

# Campaigns of the Three Kingdoms

A compilation of battles, wars and engagements

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# 181-190

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## Yellow Turban Rebellion

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Yellow Turban Rebellion	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
A Qing Dynasty illustration showing Liu Bei, Zhang Fei, and Guan Yu during the rebellion	
<b>Date</b>	184 – 205 AD
<b>Location</b>	China
<b>Result</b>	Han victory
Belligerents	
Han Dynasty	Yellow Turban rebels
Commanders and leaders	
Emperor Ling He Jin Liu Bei Huangfu Song Lu Zhi Zhu Jun Cao Cao Sun Jian	Zhang Jue Zhang Bao † Zhang Liang † Zhang Mancheng † Bo Cai †
Strength	
350,000	2,000,000

The **Yellow Turban Rebellion** (simplified Chinese: 黄巾之乱; traditional Chinese: 黃巾之亂; pinyin: *Huáng Jīn Zhī Luàn*), also translated as **Yellow Scarves Rebellion**, was a peasant revolt that broke out in 184 AD in China during the reign of Emperor Ling of the Han Dynasty. The rebellion, which got its name from the colour of the scarves that the rebels wore on their heads, marked an important point in the history of Taoism due to the rebels' association with secret Taoist societies. The revolt was also used as the opening event in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

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## Causes

A major cause of the rebellion was an agrarian crisis, in which famine forced many farmers and former military settlers in the north to seek employment in the south, where large landowners exploited the labor surplus to amass large fortunes. The situation was further aggravated by smaller floods along the lower course of the Yellow River. The peasants were further oppressed by high taxes imposed in order to fund the construction of fortifications along the Silk Road and garrisons against foreign infiltration and invasion. In this situation, landowners, landless peasants, and unemployed former-soldiers formed armed bands (around 170), and eventually private armies, setting the stage for armed conflict.

At the same time, the Han Dynasty central government was weakening internally. The power of the landowners had become a longstanding problem, but in the run-up to the rebellion, the court eunuchs in particular gained considerably in influence over the emperor, which they abused to enrich themselves. Ten of the most powerful eunuchs formed a group known as the Ten Attendants, and the emperor referred to one of them (Zhang Rang) as his "foster father". The government was widely regarded as corrupt and incapable and the famines and floods were seen as an indication that a decadent emperor had lost his mandate of heaven.

Because of its plan for a new beginning, the Taoist sect of Zhang Jue (also known as Zhang Jiao) was to prove the Han Dynasty's most dangerous enemy. In preparation for his revolt, Zhang Jue sent disciples out to gain support and organize followers throughout north China. They were helped by local political discontent, and by droughts and plague among the people. The rebels even had allies in the imperial court, and they were able to make their preparations while government officials were either ignorant of their intentions or intimidated by their power.

Zhang Jue planned a rising throughout the empire, but before the call to arms had been issued the plan was betrayed, the rebel sympathizers in Luoyang were arrested and executed, and the revolt in the provinces had to begin ahead of time, in the second month of 184. Despite the premature call and an inevitable lack of co-ordination, tens of thousands of men rose in rebellion, government offices were plundered and destroyed and the imperial armies were immediately forced onto the defensive.

## Rebels

### Founders

The rebellion was led by Zhang Jue (also referred to as Zhang Jiao, known to his followers as the "General of Heaven") and his two younger brothers Zhang Bao and Zhang Liang, who were born in Julu (present-day Pingxiang County, Hebei). The brothers had founded a Taoist religious sect in present-day Shandong. They were healers, usually accepting patients *pro bono* who could not afford to pay them. The brothers saw the harshness of the world through their work with the peasants who were often abused by the local government, overburdened and hungry due to the heavy taxes that were levied upon them.

### Taoist sect

The rebels were the first but not last followers of the Way of Supreme Peace (Chinese: 太平道; pinyin: *Tàipíng Dào*) and venerated the deity *Huang-Lao*, who according to Zhang Jue had given him a sacred book called the *Crucial Keys to the Way of Peace* (simplified Chinese: 太平要术; traditional Chinese: 太平要術; pinyin: *Tàipíng Yàoshù*). Zhang Jue was said to be a sorcerer and styled himself as the "Great Teacher". The sect taught the principles of equal rights of all peoples and equal distribution of land; when the rebellion was proclaimed, the sixteen-word slogan was created by Zhang Jue:

"The firmament<sup>[1]</sup> has perished, the Yellow Sky<sup>[2]</sup> will soon rise; in this year of *jiazi*, let there be prosperity in the world!"

(蒼天已死，黃天當立。歲在甲子，天下大吉。)

Since all the three brothers were healers, they spread it easily by telling their patients to spread it amongst the peasants.

### Religious practices

Zhang Jue used a form of Taoism to cure the sick by confession of sins and by faith healing. The religion and the politics of the Zhang brothers were based on belief in an apocalyptic change in the order of the world, and they told their followers that in the *jiazi* year, beginning of the new sexagenary cycle, the sky would become yellow, and that under this new heaven the rule of the Han Dynasty would end and a new era of government begin. The characters *jiazi* became a symbol of the coming change and later, when the followers of Zhang Jue went to battle they wore a yellow cloth bound about their heads as a badge. From this there came the term Yellow Turbans.<sup>□</sup>

Nearly all of the religious practices of the sect were communal activities (collective trances, fasts). A typical worship service consisted largely of music and chanting, the burning of incense, and sermons or anecdotes that could be given by any member of the congregation including women and those perceived as barbarians. Several Xiongnu such as Yufuluo are known to have at least lent their support to the sect and a number of scholars have theorized that Zhang Jue may have derived some of his teachings from shamanism as he appeared as a mystical healer with a direct link to the heavens.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

While many of the beliefs of the early Path of Supreme Peace have been lost, it is very likely that they had some relation to the Way of the Celestial Masters, considering Zhang Jue claimed to be a descendant of Zhang Daoling. It is further worthy to note that many of the writings found in the 52 surviving chapters of the *Taiping Jing* that are found in the *Daozang* have a direct relationship to the Way of the Celestial Masters. Regardless, it is quite likely that any discrepancies found within the Way were suppressed by later Taoist sects.

### Military action

The rebels were mostly concentrated in three areas. The group led by Zhang Jue and his two brothers gained their support from the region just north of the Yellow River, near Zhang Jue's home territory of Julu and his base in Wei Commandery. A second major rising took place in Guangyang and Zhuo commanderies in You Province, in the neighborhood of present-day Beijing. The third center of rebellion was in the three commanderies of Yingchuan, Runan and Nanyang. This force had evidently been intended to co-operate with the traitors inside Luoyang in the attempt to seize the capital, but even without that support, the rebels in this region were a major threat.

In the first weeks of the uprising, the government of Emperor Ling was chiefly concerned with finding and executing the traitors at the capital and with the immediate defense of the city. General-in-Chief He Jin, the half-brother of Empress He, was placed in charge of putting the rebellion down in the capital. In the third month, when these preparations had been made, three armies were sent out to deal with the rebellion. One was sent east against Zhang Jue. The other two, commanded by Huangfu Song and by Zhu Jun, were sent against the rebels in Yingchuan, Runan and Nanyang. Zhu recommended Sun Jian's appointment to call up troops and join his forces. With such widespread rebellion to deal with, the imperial commanders were anxious to gain any reinforcements that they could, and the territory of the lower Yangtze River, not directly affected by Zhang Jue's movement, was close enough to be a convenient source of recruits for the imperial army. Sun Jian rallied his troops, and he marched to join Zhu Jun's army with a thousand men under his command. The fighting against the rebels of Yingchuan, Runan and Nanyang was frequently fierce, with varying success.

In the third month of 184, soon after the rebellion had broken out, the rebel leader Zhang Mancheng defeated and killed the Grand Administrator of Nanyang, and in the fourth month, at the beginning of summer, the imperial army under Zhu Jun was defeated by Bo Cai in Yingchuan, while the Grand Administrator of Runan was defeated by another force of rebels.



In the middle of 184, however, the tide turned. In the fifth month Huangfu Song and Zhu Jun combined their armies to defeat Bo Cai, and in the sixth month they destroyed the rebels of Runan at the Battle at Xihua in Henan. Then the two generals went separate ways, Huangfu to join in the attack on the rebels north of the Yellow River, and Zhu to deal with the rebels of Nanyang. By this time, a new Grand Administrator had defeated Zhang Mancheng and killed him. In that campaign, however, the rebels were able to capture the capital of the commandery, Wan, and took refuge there.

For the next several months, the core of the campaign was the fighting in and around Wan, until the place was finally stormed and the defenders massacred in the eleventh month, midwinter at the beginning of 185. The capture of Wan was the last great defeat of the rebels. Their forces in the North China Plain had been destroyed in the field by the imperial armies during the summer, their strongholds were besieged and captured, and the three Zhang brothers were dead. The remaining, scattered rebels were pursued by commandery and county forces in various mopping-up operations, and in the twelfth month of the Chinese year, mid-February 185, the government issued a proclamation of celebration, changing the era name to Zhongping (中平), or "pacification achieved."

The rebels were defeated in February 185, but only two months later, the rebellion broke out again. In 185, it spread to the Taihang Mountains on the western border of Hebei and in 186 it reached Shaanxi, Hebei, and Liaoning, in 188 it reached Shanxi. In the same year, a second independent uprising took place in Sichuan, but it was not coordinated with the Yellow Turban Rebellion in other parts of the country.

In 192, the warlord Cao Cao was able to gain the submission of a rebel army after they marched into Yan Province. The rebels eventually ceased to pose a military challenge by 205.

## Aftermath and impact

The Han armies had gained a glorious victory, and it was a remarkable achievement that they removed so quickly the threat of Zhang Jue's rebellion. The cost, however, was very high. Over wide areas the offices of the government had been destroyed, magistrates had been killed, and whole districts were cut off from the writ of the central government. The enemy had been slaughtered in the hundreds and thousands, many innocent people had been left homeless or destitute by the wars, and the economy and society over great parts of this most populous region of the empire were left in ruins and without resources. Unrest remained and bandits appeared in every district; the government, in no position to put down all the lesser disturbances, was forced to patch up the situation as best it could. A long period of consolidation was needed to restore some measure of peace and prosperity, but that breathing space was not given.

While the rebellion was eventually defeated, the military leaders and local administrators gained self-governing powers in the process. This hastened the collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220. After Emperor Ling of Han died in 189, a power struggle between He Jin and the eunuchs ensued in which He Jin was assassinated on September 22, 189. He Jin's chief ally Yuan Shao retaliated by setting the palace on fire and slaughtering the eunuchs. Finally, the warlord Dong Zhuo was able to gain control over the underage heir to the throne which he used as a legitimization for occupying the capital, which was ransacked on the occasion. Because of his cruelty, Dong was murdered in 192, setting the stage for Cao Cao's rise to power.

Despite the negativity portrayed in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, being a large scale rebellion against corrupted authority, several peasant uprisings in China were patterned after the Yellow Turban Rebellion or claimed to be its spiritual successors.

## In fiction

The rebellion is portrayed in the opening chapters of Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, which portrays the Zhang brothers as sorcerors, having been provided the *Taiping Jing* from the "old immortal spirit from the southern lands" (sometimes identified as Zhuangzi). Many fictional Yellow Turban figures were created for the novel, including:

- Du Yuan, who is killed by Liao Hua for kidnapping Liu Bei's wives.
- Zhou Cang, Guan Yu's rebel-turned-weapon bearer.
- Gao Sheng, a subordinate to Zhang Bao.
- Cheng Yuanzhi, defeated by Liu Bei's forces in their first engagement.
- Deng Mao, Cheng Yuanzhi's champion.
- Bian Xi, an eventual servant of Cao Cao who tries and fails to kill Guan Yu.

Though not a fictional character, Liao Hua is presented in the novel as having been a Yellow Turban in his earlier days; this is unlikely historically, given his date of death and predicted lifespan.

## References

[1] Referring to the Han Dynasty government

[2] Referring to the Yellow Turban Rebellion

### Books

- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

# Rebellion in Liang Province

Liang Province Rebellion	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Winter 184 – 189 CE
<b>Location</b>	Regions near the Hexi Corridor, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive
Belligerents	
Han Dynasty	Han rebels Qiang peoples Lesser Yuezhi
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang Wen Huangfu Song Geng Bi	Beigong Boyu Li Wenhou Dianyu Bian Zhang Han Sui Wang Guo
Strength	
Various: 100,000+ at Meiyang <sup>[1]</sup> 40,000+ at Chencang <sup>[2]</sup>	Several tens of thousands <sup>[3]</sup>

The **Liang Province Rebellion** of 184 to 189 started as an insurrection of the Qiang peoples against the Han Dynasty in the western province of Liang (Liangzhou, 涼州, more-or-less today's Wuwei, in the province of Gansu) of 2nd century China, but the Lesser Yuezhi and sympathetic Han rebels soon joined the cause to wrestle control of the province away from central authority. This rebellion, which closely followed the Yellow Turban Rebellion, was part of a series of disturbances that led to the decline and ultimate downfall of the Han Dynasty.<sup>[4]</sup> Despite receiving relatively little attention in the hands of traditional historians, the rebellion nonetheless had lasting importance as it removed Han Chinese power in the northwest and prepared that land for a number of non-Han-Chinese states in the centuries to come.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Outbreak (184)

The rebellion began in the winter of 184 with two groups of Qiang people causing disturbances in the outlying regions of northwestern China, with one group in the northwestern commanderies of Beidi (北地) and Anding, and another in at the counties of Fuhan (枹罕) and Heguan (河關) in the upper Yellow River valley. Initially, the two groups were likely separate, each trying to seize the opportunity to resist the weakened Han rule after years of corruption and misrule.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The situation escalated in October or November 184 when the troops of the Auxiliary of Loyal Barbarians From Huangzhong (湟中義從胡), which consisted of Qiang and Lesser Yuezhi recruits sent to suppress the disturbances, mutinied against their Han Chinese superiors in the military camp of Lianju (令居,<sup>[8]</sup> northwest of present-day Lanzhou) and joined the insurgents, killing the Colonel Protector of the Qiang (護羌校尉) Ling Zheng (冷徵) in the process. At this point, the two groups had joined together, with former Auxiliary soldiers Beigong Boyu (北宮伯玉) and Li Wenhou (李文侯) as their leaders. This union meant that the rebels

now had control of the band of territory along the Yellow River in present-day Lanzhou.

