

Water-Mirror Averting the Tide of Destiny

Essays and Verses by Venerable Master Hua

In Memory of Prime Minister Ju-Ge Lyang

Mr. Kung Ming lived in seclusion in Nanyang, plowing the fields himself and attending to his studies. He kept his aspirations pure by leading a tranquil life with few worldly desires. He lived in a humble cottage that he built himself. His fine reputation as the "Crouching Dragon" was known far and wide.

Once Lyou Bei's horse leapt over a river, and those circumstances led to his meeting with Mr. Sz-ma Hwei, whose other name was Shwei Jing (Water-Mirror). This gentleman pointed out to Lyou Bei, "There is Wo Lung (Crouching Dragon) and Feng Chu (Young Phoenix). If you can recruit either one of these men, you will be able to bring peace to the country."

Thereupon Lyou Bei called on Ju-ge Lyang three times. Ju-ge was moved by someone who recognized his true worth and vowed to repay this kindness even at the cost of death. Later he dispatched his troops out of Chi Mountain six times. Planning his strategy in his grass hut at Lung Jung, he already foresaw the establishing of the Three Kingdoms, which stood like the three legs of a censer. He simply tried his best to comply with heaven's will in the human realm.

In his Memorial of Military Dispatch are the lines: "I will devote myself to affairs of state with body and mind; not until death will I stop." His loyalty and dedication to his country will forever be remembered. A verse in praise says:

Leading a serene life to make clear his own resolve,
He personally plowed the fields at Nanyang.
Holding himself detached from the world,
He slept comfortably in his grass hut.
Winter came and summer went;
In autumn there was harvest and in winter the crops were
stored.
Courteous to worthy and learned ones,
The way he dispatched his troops was uncanny and superb.

Another verse says:

The wonderful trick of the "empty city" alarmed Sz-ma.
Throughout his life, he was prudent and pledged to help his
nation prosper.
Knowing both the enemy and himself, he devised strategies
in his tent.
Assurance of victory on the battlefield separates the strong
from the weak.
In a fury he scolded Wang Lang, and demoralized the
enemy.
Three times he annoyed and demeaned gentleman Jou
Gung-jin.
His brilliance was unrivalled, but he died early.

The "creator of things" toys with people: he did not live long.

COMMENTARY:

Ju-ge Lyang (A.D. 181-234) was a great statesman of China, an astronomer, geographer, prophet and military scientist. He was endowed with a lot of foresight. During the time before he came out of his thatched cottage, he already knew that China would be divided into three kingdoms. He could foretell the future with miraculous accuracy. How did this happen? He did not recite a mantra to enable him to foresee things. Rather, when one reaches a state of ultimate stillness, the light penetrates. If your mind is extremely clear and pure, you will not have so much polluted thinking, and your wisdom will manifest. If you have a lot of polluted thinking, you will not be able to remember anything. If you do not have polluted thinking, you will not forget anything because your mind will not be cluttered with selfish desires. As a result, you will be filled with wisdom. If you have selfish desires and polluted thoughts, your mind will be filled with stupidity.

Ju-ge (諸葛) is a Chinese compound-surname. There are two characters combined, for example, Sya-hou; Wen-ren, Dung-fang; and Sz-ma. Those are all compound surnames. "Prime Minister" was his official title. He was Prime Minister in the western kingdom of Shu (西蜀) and was skilled at ruling the country. He promoted economic prosperity and the people were happy. Society was peaceful and secure.

Government and military affairs were Mr. Ju-ge's special talents. He was not someone who spoke casually. Rather, he was quiet and reserved. He was also known by another name, Kung Ming.

Here is a story about Kung Ming. A long time ago two people made a bet with each other. One person said, "Ju-ge Lyang and Kung Ming were one person." The other person said, "No, Ju-ge Lyang is Ju-ge Lyang and Kung Ming is Kung Ming. They were two different people." As for these two men who were arguing, the former was learned, while the latter was illiterate. After hearing the story of the Three Kingdoms, the illiterate man thought that Ju-ge Lyang and Kung Ming were brothers, two separate people, and so he wanted to argue.

