

吊古战场文 - 李华 (简体版)

diao` gu^ zhan` chang' wen' li' hua' (jian' ti' ban^)

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Eulogy to the Ancient Battlefield - by Li Hua (Simplified Chinese Script Version)

English Translation by Feng Xin-ming Dec. 2008

http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Ancient_Battlefield_Simp.pdf

(To complicated Chinese script version 到繁體版: http://www.tsoidug.org/Literary/Ancient_Battlefield_Comp.pdf)

[Note: Li Hua wrote this anti-war piece shortly after the Imperial Army's defeat in Nanshao (南绍, in present day southwestern China) in 752 A.D., the tenth year of the reign period *tian bao* 天宝, to advocate guarding the borders only and not conducting campaigns into foreign lands. Of course, as was common at the time with public writings critical of government policy, the war in this essay was set as being against the northern nomads instead of the real one, the one against the southern Nanshao.]

TEXT 文

浩浩乎，平沙无垠，夙不见人，

hao` hao` hu' ping' sha- wu' yin' xiong` bu' jian` ren'
So vast, this flat and endless sand! No soul can be seen even very far away.

河水萦带，群山纠纷，

he' shui' ying' dai` qun' shan- jiu- fen`
A river winds around like a belt, and a group of mountains grapple with each other.

黯兮惨悴，风悲日曛。

an` xi' can' cui` feng- bei- ri` xun-
Oh, it's dark, downcast and depressing; the wind is sad and the sun is low.

蓬断草枯，凛若霜晨，

peng' duan` cao' ku- lin^ ruo` shuang- chen'
The stalks are broken and the grass shriveled; it's very cold - a frosty morning.

鸟飞不下，兽挺亡群。

niao' fei- bu' xia` shou' ting' wang' qun'

Flying birds will not land here; any upright animal here has been lost from its herd.

亭长告予曰，此古战场也。

ting' zhang^ gao' yu' yue- ci^ gu^ zhan` chang' ye^

The station master tells me that this is the ancient battle field.

尝覆三军，往往鬼哭，天阴则闻。

chang' fu` san- jun- wang' wang' gui^ ku- tian- yin- ze' wen'

Entire armies have perished here. Often ghosts weep - on cloudy days one can hear it.

伤心哉，秦欤汉欤，将近代欤。

shang- xin- zai- qin' yu' han` yu' jiang- jin` dai` yu'

Sad indeed, oh! Was it the Qin times and the Han times? And now it will be our times?

吾闻乎，齐魏徭戍，荆韩召募，

wu' wen' hu' qi' wei' yao' shu` jing- han' zhao` mu`

I hear that they draft in Qi and Wei, and recruit in Jing and Han.

万里奔走，连年暴露，

wan` li' ben- zou^ lian' nian' bao` lu`

For thousands of miles the men hurry; year after year they are exposed to the elements.

沙草晨牧，河冰夜渡，

sha- cao^ chen' mu` he' bing- ye` du`

In the morning they put the horses to pasture in sand and grass, at night they cross rivers of ice.

地阔天长，不知归路，

di` kuo` tian- chang' bu` zhi- gui- lu`

The land is wide and the sky is long - no one knows where the road home is.

寄身锋刃，臆谁诉。

ji` shen- feng- ren` bi` yi` shui' su`

They have given themselves over to the spear and sword; there's no one to tell their sorrows to.

秦汉而还，多事四夷，

qin' han` er' huan' duo-shi` si` yi'

Since the Qin and Han times, there has been much trouble on the borders -

中州耗斁，无世无之。

zhong- zhou- hao` yi` wu' shi` wu' zhi-

Ruin of the Central Lands occurs every generation.

古称戎夏，不抗王师。

gu^ cheng- rong' xia` bu' kang` wang' shi`

During ancient times they say that the barbarians did not resist the government troops.

文教失宣，武臣用奇。

wen' jiao` shi` xuan- wu' chen' yong` qi'

Then correct teachings lost popularity, and the generals used trickery.

奇兵有异于仁义，王道¹迂阔²而莫为，

qi' bing- you' yi` yu' ren' yi` wang' dao` yu- kuo` er' mo` wei'

Now using trickery in war was not righteous, but the Kingly Way was far-off, impractical and did nothing.

呜呼噫嘻！

wu- hu- yi- xi-

Oh goodness, oh woe!

吾想乎，北风振漠，胡兵伺便，

wu' xiang^ hu' bei' feng- zhen` mo` hu' bing- si` bian`

I picture it: the north wind is shaking the dessert; the barbarian troops lie in wait.