Within a few weeks, the rebels attacked and captured Yuanya (允吾<sup>[9]</sup>), the capital of Jincheng commandery (金城), making the commandery their main stronghold for rebel operations. The rebels were helped by the fact that the local governor Zuo Chang (左昌), Inspector of Liang Province (涼州刺史), had embezzled the funds allocated for the defense force, making no relief possible.<sup>[10]</sup> The Grand Administrator Chen Yi (陳懿) went to the rebels' camp to negotiate for the release of hostages, but the rebels killed him. The hostages – which included Bian Zhang, the former Prefect of Xin'an (新安縣令); and Han Sui, Attendant Official of Liang Province (涼州從事) – were then persuaded to join the rebels' cause. The addition of such reputable and influential men gave the rebellion wider popular support, and the two men were to play more prominent roles in the rebellion as the course of events progressed.

The rebels then besieged Zuo Chang's headquarters in the county of Ji (冀; south of present-day Gangu, Gansu). Some outlying Han generals were initially reluctant to help Zuo Chang, but He Xun (蓋勳), a much-respected and successful general, forced those generals to come to Zuo Chang's aid with powerful persuasion. The rebels, out of respect for He Xun, broke off the siege.<sup>[11]</sup> After this episode, Zuo Chang was replaced by Song Nie (宋臬), a devout Confucian who believed that the situation could be remedied only by teaching the people the *Classic of Filial Piety*. He submitted this proposal to the imperial court despite his junior officials' advice and was promptly dismissed in favour of Yang Yong (楊雍). Local situations did not improve with the appointment, however, and the local officials soon found themselves besieged by the rebels again. The new Protector Xia Yu (夏育), a man with some experience with Qiang rebellions, was attacked by a rebel contingent led by Qiang chieftain Dianyu (滇吾)<sup>[12]</sup> at the Herding Office (畜官) of Hanyang Commandery (present-day Tianshui) and He Xun once again led troops for relief. This time, however, He Xun was severely defeated at nearby Hupan (狐槃). While both Xia Yu and He Xun made their escape, it was clear at this point that provincial authorities could not deal with the rebellion by themselves.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Response of the central government (185)

In the spring of 185, the rebels, now several tens of thousands in number, moved towards the former Han capital of Chang'an. In response, the imperial court appointed Huangfu Song, the famed conqueror of the Yellow Turbans, as the General of Chariots and Cavalry on the Left (左車騎將軍) in charge of defense of Chang'an. However, Huangfu achieved no immediate success, and was dismissed in the seventh lunar month of 185 after a four-month tenure after being slandered by the eunuchs in the imperial court.<sup>[14]</sup>

The continued rebellion in Liang Province took its toll on the government treasury, and the imperial court had to call on the taxes and corvées to support the war. A high official, the Minister Over the Masses Cui Lie (崔烈) proposed to abandon Liang Province altogether. The Gentleman-Consultant (議郎) Fu Xie (傅燮) made an impassioned speech that condemned Cui Lie and emphasized on the importance of the frontier province:

"...the official administrators have lost control, and they have let the whole province fall into rebellion. Cui Lie is one of the highest ministers, yet he takes no thought to the real needs of the state and he makes no plan for resorting order. Instead he is prepared to abandon ten thousand *li* of territory, and I have the gravest doubts of his plan. Should this region be occupied by the barbarians, so they could cause trouble by their great military strength, then this would be of the utmost danger to our empire and a serious loss to the nation. [...] If Cui Lie failed to realise the consequences of his policy, he is a fool. If he knows what he is saying, he is a traitor."<sup>[15]</sup>

Emperor Ling was impressed by this argument and rejected Cui Lie's proposal. Fu Xie was later assigned to be the Grand Administrator of Hanyang (漢陽太守) and was sent to the frontier region.

In the eighth lunar month of 185, the high minister Zhang Wen was given the military post of General of Chariots and Cavalry (車騎將軍) to assume Huangfu Song's responsibilities. Assigned under him were Dong Zhuo, the new General Who Routs the Caitiffs (破虜將軍); and Zhou Shen (周慎), the General Who Terrifies Criminals

(盪寇將軍), among others. Zhang's army, more than a hundred thousand in men and horses, traveled to Meiyang (美陽; west of present-day Wugong) and set camp there. Bian Zhang and Han Sui also brought their men to Meiyang to do battle, but the battles were inconclusive and Zhang Wen's army could not gain advantage for some time. Things changed during the eleventh month, when a shooting star appeared to fall on the rebel camp and shook the rebels' resolve. Taking advantage of the situation, Dong Zhuo smashed the rebel army in a sudden attack, forcing Bian Zhang and Han Sui to retreat west to Yuzhong (榆中; near present-day Lanzhou) of Jincheng commandery.

Following the victory, Zhang Wen sent two detachments in pursuit of the rebels: Zhou Shen was to lead thirty thousand men to attack Yuzhong, and Dong Zhuo was to chase the Qiang auxiliary with another thirty thousand men. Both, however, ended in failure. Zhou Shen had disregarded his advisor Sun Jian's advice to cut the enemy's supply routes and got his own supply line cut by the enemy in turn, resulting in a hasty retreat. Dong Zhuo's position became surrounded by the Qiang in Wangyuan (望垣; northwest of present-day Tianshui) with depleting supplies. He made his escape by damming up the river as if to catch fish and secretly transported his men across the river. By the time the Qiang came in pursuit, the dammed river was too deep for them to cross. Dong Zhuo was the only commander to keep his forces intact after this offensive.<sup>[16]</sup>

Although the Battle of Meiyang halted the rebels' advance into the Han Dynasty heartlands, the rebels were able to retain their power by the upper Yellow River due to the failure of the Han follow-up offensive. The upper Wei River valley became contested ground.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Local attempts at restoring Chinese power (186–187)

At some time during the winter of 186, the rebel leader Bian Zhang died of illness and Beigong Boyu and Li Wenhou were killed in internecine feuds.<sup>[18]</sup> Seeing an advantage to be gained from this situation, Geng Bi (耿鄙), the newly installed Inspector of Liang Province, attempted to re-establish Han-Chinese power in the region without major military assistance from other parts of the country.<sup>[19]</sup> Fu Xie tried to dissuade Geng Bi from this enterprise, arguing that the people were not used to Geng Bi as their governor and the army did not have time to build morale, but Geng Bi went ahead with his plan anyway.

In 187, Geng Bi attacked the western fringe commandery Longxi with a combined army from six commanderies. Longxi was previously captured by the forces of Han Sui when its Grand Administrator Li Xiangru (李相如) defected. However, the gentry and people were frustrated by Geng Bi's appointment of the corrupt official Cheng Qiu (程球). When the army reached Longxi's capital Didao in the fourth month of 187, mutiny broke out within Geng Bi's ranks, killing Cheng Qiu and Geng successively. The mutineers joined the rebels under the command of the Didao native Wang Guo (王國), and together they besieged Hanyang, east of Longxi.<sup>[20]</sup> As Grand Administrator of Hanyang, Fu Xie treated the people well and was respected far and wide, and the rebels were hesitant to fight him. On several occasions, the rebels tried to convince Fu Xie to either flee the city or surrender, but Fu was determined to defend the commandery to the death despite dwindling number of men and supplies. And so, in a desperate final charge, Fu died in battle.<sup>[21]</sup>

After this affair, Geng Bi's subordinate, Major (司馬) Ma Teng brought his troops to join Han Sui. They made Wang Guo their leader, and together the rebels raided the region around Chang'an.<sup>[22]</sup> For the first time, the rebels extended their sway over the entire Liang Province. In light of this, Zhang Wen was dismissed from his post for his failure to quell the rebellion.<sup>[23]</sup>

## The siege of Chencang (188–189)

By the end of 188, the imperial court had all but abandoned hope of recovering Liang Province and, for the most part, left the regional defences to their own devices.<sup>[24]</sup> However, when Wang Guo led a major force east to attack Chencang (陳倉, east of present-day Baoji), a gateway to Chang'an, the court once again appointed Huangfu Song to answer this obvious threat. Huangfu, now General of the Left (左將軍), was given 20,000 men; Dong Zhuo, himself commanding another 20,000 men, were to assist Huangfu. When Huangfu and Dong reached Chencang, Dong urged Huangfu to relief the siege immediately. Huangfu, however, had a different opinion – he argued that Chencang's strong defences would not be easily captured and they would only need to wait for Wang Guo's men to become discouraged. Sure enough, Wang Guo's men laid siege to Chencang for more than eighty days with no success.<sup>[25]</sup>

In spring 189, Wang Guo's men became worn out and abandoned the siege. With his men rested, Huangfu Song ordered his men to give chase. Dong Zhuo protested, citing the rule of warfare that a retreating army is not to be pursued (lest the enemy retaliates in desperation).<sup>[26]</sup> Huangfu dismissed the protest, saying Wang Guo's retreat was not an organized retreat but a result of losing all will to fight. Huangfu led his men to attack, leaving Dong Zhuo behind as rearguard, and achieved a great victory, cutting off more than ten thousand heads. Dong Zhuo was said to be ashamed and angry at this and bore a grudge against Huangfu from here on.<sup>[27]</sup>

Wang Guo was subsequently deposed by Han Sui and Ma Teng after his defeat in Chencang, and a Yan Zhong (閻忠), former Prefect of Xindu (信都令), was elected to take his place as the leader of the Liang Province rebels. However, Yan Zhong died soon after, leaving the rebels to fight amongst themselves and finally splintered into three groups: Han Sui's group in Jincheng, Ma Teng's group in the Wei Valley, and Song Jian's (宋建) group in Fuhan (in present-day Gansu). As power shifted from the barbarian initiators to the local Han rebels, the Qiang and the Yuezhi seemed to have quietly withdrew their support and played no further role of note in the rebellion.<sup>[28]</sup>

The rebellion could have been suppressed at this point if not for the events of 189 in the capital Luoyang.<sup>[29]</sup> Following the death of Emperor Ling on May 13, 189,<sup>[30]</sup> full-scale fighting broke out after the assassination of the General-in-Chief He Jin. Dong Zhuo led the frontier men to the capital in the chaos and took control of the court, replaced Emperor Shao with Emperor Xian, and made himself Chancellor of State (相國). By the end of the year, civil insurrection had spread across China and the Liang Province Rebellion became subsumed as an outlying disturbance in the fragmentation of the Han Dynasty.

## Epilogue: the final destruction of the rebels

As China disintegrated into chaos, the three rebel leaders of Liang Province became warlords in their own right and took different approaches to adapt to the new geopolitical situation. Song Jian, distancing himself from the conflict in China, proclaimed himself to be King of the Sources of the River Who Will Pacify Han (河首平漢王) and ruled the region of Fuhan and Heguan in isolated autonomy for almost thirty years. On the other hand, Han Sui and Ma Teng became involved in the wider affairs of the empire, starting with their reconciliation with Dong Zhuo, who asked for their support to deal with the coalition against him.<sup>[31]</sup> After Dong Zhuo died in 192, his retainers Li Jue and Guo Si seized power and gave Han Sui and Ma Teng the positions of General Who Maintains the West in Peace (鎮西將軍) and General Who Subdues the West (征西將軍), respectively; thereby granting the two rebel leaders official recognition.<sup>[32]</sup>

Later on, Han Sui and Ma Teng shared an uneasy relationship with each other; between them were periods of alliance followed by periods of open warfare. In one occasion in 209, Ma Teng was compelled to flee to seek help from Cao Cao, the powerful warlord who had gained control of northeast China and the imperial court. At the time, Cao Cao had his interests in the northwest, and thus invited Ma Teng to his headquarters in Ye and kept him as a virtual hostage.<sup>[33]</sup> Ma Teng was executed along with his family in Ye when his son Ma Chao rose up against Cao Cao two years later.

In the spring of 211, Cao Cao sent the commander Zhong Yao to the Wei Valley, ostensibly to attack Zhang Lu's theocratic state of Hanzhong. The incursion provoked the northwestern warlords, including Han Sui and Ma Teng's son Ma Chao, into forming a coalition to resist Cao Cao. The coalition opposed Cao's forces in the Battle of Tong Pass, where Cao personally took charge of operations. With skilful manoeuvring, Cao's army crept to the rear of the coalition forces and routed them in a decisive encounter in the autumn of 211. The defeat at Tong Pass signalled the beginning of the end of autonomy in the northwest.<sup>[34]</sup>

Cao Cao returned east after this engagement, leaving his lieutenant Xiahou Yuan in charge of mop up operations and Zhang Ji in charge of restoration of local government.<sup>[35]</sup> Ma Chao first attempted to stage a resistance after capturing the city of Ji in Cao Cao's absence, establishing bonds with the Di people, but was ousted in 213 with a combination of Xiahou Yuan's army and internal mutiny. Ma Chao fled south to Zhang Lu, and later to the southwestern warlord Liu Bei in Sichuan, where he died in 221 without ever seeing the north again.<sup>[36]</sup> In 214, Xiahou Yuan defeated the resistance led by Han Sui at the Changli River (長離水; present-day Hulu River, north of Tianshui), and followed up that victory by an expedition against the Di and Song Jian. Song Jian died, his capital of Fuhan was captured, and his officials were all killed by Xiahou. Han Sui died the next year, and his remaining subordinates sent his head to Cao Cao as a sign of submission. And so, the power blocs that were generated by the Liang Province Rebellion some thirty years prior were finally eliminated.

## Legacy

After Cao Cao's death in 220, his son Cao Pi forced Emperor Xian to abdicate and established the state of Cao Wei to succeed the Han Dynasty. Under his rule, commanderies were restored across the northwest while the region suffered only minor outbreaks of local rebellions. In 222, trade with Central Asia was officially re-established after being disrupted by the string of military action in Liang Province.<sup>[37]</sup>

Despite these achievements, Chinese power in the northwest was weaker than during the Han Dynasty before the rebellion. Compared to the Han Dynasty, Cao Wei's territory shrank in the northwest as some outlying former commanderies, such as Song Jian's realm of Fuhan, were simply abandoned. Chinese population in the area dwindled and eventually gave way to the Qiang and Di tribes of the southern mountains.<sup>[38]</sup> A little over a century were to pass after the Liang Province Rebellion before these peoples, along with other nomadic groups of northern China, overthrew their Chinese overlords and established barbarian states in northern China.

## Modern references

The Liang Province Rebellion is featured as playable stages in the seventh installment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series, and focuses on Sun Jian's involvement in aiding Dong Zhuo on behalf of the Han imperial court.

## Notes

[1] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 2: Q

[2] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 5: O

[3] de Crespigny (1984), p. 150

[4] Haloun, p. 119

[5] de Crespigny (1984), p. 146

[6] Haloun, p. 120

[7] de Crespigny (1984), p. 147

[8] Following the pronunciation specified by Meng Kang's commentary to the *Book of Han*. See note 14 of de Crespigny (1984), p. 471.

[9] Following the pronunciation specified by Ying Shao's commentary to the *Book of the Later Han*. See note 37 of de Crespigny (1984), p. 474.