The learned man said, "Okay. We have a school master here. I only know a few more characters than you, and you are illiterate. Let us ask the school master whether Kung Ming and Ju-ge Lyang were one person or two. If they were one person, you must treat me to a drink, and if they were two people, I'll treat you to a drink." The two of them bet against each other and went to ask the schoolmaster. The learned man said, "Teacher, I know that Ju-ge Lyang and Kung Ming were one person, but he says they were two people. I would like to hear what you have to say about this."

The teacher said, "Oh, they were two separate individuals."

And so, the illiterate man won the bet. He was quite pleased that he won, and he left. But the learned man was not convinced, and he spoke to the teacher, "I know Ju-ge Lyang was Kung Ming. Why did you say they were two people?"

The teacher replied, "You are very stupid. He said they were two; you said they were one. This proved that he did not know, but he was betting with you. If I said they were one person, you would have won the bet, and he would have understood and known. I asserted that they were two people because I wanted to confuse him. He will remain muddled about the issue for the rest of his life. He will never know who Ju-ge Lyang was and who Kung Ming was, and wherever he goes he will still argue his

point, because he won a drink betting on it." This was a very bad teacher. He did not speak the truth. Others asked him to be a judge, but he was not fair. This kind of teacher is very plentiful nowadays.

Mr. Kung Ming lived in seclusion in Nanyang, plowing the fields himself and attending to his studies. He personally farmed and sustained himself. He went to work when the sun rose and rested when the sun set. He dug a well to drink. He plowed the fields to eat. He studied and lived as a recluse. He said, "I sustain my own life in this troubled world and do not seek to be known by nobility." He did not seek recognition from high officials, noble lords, or the emperor. He lived in a grass hut that was very rustic and simple, not attractive at all. Once he spoke the following poem:

Who is the first to enlighten from the great dream?
I understand my life entirely.
I've got plenty of sleep this spring, in my grass hut.
The sun creeps up slowly outside my window.

The meaning of this poem is: life is like a big dream—who is the first to awaken from it? I understand that life is like a dream. It's springtime. I've had a lot of sleep in my grass hut. I won't be frantically running around, getting entangled in the affairs of state and people.

An ancient poet also said,

While alive I do not want to be a Prime Minister;
After death I have no wish to be King Yama.
King Yama is cruel when he calls the ghosts.
A Prime Minister is worried over many affairs of the people.

A certain recluse composed this poem. He said, "In life I do not want to be a Prime Minister. A Prime Minister is the pillar of a country, able to support the country when it is on the verge of collapse. After I die, I want even less to be King Yama. Why? King Yama is cruel when he calls out the names of the ghosts. One moment the ghosts are sent to be fried in pots of oil; another moment they are impaled upon the mountain of knives. King Yama's heart is very cruel. Also, a Prime Minister is always concerned about the country and the people."

People in the past preferred to hide their light and cover their tracks. They looked lightly on fame and profit. Unlike people nowadays who like to compete with one another, ancient people were not confused by wealth, sex, fame, food and sleep. So the Marquis Ju-ge Wu Hou (his posthumous title) was determined to live in seclusion in Nanyang. He farmed and studied by himself. He earned his own living, like a common laborer.

He kept his aspirations pure by leading a tranquil life with few worldly desires. He was not greedy and did not contend with others. He led a very simple life and did not seek name and profit, unlike upside-down common people. His aspirations were lofty and pure. He always rested in his grass hut and was not overly busy, but his wisdom was profound and his knowledge extensive and profuse. He was very clear about what was happening in his country.

Before he left Lung Jung, the town in which he lived, he already had a very clear design—a plan for the entire country. He knew that China would in the future be divided into three kingdoms.

