

Fighting south of the ramparts by li po

Literature



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An analysis on “ Fighting South of the Ramparts” by Li Po and its benefits to modern society. The short poem “ Fighting South of the Ramparts” is a reflection on the futility of war by a man who has seen too much suffering in the world. Through its structure and imagery it presents a depressing picture of the selfish obstinacy of rulers and the continuous struggle of the ordinary man in battles that bring him only to death and destruction.

In the title and the four opening lines of the poem Li Po emphasizes the vast extent of China, since he mentions the Ramparts of the Great Wall (title), the river Sanggan (line 1), the Onion River Road (line 2), the Parthian seas (line 3) and the Tian Shan (line 4). These names convey the huge scale of Chinese fighting, but also the many different territories that are covered including ramparts, rivers, roads, seashores and mountainous regions.

The sentence structure is deliberately repetitive, repeating time structures “ Last year... This year (lines 1-2) which implies that the fighting goes through past, present and future. There is an emphasis on passage of time which makes the armies “ grow gray and old” (line 5) and Li Po suggests no hope of relief for the poor soldiers.

Li Po contrasts the nomadic “ battle and carnage” of Hun culture with the “ fields and ploughlands” (line 8) of Chinese culture, and praises the wall that was built to keep the Tartars out (line 10). This shows that he values Chinese culture and longs for a return to a quiet and peaceful farming lifestyle.

There is evidence of sympathy for all living creatures harmed by war. Li Po criticizes the senior officer who orde ed this slaughter (line 18) suggesting that it is not wise to indulge in violent wars, especially since they bring no benefit and cost many lives. This message can be applied to many contexts, and especially those which are conducted outside the home country, in the <https://assignbuster.com/fighting-south-of-the-ramparts-by-li-po/>

territory of other nations. The implication for modern times is that America is already a vast and diverse territory, which should not squander life needlessly in distant lands.

References

Li Po, “ Fighting South of the Ramparts.” First written in 751. Text in English available online at: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/libo_fighting.pdf