The modern pronunciation of the same characters would be "Yunwu".

[10] de Crespigny (1984), p. 149

[11] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 1: 1874

[12] de Crespigny (1984), p. 160. For the pronunciation of this name, see de Crespigny (1984), p. 476 note 2.

[13] Haloun, p. 121


- [14] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 2: M
- [15] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 2: I
- [16] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 2: note 27
- [17] de Crespigny (1984), p. 151
- [18] Although some volumes of the *Book of the Later Han* say Han Sui killed all three of them, there are suspicions that these records were oversimplified and excessively condensed. See Haloun, p. 121 note 19.
- [19] de Crespigny (1984), p. 152
- [20] Haloun, p. 122
- [21] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 4: C, 1885
- [22] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 4: D
- [23] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 4: E
- [24] de Crespigny (1984), p. 153
- [25] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 5: Q
- [26] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 6: A
- [27] de Crespigny (1989), *Zhongping* 6: 1893
- [28] de Crespigny (1984), p. 162
- [29] Haloun, p. 123
- [30] de Crespigny (1984), p. 155
- [31] de Crespigny (1996), *Chuping* 3: DD
- [32] Haloun, p. 124
- [33] de Crespigny (1984), p. 163
- [34] Haloun, p. 127
- [35] de Crespigny (1984), p. 165
- [36] Haloun, p. 128
- [37] de Crespigny (1984), p. 166
- [38] de Crespigny (1984), p. 167 – 168

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# Campaign against Dong Zhuo

Campaign against Dong Zhuo	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
A mural in Fragrant Hills depicting the duel between the three sworn brothers and Lü Bu at Hulao Pass in a fictional encounter.	
<b>Date</b>	February 190–191 CE
<b>Location</b>	Henan, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Dong Zhuo retreats west, Coalition disbanded
Belligerents	
Guandong Coalition	Dong Zhuo
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao Cao Cao Yuan Shu Sun Jian Zhang Miao Han Fu Bao Xin Yuan Yi Zhang Chao Zhang Yang Yufuluo Kong Zhou Wang Kuang Liu Dai Qiao Mao	Dong Zhuo Lü Bu Li Jue Guo Si Hua Xiong †
Strength	
100,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>	Described as less than coalitions <sup>[2]</sup>

Campaign against Dong Zhuo	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	董卓讨伐战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	董卓討伐戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Dǒng Zhuó Tǎofá Zhàn

The **Campaign against Dong Zhuo** was a punitive expedition initiated by a coalition of regional officials and warlords against the warlord Dong Zhuo in 190 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The members of the coalition claimed that Dong had the intention of usurping the throne by holding Emperor Xian hostage and by establishing a strong influence in the imperial court. They justified their campaign as to remove Dong from power. The campaign led to the evacuation of the capital Luoyang and the shifting of the imperial court to Chang'an. It was a prelude to the end of the Han Dynasty and, subsequently, the Three Kingdoms period.

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the campaign is memorable for at least two famous incidents: one is Guan Yu's slaying of Hua Xiong; the other is the three-on-one duel between the three sworn brothers (Liu Bei, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei) and Lü Bu. The two scenes are often reenacted in Chinese opera along with other famous scenes from the novel. Both incidents however, are fictional; Hua was killed in a battle against Sun Jian. Liu, Guan and Zhang were not active in the campaign. Instead, they were fighting remnants of the Yellow Turban rebels in the north and thus did not duel with Lü Bu, who, historically, was defeated by Sun Jian in battle.

## Background

Following the death of Emperor Ling in 189, General-in-Chief He Jin summoned the frontier general Dong Zhuo from the northwest into the capital city of Luoyang. Dong was ordered to lead his troops into the capital city to aid He in eliminating the eunuch faction, the Ten Attendants, from the imperial court. However, before Dong Zhuo's arrival, He Jin's plan was revealed and he was assassinated by the eunuchs.<sup>[3]</sup> He Jin's associates led by Yuan Shao stormed the palace after the assassination and started massacring eunuchs. The young Emperor Shao and his younger brother, the Prince of Chenliu, were brought out of the palace by the surviving eunuchs during the chaos. The emperor lost the Imperial Seal during his escape. They were eventually discovered by a search party and escorted back to the palace safely by Dong Zhuo and his men.

Subsequently, the warlord Ding Yuan was killed by his subordinate Lü Bu for opposing Dong Zhuo's decision to depose Emperor Shao. Lü then defected to Dong's side.

In 190, Dong Zhuo deposed Emperor Shao and installed the Prince of Chenliu on the throne. The prince became historically known as Emperor Xian. Dong appointed himself as Chancellor of State, an official post abolished almost 200 years ago. On March 26 in the same year, Dong had the Prince of Hongnong (the former Emperor Shao) and Empress Dowager He killed.

Since then, Dong Zhuo had established a strong influence in the imperial court. He was authoritarian and showed no regard for the absolute monarchy as he made the final decisions on policies without consulting or seeking approval from the emperor. He eliminated several of his opponents in the imperial court to further strengthen his grip over the apparatus of state. Yuan Shao fled from Luoyang after openly disagreeing with Dong Zhuo's decision to depose Emperor Shao. Dong Zhuo feared that Yuan Shao might rise in revolt against him as Yuan was also an influential figure in politics as well. Dong heeded his advisor's suggestions and proposed to the emperor to appoint Yuan as Grand Administrator of Bohai as an act of appeasement.

## Course of events

### Formation of the coalition

While in Bohai, Yuan Shao was not appeased by Dong Zhuo's proposal to appoint him as Grand Administrator. He planned to start a coup d'etat to remove Dong from power by rising in revolt but he was kept in check by Han Fu, the Governor of Ji Province (冀州).

At the same time, the Grand Administrator of Dong Commandery (東郡), Qiao Mao, forged letters of accusation against Dong Zhuo, denouncing him as a traitor with the intention of usurping the throne, calling for a punitive expedition against Dong. These letters were distributed all around the nation in the name of officials from the capital. Regional officials and warlords all around China received the letters and responded to the call to remove Dong Zhuo from power.

In February 190, the Guandong Coalition (關東聯軍, literally: Coalition East of the Pass) was formed after several regional officials and warlords gathered east of Hangu Pass with their armies in response to the call for a punitive war against Dong Zhuo. Yuan Shao was elected to be the leader of the coalition. The forces of Sun Jian and Cao Cao also participated in the campaign under the banners of Yuan Shu and Zhang Miao respectively. The participants of the campaign included:

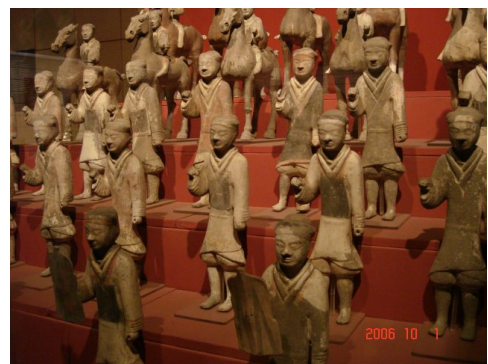
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yuan Shu, General of the Rear (後將軍)<sup>[4]</sup></li> <li>• Han Fu, Governor of Ji Province (冀州牧)</li> <li>• Kong Zhou, Inspector of Yu Province (豫州刺史)</li> <li>• Liu Dai, Inspector of Yan Province (兗州刺史)</li> <li>• Wang Kuang, Grand Administrator of Henei (河內太守)</li> <li>• Yuan Shao, Grand Administrator of Bohai (勃海太守)</li> <li>• Zhang Miao, Grand Administrator of Chenliu (太守張邈)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qiao Mao, Grand Administrator of Dong Commandery (東郡太守)</li> <li>• Yuan Yi, Grand Administrator of Shanyang (山陽太守)</li> <li>• Bao Xin, Chancellor of Jibei (濟北相)</li> <li>• Zhang Chao, Grand Administrator of Guangling (廣陵太守)</li> <li>• Zhang Yang, Grand Administrator of Shangdang (上黨太守)</li> <li>• Yufuluo, Chanyu of the southern Xiongnu</li> </ul>
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The coalition forces encamped in several locations east of the capital city of Luoyang, effectively surrounding it. The locations of the coalition members in relation to Luoyang are as follows:

- To the north, in Henei (河內): Yuan Shao, Wang Kuang, Zhang Yang, Yufuluo
- To the east, in Suanzao (酸棗): Zhang Miao, Liu Dai, Qiao Mao, Yuan Yi
- To the south, in Luyang (魯陽): Yuan Shu
- To the southeast, in Yingchuan (潁川): Kong Zhou
- To the northeast, in Ye: Han Fu

The blockade had the effect of cutting supplies from the eastern part of the Han empire from the capital, which drastically reduced the government's tax revenue. In response, Dong Zhuo melted statues and treasures for all the bronze he could find to mint more coinage, flooding the market, with the ultimate effect of rampant inflation throughout the empire.<sup>[5]</sup>

Despite the impressive showing of force, most of the coalition's armies were hurriedly rallied family retainers and opportunists for loot with little battle experience. The leader of the coalition Yuan Shao himself had not seen action in much of the 180s since he had been in six years mourning for first his mother and then his adoptive father, during which he could not participate in military matters. This is contrasted with Dong Zhuo's battle-hardened frontiersmen, who had previously fought in the Liang Province Rebellion.<sup>[6]</sup>

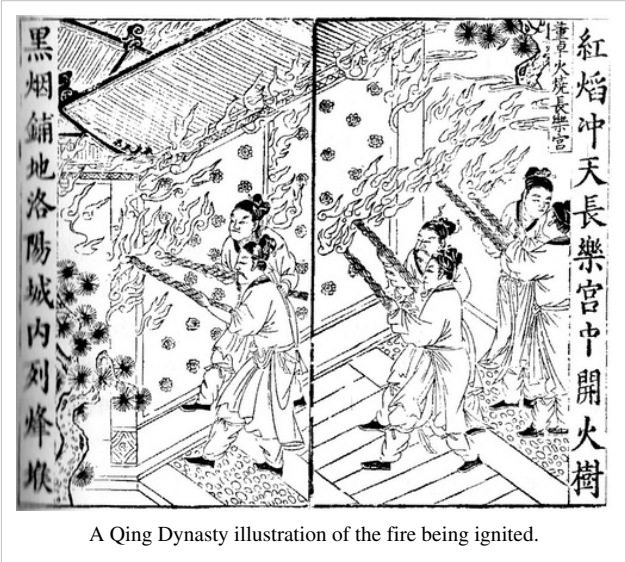


Pottery figurines of shield-wielding infantry (foreground) and cavalymen on horses (background), dated from the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC –9 AD)

## Razing of Luoyang

Dong Zhuo was alarmed by the formation of the Guandong Coalition against him. He proposed that the capital of Luoyang be evacuated immediately and the imperial court be shifted to Chang'an in the west. All civilians were to evacuate Luoyang as well and move to Chang'an, with only Dong and his military staying behind to defend Luoyang from the coalition forces.

Dong Zhuo's proposal was met with strong criticisms from other court officials but Dong silenced them by deposing anyone who opposed him. On April 9 of 190, Dong's proposal was implemented. He ordered his soldiers to loot and rob the rich households of Luoyang and drive Luoyang's civilian population towards Chang'an. Emperor Xian, nobles, aristocrats and officials followed the civilians and Dong's troops as they made their long journey towards Chang'an. Anyone who refused to obey orders to evacuate to Chang'an was killed on the spot. Dong Zhuo also ordered Lü Bu to lead men to raid ancient tombs and burial mounds for their valuables and treasure. After the evacuation, Luoyang was set on fire and razed to the ground. According to Chen Shou's *Records of Three Kingdoms* "the numbers of the innocent dead were beyond measurement."



A Qing Dynasty illustration of the fire being ignited.

In Suanzao (酸棗), Cao Cao led his men westward to attack Dong Zhuo's forces. He was followed by a contingent from Zhang Miao's army led by Wei Zi (衛茲). Cao Cao's army was defeated by Dong's forces, led by Xu Rong, in the Battle of Xingyang, and Cao Cao himself was injured in battle. Cao Hong offered his steed to him and he followed Cao Cao on foot, and they managed to escape from the battlefield. Xu withdrew his troops after the battle.



Rubbing of a low bas-relief carving on the west wall of the Wu family shrines in Shandong, dated 2nd century AD, showing a battle scene at a bridge

When Cao Cao returned to Suanzao, he suggested that the coalition pursue Dong Zhuo's retreating forces to threaten Dong by showing him that the coalition was still on the move. However, Zhang Miao and the others present dismissed his suggestion. Cao Cao then led his men to join Yuan Shao in Henei together with Xiahou Dun. After Cao's departure, the coalition forces stationed in Suanzao ran out of supplies and dispersed. Liu Dai seized the opportunity to kill Qiao Mao, whom he held a grudge against.

At the same time, Dong Zhuo sent reputable men such as Han Rong (韓融), Yin Xiu (陰修), Humu Ban (胡毋班), Wu Xiu (吳修), and Wang Gui (王瑰) to see Yuan Shao and negotiate for an armistice. However, Yuan had all the negotiators detained and killed except for Han Rong. Seeing peace was impossible, Dong Zhuo rapidly surrounded Wang Kuang's encampment in Heyang Ford (河陽津) north of Luoyang and dealt a defeat so severe that Wang Kuang abandoned the coalition and fled back to his home in Taishan commandery (泰山郡).<sup>[7]</sup>

## Sun Jian's advances

In Luyang to the south, Sun Jian, who had joined Yuan Shu with 20,000 - 30,000 men, was given the rank General Who Quells Rebels (破虜將軍) and Governor of Yu Province by Yuan. Yuan made Sun the vanguard, and Sun started to train his men in Luyang.

In the winter of 190, Dong Zhuo sent a force of some ten thousands to attack Luyang. At the time, Sun Jian's men were having a drinking party, but Sun did not stir upon hearing the news; instead, he calmly continued to pass his wine around while his troops gathered into formation. Seeing such discipline, Dong Zhuo's men turned around and retreated.

In March 191, Sun Jian moved his camp north to Liangdong (梁東), but he was outnumbered by Xu Rong there. With several dozen men, he broke through the encirclement. Seeing that his red scarf could easily identify him, Sun gave it to his trusted general Zu Mao, whom Xu Rong's soldiers chased while Sun escaped. Zu Mao later hung the scarf onto a half-burnt pillar, and hid himself in the tall grasses nearby. The enemies surrounded the pillar and approached cautiously till they realized they had been fooled, whereupon they retreated.