He lived in a humble cottage that he built himself. He was a recluse who lived at ease and enjoyed his seclusion. **His fine reputation as the "Crouching Dragon" was known far and wide.**

Once Lyou Bei's horse leapt over a river and those circumstances led to his meeting with Mr. Sz-ma Hwei, whose other name was Shwei Jing (Water Mirror). One time Lyou Bei was riding around when he came upon a deep stream. His horse did not swim across, rather it jumped across the stream. On the other side of the stream, Lyou Bei discovered a place of unique beauty--somewhat like a paradise--where he met Mr. Sz-ma Hwei. This gentleman was probably the loftiest individual during the Three Kingdoms Period. Although Mr. Sz-ma recognized the talents of "Crouching Dragon" and "Young Phoenix," he himself did not seek for fame and profit. He was truly a hermit. For this reason, during the Three Kingdoms Period, Sz-ma Hwei was considered the highest and wisest person. Upon their meeting, Sz-ma Hwei and Lyou Bei began to converse. Lyou Bei wanted to consult him on the outstanding and greatly wise figures of that time—people who could help him rejuvenate and strengthen the foundation of the Han dynasty.

This gentleman pointed out to Lyou Bei, "there is Wo Lung (Crouching Dragon) and Feng Chu (Young Phoenix). If you can recruit either one of these men, you will be able to bring peace to the country." Mr. Shwei Jing (Water Mirror) told Lyou Bei, "There are two people, Wo Lung and Feng Chu. If you gain the help of either one—you don't need both, but one will do—it will bring peace to the world. You will rule the country very well because these two men are knowledgeable in military strategy. They have great wisdom. They will be able to assist you in running the country." Lyou Bei did not ask clearly where they lived. He left, only knowing their names.

In Lyou Bei's military camp, there was a learned scholar named Syu Shu. Syu Shu's mother had been tricked by Tsau Tsau, an enemy of Lyou Bei, into coming to Tsau Tsau's camp. Syu Shu's mother was also intelligent. Tsau Tsau told her that Syu Shu was in his camp and that he wished to see her to discuss some matters with her. She did not believe it. But Tsau Tsau took her by force anyway. After that, Tsau Tsau asked someone to forge a letter with Syu Shu's mother's handwriting. The letter said that she was ill and living in Tsau Tsau's camp, and that she wanted Syu Shu to come as soon as possible to see her.

After Syu Shu found out that his mother was in Tsau Tsau's camp, he was afraid she would run into some kind of mishap and so he quickly said good-bye to Lyou Bei and went to Tsau Tsau's camp. Why did Tsau Tsau capture Syu Shu's mother? Because he wanted to win Syu Shu's support. He knew that Syu Shu was a talented person, and so he kidnapped his mother in order to induce the son to work under him rather than Lyou Bei. When Syu Shu was taking his leave, Lyou Bei personally escorted him for many miles. He could not bear to part from him. Syu Shu, moved by this conduct, recommended Ju-ge Lyang to Lyou Bei.

Thereupon Lyou Bei called on Ju-ge Lyang three times. After Lyou Bei returned to his own country, he made a special trip to call on Ju-ge Lyang. He called on him once, and then a second time, to invite Ju-ge Lyang to help him rule the country. Ju-ge Lyang did not pay any attention and did not wish to go. Lyou Bei then called a third time. Ju-ge Lyang was finally moved by Lyou Bei's sincerity and consented.

Ju-ge was moved by someone who recognized his true worth and vowed to repay this kindness even at the cost of death. He was grateful for Lyou Bei's kindness and appreciation of his ability, so he dedicated his life to repaying Lyou Bei. **Later he dispatched his troops out of Chi Mountain six times.** He mobilized his army from Mount Chi. During his life, Ju-ge Lyang attacked the kingdom of Northern Wei six times and after his death, his successor Jyang Wei battled in the Central Plains nine times.

Planning his strategy in his grass hut at Lung Jung, the town in which he resided before he left his grass hut, **he already foresaw the establishing of the Three Kingdoms—Wei, Shu and Wu—which stood like the three legs of a censer. He simply tried his best to comply with heaven's will in the human realm.** Even though he tried his best, he met with no success.

In his Memorial of Military Dispatch are the lines: "I will devote myself to affairs of state with body and mind; not until death will I stop." He would withstand all toil and fatigue and would take his responsibility very seriously until the day he died. Only then would his desire to serve his country cease. **His loyalty and dedication to his country will forever be remembered.** His good name will last through the ages. From the past to the present, people have admired him very much.

