

# *Water-Mirror Turning Back the Tide of Destiny*

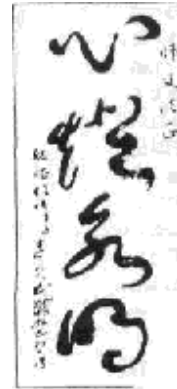
*Essays and Verses by the Venerable Tripitaka Master Hua*

## *In Memory of General Li Yen Wu*

紀念李炎武將軍

ESSAY:

GENERAL LI WAS A NATIVE OF JI-LIN PROVINCE IN MANCHURIA. HE WAS WELL VERSED IN THE *ART OF WAR* BY SUN DZ (SUN DZ WAS A BRILLIANT STRATEGIST WHO LIVED DURING THE WARRING STATES PERIODS). IN HIS YOUTH HE ENJOYED SUCCESS. WHEN STILL IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES HE BECAME CHIEF OF STAFF TO GENERAL MA JAN SHAN. HIS TALENT ALLOWED HIM TO "MAP OUT TACTICAL MANEUVERS INSIDE A TENT, AND WAGE VICTORIOUS BATTLES A THOUSAND MILES AWAY." WHEN THE JAPANESE ARMY INVADED HEILUNGJYANG PROVINCE, AMONG THE CHINESE THERE WERE THOSE WHO ADVOCATED NON-RESISTANCE AND GIVING UP MANCHURIA, WHILE OTHERS INSISTED UPON REPELLING THE ENEMY AND NOT RETREATING. THERE WAS UNMITIGATED DEBATE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. GENERAL LI WAS ALL FOR BATTLING THE ENEMY, AND GENERAL MA, WHO WAS ACTING GOVERNOR OF MANCHURIA AT THAT TIME, AGREED. THEIR COMBINED EFFORTS BROUGHT ABOUT THE VICTORIOUS BATTLE AT NUN JYANG BRIDGE; THE JAPANESE SUFFERED A HUGE DEFEAT AND WERE DEMORALIZED.



THE GENERAL WAS A VALIANT SOLDIER AS WELL AS ACCOMPLISHED MAN OF LETTERS. BESIDES BEING A SKILLED POET, HE WAS ALSO A MASTER CALLIGRAPHER. IT IS SAID OF HIS CALLIGRAPHY THAT IT RESEMBLED FLYING DRAGONS AND PRANCING PHOENIXES. FOR THIS REASON HE HAS BEEN CALLED THE CONFUCIAN GENERAL. AFTER HIS RETIREMENT, EVERY DAY HE PRACTICED CALLIGRAPHY. A SCROLL BEARING THE CHARACTERS "THE MIND'S LIGHT IS FOREVER BRIGHT" (心性如明) FROM HIS BRUSH STILL GRACES GOLD MOUNTAIN MONASTERY.

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS:

HIS LITERARY AND MARTIAL SKILLS EXCELLED THE  
COMMON LOT.  
WITH UNDAUNTED VALOR, HE SWEEPED CLEAN THE FOUL  
AND DEMONIC ENERGIES.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS LIKE JANG LYANG, WHO HAD PLANS  
TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY,  
HE NEVER MET WITH SOMEONE LIKE THE GOVERNOR OF  
PEI,\*  
WHO MANAGED TO BRING PEACE TO HIS COUNTRYMEN'S  
HEARTS.  
HE LED A BUSY LIFE, RIDING ASTRIDE HIS WAR HORSE.  
BUT THE ROAMING *CHI-LIN* 麒麟 WAS BORN AT THE  
WRONG TIME —HOW UNFORTUNATE!  
THE GENERAL NEVER KNEW WHEN HE WOULD BE ABLE  
TO RETURN TO HIS HOME TOWN.  
HE GREW OLD AND LIVED OUT HIS REMAINING YEARS IN  
TAIWAN, REMINISCING OVER PAST CAUSES.

COMMENTARY:

GENERAL LI WAS A NATIVE OF JI LIN PROVINCE OF MANCHURIA, and later came to believe in Buddhism. The first time I went to Taiwan, he took refuge, HE WAS WELL VERSED IN THE *ART OF WAR* BY SUN DZ (孫子兵法). He knew this work by the military scientist Sun Dz very well. IN HIS YOUTH HE ENJOYED SUCCESS, AND WHEN HE WAS STILL IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES HE BECAME CHIEF OF STAFF TO GENERAL MA JAN-SHAN. He was the chief military advisor to General Ma. HIS TALENT ALLOWED HIM TO "MAP OUT TACTICAL MANEUVERS INSIDE A TENT, AND WAGE VICTORIOUS BATTLES A THOUSAND MILES AWAY." He was gifted with military acumen that enabled him to understand the enemy's moves, as if reading the lines on his own palm. He could draw up plans inside an army camp, and score decisive victories hundreds of miles away. He was spirit-like in his evaluation of enemy forces.