Gathering his scattered armies, Sun Jian went forward to camp in Yangren (陽人). This time, Dong Zhuo sent Hua Xiong, Hu Zhen, and Lü Bu with 5000 men to attack Sun. However, Lü Bu, who was in charge of cavalry, was not in good terms with Hu Zhen and quarrelled with him. Sun Jian seized the opportunity to attack them, and Dong Zhuo's forces were defeated in a rout. Hua Xiong was captured by Sun and promptly executed.

At this time, someone told Yuan Shu that if Sun Jian defeated Dong Zhuo and took over the capital, he would not be controllable anymore. The doubtful Yuan then ceased providing supplies to Sun. Sun rode the hundred odd *li* from Yangren to Luyang in the night to see Yuan, whereupon he said to the latter, "I put myself in danger during battle, with a primary purpose to eliminate a traitor (Dong Zhuo) for the country and second to avenge the deaths of your kinsmen (Yuan Shu's uncle was killed by Dong Zhuo). I have no personal grudge against Dong Zhuo. Yet you believed slanderous talks and suspect me!" The words put Yuan to shame and he immediately ordered the food supply to be delivered.

Fearing Sun Jian, Dong Zhuo sent his subordinate Li Jue as an emissary to seek peace and cement an alliance. Li Jue also promised Sun Jian appointments in the government service for his sons. To this, Sun replied, "Dong Zhuo opposes Heaven and defies the law. Until I have killed you and all your clan, and shown your heads to the Four Seas, I shall not be able to die in peace. How can I ally with you?"

Sun Jian then led his forces to Dagu Pass (大谷關), a fortified pass guarding Luoyang to the south, 90 *li* away from Luoyang. Dong Zhuo personally fought in the battle at the Later Han tombs, but was defeated and fled to Mianchi and Shan (陝), west of Luoyang. Sun Jian then continued to march into Luoyang, where he met and routed the forces of Lü Bu. Settling in, Sun ordered his men to reseat the tombs of former emperors that were excavated by Dong Zhuo. It was said in Wei Zhao's *Book of Wu* (吳書) that Sun Jian found the lost Imperial Seal in a well south of Luoyang and kept it for himself.

Sun Jian then sent part of his force forward to Xin'an and Mianchi to threaten Dong Zhuo's defense positions. Dong now sent Dong Yue (董越) to camp at Mianchi, Duan Wei (段熲) to camp at Huayin, and Niu Fu to camp at Anyi (安邑). His other commanders were spread out among the counties to block any attack from the east of the mountains. After these arrangements, Dong Zhuo led his own troops away to Chang'an.

Having repaired the imperial tombs, Sun Jian led his army back to Luoyang as the ruined Luoyang was vulnerable to possible counterattacks by Dong Zhuo. The former capital of Luoyang was now abandoned by both contending forces.

### Internal conflict

Despite Sun Jian's successes, the coalition did not build upon them due to poor communication and coordination among the leaders. The warlords in the east were unaware that Emperor Xian was still alive as they were isolated by the passes separating Luoyang from the east. Yuan Shao and Han Fu proposed to enthrone Liu Yu, the Inspector of You Province (幽州) and a member of the imperial clan, as the new emperor. Cao Cao and Yuan Shu disagreed with the proposal. When Yuan Shao and Han Fu sent a messenger to Liu Yu to inform him, Liu rebuked the messenger sternly and refused the offer flatly. Liu expressed his loyalty to the current Emperor Xian and threatened to head north into Xiongnu territory if Yuan Shao insisted that he become the new emperor. After repeated failed attempts, Yuan Shao decided to give up. In addition, the warlords turned their attention from Dong Zhuo back to themselves and started to pursue their individual interests again instead of uniting against Dong Zhuo.

Han Fu, who was in charge of provisions, gradually stopped supplying the coalition army. His subordinate Qu Yi rebelled against him and defeated him before defecting over to Yuan Shao. The incident alerted Yuan of his need to secure his sources of supply and he plotted to seize Han's lands. Yuan collaborated with Gongsun Zan secretly to attack Han Fu's Ji Province (冀州) and eventually Han surrendered Ji Province to Yuan.

Yuan Shao sent Zhou Yu (Renming) to attack Sun Jian, who was returning from Luoyang to join Yuan Shu. In the Battle of Yangcheng, Zhou made a surprise attack on Sun's camp at Yangcheng and captured it. Yuan Shu sent Gongsun Yue to assist Sun Jian in fighting Zhou Yu. Gongsun Yue was killed in the battle even though it was a victory for Sun Jian. Gongsun Zan held Yuan Shao responsible for Gongsun Yue's death and declared war on Yuan Shao, which led to the Battle of Jieqiao subsequently.

By then, the coalition had failed and collapsed, existing only in name.



A Qing Dynasty illustration of Sun Jian finding the Imperial Seal.



## Death of Dong Zhuo

For the following year, the warlords ceased to take any action against Dong Zhuo. Dong occasionally sent an army to attack the warlord Zhu Jun and plundered his territory.

Dong Zhuo returned to his tyrant status in the imperial court, but he had become less tolerant towards dissent, as any official who uttered a slight offensive remark would be killed immediately. He installed all members of his clan and relatives by marriage in high-ranking official posts. Even his infant sons were conferred titles of marquises and played with gold seals and purple tassels.

Court officials Wang Yun, Huang Wan (黃琬), Shisun Rui (士孫瑞) and Yang Zan (楊瓚) plotted to assassinate Dong Zhuo. They persuaded Lü Bu to join their cause because Lü's relationship with Dong was becoming increasingly strained after Dong threw a hand-axe at him and due to his affair with one of Dong's chambermaids.

On 22 May 192, Dong Zhuo was on the way to an assembly in his chariot when Li Su advanced towards him and stabbed him. Dong shouted for Lü Bu to protect him, but Lü killed him instead. Dong's relatives were executed after his death while his corpse was left exposed on the streets of Chang'an. The officer guarding the corpse lit a wick on the navel and it burned for days on the fats of the corpse.

After Dong Zhuo's death, several of his loyalists, such as Fan Chou, Guo Si and Li Jue, escaped as they believed that their loyalty towards Dong Zhuo would be considered as treason. Wang Yun, who had taken control of the government after Dong Zhuo's death, heard their appeal for amnesty and said, "Of all those who should be pardoned, they are the exceptions." Dong's loyalists were outraged by Wang's remarks and waged war. However, they were defeated by Lü Bu and the imperial forces. Eventually, Dong Zhuo's remnant forces managed to outwit Lü Bu by distracting him and they seized control of Chang'an. Wang Yun was killed.

The power of the Eastern Han Dynasty fell into the hands of Dong Zhuo's remnants after that and gradually evolved into a struggle for power, which spread throughout the nation progressively.

## In fiction

In the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the author Luo Guanzhong employed artistic license rather freely as he changed some details of this campaign to better portray the main characters. For example, there is no historical evidence that Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei participated in the campaign, yet their achievements eclipse those of Sun Jian in the novel. Luo Guanzhong also simplified some of the historical events, invented fictional battles, and changed the sequence of events. However, due to the popularity of the novel, many people hold the events detailed in the novel to be true, not knowing the true history as presented in definitive sources such as the *Book of the Later Han*, *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, or *Zizhi Tongjian*. This fictional account of history is also adopted by many Chinese operas and video games.

## Uprising against Dong Zhuo

In chapter 5 of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Cao Cao attempted to assassinate Dong Zhuo but failed and escaped to his hometown in Chenliu. Subsequently, Cao sent secret imperial decrees, in the name of the emperor, to various regional warlords and officials, ordering them to rise up against Dong Zhuo and remove him from power. Many responded to the call and they formed the Anti-Dong Zhuo Coalition (反董卓聯合軍).

The novel has a slightly different list of participants in the coalition:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cao Cao, Colonel of Resolute Cavalry (驍騎校尉)</li> <li>• Yuan Shu, General of the Rear (後將軍), Administrator of Nanyang (南陽太守)</li> <li>• Han Fu, Inspector of Ji Province (冀州刺史)</li> <li>• Kong Zhou, Inspector of Yu Province (豫州刺史)</li> <li>• Liu Dai, Inspector of Yan Province (兗州刺史)</li> <li>• Wang Kuang, Administrator of Henei (河內太守)</li> <li>• Zhang Miao, Administrator of Chenliu (陳留太守)</li> <li>• Qiao Mao, Administrator of Dong Commandery (東郡太守)</li> <li>• Yuan Yi, Administrator of Shanyang (山陽太守)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bao Xin, Chancellor of Jibei (濟北相)</li> <li>• Kong Rong, Administrator of Beihai (北海太守)</li> <li>• Zhang Chao, Administrator of Guangling (廣陵太守)</li> <li>• Tao Qian, Inspector of Xu Province (徐州刺史)</li> <li>• Ma Teng, Administrator of Western Liang (西涼太守)</li> <li>• Gongsun Zan, Administrator of Beiping (北平太守)</li> <li>• Zhang Yang, Administrator of Shangdang (上黨太守)</li> <li>• Sun Jian, Administrator of Changsha (長沙太守), Marquis of Wucheng (烏程侯)</li> <li>• Yuan Shao, Administrator of Bohai (渤海太守), Marquis of Qi (祁鄉侯)</li> </ul>
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With eighteen warlords participating in the novel, the campaign is thus popularly known as "The eighteen warlords' campaign against Dong Zhuo" (十八路諸侯討董卓). In this campaign, Liu Bei, with his sworn brothers Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, offered their service to Gongsun Zan, Liu's friend and former classmate. After the warlords pledged allegiance to the coalition, they insisted to have Yuan Shao as the commander-in-chief, a role which Yuan reluctantly accepted. Yuan Shao then put Yuan Shu in charge of provisions, and appointed Sun Jian as the vanguard to attack Sishui Pass.

## Dissolution

While restoring order in Luoyang, Sun Jian was alerted by his men that there is light faintly emitting from a well. He ordered to retrieve whatever was in the well, and they found a dead woman with the Imperial Seal in a silk bag around her neck. As advised by Cheng Pu, Sun Jian kept the Seal for himself and warned his men not to reveal anything about the discovery.

Unfortunately for Sun Jian, one of his soldiers went and told Yuan Shao about it, and was heavily rewarded. During a meeting on the following day, Sun Jian cited health problems as an excuse to return to Changsha, to which Yuan Shao remarked sarcastically, "I know you're ill because of the Imperial Seal", causing Sun to be stunned. After rounds of accusations and denials, Yuan Shao and Sun Jian's men drew swords in preparation for a fight, but the conflict was defused by the rest of the coalition members. Sun Jian then quickly fled from Luoyang with his men. In anger, Yuan Shao sent a letter to Liu Biao of Jing Province, asking Liu Biao to intercept Sun on the way and take him into custody. This gave rise to the conflict between Sun Jian and Liu Biao, which eventually culminated in the death of Sun at the Battle of Xiangyang.

The next day, Cao Cao returned to the main camp from his defeat in Xiangyang. He lamented at the lack of motivation within the coalition and left as well. Gongsun Zan told Liu Bei, "Yuan Shao is an incapable leader, and together there will be strife, we should leave", and so they also pulled their forces from the alliance and retreated north. Seeing everyone had dispersed, Yuan Shao dismantled the camps and led his army back to his base.





## Notes

- [1] (操到酸棗，諸軍十餘萬，日置酒高會，不圖進取) *Zizhi Tongjian* vol. 59.
- [2] Cao Cao's claims. de Crespigny (2010), p. 358
- [3] de Crespigny (1996), p.9
- [4] (初平元年春正月，後將軍袁術、冀州牧韓馥、豫州刺史孔伷、兗州刺史劉岱、河內太守王匡、勃海太守袁紹、陳留太守張邈、東郡太守橋瑁、山陽太守袁遺、濟北相鮑信同時俱起兵，衆各數萬，推紹為盟主。太祖行奮武將軍。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [5] de Crespigny (2010), p. 55
- [6] de Crespigny (2010), p. 54
- [7] de Crespigny (2010), p.56

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## External links

- Map showing the places involved during the historical campaign ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace\\_maps/map05.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace_maps/map05.pdf)) PDF (62.6 KiB)

# Campaign against Dong Zhuo - Battle of Xingyang

Battle of Xingyang	
Part of the campaign against Dong Zhuo	
<b>Date</b>	190 CE
<b>Location</b>	Xingyang, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Dong Zhuo victory
Belligerents	
Guandong Coalition	Dong Zhuo
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Cao Hong	Xu Rong
Strength	
3000+	
Casualties and losses	
Several thousands <sup>[1]</sup>	

Battle of Xingyang	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	荊陽之戰
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	滎陽之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xíngyáng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xingyang** was a battle fought in 190 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty as part of the campaign against Dong Zhuo. It took place when Dong Zhuo's retreating forces, led by Xu Rong, encountered Cao Cao's pursuing army at Xingyang.

## Background

In 190, dissenting regional officials and warlords formed a coalition against the Chancellor of State, Dong Zhuo, who controlled Emperor Xian. Dong Zhuo was concerned that the capital Luoyang was not as easy to defend as Chang'an to the west, and thus moved all civilians and court officials, including the emperor, to Chang'an while the military under Dong stayed to defend Luoyang. During the mass relocation on 9 April, Dong ordered his soldiers to raze Luoyang, confiscate from the rich, and looted from the Han emperor tombs.<sup>[2]</sup> According to *Records of Three Kingdoms*, the people who died during the relocation was "beyond measure".<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Around that time, the coalition members were stationed in different locations as such: Yuan Shao at Henei (河内); Zhang Miao, Liu Dai, Qiao Mao and Yuan Yi at Suanzao (酸棗, near present-day Yanjin, Henan); Yuan Shu at

Nanyang (南陽); Kong Zhou at Yingchuan (潁川); Han Fu at Ye. Dong Zhuo's forces were still powerful, so the coalition members did not dare to pursue Dong as he retreated to Chang'an.<sup>[3]</sup>

Cao Cao, then stationed in Suanzao, saw this as an opportunity to attack Dong Zhuo and he announced to the dormant alliance:

We rallied troops of righteousness to destroy oppression and disorder, now that we're united, why do you hesitate? At the beginning, if Dong Zhuo heard that armies have risen (against him) in Shandong, he would have relied on the imperial house, occupied the old capital [Luoyang], and turned east to attack the rest of the empire; then even though he behaved immorally, he would still be a threat. Now he's burning the palace, holding the Son of Heaven hostage and moving him away. The empire is in disorder and nobody knows where to turn to. This is the time when he is condemned by Heaven. One battle and the empire will be settled. We must not lose this opportunity.<sup>[4]</sup>

Apparently, Cao Cao did not manage to rally anyone else in the alliance except his friend Wei Zi (衛茲), who was under the warlord Zhang Miao. Nonetheless, the detachment marched west from Suanzao with the intention to occupy Chenggao (成皋).

