conveys the sincere and undying love between the pair of couple. Zhu Ge valued the inner talent rather than the exterior beauty while choosing his wife, which together with her loyal and devoted love to his wife made a sharp contrast with what Cao Cao had done in marriage. Since then, Zhu Ge had been worshiped as the heroic model by the later generations. According to the historical record, Guan Yu had only one wife and devoted to her in his lifetime. In sum, Zhu Ge and Guan Yu, the two loyal heroes' loyal to their marriage has been recorded in the history, but embellished in literature, and praised in the folk.

In Greek Mythology, Zeus and many other gods and goddesses had complex extramarital affairs and lived a dissolute life at the edge of ethical loss, only **Hera** (the goddess of marriage), **Artemis** (the goddess of the moon) and **Hestia** (the goddess of hearth and home) were excluded. They three goddesses kept their loyal to their love

and marriage, and were usually worshiped and sacrificed by ancient Greek people in a solemn and splendid festival or ceremony. Among the three goddesses, it was Artemis won much more sacrifice and worship from people. She was the rare virgin goddess of chastity and named as the virgin goddess together with her two sisters in law Athena and Hestia. Artemis had three images such as the goddess of the moon, the goddess of hunting and the goddess of the fertile. As the goddess image of the fertile, Artemis's statue was enshrined in the shape of the goddess of milk at Artemis temple which became one of the seven great wonders afterwards. It can be seen from above that, in Greek mythology, the loyal heroes devoted to love and marriage gave priority to the goddesses, especially the virgin goddesses, but the gods were missing. In a certain respect, the folks' collective worship of above three goddesses reflects ancient Greeks' respect and worship to female reproduction, and it also shows the feminism was coming into existence at that time.

### 2.3 Being Loyal to One's Throne or Master

Zhuge Liang contributed all his efforts and lifetime to serve Liu Bei and to make the country prosperous until his death, which can be witnessed and traced back from Jian'an 12 year, Zhuge liang made Longzhong Strategy and determined to assist Liu Bei, to Liu Bei's entrusted his orphan Liu Chan to him, and then to submitted the Table of Petition to request for the northern expedition, and last to his dead at the battlefield.

Guan Yu followed his master Liu Bei with great and unchanging loyalty. In Jian'an 5 year (200A. D.), Cao Cao made an attack against Liu Bei and captured Guan Yu who were forced to surrender. Even though Cao treated him generously and rewarded him large sum of money with the purpose of persuading him to stay in Cao camp, he refused, "I appreciate your great kindness and generosity to me, but I would not stay here, because Liu Bei did me a great favor, I swore to share weal and woe with him and would never betray and leave him. Once I finish doing a favor for you, I will leave soon." (Zhang, 2005). Afterwards, Guan Yu killed Yan Liang and rescued Liu Yan from the besieging of white horses for Cao Cao, then left a message to leave, and returned to Liu Bei soon.

It was no doubt that Zhuge liang and Guan Yu's heroic images of loyalism to their master have been affirmatively praised in the history, literature and folk.

In Greek Mythology, As anyone who betrayed Zeus (the king of the gods) could never escape severe punishment of his lightning bolt, none of the gods under his rule dared to disobey him, even his wife, Hera (always against and angry at Zeus' tyranny, brutality and lasciviousness but still had to fight against him stealthily) was certainly no exception. Obviously, the Gods' loyal to their master belongs to the passive loyalism.

### 2.4 Being Loyal to One's Country

Zhuge liang's contribution has been assessed in *The History of the Three Kingdoms* as follows: as the prime minister, Zhuge liang placates people, abides by sets of etiquette, restrains officials' behavior, uses his rights cautiously, speaks frankly and sincerely with a candid mind. Under his governance, whoever even if his foe devotes himself to the prosperity of the country can get rewards, but whoever even if his trusted follower neglects his duty and breaks the law can be strictly punished unless he can sincerely plead his guilty. If someone speaks subtle words and find excuses to escape his responsibility and mistake, no matter light and heavy, he can be put into strict control; even a bit of kindness and contribution can be given praises; even an insignificant mistake can be given a punishment. When he deals with affairs, he attaches importance to the truth and reality without taking undeserved reputation into consideration, so he can solve the problem at root, by virtue of such, people all over the country eventually are afraid of him but admire him more. No one complains and objects his complying with severe law because of his honesty and explicit advising. He is a talent in respect of governing the country, and his ability can be comparable to Guan Zhong and Xiao Hexiang. From above objective evaluation, we can get that much more of the comments on Zhuge liang's ability are concerning to his talent in administering the country rather than his talent in military affairs. That means Zhuge Liang's wisdom and talents in politics have been affirmed, but his talents in military affairs are seldom mentioned. Nevertheless, In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Luo Guanzhong not only fully reproduces Zhuge Liang's political wisdom, but strongly highlights his foresight in military affairs such as directing military operations with miraculous skill through plentiful depiction in a set of fictional plots, which turns him into the embodiment of an incomparable wisdom and the model of Chinese national loyalism.

