

# Chinese literature unit paper



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Cao Cao Short Song” is in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. The poem is about the Battle of Red Cliff. Several accounts exist about the Battle of Red Cliff. One is The Romance of the Three Kingdoms and the other primary one is Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel. The first novel is a romantic and mystical account of the Battle of Red Cliff, whereas the second is a more accurate account. Both books are creations of history. The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, especially “ Cao Cao Short Song”, was influenced by later events. The winner of battles generally gets to retell history. The Shu Empire was the winner against the Cao Cao’s Han Kingdom. Thus “ Cao Cao Short Song” was written under the influence of the Shu. Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel is not completely accurate, but more accurate than The Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

From the Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel relates the story of the end of the Han Dynasty which created Three Kingdoms out of the region. Two warlords Liu Bei and Sun Quan defeated Cao Cao to form Shu Han and Eastern Wu in the Southern providence. During this battle Cao Cao gave up land along and South of the Yangtze River. This text is not completely accurate, because it was written by Chen Shou, an officer for the Shu Han. Once again since the Shu Han was victorious, Shou had a warped view of the Battle at Red Cliff.

Although biased, Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel is what John Woo used to make his movie Red Cliff. This historical account is the official record. No matter what biases Shou had, this is what the Shu Empire recorded at the time. This account makes more sense than The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, so most Chinese accept this account. History cannot always be revealed without help of historians. Shou created an account that is the most

credible.

The Romance of the Three Kingdoms can be considered more fiction than fact. In this book is the poem, “Cao Cao Short Story”. This poem shows Cao Cao in a bad light. The following sums up how the Shu Kingdom felt about Cao Cao. The poem is like Cao Cao is the narrator. The poem states:

The wine before me as I sing:

how long can a man's life last?...

How can I banish melancholy?-

by Du Kang's gift of wine...

This shows that Cao Cao was not a good leader, but a drunken depressed individual. The Romance of the Three Kingdoms also minimizes the Eastern Wu's generals. This fanciful account is solely a production of later fictional Shu beliefs. The numbers of the soldiers were increased on Cao Cao's side and decreased on the Shu side. Due to the prejudice and fiction, the Red Cliff Battle will remain elusive in the annals of history.

#### Works Cited

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Woo, John. Red Cliff. 2008.