## The battle

Cao Cao and Wei Zi's armies advanced to the Bian River at Xingyang, an important staging post en route to Luoyang, and met the opposing army led by Xu Rong there. In a day of fierce fighting, the coalition force, consisting of a ragtag assembly of family retainers and looters, was ultimately no match for the professional frontiersmen of Dong Zhuo.<sup>[5]</sup> The coalition men were heavily defeated and Wei Zi was killed. In addition, Cao Cao was hit by a stray arrow and his horse was injured. His younger cousin, Cao Hong, offered him his horse but Cao Cao would not accept at first. Cao Hong then said, "The empire can do without me, but it cannot do without you."<sup>[6]</sup> Cao Hong then followed Cao Cao on foot and they withdrew back to Suanzao by night.<sup>[7]</sup>

Xu Rong considered an attack on Suanzao, but he observed that even though Cao Cao's men were few in number they fought fiercely throughout the day, and so assumed that an attack on Suanzao against these sort of men would be difficult. He, too, withdrew.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Aftermath

Cao Cao returned to Suanzao to see the warlords feasting every day with no intention of attacking Dong Zhuo, he reproached them. Learning from his defeat in Xingyang where he tried to attack Chenggao head-on, Cao Cao came up with an alternative strategy and presented it to the coalition:

Instead of attempting another direct attack from Suanzao, the plan involved taking strategic points to blockade Luoyang and Chenggao. Then Yuan Shu, the coalition general in the south could, instead of attacking Luoyang, threaten Dong Zhuo's new capital in Chang'an. The coalition would position themselves behind fortifications and avoid actual fighting. This arrangement, Cao Cao argued, could show the world that the coalition is on the move while applying pressure on Dong Zhuo's court. In this, Cao Cao was hoping that Dong Zhuo's government would eventually become over-strained, lose credit and collapse. Cao Cao concluded his plan with the words, "Now that our men are fighting for a just cause, if we hesitate and delay, we will disappoint everyone in the empire, and I will be ashamed for you."<sup>[9]</sup>

However, the generals in Suanzao would not agree to his plan. Cao Cao abandoned the generals in Suanzao to gather troops in Yang Province (揚州) with Xiahou Dun, then went to camp with the coalition commander-in-chief Yuan Shao in Henei (河內). Soon after Cao Cao's departure, the generals in Suanzao ran out of food and dispersed, some even fought amongst themselves. The coalition camp in Suanzao collapsed on itself.

Years later, when Yuan Shao and Cao Cao became rivals in their contest for power, Yuan had his secretary Chen Lin draft a document to denounce Cao before their confrontation at the Battle of Guandu. At one point, Chen Lin used

Cao Cao's defeat at the Battle of Xingyang to discredit him:

...he displayed foolhardiness and a lack of forethought. Attacking in haste, he was swiftly driven back, suffering many casualties and fleeing to base with heavy loss of life.<sup>[10]</sup>

## In fiction

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the coalition were successively victorious and pressed on Luoyang. Dong Zhuo asked his aid Li Ru for advice, and Li replied that he should move the capital to Chang'an. Dong Zhuo did so and burned Luoyang to the ground to force everyone to leave. The coalition generals saw the smoke coming from Luoyang and advanced, only to find the charred ruins of Luoyang.

Cao Cao went to Yuan Shao and said that the coalition should pursue Dong Zhuo, but Yuan replied that everybody was worn out and there would be nothing to gain by pursuing, and all the lords agreed that they should do nothing. After this Cao Cao exclaimed, "You childish buffoons are not qualified to participate in strategic planning!"<sup>[11]</sup> Cao Cao then took Xiahou Dun, Xiahou Yuan, Cao Hong, Cao Ren, Li Dian, Yue Jin, and 10,000 troops to chase in pursuit.

In the novel, the road west from Luoyang to Chang'an was through Xingyang (while in reality, Xingyang was to the east of Luoyang). When Dong Zhuo reached Xingyang, Xu Rong welcomed him. Li Ru, hearing of Cao Cao's approach, suggested to lure Cao Cao into an ambush with Lü Bu. In Xingyang, Cao Cao engaged Lü Bu, as predicted, and while Xiahou Dun was dueling Lü, Dong Zhuo's generals Li Jue and Guo Si attacked from both flanks and surrounded Cao Cao. Cao Cao ordered Xiahou Yuan and Cao Ren to hold them off, but Cao Cao's forces were eventually overwhelmed and retreated.

As Cao Cao's men were preparing to settle for the evening, Xu Rong came out of his ambush and scattered Cao's camp. Cao Cao quickly mounted his horse to escape, but he was shot in the shoulder by Xu Rong and his horse was slain. Cao Cao became captured by two enemy soldiers but Cao Hong killed them and freed his master. Cao Hong offered his horse to Cao Cao, but there was a river ahead and Cao Cao could ride no more, while Xu Rong's men drew ever closer. Cao Hong then carried Cao Cao as he waded across the river. Xu Rong's men initially fired arrows at them, but soon turned around to cross the river in a ford upstream. When Cao Cao and Cao Hong finally reached the other side of the river, Xu Rong came charging from upstream, but Xiahou Dun intercepted and killed Xu Rong on the spot. Cao Cao's forces then came together, all relieved that Cao Cao is safe, and retreated back to Yuan Shao's main camp at Henei. Dong Zhuo's remaining forces left to follow him to Chang'an.

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- [2] (二月，卓聞兵起，乃徙天子都長安。卓留屯洛陽，遂焚宮室。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [3] (是時紹屯河內，邈、岱、瑁、遺屯酸棗，術屯南陽，佃屯潁川，馥在鄴。卓兵彊，紹等莫敢先進。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [4] (太祖曰：「舉義兵以誅暴亂，大眾已合，諸君何疑？向使董卓聞山東兵起，倚王室之重，據二周之險，東向以臨天下；雖以無道行之，猶足為患。今焚燒宮室，劫遷天子，海內震動，不知所歸，此天亡之時也。一戰而天下定矣，不可失也。」) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [5] de Crespigny (2010), p. 55
- [6] (天下可無洪，不可無君。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biography of Cao Hong.
- [7] (遂引兵西，將據成臯。邈遣將衛茲分兵隨太祖。到熒陽汴水，遇卓將徐榮，與戰不利，士卒死傷甚多。太祖為流矢所中，所乘馬被創，從弟洪以馬與太祖，得夜遁去。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [8] (榮見太祖所將兵少，力戰盡日，謂酸棗未易攻也，亦引兵還。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
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[10] de Crespigny (2010), p. 130

[11] (豎子不足與謀!) Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapter 6.

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- de Crespigny, Rafe (1996). "To Establish Peace: being the Chronicle of the Later Han dynasty for the years 189 to 220 AD as recorded in Chapters 59 to 69 of the Zizhi tongjian of Sima Guang". Volume 1. ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace1\\_index.html](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace1_index.html)) Faculty of Asian Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra. ISBN 0-7315-2526-4.
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# 191-200

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## Battle of Yangcheng

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Battle of Yangcheng	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	191 CE
<b>Location</b>	Dengfeng, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Yuan Shu victory
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao	Yuan Shu
Commanders and leaders	
Zhou Yu (Renming) <sup>[1]</sup> Zhou Ang	Sun Jian Gongsun Yue †

Battle of Yangcheng	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	阳城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	陽城之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yángchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yangcheng** was a battle fought between the warlords Yuan Shao and Yuan Shu as the coalition against Dong Zhuo fell apart in 191 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Sun Jian, Yuan Shu's nominal subordinate returning from his triumphant capture of the abandoned capital of Luoyang, became involved in Yuan Shao and Yuan Shu's personal feud as the former allies turned against one another. Yuan Shao's forces, under Zhou Yu, first got an upper hand against Sun Jian's forces, but was beaten back by Sun's counterattack.

### Background

In 190, regional warlords and officials from across China formed a coalition against Chancellor of State Dong Zhuo, who controlled state power and held Emperor Xian hostage. Yuan Shao was elected leader of the alliance. To participate in the campaign against Dong Zhuo, Sun Jian led an army north to join Yuan Shu, who was part of the coalition. Yuan Shu appointed Sun Jian as Acting General Who Smashes the Caitiffs (破虜將軍) and Inspector of Yu Province (豫州刺史), and sent him to attack Dong Zhuo at the capital city of Luoyang. Sun Jian defeated Dong Zhuo's forces, causing Dong to set fire to Luoyang and force its people to move to Chang'an, where the new capital was situated. Sun Jian's capture of Luoyang, in ruins, was militarily untenable since the other members of the alliance had no mind to reinforce his position, while they themselves were on the verge of dissolution. Sun

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abandoned Luoyang and made his way back south.

Yuan Shu, apparently dissatisfied that his cousin Yuan Shao was elected coalition leader and received all the prestige that came with his appointment, insulted his cousin as "a family slave" and "not a true son of the Yuan clan".<sup>[2]</sup> Yuan Shao was predictably angry at this. In 191, he named Zhou Yu (Renming) as Inspector of Yu Province, a title to which Sun Jian was entitled, and sent him to attack Sun's territories in Yu Province while Sun was away.

Zhou Yu decided to attack Yangcheng of Yingchuan Commandery (潁川; southeast of present-day Dengfeng, Henan). Originally, an outpost was set up here by Sun Jian during his march north against Dong Zhuo, and the outpost remained to watch for possible attacks from Dong Zhuo from the west after Sun Jian left Luoyang. Although the city of Yangcheng belonged under Sun Jian's government in Yu Province, it was also within Yuan Shao's sphere of influence in Ji Province (冀州), and thus it was a sensible target for Yuan's aggression.<sup>[3]</sup>

## The battle

Not expecting an attack from a nominal ally, Yangcheng was taken by surprise. When Sun Jian heard of the attack, he sighed and commented:

*Together we rallied troops of righteousness, with a purpose of saving the nation. The rebels and bandits are on the point of destruction, and yet people can act like this. Whom can I work with?*

The northern warlord Gongsun Zan sided with Yuan Shu, and sent his cousin Gongsun Yue with a 1,000 horsemen to Yuan Shu. Gongsun Yue and his horsemen were to accompany Sun Jian in the battle to retake Yangcheng, but in the initial skirmishes Gongsun Yue was killed by an arrow. Despite the setbacks, Sun Jian recovered some time later and defeated Zhou Yu in several battles. Then Yuan Shu led an attack southeast on Zhou Yu's brother Zhou Ang in Jiujiang, which compelled Zhou Yu to abandon Yangcheng to go to his brother's aid. There Zhou Yu was defeated again, and he abandoned the campaign to return to his hometown of Kuaiji.

## Aftermath

The first battles between Yuan Shao and Yuan Shu ended in the latter's favour: he had engaged and defeated Yuan Shao's forces in both Yangcheng and Jiujiang, restored the position in Yingchuan under Sun Jian, and eliminated Zhou Yu's as a threat once and for all although Jiujiang was not yet conquered. For Yuan Shao, on the other hand, the situation was extremely difficult: besides the failure in the south, he was also under threat from Gongsun Zan, who held Yuan Shao responsible for the death of Gongsun Yue and declared war against him, rejecting all of Yuan Shao's protestations of goodwill.<sup>[4]</sup> This led to the clash between Yuan Shao and Gongsun Zan in the Battle of Jieqiao.

The battle of Yangcheng, being the first moves in the struggle between the two Yuans, marked the beginning of a new stage in the confusion of wars which brought the end of the Han Dynasty. The battle was notable as a confirmation of the death of the alliance against Dong Zhuo as the warlords of the North China Plain start to battle each other for the ultimate dominion of China.

## Notes

- [1] Historical sources disagree on whether it was Zhou Yu, Zhou Ang, or Zhou Xin that was involved in this battle. Historian Rafe de Crespigny accepted the version which described Zhou Yu as the one in the attack on Yangcheng. See de Crespigny (1990), p. 121 note 70.
- [2] de Crespigny (1990), p. 119
- [3] de Crespigny (1990), p. 121
- [4] de Crespigny (1990), p. 123

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# Battle of Jieqiao

Battle of Jieqiao	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	191
<b>Location</b>	Jieqiao (near present-day Wei County, Xingtai, Hebei, China)
<b>Result</b>	Marginal victory by Yuan Shao
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao	Gongsun Zan
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao Qu Yi Tian Feng	Gongsun Zan Yan Gang †
Strength	
40,000 infantry <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>	30,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>
Casualties and losses	
Unknown	Unknown, at least 1000 <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>

Battle of Jieqiao	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	界桥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	界橋之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jièqiáo Zhì Zhàn

The **Battle of Jieqiao**, also known as the **Battle of Jie Bridge**, was fought between the warlords Yuan Shao and Gongsun Zan in 191 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. It was the first significant clash of arms between the rival



warlords in the contest for dominion of Ji and Qing provinces in northern China. The site of the battle is generally considered to be a site east of Guangzong County, Julu Commandery (present-day Wei County, Xingtai, Hebei).

## Background

Late in the winter of 191, following a victorious campaign against remnants of the Yellow Turban rebels, Gongsun Zan took the pretext of his brother Gongsun Yue's death in the Battle of Yangcheng to declare war on Yuan Shao. His army marched southwest between the Qing and Yellow rivers into Ji Province. Very quickly a number of cities under Yuan's control were compelled to change sides. Yuan Shao hurriedly made conciliatory gestures, in a bid to forestall a full blown war. He gave his official position as Grand Administrator of Bohai to Gongsun Fan, a distant relative of Gongsun Zan. Gongsun Fan, however, took the Bohai garrison to join his clansman.

## The battle

Soon Yuan Shao himself came in force and the two sides met 40 km south of Jie Bridge, a crossing on the Qing River. Gongsun Zan's army had a reported strength of 40,000, consisting of 30,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. He arrayed his infantry in a square and divided his cavalry between the left and right wings. In the centre were placed his "white horse volunteers" (白馬義從), an elite mounted unit which formed the core of his fighting force.

Whilst the numbers may have exaggerated, their appearance must have been impressive; *Records of Three Kingdoms* describes how their "flags and armour lit up Heaven and Earth". Though Yuan Shao's army was of comparable size, it consisted almost entirely of infantry. His commander Qu Yi was placed at the van with 800 crack troops and 1,000 crossbowmen. Behind them stood masses of footsoldiers, numbering in the tens of thousands, commanded by Yuan Shao himself.

