

Righteousness in Chinese and Western Culture: *RUSH HOUR* and *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS*

LA JUSTICE DANS LA CULTURE CHINOISE ET OCCIDENTALE: TEMPS RAPIDE ET LE ROMAN DES TROIS ROYAUMES

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cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/j.ccc.1923670020110704.301
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.ccc.1923670020110704.301>

Received 5 August 2011; accepted 12 October 2011

Abstract

With increasing cultural globalization, *RUSH HOUR* and *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS*, two typical movies, have enjoyed a great popularity in public both at home and abroad, profoundly reflecting the spirit of righteousness equipped by Chinese and western people. The article aims at spreading Chinese spirit of righteousness, advocating the common values of the world righteousness and pursuing the world harmonious culture (one world, one dream) by the mean of comparison in which righteousness has been fully interpreted based on above films.

Key words: Righteousness; Chinese culture; Western culture; Clash and assimilation

Résumé

Avec la mondialisation croissante culturel, Temps rapide et le Romance des Trois Royaumes, deux films typiques, ont bénéficié d'une grande popularité en public, tant au pays qu'à l'étranger, profondément reflétant l'esprit de justice équipés par le peuple chinois et occidentaux. L'article vise à diffuser l'esprit chinois de la justice, défendant les valeurs communes de la justice du monde et de poursuivre la culture du monde harmonieux (un monde, un rêve) par la moyenne de comparaison, où la justice a été entièrement interprété basé sur des films ci-dessus.

Mots-clés: Droiture; Culture Chinoise; La culture occidentale; Clash et l'assimilation

LEI Min (2011). Righteousness in Chinese and Western Culture: *RUSH HOUR* and *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS*. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 7(4), 63-65. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/j.ccc.1923670020110704.301>

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to the development of globalization, Chinese culture has progressively caught most western countries' attention and has been transferring to western culture by means of mass media such as film, internet and TV etc. of which film becomes the very efficient way to encourage and speed up culture communication between China and western countries.

In *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS*, Guan Yu's "righteousness" is by no means the general loyalty, but the spirit of sacrifice weightier than Mount Tai, more precious than life, which has withstood all kinds of rigorous tests. From the point of public view, Guan Yu is the embodiment of loyalty, the model of friends and the world people.

In *RUSH HOUR*, the conflict between justice and evil experienced by two policemen (one from China, the other from America) and a criminal fully reproduces the different culture of "righteousness" in China and western countries, in which brother hood is given different interpretation but at length lifts to the common values: to fulfill justice and faith. As a proverb says, "a friend in need is a friend indeed", can we make a friend based on this creed? Is there any different attitude towards faith, friendliness, and righteousness in Chinese and western countries? How do we entertain cultural conflict? So many questions prompt us to deep thought and brought us into further research and study.

1. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN CHINESE AND WESTERN PEOPLE'S INTERPRETATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

1.1 Similarities

1.1.1 Origin of Righteousness

In Chinese culture, word “righteousness” originated from the compound word “righteousness” which shaped like “man” and “sheep”. It refers to that a man’s appearance and internal quality must be like sheep’s tender, kind and good will because people mostly worship sheep so that adopt “sheep” as one part of new characters which represent good things. What’s more, sheep blood was used to represent one’s righteousness when preceding the sacrifice.

In Western culture, as it says in Bible, even in different language, “righteousness” is also connected with “sheep”. The relationship between human and God does not break down until Adam and Eve have been expelled from Eden. For the sake of atonement, people worship God by killing sheep and then sacrificing sheep’s head and placing it above people’s head on the ritual.

From the origin of righteousness both in Chinese and western culture, we discover that the similarity between Chinese and western righteousness mainly lies in that “sheep” is the common symbol of righteousness.

1.1.2 Denotation of Righteousness

In Chinese Confucianism culture, word “righteousness” is nothing but used to maintain good relationship between peoples. Even though “Ren” has been involved in its literal meaning, it still concerns the relationship between gentlemen and villain (the righteous and sinner in Bible), both of them are indispensable. Confucius regards righteousness and profit as one of the standards to distinguish gentlemen from villain.

In Western Bible culture, people’s faith in God has been valued, that is to say, the denotation of righteousness also contains the relationship between people and people. As recorded in Bible, Jesus was one of the four big righteous people, who sacrifice himself for others. As sayings of Solomon say, “treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death; the memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot”. It is turned out that righteousness in Bible also involves both the righteous and sinner.

After the comparative study of the denotation of “righteousness” both in Chinese and western culture, we have been informed that the similarity lies in that both Chinese and western people view “righteousness” as the relationship between man and man.