Guan Yu's contribution has been assessed in *The History of the Three Kingdoms* as follows: both Guan Yu and Zhang Fei has been known as being powerful to defense against thousands of enemies, they are generals as powerful as tigers. Yu can render service to repay Cao's kindness; Fei can let Yan Yan free and make him moved to surrender; both of them are heroic standouts. But Yu is stubborn and arrogant; Fei is irritable and graceless; so the failures due to their shortcomings are of course. (Chen, 2011) It can be judged that, both merits and faults Guan Yu had done has been recorded objectively in the history, but in the folk, he has been entitled as "Guan Gong" and always been worshiped by Confucians, Taoists and Buddhists and so become the god of the three religious schools. While in Confucian school, the image of Guan Yu remains much more of his true nature. As his status

becomes prominent, he is popularly respected as "Saint of War" and famous as Confucius.

The historical images of Zhuge Liang and Guan Yu have become much greater and glorious after the artistic creation in literature, and even have been molded into two noble and perfect images of Saints, the gods in folks' mind.

In Greek Mythology, **Athena** was the patron divinity of the state to defense exotic invasion, also known as the goddess of wise counsel and war. On the battlefield, she was brave and battlewise, unrivaled and invincible, often also referred to as the goddess of victory. As the patron saint of the city, she was in charge of the handicraft industry and agriculture, invented saddles, horns, bagpipes, farm tools, vessels and chariots, etc. She teamed up with **Hephaestus** (the god of fire, smiths and craftsmen) made an immortal feat in resisting foreign aggression in the Trojan War. In ancient Greece, Athena was popularly respected in every town and city especially in Athens, her proprietary state, named after her. People usually held celebrations in traditional festivals and build temples to express their worship and love to the goddess. The main building of the Acropolis, Pal Parthenon, was the largest temple to worship the goddess Athena. Differ from Athena, **Ares** (the famous god of war) was bloodthirsty and brutal, got himself involved in slaughter and extinction, and so represented the cruel side of the war. While Athena represented the rational side of the war, that means to win the war by resourcefulness and strength, for example, at the end of the Trojan War, she eventually helped the Greeks get the victory by virtue of the strategy of Trojan horse.

**Hephaestus**, the god of fire, was the patron saint of smiths and craftsmen. He was gentle and peace-loving, and so won the popular respects coming from the heaven and the earth. Once he was forced by Zeus to reluctantly work with Cratus and Bius to bind Prometheus (a national heroic god who sacrificed his life in stealing fire for mankind) with iron chains, after that he felt dramatically lasting sympathy to the descendants of Prometheus. The relevant depiction was written in the play, *The Bound of Prometheus*, in the form of the dialogue between Hephaestus, Prometheus and his two tyrannical servants. Furthermore, Hephaestus was also named as "the most sympathetic god".

If **Athena** was the national hero loyal to the city Athens in a narrow sense, **Hephaestus** would become the authentic national hero loyal to the whole nation and humankind in pursuit of human peace.

To sum up, there exist not only similarities and differences in the historical and cultural connotation of the national heroic loyalism between the culture of the Three Kingdoms and Greek Mythology.

In respect of similarities, the heroic images have been deified as the supermen with extraordinary ability beyond the mortal. Furthermore, all of the heroes shoulder the

mission given by the human: to conquer..., to sacrifice..., to save...in the battle. People's worship of heroes truly conveys their sincere desires, wishes and beliefs. In addition, both two kinds of history and culture have expressed the common spirituality of the national heroic loyalism to devote themselves to their duties, to spare no sacrifice in pursuit of the happiness and harmony of the whole community, state and humankind. Besides, people are highly enthusiastic to the heroes in the form of temple worship and festival celebration.