Observing that Yuan's vanguard was thinly spread, the experienced horseman Gongsun Zan ordered a charge by his cavalry. The aim was to "break the enemy line" - destroying the core of an opposing army and then rolling up its retreating multitudes. Qu Yi's men formed a shield wall and awaited the onslaught. When Gongsun's cavalry was a mere ten paces away, the crossbowmen loosed waves of bolts, followed by the footsoldiers, who rose with their spears. After a general mêlée the front of Yuan Shao's line was littered with cut down horses and Gongsun Zan's dead. Gongsun's general Yan Gang was killed in the fighting. Yuan Shao's army is said to have taken 1,000 heads. Having failed to breach the enemy line, Gongsun's cavalry wheeled around and streamed away from the battle, followed by the infantry.

Gongsun Zan attempted to regroup and hold the line of the Qing River. His rearguard clashed with Qu Yi's men at Jie Bridge itself and were driven into retreat. The abandoned Gongsun camp was quickly overrun, its yak tail standard (comparable to the regimental colours of European armies) lost.

Seeing that Gongsun was all but defeated, Yuan Shao advanced with a bodyguard of several tens of crossbowmen and a hundred men-at-arms. He was caught by surprise by 2,000 horsemen who had been detached from Gongsun Zan's main force. According to the *Records of Three Kingdoms*, the aide-de-camp Tian Feng was about to support Yuan Shao behind a low wall for refuge. Yuan threw his helmet to the ground, and said, "A real man should die in front of the ranks. To be idle behind a wall, that is no way to live!" The enemy horsemen, ignorant of Yuan Shao's identity, were beginning to withdraw when Qu Yi arrived on the scene to drive them away. This story, somewhat detached from the main battle sequence, emphasises Yuan Shao's bravery.

## Aftermath


The Battle of Jieqiao halted the southern advance of Gongsun Zan but it was by no means decisive in the protracted struggle between Gongsun and Yuan which lasted until 199. Gongsun returned a year later, in the winter of 192, along the same route. Even though the battle was a setback for Gongsun Zan, it did not impact significantly on his army. Many of the soldiers who fled must have found their way back to Gongsun in the days and weeks after the battle.

The battle is unique in that it is described in detail in *Records of Three Kingdoms*. The arrangement of the armies and the tactics used, usually neglected by traditional Chinese histories, are reasonably clear. The battle demonstrates the ineffectiveness of even an experienced cavalry force against a disciplined infantry unit with competent leadership. It is also significant to note that although the numbers involved are very high, the actual fighting is decided by only a small elite portion of the entire army. Once the core was defeated, the demoralised masses quickly follow.

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- Fan Ye. *Book of the Later Han*, Volume 73, Biography of Gongsun Zan.
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# Battle of Xiangyang

<b>Battle of Xiangyang</b>	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
A Qing Dynasty illustration of Sun Jian arriving onto battle	
<b>Date</b>	191 CE
<b>Location</b>	Xiangyang (present day Xiangyang, Hubei, China)
<b>Result</b>	Liu Biao victory
<b>Belligerents</b>	
Liu Biao	Sun Jian
<b>Commanders and leaders</b>	
Huang Zu	Sun Jian †

Battle of Xiangyang	
Simplified Chinese	襄陽之戰
Traditional Chinese	襄陽之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Xiāngyáng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xiangyang** was fought between the warlords Sun Jian and Liu Biao in 191 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Liu Biao emerged victorious against Sun Jian's forces. Shortly after their coalition had ousted Dong Zhuo from the capital Luoyang, Yuan Shu and Yuan Shao, two feudal lords vying for power, had formed alliances against one another, with Gongsun Zan supporting Yuan Shu while Liu Biao supported Yuan Shao.<sup>[1]</sup> Yuan Shu sent his subordinate Sun Jian to attack Liu Biao in order to extinguish Yuan Shao's influence in the southern half of China. Although Sun Jian initially outmaneuvered and outfought Liu Biao, he was killed in action and his army forced to retreat.

## The battle

Sun Jian and his forces encountered the forces of Liu Biao's general, Huang Zu, between Fancheng and Deng (near present-day Xiangyang). There, he easily routed Huang's forces and surrounded the city of Xiangyang itself. Within the confines of the city, Liu Biao again sent Huang Zu out, this time to make a surprise attack. However, Huang was again defeated, and when he attempted to withdraw to the city once more, Sun Jian cut off his line of retreat, and he fled to Mount Xian. Sun pursued Huang, hoping to follow up on his success. According to Sun Jian's official biography in *Records of Three Kingdoms*, he was fatally wounded by an arrow fired by a soldier in Huang Zu's unit, who was hiding in a bamboo grove. Sun's men carried him away from the battlefield and he died from his injury later.<sup>[2]</sup> Other theories of Sun Jian's death include Sun being killed while fighting in the wilderness, or being crushed to death by boulders rolled down by the enemy from above.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Aftermath

Sun Jian's death effectively ended the battle, although Liu's forces suffered far more casualties. Huan Jie, an official under Sun Jian, successfully negotiated for his lord's corpse to be returned, and Sun Jian's army temporarily came under the control of Sun Jian's nephew, Sun Ben. Sun Ben then went to join Yuan Shu with most of Sun Jian's followers. Sun Ce, Sun Jian's oldest son, was given Sun Jian's marquisate, but chose to pass the position down to his youngest brother, Sun Kuang, who was still young then.

Liu Biao's success allowed him to expand his influence in Jing Province. Though he would be unable to defeat either Sun Ce or his successor, Sun Quan, he would nonetheless remain an influential figure in the Han Dynasty until his death in 208.

## In fiction

The battle and its justifications were altered in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. In this fictionalized account, Sun Jian attacked Liu Biao for revenge because Liu's forces routed his army during his withdrawal from the coalition against Dong Zhuo. Sun Jian's younger brother, Sun Jing, attempted to dissuade him from this course of action, but Sun Jian refused to listen. Sun Jian's oldest son, Sun Ce, was granted a command position and performed well in his first battle.

After initially defeating Huang Zu, Sun Jian's army surrounded Xiangyang. Two commanders under Liu Biao, Chen Sheng (陳生) and Zhang Hu (張虎), were killed by Sun Jian (or in some versions, Sun Ce) and Han Dang, respectively. Sun Jian was killed in a rockslide after being lured into a trap by Lü Gong and Huang Zu, according to a ploy by Liu Biao's advisor Kuai Liang. Sun Jian's generals Huang Gai and Cheng Pu managed to capture Huang Zu and kill Lü Gong respectively, while Sun Ce was forced to withdraw.

Huan Jie's involvement in recovering Sun Jian's corpse is similar in the novel to the historical account. However, in the novel, Huang Zu was released in exchange for Sun Jian's corpse, when there is no mention of Huang Zu's capture in historical texts.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Modern references

The Battle of Xiangyang is featured in video games such as Koei's *Dynasty Warriors*, but the name of the battle changes with almost every release. After Sun Jian is killed, Sun Ce takes command of the army instead of Sun Ben. Sun Jian's death also changes with each game release, as a possible reflection of the confusion as to his actual cause of death.

## References

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- [3] *Record of Heroes*
- [4] Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

# Battle of Fengqiu

Battle of Fengqiu	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Spring of 193 <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Location</b>	Fengqiu (封丘; present-day Fengqiu County, Xinxiang, Henan, China)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shu Heishan Bandits Xiongnu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shu Yufuluo

The **Battle of Fengqiu** was fought between Cao Cao and Yuan Shu in the spring of 193 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Cao Cao emerged victorious against Yuan Shu's forces.

## The battle


Cao Cao's army was stationed in Juancheng (鄆城). Liu Biao, the Governor (牧) of Jing Province, cut off Yuan Shu's supply route. As a result, Yuan Shu led his army into Chenliu (陳留), garrisoning at Fengqiu (封丘), where the remnants of the Heishan Bandits and the Xiongnu chieftain Yufuluo provided him support. Yuan Shu sent his general Liu Xiang (劉詳) to garrison at Kuangting (匡亭).<sup>[2]</sup>

When Cao Cao attacked Liu Xiang, Yuan Shu reinforced Kuangting, where the latter was badly defeated. Yuan Shu retreated to defend Fengqiu. Cao Cao subsequently moved to surround the town before Yuan Shu could complete the movement, Yuan Shu fled to Xiangyi (襄邑). Cao Cao pursued to Taishou (太壽) and diverted the waters of the Qu River (渠水) from Xiangyi, cutting off the canal supplying water to the city. After, Yuan Shu fled to Ningling (寧陵) and Cao Cao pursued Yuan Shu retreat towards Jiujiang (九江). In summer, Cao Cao finally withdrew with his army to Dingtao (定陶).<sup>[3]</sup>

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- ↑ (四年春， ...) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
  - ↑ (四年春，軍鄆城。荊州牧劉表斷術糧道，術引軍入陳留，屯封丘，黑山餘賊及於夫羅等佐之。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
  - ↑ (術使將劉詳屯匡亭。太祖擊詳，術救之，與戰，大破之。術退保封丘，遂圍之，未合，術走襄邑，追到太壽，決渠水灌城。走寧陵，又追之，走九江。夏，太祖還軍定陶。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
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# Invasion of Xu Province

Cao Cao's invasion of Xu Province	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
A Qing Dynasty illustration of Cao Cao departing to attack Xu Province.	
<b>Date</b>	193–194
<b>Location</b>	Jiangsu, China
<b>Result</b>	Decisive but temporary Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Tao Qian Tian Kai
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	Tao Qian Liu Bei
Strength	
	More than 5,000
Casualties and losses	
	Over 100,000 civilians

**Cao Cao's invasion of Xu Province** was a punitive invasion launched by the warlord Cao Cao against Tao Qian, the Governor of Xu Province, in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The *casus belli* for the invasion was the murder of Cao Cao's father, Cao Song, in Xu Province. Although Tao Qian's culpability was questionable, Cao Cao nonetheless held him responsible. The invasion took place in two separate waves in 193 and 194, during each of which Cao Cao captured a number of towns and engaged in collective punishment of the civilian populace.

## Background

Cao Cao's father Cao Song was living in his hometown Qiao (譙; present-day Bozhou, Anhui) after retirement until it became a battle field when the Campaign against Dong Zhuo happened. So Cao Song along with the rest of Cao's family moved to Langya (琅邪; present-day Linyi, Shandong) in Xu Province. By 193, Cao Cao had established a base in Yan Province (covering present-day southwestern Shandong and eastern Henan). And he invited his father over to his territory. However, before Cao's family could reunite, they were murdered in the border line of Xu Province and Yan Province. There were two accounts of how they were murdered. One was that the governor of Xu Province, Tao Qian, sent his men to kill Cao's family because he was defeated by Cao several times. The other was that Tao Qian actually sent people to protect Cao's family because he was afraid of Cao Cao. But his men killed

Cao's family for the great fortune they owned. Regardless of Tao Qian's culpability, Cao Cao intended to hold him responsible for the murder of his father.<sup>[1]</sup>

## The first invasion

In the summer or autumn<sup>[1]</sup> of 193, Cao Cao invaded Xu Province with an unspecified number of troops and easily captured over ten cities.<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> After conquering Tao Qian's capital of Pengcheng (彭城; present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu), Cao Cao killed possibly more than 10,000 defenders.<sup>[2]</sup> Tao Qian fled to Tan (犟; present-day Tancheng County, Linyi, Shandong), which Cao Cao assaulted unsuccessfully.

Thwarted and low on rations<sup>[5]</sup> Cao Cao turned his army around, sacking in the process the counties of Qulü (取慮), Suiling (睢陵), and Xiaqiu (夏丘).<sup>[3][6]</sup> The local population was swollen with refugees from the violence of the capital regions. Cao Cao's army killed over 100,000 civilians, including both men and women, such that the Si River was stoppered up with their corpses. His army took the chickens and dogs for food and tore down the villages into ruins.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

## The second invasion

In the spring of 194, Cao Cao's army returned to Xu Province, and Tao Qian begged aid from Tian Kai in the nearby Qing Province (青州). Tian Kai sent Tao Qian a force of some thousand men commanded by Liu Bei. Tao Qian, seeking to open a southern front against Cao Cao,<sup>[9]</sup> appointed Liu Bei as the Inspector of Yu Province, and transferred 4,000 soldiers into his service.<sup>[10][11]</sup> Along with Tao Qian's officer Cao Bao, Liu Bei encamped east of Tan (犟).<sup>[12][13]</sup>

Cao Cao's army plundered Langya and Donghai (東海; near present-day Tancheng, Shandong), destroying all in its path. Returning west, Cao Cao engaged and defeated Tao Qian's forces led by Liu Bei. According to one source, Cao Cao conquered the nearby city of Xiangben (襄贛) after this.<sup>[14]</sup>

Xu Province was only granted reprieve when Zhang Miao betrayed Cao Cao and invited Lü Bu to take over Cao Cao's home base in Yan Province (兗州). Cao Cao broke off his vengeance against Tao Qian and turned his army back to attack Lü Bu.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Aftermath

Liu Bei shifted his alliance from Tian Kai towards Tao Qian and he remained in Xu Province after Cao Cao left. When Tao Qian died of illness later in 194, his sons Tao Shang (陶商) and Tao Ying (陶應)<sup>[16]</sup> were passed over for governorship by the local elite in favour of Liu Bei. Thus Liu Bei gained his first territory as a result of Cao Cao's campaign.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Modern references

Cao Cao's invasion of Xu Province is featured as playable stages in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series.

## Notes

- <sup>^</sup> The *Zizhi Tongjian* (60.1945) has "autumn", while the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (1.11) has "summer". *History of Chinese Warfare* specifies "the sixth month" (vol. 4, p 67), which would have been around August.
- <sup>^</sup> This casualty statistic, which appears in Tao Qian's biography in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (8.249), is attached to a phrase describing the Si River being dammed with the bodies of the dead. According to Rafe de Crespigny (*To Establish Peace* <sup>[18]</sup>, volume 1, internet edition (2004), p. 68 note 24 [internet pagination]), this is unsupported by geography and probably happened during Cao Cao's massacre of civilians somewhat farther south, not during his battle at Pengcheng. Thus, the casualty figure is most probably not reliable.
- <sup>^</sup> The *Book of the Later Han* (73.2367) also includes Pengcheng and Fuyang (傅陽; in present-day Linyi, Shandong) among Cao Cao's ravages.