A verse in praise says: Leading a serene life to make clear his own resolve, / he personally plowed the fields at Nanyang. He supported himself by farming. **Holding himself detached from the world he slept comfortably in a grass hut.** He did not contend with worldly people. When it was time to work, he worked; and likewise, when it was time to rest, he rested. He was detached.

Winter came and summer went; / in autumn there was harvest and in winter the crops were stored. "Winter came" represents his compliance with the natural changes of the seasons. For example, in farming, during the fall there is the harvest and in the winter the crops are stored. These are very ordinary affairs.

Courteous to worthy and learned ones. He cherished people with talent, such as those who had literary ability. **The way he dispatched his troops was uncanny and superb.** The way he attacked the Central Plains could not be pinpointed to any particular method. He simply tried his best and left his fate to the gods.

Another praise says: **The wonderful trick of the "empty city" alarmed Sz-ma. Throughout his life, he was prudent and pledged to help his nation prosper.** Ju-ge Lyang played an empty city trick. Throughout his life he was cautious and never took a risk. Sz-ma Yi, commander of the Northern Wei forces, also knew that Ju-ge Lyang never took risks. Once Sz-ma attacked a city where Ju-ge Lyang was stationed, but the city did not have an army inside. That does not mean there weren't any people in it at all. There were common citizens living inside, but no army guarding it. If Ju-ge Lyang did not stand up against the threats of Sz-ma Yi's army, Sz-ma Yi would surely have captured that city and as a result, the Western state to Shu would have lost that whole territory.

Ju-ge Lyang was a prudent person who never took risks, but this time he took a risk. He sat above the gates of the city wall and played the Chinese zither. He asked the guards to sweep the ground below. He did not appear to be the slightest bit afraid but looked as if he had a well thought-out plan. Sz-ma Yi noticed that Ju-ge Lyang was playing the zither very calmly, and so he figured that Ju-ge Lyang had an ambush waiting for him. If he entered the city, he would fall into that ambush. Thereupon he withdrew his troops for forty miles. After he ascertained that the city was empty and without an army to guard it, he wanted to attack again, but by then Ju-ge Lyang's troops had returned.

Although Ju-ge Lyang was prudent, he took a risk once in a while, and so Sz-ma Yi was unable to predict his actions. This time Ju-ge Lyang had succeeded by luck, but in his entire life he was prudent and took everything seriously. This time he took a risk and was able to trick Sz-ma Yi.

Knowing both the enemy and himself, he devised strategies in his tent. He would devise military maneuvers inside the military camp, but he would win battles even though they were a thousand miles away. He knew the enemy and knew himself, so he could fight a hundred battles and win them all.

Assurance of victory on the battlefield separates the strong from the weak. Before a battle began, he already knew whether he or the enemy had more soldiers. He could devise plans to win against a strong enemy even if his own forces were weak. He would also be victorious over any enemy with an army larger than his own.

In a fury he scolded Wang Lang, and demoralized the enemy. He gave Wang Lang, a persuasive negotiator for Tsau Tsau, a good scolding. Ju-ge Lyang scolded Wang Lang until the latter died of vexation. **Three times he annoyed and demeaned gentleman Jou Gung-jin.** Jou Gung-jin was a young hero, the commander of the forces of the Eastern State of Wu, who loved to be number one. Ju-ge Lyang goaded him into attacking the Northern State of Wei.

His brilliance was unrivalled, but he died early. His talent was peerless, but his life was short. Even though he had passed through the gate of Yan Dz—Yan Dz was the eminent disciple of Confucius who passed away at the age of thirty-two—still, he died at Wo Chang Yan when he was only fifty-eight years old. **The "creator of things" toys with people: he did not live long.** The "creator of things" sometimes creates people who are almost perfect, but not completely perfect. In most aspects they are very good, but they might have a fault, a small defect. That defect is an opportunity for people to resolve their minds on becoming enlightened and understanding that:

All conditioned dharmas,
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows,
Like dewdrops or a lightning flash:
Contemplate them in this way.