As for differences, they lie in following aspects: **First**, the national heroic loyalism has become the mainstream in the culture of the Three Kingdoms, while the Greek Mythology focuses on the collective heroic loyalism or individual heroism. **Second**, the gender structure of the loyal national heroic images differs from each other. It is a lack of female national heroic images in the culture of the Three Kingdoms; but in Greek Mythology, the heroic goddesses have equal opportunities and responsibilities and even play the major role in making a contribution to their state and country, as well as the whole mankind. **Third**, the morality and personality of the folk images of the loyal national heroes is not in similar connotation. In the culture of the Three Kingdoms, the historical images of the loyal national heroes have been gradually molded into the perfect, even "the Saints" or "the Gods". In other words, all of the virtues of loyalism (such as being dedicated to duty, being loyal to the master, being loyal to the country, being loyal to friends, being loyal to marriage and being righteous and honest) have been given to the perfect heroes, for example, Zhuge Liang and Guan Yu have been successfully shaped into the folk models as the loyal national heroes. **Fourth**, folks' worship of the heroes differs from each other in two kinds of cultures. In the culture of the Three Kingdoms, the perfect images of the "saints" are the people's models to follow the example of. While the Greek national heroic gods are the "supermen" images of "god-men", they are humans' assistants. In addition to this, the heroes of the Three Kingdoms would have been restrained and evaluated by folk ethics and morality; but the Greek heroic gods would get folks' tolerance and acceptance, even though they have moral deficiency. **Finally**, folks' worship of the loyal national heroes differs in terms of territorial scope. In the period of Three Kingdoms, folks' worship of the saint-like national heroes is across the country. But Greek folks' worship of the national heroic gods mainly focuses in a small region such as a town or a city. Moreover, the folk and literary creative images of the loyal national heroes in the Three Kingdoms are based on the prototype of the historical heroic figures; however, thanks to the narrative feature of the Greek Mythology, It is a lack of the historical prototype for the creation of the heroic gods. In other words, the heroic images in Greek Mythology all come from folk spreading and literary creation.

### 3. CAUSES OF DIFFERENCES IN THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONNOTATION OF CHINESE AND WESTERN NATIONAL HEROES' LOYALISM

As above comparison on the differences in the historical and cultural connotation of Chinese and western national heroes' loyalism, it can be traced back to the different philosophic values as follows.

The culture of the Three Kingdoms is built on the Confucian Philosophy, which is represented by Confucian ideology of rites and music education, Mencius' policy of benevolence and Xuncius' thoughts of etiquette. It attaches great importance to the maintenance of the national community and personal cultivation practice, and focuses on research of the relationship between society and humans in purpose of building an ideal social philosophy of human society. Confucianism occupies an important position in Chinese culture and history, taking "benevolence", "righteousness", "etiquette", "wisdom" and "honesty" as the connotation of ethics system ("Benevolence" means to love and respect parents and brothers, to be honest to friends, to be loyal to the country and to be kind to others. (Bai Du Encyclopedia Confucianism, 2014). It maintains the "rule by rites", advocates the "rule of virtue" and values "benevolent administration" and exerts a great influence on the feudal society where Confucian thoughts have been viewed as the orthodox idea for the long term. Confucianism, the most influential school and mainstream ideology in China, is not only an ideological tool, but also the principle part of Chinese feudal culture. The loyal national heroic images have been built on the ethics of Confucian philosophy that has also been rooted in the folk spreading of the national heroic loyalism.

Ancient Greek natural philosophy has contributed to the creation of the god heroic images. It is Plato's soul theory and political theory together with Aristotle's metaphysics theory what explain and support the creation of the mythological heroes and the inheritance of the heroic spirit. Plato's political science (*Utopia*) divides the society into three classes: the producer class (with a majority of members, their virtue is moderation), the warrior class (taking brave as their virtue), and the political ruler class (with a minimum of members, wisdom is their virtue). It is such an idea that shapes the mythological heroes' character and morality, namely the ordinary gods take "controlling desires" as the virtue, the gods of war regard "being brave" as the virtue, the rulers should take "wisdom" as the virtue. All of them echo the fact that the mythological heroes are single in their character connotation, and personal heroism prevails. *Utopia* argues for that everyone has its special function

in society in order to meet the overall social needs. But in this country, women and men have the same rights and enjoy complete gender equality. The government can lie for the public interests, while everyone should do his own business rather than interfere with others. It is such philosophy that highly interprets the lack of morality and ethics in mythological heroes' sexual relations, namely male and female heroic gods can equally betray each other and even do dissolute affairs without any moral condemnation. Also it once again confirms the mythological heroes' extreme individualism (i.e. to take collective interests out of consideration and neglect faith in state governance). Aristotle considers individual things is the first entity, a specific entity is divided into several grades from the lowest level to the highest one. The highest grade is the god, which supports the myth heroic images of "superman".