¹ 王道 *wang dao* or "the correct way to govern" or "The Kingly Way" was a way of governing, especially when it came to foreign policy, as being motivated mainly by moral principles rather than advantage or gain, and characterized by mainly peaceful and diplomatic methods. During China's imperial history *wang dao* was often set against the concept of *ba dao* 霸道 or "The Hegemon's Way" where policy was motivated mainly by advantage or gain and methods were characterized by force and war.

² 迂阔: according to *Ci Hai* 辞海 (*Sea of Terms*), Shanghai 1989, p. 1166, this term means far-off and impractical ("迂远而不切实际").

主将骄敌，旗门受战，

zhu[^] jiang` jiao- di' qi' men' shou` zhan`

The commander is arrogant and looks down upon the enemy; he takes the assault with the Banner Gate.

野竖旄旗，川回组练，

ye' shu` mao' qi' chuan- hui' zu[^] lian`

All over the wilds stand flags; on the plain units march.

法重心骇，威尊命贱。

fa[^] zhong` xin- hai` wei- zun- ming` jian`

Discipline is harsh and the heart is afraid; awe is supreme and lives are lowly.

利镞穿骨，惊沙入面。

li` zu' chuan- gu' jing- sha- ru` mian`

Sharp arrowheads pierce bones; beaten sand enters the face.

主客相搏，山川震眩。

zhu[^] ke` xiang- bo' shan- chuan- zhen` xuan`

Host and guest struggle; the mountains and plains shake dizzily.

声析江河，势崩雷电。

sheng- xi- jiang- he' shi` beng- lei' dian`

The sound splits rivers; the force collapses thunder and lightning.

至若³穷阴凝闭，凜冽海隅，

zhi` ruo` qiong' yin- ning' bi` lin[^] lie` hai' yu'

Add to that the freezing cold in deepest winter; the corner of the sea is icy and frigid.

积雪没胫，坚冰在须，

ji- xue[^] mo` jing` jian- bing- zai` xu-

Piled-up snow buries the lower legs; solid ice forms on the beard.

³ "至若": means "in addition" according to

http://www.nlcsearch.moe.gov.tw/EDMS/admin/dict1/dict/111/m_110063.html (注釋：“加之。唐·李華·弔古戰場文：至若窮陰凝閉，凜冽海隅。”)

鷺鸟归巢，征马踟蹰，

zhi` niao^ gui- chao' zheng- ma^ chi' chu'

The birds of prey return to their nests; the war horse is not sure whether to go forward.

缁纆无温，堕指裂肤。

zeng- kuang` wu' wen- duo` zhi^ lie` fu-

Heaped cotton suits give no warmth; fingers fall and skin cracks.

当此苦寒，天假强胡，

dang` ci' ku' han' tian- jia^ qiang' hu'

During this bitter cold, Heaven sends strong barbarians,

凭陵杀气，以相翦屠。

ping' ling' sha- qi` yi' xiang- jian^ tu'

Who rely on their lust for bullying and killing to cut and slaughter.

径截辎重，横攻士卒，

jing` jie' zi- zhong` heng' gong- shi` zu'

They strike our transport on the road; they attack our troops from the sides.

都尉新降，将军覆没。

du- wei` xin- xiang' jiang' jun- fu` mo`

The colonel has just surrendered; the general has died.

尸填巨港之岸，血满长城之窟，

shi- tian' ju` gang^ zhi- an` xue' man^ chang' cheng' zhi- ku-

Bodies fill the shores of the giant harbor; blood plugs the holes of the Great Wall.

无贵无贱，同为枯骨，可胜言哉。

wu' gui` wu' jian` tong' wei' ku- gu' ke^ sheng- yan' zai-

Whether of high or low station, all become dried-up bones together - this says more than any words.

鼓衰兮力尽，矢竭兮弦绝，

gu' shuai- xi' li` jin` shi^ jie' xi' xian' jue'

The drum is feeble and the strength is spent. The arrows are exhausted and the bowstring is at an end.

白刃交兮宝刀折，两军蹙兮生死决，

bai' ren` jiao- xi' bao' dao- zhe' liang^ jun- cu` xi' sheng- si^ jue'

The white blades cross and the treasured sword breaks. The two armies meld together and it's life and death.

降矣哉终身夷狄，战矣哉骨暴沙砾。

xiang' yi' zai- zhong- shen- yi' di` zhan` yi' zai- gu' bao` sha- li`

To surrender means to spend the rest of one's life in the barbarian land; to fight means to leave one's bones on the pebbles and sand.

鸟无声兮山寂寂，夜正长兮风淅淅，

niao' wu' sheng- xi' shan- ji` ji` ye` zheng` chang' xi' feng- xi- xi-

The birds make no noise and the mountains are quiet. The night is long and the wind sounds like sleet.

魂魄结兮天沉沉，鬼神聚兮云幂幂，

hun' po` jie` xi' tian- chen' chen' gui' shen' ju` xi' yun' mi` mi`

The souls congeal and the sky sinks. The ghosts and spirits gather and the clouds thicken.

