



# Records of the Three Kingdoms in Plain Language

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The saga of the Three Kingdoms—which recounts the dramatic story of the civil wars (ca. 180–220 CE) that divided the old Han Empire into the Shu, Wei, and Wu states—remains as popular as ever in China, having served as the basis of not only traditional operas and ballads, but also, in more recent years, of movies, television dramas, and video games.

Translated into English for the first time here, the *Sanguozhi pinghua* (thirteenth century CE) provides a complete and fast-paced narrative account of the events of the period, from the beginning of the civil wars to the demise of the Three Kingdoms and the short-lived reunification of the realm by the Jin dynasty. Shorter, clearer, and more accessible to Western audiences than Luo Guanzhong's later, greatly expanded *Romance* (*Sanguo yanyi*)—and beautifully rendered in this edition by two modern-day masters of the art of Chinese literary translation—the *Records of the Three Kingdoms in Plain Language* provides an ideal introduction to one of the foundational Chinese epic traditions.

Tables of major Chinese dynasties and reigns, a guide to understanding formal Chinese naming conventions, a glossary of Chinese names and terms, and reproductions of some woodcuts from the original edition of the text are included.

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