1.2 Differences

Besides the similarities, there are still some differences consist in Chinese and western culture of righteousness (see table 1) in respects of traditional belief and modern people’s fulfillment.

1.2.1 Differences in Traditional Belief

In perspective of traditional belief, the differences in Chinese and Western culture of “righteousness” are

elaborated in following table:

Table 1
Differences in Belief

Chinese	Western
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting Relationship between human beings • Focusing on Sense of Values • Ren • Faith: promise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting Relationship between human and God (standard) • Focusing on Compliance • Compliance • Serve God (standard)

In Chinese Confucianism culture, word “righteousness” is nothing but used to maintain good relationship between peoples. Most people attach special attention to keeping this sense of values and instructing themselves to carry out their belief of “righteousness”. “Ren” becomes its important meaning while “faith” namely keeping one’s promise is the other twin. For example, in *ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS* the righteous hero Guan Yu would never reluctant to sacrifice himself in the purpose of performing his “righteousness” or keeping his words even in the peak time regardless of any danger. Once induced by wealth and beauty offered by Cao Cao, he is indifferent and doesn’t change his mind at all. Once again, he persists on escorting brother Liu Bei’s family out of danger at the risk of life. All of his righteousness is to fulfill his obligations and responsibilities as a righteous brother. He sincerely cherishes the brotherhood with Liu Bei and Zhang Fei.

In western culture, as it says in Bible, “For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him might become the righteousness of God”(Holy Bible Association, 2000). “Righteousness” not only concerns the relationship between people but also involves people’s faith in God. Building up the belief and performing it are dependent on each other. As says in Bible, “he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness(Holy Bible Association, 2000)”. Therefore, western culture of righteousness focuses on people’s compliance to God and faithfully serve God.

Above comparison indicates that the major differences in Chinese and western culture of “righteousness” lies in the different opinions upon belief and performance: Chinese traditional culture of righteousness focused on sacrifice for friend, family and nation, but western one emphasize in compliance to the God, an embodiment of certain rule or standard.

1.2.2 Differences in Modern People’s Performance of Righteousness

In perspective of modern people’s performance, the differences in Chinese and Western culture of “righteousness” are elaborated in following table.

Table 2
Differences in Modern People' Fulfillment of Righteousness

Chinese	Western
RUSH HOUR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping one's words • Fulfilling Responsibilities and Obligations Supporting friends • Sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • friendship • Without sacrifice

In China, as reflected in *RUSH HOUR*, people believe a friend in need is a friend indeed. Once they regard someone as their friends, they will keep their words to their friends at any time, and spare no efforts fulfilling their due responsibilities and obligations, helping their brothers out of trouble or difficulty, and supporting their brothers in need. At the peak time, they will sacrifice their own profits to protect others.

In western countries, as described in *RUSH HOUR*, people mostly uphold individualism and freedom. They often view righteousness as a kind of respect, friendship, but are scarcely willing to sacrifice their own interests to support their friends, even though they value righteousness. It is the major reason why the western policeman and the Chinese in above film have different attitudes toward brotherhood and it stimulates the initiatory culture conflict.

The conflict of different culture of righteousness has been intensively embodied in *RUSH HOUR* which states a story that takes place between two righteous policemen and one representative criminal (Chinese policeman's old brother in orphanage), at first, two policemen from different countries hold different opinions upon how to performing the righteousness they respectively worship, but after undergoing a great violent war against the wicked criminal gang, two righteous policemen eliminate the cultural clash, assimilated by each other, at length, they work together and break down the criminal gang in one stroke, fulfilling their common righteousness. This film completely mirrors modern culture of righteousness in Chinese and western countries, record the development of the value of righteousness, which undergoes the process

of starting from conflict to assimilation and at last to the common value of the world big righteousness.

2. CONCLUSION

From above comparative study on similarities and differences in Chinese and western culture of righteousness based on two representative movies, we can get the conclusion that on the one hand, both of them are originated from "sheep", whose mild, kind and good will become the standard or creed people should follow; both of them have the common denotation: referring to the relationship between man and man. On the other hand, when it comes to traditional belief and modern people' awareness of fulfilling their righteousness, they hold different attitudes towards righteousness: for one thing, compared with western people, Chinese value sacrifice for people rather than compliance to God which is worshiped by western people; for another, Chinese are willing to fulfill more obligations and responsibilities for their friends, family and other people than western people. However, no matter what differences and similarities are involved in Chinese and western culture of righteousness, after the initial cultural clash, they will meet together and merge into the common value (performing righteousness worldwide) at length. It is imperative that we overcome cultural clash and exert ourselves to advocate and spread the common value of righteousness worldwide. Eventually, with the globalization of righteousness "one world, one dream" will be come true.

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