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- [2] *Zizhi Tongjian*, 60.1945: 秋，操引兵擊謙，攻拔十餘城，至彭城，大戰，謙兵敗，走保郟。
- [3] *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, 8.249, biography of Tao Qian: 初平四年，太祖征謙，攻拔十餘城，至彭城大戰。謙兵敗走，死者萬數，泗水為之不流。謙退守剡。
- [4] *History of Chinese Warfare*, vol. 4, p 67
- [5] *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, 8.249, biography of Tao Qian: 太祖以糧少引軍還。
- [6] *Book of the Later Han*, 73.2367: 謙退保郟，操攻之不能克，乃還。過拔取慮、睢陵、夏丘，皆屠之。
- [7] *Book of the Later Han*, 73.2367: 凡殺男女數十萬人，雞犬無餘，泗水為之不流，自是五縣城保，無復行迹。
- [8] *Zizhi Tongjian*, 60.1945: 初，京、雒遭董卓之亂，民流移東出，多依徐土，遇操至，坑殺男女數十萬口於泗水，水為不流。
- [9] *To Establish Peace*, 1.13 n 6
- [10] *Zizhi Tongjian*, 61.1949–50: 陶謙告急於田楷，楷與平原相劉備救之。備自有兵數千人，謙益以丹陽兵四千，備遂去楷歸謙，謙表為豫州刺史，屯小沛。曹操軍食亦盡，引兵還。
- [11] *History of Chinese Warfare*, 4.68
- [12] *Zizhi Tongjian*, 61.1950: 曹操使司馬荀彧、壽張令程昱守甄城，復往攻陶謙，遂略地至琅邪、東海，所過殘滅。還，擊破劉備於郟東。謙恐，欲走歸丹陽。
- [13] *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, 8.249, biography of Tao Qian: 興平元年，復東征，略定琅邪、東海諸縣。謙恐，欲走歸丹陽。會張邈叛迎呂布，太祖還擊布。
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- [18] [https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/html/1885/42048/peace1\\_part3.pdf](https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/html/1885/42048/peace1_part3.pdf)

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# Battle of Yan Province

Battle of Yan Province	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	194 - 195 CE
<b>Location</b>	Yan Province (covering present-day southwestern Shandong and eastern Henan)
<b>Result</b>	Indecisive, Lü Bu retreated
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Lü Bu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Xun Yu Cheng Yu	Lü Bu Chen Gong Zhang Miao †
Strength	
	over 10,000

Battle of Yan Province	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	兗州之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	兗州之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yǎnzhōu Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yan Province** was a battle fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Lü Bu for control of Yan Province (covering present-day southwestern Shandong and eastern Henan) in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle lasted for at least one hundred days with an indecisive conclusion.

## Background

In 192, remnants of the Yellow Turban rebels from Qing Province invaded Yan Province and occupied Dongping and Rencheng. Liu Dai, Inspector of Yan Province, wanted to attack the rebels but Bao Xin, Chancellor of Jibei, advised him against it. Liu Dai ignored Bao Xin's warning, engaged the rebels in battle, and was eventually defeated and killed.

At that time, Cao Cao's advisor Chen Gong urged him to take control of Yan Province and secure it as a base for conquering other territories. Chen Gong volunteered to persuade Liu Dai's followers to join Cao Cao. Bao Xin, who was friendly towards Cao Cao, travelled to Dong Commandery (southwest of present-day Puyang, Henan) to invite Cao to be the new Inspector of Yan Province.

Cao Cao then attacked the Yellow Turban rebels at Shouzhang but failed to defeat them. After that, Cao Cao reformed his army, enforced military rules more strictly, and used incentives to encourage his men. He recognized that the rebels did not have a stable flow of supplies, as they relied on plundering to sustain themselves. Hence, Cao Cao launched surprise attacks on the rebels, prevented them from pillaging, and achieving ultimate victory and

forcing the rebels to retreat north. Cao Cao pursued the rebels and defeated them again at Jibei (south of present-day Changqing District, Shandong). The rebels, numbering more than 300,000, including 100,000 civilians, surrendered to Cao Cao. Cao reorganized the surrendered troops to form the Qingzhou Corps (青州兵), while implementing the *tuntian* system for the people to provide for themselves and the military.

In 193, Cao Cao's father Cao Song was killed by Zhang Kai (張闓), a subordinate of Tao Qian, Governor of Xu Province. In retaliation, Cao Cao launched an attack on Tao Qian, sweeping through Tao's lands and slaughtering thousands of Xu Province's population, including civilians. Tao Qian retreated to Tancheng (鄆城), where Cao Cao was unable to conquer the city and retreated after his army was running low on supplies.

The following year, Cao Cao attacked Tao Qian again, conquering many counties in Langya and Donghai commanderies of Xu Province. Just then, Cao Cao's subordinates Zhang Miao and Chen Gong rebelled against him and aided Lü Bu in taking over his home base of Yan Province. Cao Cao then decided to abandon his campaign on Tao Qian and turn back to retake Yan Province.

## The battle

Cao Cao and Lü Bu's forces were locked in a stalemate for at least a hundred days, with Cao on the disadvantageous end. Eventually, Lü Bu abandoned his position because of a famine outbreak. Cao Cao then laid siege to Lü Bu at Juye, Puyang. Cao Cao's advisors Xun Yu and Cheng Yu defended the cities of Juancheng, Fan and Dong'e, but this left only two counties with solid defenses, so Cao Cao led his army back. Lü Bu arrived and was unable to take Juancheng by siege so he went west and garrisoned Puyang. Lü Bu re-stationed his forces to the east at Shanyang.

In battle, Lü Bu used his cavalry in the first clash of arms, charging towards Cao Cao's Qingzhou Corps. The Qingzhou Corps fled in terror and Cao's formations were in complete disarray. Cao Cao, seeing the confusion, quickly galloped ahead when a fire broke out, but he fell from his horse and burnt the palm of his left hand. Cao's army halted before they reached camp, because most of Cao's generals had not seen their lord and feared for his safety. Cao Cao then strained himself to rouse his men, ordering that siege weapons be prepared immediately so that they can besiege Lü Bu again.

Zhang Miao followed Lü Bu and left his brother Zhang Chao (張超), Administrator of Guangling, to take care of their family at Yongqiu. Cao Cao laid siege on Yongqiu for several months and eventually captured the city, killing Zhang Chao and his family. Zhang Miao pleaded for assistance from Yuan Shu but was rejected and killed by his soldiers. At the same time, a locust plague broke out, causing many to starve while some resorted to cannibalism. Lü Bu had also used up all his provisions, horse feed, and grain supplies so both sides were forced to withdraw.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

When Cao Cao later surrounded Lü Bu at Puyang, the influential Tian clan, who were initially on Lü's side, switched allegiance to Cao and allowed his forces to enter the city. Cao Cao set fire to the eastern gate as a sign that he had no intention of reversing course, thereupon he came under attack and was defeated. Some of Lü Bu's horsemen captured Cao Cao but were unaware of his identity. Cao Cao saw a man riding on a yellow horse and lied that the man was him, so Lü Bu's horsemen released him and chased the rider. Cao Cao then dashed through the burning eastern gate and escaped from Puyang.<sup>[3]</sup>

Within two years, Cao Cao was able to recapture all the cities in Yan Province and defeated Lü Bu at Juye. Lü Bu then fled eastwards to join Liu Bei, who had taken over Xu Province from Tao Qian.

## Aftermath

The Battle of Yan Province led to the subsequent Battle of Xiapi in 198, when the allied forces of Cao Cao and Liu Bei launched an attack on Lü Bu in Xu Province. Lü Bu was executed on Cao Cao's order after his defeat.

## Modern references

The battle was featured as a stage in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends* called the "Battle of Yan Province". In *Dynasty Warriors 7*, the battle is part of the "Battle of Xu Province", which has Lü Bu attacking Cao Cao's main camp. It should not be confused with the "Battle of Yan Province", which deals with remnants of the Yellow Turban rebels.

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- Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*.

# Conquest of Jiangdong

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Sun Ce's conquests in Jiangdong	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	194–199 CE
<b>Location</b>	Jiangnan region, China
<b>Result</b>	Sun Ce victory; foundation laid for the state of Eastern Wu
Belligerents	
Sun Ce	Various warlords, Shanyue
Commanders and leaders	
Sun Ce Zhou Yu Wu Jing Sun Ben Sun Fu	Liu Yao Yan Baihu Xu Gong Wang Lang Lu Kang Liu Xun

Sun Ce's conquests in Jiangdong	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	孙策平江东之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	孫策平江東之戰
<b>Literal meaning</b>	Sun Ce's war of pacification in Jiangdong
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Sūn Cè Píng Jiāngdōng Zhī Zhàn

**Sun Ce's conquests in Jiangdong** were a series of military campaigns led by the warlord Sun Ce to conquer territories in the Jiangdong and Wu regions from 194 to 199 during the final years of the Eastern Han Dynasty. The campaign concluded with victory for Sun Ce, and the conquered lands served as a foundation for the state of Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms era.

## Background

Sun Ce was the eldest son of Sun Jian, who was killed in action during the Battle of Xiangyang in 191 against Liu Biao, the Governor of Jing Province. Although Sun Ce was 17 when his father died, he was already well-known and was acquainted with many reputable men.

In 194, Sun Ce went to meet Yuan Shu, the warlord whom his father was subordinate to. Yuan Shu was surprised, but he refused to return the command of Sun Jian's troops to Sun Ce. At that time, Sun Ce's maternal uncle Wu Jing, the Administrator of Danyang, was also under Yuan Shu. Yuan Shu then ordered Sun Ce to travel to Danyang and rally his own troops there. Although he managed to muster about a few hundred men, Sun Ce came under attack by Zu Lang, a bandit leader in Jing County, and almost lost his life. Sun Ce went to meet Yuan Shu again, with Yuan this time agreeing to return about 1,000 of Sun Jian's troops to Sun Ce. Yuan Shu also initially promised to let Sun Ce be the Administrator of Jiujiang, but he went back on his word and appointed Chen Ji instead.

Subsequently, Yuan Shu planned to attack Xu Province and requested 30,000 *hu* (斛) of rice from Lu Kang, the Administrator of Lujiang, but Lu refused and Yuan was enraged. Sun Ce bore a grudge against Lu Kang, because there was once when he visited Lu, Lu refused to meet him and sent a registrar to entertain him instead. Yuan Shu sent Sun Ce to attack Lu Kang, promising Sun, "It was my mistake to appoint Chen Ji, and now I often regret not abiding by my original decision. If you defeat Lu Kang, Lujiang will truly be yours."<sup>[1]</sup> However, Yuan Shu reneged his promise again when Sun Ce conquered Lujiang, appointing Liu Xun as the administrator instead. Sun Ce became disappointed with Yuan Shu. Concurrently, Sun Ce gained the support of Wu territory residents such as Ling Cao and his kinsman, and pirates such as Zhou Tai and his gang.

At that time, the territories in Yang Province in southeastern China were under the jurisdiction of Liu Yao, who was appointed Inspector of the province. However, Liu Yao only controlled the four commanderies of Danyang, Wu, Kuaiji and Yuzhang, with Jiujiang and Lujiang (both located north of the Yangtze River) not under him. Shouchun was initially the capital of Yang Province, but as it was occupied by Yuan Shu, Liu Yao moved his capital to Qu'e, Danyang. Liu Yao drove away Wu Jing, Yuan Shu's appointed Administrator of Danyang. Wu Jing and Sun Ben (the former Commandant of Danyang, and a cousin of Sun Ce) retreated to Liyang. As a defensive measure against Wu Jing, Liu Yao ordered Fan Neng and Yu Mi to garrison at Hengjiang Ford (southeast of present-day He County, Anhui), Zhang Ying to defend Danglikou (east of present-day He County, Anhui). Yuan Shu appointed his follower Hui Qu (惠衢) as Inspector of Yang Province, Wu Jing as Military Inspector-General of the Household, sending them along with Sun Ben to attack Liu Yao's forces.

## The conquests

### Campaign against Liu Yao

In 195, Sun Ce requested permission from Yuan Shu to assist Wu Jing in fighting Liu Yao. Yuan Shu agreed and appointed Sun Ce as "Colonel Who Breaks and Charges" (折衝校尉) and acting-"General Who Exterminates Bandits" (殄寇將軍). Sun Ce initially had about 1,000 troops, tens of warhorses, and hundreds of followers. When he reached Liyang (present-day He County, Anhui), he had rallied about 5,000 to 6,000 men. Sun Ce's army then crossed the Yangtze River and attacked Liu Yao's base at Niuzhu, obtaining much weapons and provisions. Some time earlier, Xue Li, the Chancellor of Pengcheng, and Ze Rong, the Chancellor of Xiapi, both led troops southward and supported Liu Yao as their leader. Xue Li garrisoned at Moling while Ze Rong fortified his base at south of Moling. Sun Ce attacked Ze Rong first, defeating him and killing more than 500 of Ze's men. Ze Rong retreated to Moling and remained in the city.

Sun Ce then turned his attention towards attacking Xue Li but Xue escaped. At this time, Fan Neng and Yu Mi combined forces to seize back Niuzhu. When Sun Ce heard of that, he returned to retake Niuzhu, defeating Fan Neng and Yu Mi, bringing thousands of civilians under his control with his victory. Sun Ce advanced back to attack Ze Rong, but was wounded by a straw arrow during the battle and was unable to ride on his horse, so he stayed in Niuzhu camp. To lure Ze Rong out of Moling, Sun Ce ordered his soldiers to spread false rumours that he had died of his wounds. Ze Rong fell for the ruse and sent his general Yu Zi (于茲) to attack Sun Ce. Sun Ce sent a few hundred men to engage Yu Zi and lure him into an ambush, where Yu suffered a crushing defeat. Sun Ce then went to Ze Rong's camp, ordering his men to shout, "How is Sun Ce ultimately?" Yu Zi was terrified and escaped at night.

When Ze Rong learnt that Sun Ce was still alive, he immediately strengthened his defences by ordering deeper trenches to be dug and higher ramparts built. As Ze Rong was in a strategic defensive position, Sun Ce abandoned the assault. Sun Ce defeated Liu Yao's forces at Hailing, conquered Hushu and Jiangcheng, and appeared outside Qu'e, the capital of Liu Yao's territories. Around this time, Taishi Ci arrived from Donglai to assist Liu Yao. Although his subordinates advised him to make good use of Taishi Ci in resisting Sun Ce, Liu Yao was suspicious of Taishi and did not dare to let Taishi take up important roles.

Once, when Taishi Ci was scouting outside Qu'e, he encountered Sun Ce at Shenting. Sun Ce was accompanied by 13 riders of good fighting capabilities, including Han Dang, Huang Gai and Song Qian. Taishi Ci knew that the lead rider was Sun Ce so he rode forth to challenge Sun to a duel. During the fight, Sun Ce managed to grab one of Taishi Ci's *jis* but he also lost his helmet to his opponent. By then, reinforcements from both sides had arrived so Sun Ce and Taishi Ci retreated to their respective bases.

Not long later, Liu Yao was defeated in battle by Sun Ce and his troops abandoned the city and fled. After occupying Qu'e, Sun Ce rewarded his men and issued an order to the people: "Those who previously served Liu Yao and Ze Rong will not be subject to questioning if they surrender. For those who wish to join the army, one man from each household is sufficient; those who are unwilling will not be compelled." Within one day, Sun Ce succeeded in rallying more than 200,000 troops and 1,000 warhorses.

