

# *Chinese Poetry*

## *Poems of Li Bai*

Li Bai was the greatest poet of the Tang Dynasty in China. His work is still considered among the best, and appears in school textbooks and anthologies.

Li Bai was born in CE 701. The subject of his poetry is usually Nature, Friendship, or his love of Wine.

There are stories about his life, as there are about the lives of many famous people. Not all of them are true, though usually they reflect some aspect of the great man's life or personality. One story is about how Li Bai died. It is said that one night when he was enjoying a boat ride in a river, and relishing the cool night breeze, he saw the reflection of the full moon in the river. Being in a state of drunkenness, when he saw the beautiful golden moon in the water, he was beside himself with joy and flung himself in the river to seize it. And that was how China lost one of its best poets.

[This story of Li Bai's death is probably not true. It could have been invented by someone who was a nature lover, like the poet himself, or knew him or his work well. There are other accounts of how he met his death which are possibly more accurate.]

## ***Quiet Night Thoughts***

*Beside my bed, as bright as the moon,  
Is it frost on the ground, I wonder,  
Raising my head I gaze at the moon,  
Lowering it, longing for home.*

— *Li Bai*

## ***Spending the night on a Mountain Temple***

*The high tower is a hundred feet tall,  
From here one's hand could pluck the stars.  
I do not dare to speak in a loud voice,  
I fear to disturb the people in heaven.*

--- *Li Bai*

## ***Alone on Jingting Shan Hill***

*A flock of birds is flying high in the distance,  
A lonely cloud drifts idly on its own.  
We gaze at each other, neither growing tired,  
There is only Jingting Shan, and me.*

---*Li Bai*

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