日光寒兮草短，月色苦兮霜白，

ri' guang- han' xi' cao' duan` yue` se` ku' xi' shuang- bai'

The sunlight is cold and the grass short. The moonlight is bitter and the frost white.

伤心惨目，有如是耶。

shang- xin- can' mu` you' ru' shi` ye'

Such are the heart-breaking, eye-wrenching sights.

吾闻之，牧用赵卒，大破林胡，

wu' wen' zhi` mu' yong` zhao` zu' da` po` lin' hu'

I've heard that Mu used the Zhao troops and dealt the Lin barbarians a great defeat;

开地千里，遁逃匈奴。

kai- di` qian- li^ dun' tao' xiong- nu'

He opened up a thousand miles of land and the Xiong-nu fled.

汉倾天下，才殫力痛，

han` qing- tian- xia` cai' dan- li` pu-

The Han Dynasty exerted the strength of the entire land, and drained it of money and strength.

任人而已，其在多乎？

ren` ren' er' yi^ qi' zai` duo- hu'

Using the right people is what's important, not using great numbers.

周逐獫狁，北至太原，

zhou- zhu' xian^ yun^ bei' zhi` tai` yuan'

The Zhou Dynasty drove away the Xian-yun, north to Tai-yuan,

既城朔方，全师而还，

ji` cheng' shuo` fang- quan' shi- er' huan'

And built a fort in the northern land, after which the entire army returned.

饮至策勋，和乐且闲，

yin^ zhi` ce` xun- he' le` qie^ xian'

They drank to award medals, happy and relaxed.

穆穆棣棣，君臣之间。

mu` mu` di` di` jun- chen' zhi- jian-

Respect and kindness was what transpired between ruler and ministers.

秦起长城，竟海为关，

qin' qi' chang' cheng' jing' hai' wei' guan-

The Qin Dynasty built the Great Wall, installing a pass next to the sea,

荼毒生灵，万里朱殷。

tu' du' sheng- ling' wan` li^ zhu- yan-

And inflicted untold suffering on the people, causing bleeding throughout the land.

汉击匈奴，虽得阴山，

han` ji' xiong- nu' sui- de' yin- shan-

The Han Dynasty attacked the Xiong-nu, and though it captured the Yin Mountains,

枕骸遍野，功不补患。

zhen' hai' bian` ye' gong- bu` bu' huan`

Bodies lay all over the wild - the gain did not make up for the loss.

苍苍蒸民，谁无父母，

cang- cang- zheng- min' shui' wu' fu' mu^
The ordinary people - who doesn't have parents,

提携捧负，畏其不寿。

ti' xie' peng^ fu' wei` qi' bu' shou`
Who carried the children with arms and on the backs, fearing that they wouldn't live long lives?

谁无兄弟，如手如足，

shui' wu' xiong- di` ru' shou^ ru' zu'
Who has no brothers, like one's own arms and legs?

谁无夫妇，如宾如友。

shui' wu' fu' fu' ru' bin- ru' you'
Who has no husband and wife, treating each other like guests and friends?

生也何恩，杀之何咎？

sheng- ye' he' en- sha- zhi- he' jiu`
For what grace are they born, for what trespass are they killed?

其存其没，家莫闻知

qi' cun' qi' mo` jia- mo` wen' zhi-
Whether they are alive or dead, the family doesn't know.

人或言，将信将疑，

ren' huo` you' yan' jiang- xin- jiang- yi'
On hearing a rumor, the family believes it and doubts it at the same time.

惛惛心目，寢寐见之，

juan- juan- xin- mu` qin^ mei` jian` zhi-
With fear on the mind, the family sees them in dreams.

布奠倾觞，哭望天涯。

bu` dian` qing- shang- ku` wang` tian- ya'
Then the mourning cloths come out, the wine cups are poured, and the family weeps toward the sky's edge.

天地为愁，草木悽悲，

tian- dì` wei' chou' cao' mu` qi- bei-

Heaven and Earth are saddened; the grasses and trees become forlorn.

吊祭不至，精魂何依？

diao` jì` bu' zhì` jing- hun' he' yi-

The offerings don't reach the souls, so where do they find sustenance?

必有凶年，人其流离。

bì` you' xiong- nian' ren' qí' liú' lí'

Surely there will be famine, and people will become refugees.

呜呼噫嘻！时耶命耶？

wu- hu- yi- xi- shí' yé' mìng` yé'

Oh goodness, oh woe! Is it the times? Is it fate?

从古如斯，为之奈何？

cong' gu' ru' shí- wéi' zhì- nài- hé'

From olden days it has been thus - what to do?

守在四夷。

shou' zài` sì` yí'

Stick to guarding the borders.