From above analysis, it can be seen that it is the root difference between Confucian philosophy (viewing benevolence as its core) and ancient Greek natural philosophy (taking "equality, freedom, individualism" as its core spirit) that causes the different historical and cultural connotation of Chinese and western "national heroic loyalism".

### CONCLUSION

There exist similarities and differences in the historical and cultural connotation of Chinese and western images of national heroic loyalism. As for similarities, both Chinese and western heroic images have been overstated and even deified (i.e. all of the heroes are equipped with extraordinary abilities, they shoulder the mission given by human—to conquer ..., to sacrifice..., to save...in the war.); people's worship of the heroes conveys their different desires, wishes and beliefs. Due to the great differences in terms of philosophic ideology, Chinese and western national heroic loyalism has different historical and cultural connotation from each other: **In the culture of the Three Kingdoms**, loyal heroes' behavior has been influenced and assessed by Confucian philosophy of being benevolent, brave and loyal; the heroines are missing; the heroes can distinguish good from evil, pay attention to ethics and morality, believe in Buddhism and Taoism, support benevolent governance, and put collective and national interests above everything else; they are the perfect "saints" with extraordinary character and worshipped by people all over the country as the model. **In Greek Mythology**, heroism has greatly influenced by ancient Greek natural philosophy that views "equality, freedom and individualism" as its core spirit: the goddesses are in majority of heroic gods and enjoy equal opportunities with the male; the heroic gods can receive folks' tolerance and acceptance even though they've done something immoral; heroes usually give priority to

their personal interests and put collective and national interests later; the heroic gods are of extraordinary power, being hailed as the “supermen” of the unity of god-men, the assistants of the human kind; people’s worship of the heroes mostly takes place in the city or town. In addition, Due to the Greek Mythology’s different genre and narrative feature from that of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the creation of Chinese folk and literary heroic images are built on the prototypes of the historical figures; while Greek mythological hero-gods only have been depicted as the folk and literary images without any record of its historical prototypes.

---

## REFERENCES

---

- Bai Du Encyclopedia. (February 20, 2014). *Greek mythology*. Retrieved from <http://baike.baidu.com/subview/5952/9571105.htm?fromId=5952&from=rdtself>
- Bai Du Encyclopedia. (March 8, 2014). *Guan Yu*. Retrieved 2014 from <http://baike.baidu.com/subview/2275/6379942.htm?fromId=2275&from=rdtself>
- Bai Du Encyclopedia. (March 3, 2014). *Zhuge Liang*. Retrieved from <http://baike.baidu.com/subview/2347/6593662.htm?fromId=2347&from=rdtself>
- Bai Du Encyclopedia. (March 9, 2014). *Zhuge Liang' tomb*. Retrieved from <http://baike.baidu.com/view/999619.htm>
- Bai Du Encyclopedia. (March 10, 2014). *Confucianism*. Retrieved from <http://baike.baidu.com/view/51931.htm?fromId=403077&redirected=seachword>
- Chen, S. (2011). *The history of the three kingdoms*. Shanghai: Ancient Books Press.
- Lei, M. (2011). Righteousness in Chinese and western culture: Rush hour and romance of the three kingdoms. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, (7)4, 63-65.
- Luo, G. Z. (2006). *The romance of the three kingdoms*. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House.
- Mao, L. Q., & Li, Fan. (2009). *The preeminent Gods in Greek mythology*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Wang, Y. X. (2006). *Myth and history: The historical and cultural connotation of Greek mythology*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Yi, Z. T. (February 26, 2014). *Yi zhongtian's commentary of the three kingdoms*. Retrieved from <http://www.3gpxp.com>
- Zhang, X. R. (2005). *Analysis of the characteristic images in the romance of the three kingdoms*. Central China Normal University Network Education Institute.