WHEN THE JAPANESE ARMY INVADED HEILUNGJYANG PROVINCE OF MANCHURIA, AMONG THE CHINESE THERE WERE THOSE WHO ADVOCATED NON-RESISTANCE AND GIVING UP MANCHURIA, WHILE OTHERS INSISTED ON REPELLING THE ENEMY AND NOT RETREATING. During the Japanese occupation of the Northeastern region of China, some people insisted on fighting the enemy, while others said they should not fight but simply give up on Manchuria. THERE WAS UNMITIGATED DEBATE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. Those two parties argued on and on without end. GENERAL LI WAS ALL FOR FIGHTING THE ENEMY, AND GENERAL MA, WHO WAS ACTING-GOVERNOR OF MANCHURIA AT THAT TIME, AGREED. General Ma Jan-shan (馬占山) also agreed with General Li's suggestion to resist the Japanese. THEIR COMBINED EFFORTS BROUGHT ABOUT THE VICTORIOUS BATTLE AT NUN JYANG BRIDGE (嫩江橋); THE JAPANESE SUFFERED A HUGE DEFEAT AND WERE DEMORALIZED. After they were defeated in battle, the Japanese became scared.

THE GENERAL WAS A VALIANT SOLDIER AS WELL AS AN ACCOMPLISHED MAN OF LETTERS. He was good at both military and literary affairs. BESIDES

BEING A SKILLED POET, HE WAS ALSO A MASTER CALLIGRAPHER. He was an accomplished poet, and his calligraphy was very fine. In fact, I think his calligraphy excelled that of the famous calligrapher, Yu You-ren. IT IS SAID OF HIS CALLIGRAPHY THAT IT RESEMBLED FLYING DRAGONS AND PRANCING PHOENIXES. Yu You-ren's calligraphy is still a little weak, but General Li's brush strokes were forceful and full of power, FOR THIS REASON HE HAS BEEN CALLED THE CONFUCIAN GENERAL, a general who devotes himself to learning and study.

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT, HE PRACTICED CALLIGRAPHY EVERY DAY. It was his hobby. A SCROLL BEARING THE CHARACTERS, "THE MIND'S LIGHT IS FOREVER BRIGHT" FROM HIS BRUSH STILL GRACES GOLD MOUNTAIN MONASTERY. Right after he took refuge with me, he felt as if a lamp in his heart was lit, that it shone on and on for seven or eight days without going out. Thereupon, he wrote the four characters "The Mind's Light is Forever Bright" and presented it as a gift to Gold Mountain Monastery.

A VERSE IN PRAISE SAYS: HIS LITERARY AND MARTIAL SKILLS EXCELLED THE COMMON LOT./ He showed exceptional achievement in both letters and in the art of war, surpassing his peers. WITH UNDAUNTED VALOR HE SWEEP CLEAN THE FOUL AND DEMONIC ENERGIES./ He had a vast and magnanimous mind, and felt indignant at the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Therefore he was determined to defeat the Japanese. ALTHOUGH HE WAS LIKE JANG LYANG (張良), WHO HAD PLANS TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY,/ like Jang Lyang of the Han Dynasty, he had the wisdom and strategy to pacify the country, however HE NEVER MET WITH SOMEONE LIKE THE GOVERNOR PEI, WHO MANAGED TO BRING PEACE TO HIS COUNTRYMEN'S HEARTS./ It was a shame he did not encounter anyone who truly recognized him. Unlike Jang Lyang, who ran into Lyou Bang (劉邦), the Governor of Pei, and helped him found the Han Dynasty, General Li did not meet with someone who could utilize his vast ambitions. He had the talent, but not the opportunity to use it. HE LED A BUSY LIFE, RIDING ASTRIDE HIS WAR HORSE./ Cardinal Paul Yu Bin had a high esteem for the General's talent. He remarked that there were only two and a half soldiers in Manchuria, and that General Li was one of them. However, the general never had the chance to unfurl his grand ambition. He was LIKE THE ROAMING *CHI-LIN*, BORN AT THE WRONG TIME--HOW UNFORTUNATE!/ During the time of the sagely rulers Yau and Shun (堯舜), the *chi-lin* appeared in the world. When Confucius saw people capture a *chi-lin*, he was moved to compose the "Song of the Captured *Chi-Lin*," which goes,

During the time of Tang and Yu, the *chi-lin* and phoenix roamed freely.

But now is no longer those days of old--how could one seek the *chi-lin*?

Ah, *chi-lin*, *chi-lin*, how my heart grieves!

General Li was also like a *chi-lin*, born at the wrong time, and so he felt great regrets in his heart.

THE GENERAL NEVER KNEW WHEN HE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO HIS HOME TOWN./ He wrote a poem about his home town in Manchuria:

The Black River flowed for a thousand years.  
The White Mountain towers for ten thousand ages.  
My house was tucked away in the secluded foothills.  
Plowing the fields, digging a well, we enjoyed simple pleasures.  
In my youth, I threw away my writing brush to join the army;  
In my old age, I sojourn in the Island of Pang (Taiwan).  
When will I return to my home town,  
And run around the firmiana tree in front of the yard?

By his old home, there was an aged firmiana tree. He used to sit with his mother beneath that firmiana tree and chat, enjoying the breeze. He reminisced about those years of close family ties. He often thought back, wondering when he would return to that firmiana tree and chat with his mother. When I heard that poem, I chastised him, saying, "You are spineless. You haven't had enough being someone's son for an entire lifetime, and you are still planting those firmiana trees-- you are spineless!"

HE GREW OLD AND LIVED OUT HIS REMAINING YEARS IN TAIWAN./ He grew old and died in Taiwan, REMINISCING OVER PAST CAUSES./ He felt that he probably did not plant very good causes in the past, which was why in this life he encountered many hard-ships and vicissitudes.

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\* Referring to Liu Bang, the Governor of Pei, founder of the Han Dynasty, whose reign lasted from 206-194 B.C. Liu Bang started his uprising from his native town of Pei.