Meanwhile, Liu Yao and Ze Rong retreated to Yuzhang. Ze Rong used a scheme to kill the Administrator Zhu Hao (朱皓) and take over Yuzhang. Liu Yao led an army from Pengze (present-day Hukou County, Jiangxi) to attack Ze Rong. Ze Rong was defeated and retreated to the hills, where he was killed by the natives. Hua Xin was appointed by the Han Dynasty central government as Administrator of Yuzhang.

Concurrently, Zhu Zhi defeated Xu Gong and conquered Wu Commandery, handing it over to Sun Ce when he arrived. Xu Gong escaped to join the bandit leader Yan Baihu.

## Campaign against Wang Lang

In 196, Sun Ce's subordinates advised him to attack Yan Baihu, but Sun said, "Yan Baihu and his bandits do not have great aspirations. I will capture them later eventually."<sup>[2]</sup> Sun Ce then led his troops on a detour, bypassing Yan Baihu's forces south of Wu Commandery, and proceeded to attack Wang Lang, the Administrator of Kuaiji (present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang). Yu Fan, an Officer of Merit (功曹) under Wang Lang, advised his lord to avoid Sun Ce since they were weaker in military strength than Sun. As Sun Ce advanced, Wang Lang moved to defend his territory on the line of the Qiantang estuary at the head of Hangzhou Bay. During his march through Wu Commandery, Sun Ce used the opportunity to rally support from his connections in the region. Sun Ce's uncle, Sun Jing, responded and joined him at Qiantang.

Wang Lang's army was stationed at Guling, where Sun Ce attempted several times to force his way through but failed. Sun Ce then heeded Sun Jing's suggestion, arranging for his uncle to lead a detachment south to a river crossing at Zhadu (southwest of present-day Xiaoshan District, Zhejiang), and from there Sun Jing would head back to attack Wang Lang's forces at Gaoqian (northwest of present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang). That night, Sun Ce then ordered his remaining troops to light the usual number of campfires even though they had less men now, so as to create an illusion that his army's strength was still the same. Wang Lang was taken by surprise and Sun Ce's forces were established across the river.

Initially, Wang Lang attempted to organise a retreat and regroup his troops, so he sent his appointed Administrator of Danyang, Zhou Xin, to hold the line against Sun Ce's attack. Sun Ce defeated and killed Zhou Xin, causing Wang Lang to abandon his territories and escape south to Dongye by sailing along the coast. Wang Lang later surrendered to Sun Ce, and was summoned back to the imperial court two years later.

Sun Ce appointed himself Administrator of Kuaiji, reinstated Yu Fan as an Officer of Merit and treated him like a friend. By 197, Sun Ce had already established a strong foothold in Jiangdong, so he broke ties with his former ally Yuan Shu, and planned to expand his territory. In 198, Sun Ce was promoted by the imperial court to the rank of "General Who Attacks Rebels" (討逆將軍) and received the title of "Marquis of Wu" (吳侯). In addition, Sun Ce's younger brother Sun Kuang married Cao Cao's niece while Cao Cao's son Cao Zhang married the daughter of Sun Ben (Sun Ce's cousin).

## Campaign against Yan Baihu, bandits and the Shanyue

When Sun Ce defeated Wang Lang, the bandit leader Chen Yu (陳瑀) from Haixi (southeast of present-day Guannan County, Jiangsu) proclaimed himself Administrator of Wu Commandery. Chen Yu led his men secretly across the river, planning to ally with Yan Baihu to attack Sun Ce. However, Sun Ce sent two armies to attack Chen Yu and Yan Baihu at the same time and defeated them.

In 198, Yuan Shu sent a messenger to Zu Lang, a bandit leader in Danyang, promising to grant him an official post if he would oppose Sun Ce. Previously, after Liu Yao's defeat, Taishi Ci escaped to the hills around present-day Wuhu City. He declared himself Administrator of Danyang and moved to Jing County, where he amassed a large number of Shanyue followers.

After pacifying eastern Danyang, Sun Ce led his troops to attack Zu Lang at Lingyang (west of present-day Taiping County, Anhui) and captured him. Although Sun Ce almost lost his life in an earlier battle against Zu Lang before he started his conquests, he spared Zu and allowed Zu to be an officer under him. Subsequently, Sun Ce defeated Taishi Ci at Yongli (in present-day Jing County, Anhui) and captured him. Sun Ce freed Taishi Ci and succeeded in persuading Taishi to serve him as a general. When Sun Ce's army marched back in triumph, both Taishi Ci and Zu Lang were in the lead. With his victory, Sun Ce pacified the six counties west of Jing (涇) and controlled three commanderies in Jiangdong.

Around that time, Liu Yao had died of illness in Yuzhang and he left behind more than 10,000 followers. Sun Ce sent Taishi Ci to recruit them, saying that it was voluntary for Liu Yao's men to join him. Sun then asked Taishi how

many men he wanted to bring along with him, and Taishi replied that he needed about ten men only. Sun Ce's aides felt that Taishi Ci would not return but Sun said that if Taishi deserted him, he would have no one else to turn to. Sun Ce personally saw Taishi Ci off, held his hand and asked him when he would come back, and Taishi replied that he would return in less than 60 days. As promised, Taishi Ci did return on time, bringing along with him several of Liu Yao's former followers.

### **Sun Ce breaking relations with Yuan Shu**

While Sun Ce was attacking the warlords of Jiangdong, Yuan Shu was making plans to become emperor. Despite having been in Huainan for years, Yuan Shu did not make any great achievements. Instead, he oppressed the people and caused agricultural production to be disrupted. On the battlefield, he had also been experiencing defeats, but he still insisted on becoming emperor against the advice of his followers.

When Sun Ce heard that Yuan Shu was about to declare himself emperor, he wrote a letter reprimanding Yuan, reasoning the potential harms of committing treason. Yuan Shu ignored Sun Ce and hurriedly declared himself "Son of Heaven" around late 196 or early 197, starting his new Zhong (中) dynasty in Huainan. Yuan Shu's action provoked hostility from other warlords and caused Sun Ce to break ties with him. The Han imperial court, which was actually under Cao Cao's control, issued edicts to Lü Bu and Sun Ce, urging them to exterminate Yuan Shu's regime.

### **Conquest of Lujiang**

In the winter of 199, Yuan Shu's regime was crushed by Han Dynasty forces and Yuan himself died not long after his defeat. Yuan Shu's former subordinates Yang Hong and Zhang Xun planned to surrender to Sun Ce, along with their followers and Yuan Shu's family. However, Liu Xun, the Administrator of Lujiang, attacked them, took them captive and looted their possessions. When Sun Ce heard about the incident, he pretended to ally with Liu Xun by sending Liu expensive gifts and showering him with praises.

Sun Ce feigned inferiority and urged Liu Xun to help him attack Shangliao (present-day Yongxiu County, Jiangxi), a region in Jiangdong that Liu already had been eyeing. Liu Xun's subordinate Liu Ye attempted to dissuade him from invading Shangliao, but Liu Xun ignored him. After Liu Xun's army left, Sun Ce split his army into two groups to attack Lujiang: Sun Ben and Sun Fu led a contingent to Pengze to cut off Liu Xun's return route; Sun Ce and Zhou Yu personally led 20,000 troops to assault Lujiang's capital, Huancheng (皖城; present-day Qianshan County, Anhui), and conquered it swiftly, capturing Liu Xun's family and men and retrieving Yuan Shu's family. After that, Sun Ce brought the majority of Lujiang's population back to his territories across the Yangtze River, while leaving his general Li Shu (李術) behind with a garrison to guard Lujiang. He then returned to join his cousins at Pengze.

Liu Xun attempted to take Haihun by surprise but the people were forewarned about his attack and he was unsuccessful. When Liu Xun learnt of Sun Ce's attack on Wan, he sought to return, but was cut off by Sun Ben's army at Pengze and driven west up the Yangtze River. Liu Xun then halted to fortify defensive positions near Mount Xisai, where he requested reinforcements from Liu Biao and Huang Zu. Huang Zu's son, Huang Ye (黃射), led 5,000 men and a fleet of ships from Jiangxia (west of present-day Xinzhou District, Wuhan, Hubei) to support Liu Xun. Sun Ce defeated the combined forces, capturing more than 2,000 enemy troops and 1,000 ships, while Liu Xun fled north to join Cao Cao.

### **Conquest of Yuzhang**

Following his victory, Sun Ce moved west to attack Jiangxia, defeating Huang Zu's army at Shaxian (in present-day Wuhan, Hubei), in which many enemy soldiers were either killed or drowned, and Sun Ce captured Huang Zu's family and obtained 6,000 vessels. Sun Ce then turned south to attack Yuzhang (present-day Nanchang, Jiangxi). He sent Yu Fan to persuade Yuzhang's Administrator Hua Xin to surrender, which Hua agreed. Sun Ce treated the elderly Hua Xin, who commanded much respect, like an honoured guest.

## Aftermath

In the summer of 200, Sun Ce led his army west to attack Huang Zu again. Chen Deng, the Administrator of Guangling, allied with Yan Baihu's remnants and attempted to launch a sneak attack on Sun Ce's Wu Commandery. However, Sun Ce defeated Huang Zu and returned to deal with Chen Deng, but his army temporarily halted at Dantu on the way back to await for supplies to arrive. In the meantime, Sun Ce went on a hunting trip with a few men, but the men fell behind as Sun Ce's horse was faster than theirs. When Sun Ce was alone, he was ambushed by three former servants of Xu Gong, the Administrator of Wu Commandery, whom he killed earlier. He was hit in the cheek by an arrow fired by one of them before his men arrived and killed the assassins. Sun Ce eventually died from his wound days later.

Sun Ce's younger brother, Sun Quan, inherited and expanded his legacy based on the conquered territories in Jiangdong. Sun Quan later became the founding emperor of the state of Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms era.

## Order of battle

### Sun Ce forces

- Sun Ce
    - Xu Kun (徐琨), Sun Ce's maternal cousin.
    - Sun He (孫河), Sun Ce's distant cousin and bodyguard.
    - Cheng Pu
    - Huang Gai
    - Han Dang
    - Zhu Zhi
    - Song Qian
    - Lü Fan
    - Xu Yi (徐逸)
    - Zhang Zhao
    - Jiang Qin
    - Zhou Tai
    - Chen Wu
    - Ling Cao
    - Dong Xi
    - Xu Sheng
    - Quan Rou (全柔)
    - Li Shu (李術)
  - Zhou Shang (周尚), Zhou Yu's uncle. He served as the Administrator of Danyang when Wu Jing was attacking Guangling.
    - Zhou Yu, the Chief of Juchao. He helped Sun Ce pacify Jiangdong under the pretext of visiting his uncle.
  - Wu Jing, the Administrator of Danyang, Sun Ce's maternal uncle.
    - Sun Ben, the Commandant of Danyang, Sun Ce's cousin. He became the Administrator of Yuzhang after Liu Yao's death.
    - Sun Fu, Sun Ben's younger brother.
  - Yuan Shu's support forces:
    - Hui Qu (惠衢)
    - Yuan Yin, Yuan Shu's relative. He was driven away by Xu Kun when Yuan Shu sent him to be the Administrator of Danyang.
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## Opposing forces in Yang Province

- Liu Yao, the Inspector of Yang Province. He retreated to Yuzhang after being defeated by Sun Ce, and eventually died of illness in 197.
  - Xu Shao, served as an advisor to Liu Yao.
  - Fan Neng, the defending general of Hengjiang Ford.
  - Yu Mi, the defending general of Hengjiang Ford.
  - Zhang Ying, the defending general of Danglikou.
  - 卞 Taishi Ci
- Ze Rong, a Buddhist leader and the Chancellor of Xiapi.
  - Yu Zi (于茲)
- † Xue Li, the Chancellor of Pengcheng. He was killed by Ze Rong.
- Yan Baihu, a bandit leader in Wu.
  - Yan Yu, Yan Baihu's younger brother. He was killed by Sun Ce while negotiating for peace.
- † Xu Gong, the Commandant of Wu. After suffering initial defeats at the hands of Sun Ce, he attempted to conspire with Cao Cao, but was captured and executed.
- 卞 Wang Lang, the Administrator of Kuaiji. Eventually was forced to surrender, then was sent north to join Cao Cao.
  - † Zhou Xin, the former Administrator of Danyang.
  - 卞 Yu Fan, an advisor to Wang Lang. He opposed Wang Lang's support of Yan Baihu and joined Sun Ce after Wang Lang's initial defeat.
  - 卞 He Qi, the Chief of Yan (剡) County. He chose to support Sun Ce after Wang Lang's initial defeat.
  - Zhang Ya (張雅), a local bandit leader of Houguan. He supported Wang Lang after the latter lost his city to Sun Ce.
  - Xu Jing, Xu Shao's brother. He fled to Shi Xie after Wang Lang's defeat.
- Lu Kang, the former Administrator of Lujiang. He died of illness after his defeat.
- Chen Deng, the Administrator of Guangling.
  - Chen Jiao (陳矯), a Clerk (功曹) under Chen Deng.
- Chen Yu (陳瑀), a bandit leader in Haixi. He surrendered to Yuan Shao.
  - † Chen Mu (陳牧)
- 卞 Zu Lang, a bandit leader in Jing County.
- Huang Longluo (黃龍羅), a bandit leader in Shanyin.
- Zhou Bo (周勃), a bandit leader in Shanyin.
- Liu Biao's support forces:
  - Liu Pan, Liu Biao's nephew.
  - Huang Zu, the Administrator of Jiangxia.
  - † Huang She (黃射), Huang Zu's son.
  - † Liu Hu (劉虎), Liu Biao's nephew.
  - † Han Xi (韓希)
- Liu Xun, the Administrator of Lujiang. He joined Cao Cao after being defeated by Sun Ce.
  - Liu Xie (劉偕), Liu Xun's nephew.
  - Liu Ye, joined Cao Cao along with Liu Xun.

## Modern references

The campaign is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*, in which it is also known as the Battle of Jiangdong. In *Dynasty Warriors 3*, by defeating Liu Yao before the other two warlords (Wang Lang and Yan Baihu), the player can force Taishi Ci to surrender. In *Dynasty Warriors 5*, Liu Yao retreats and Taishi Ci becomes the enemy commander. He joins Sun Ce's side after the player defeats him. In addition, a special event is included, in which Sun Quan is trapped inside one of the enemy forts and the player needs to save him. If the player is playing as Zhou Tai, a cutscene will be triggered, showing a conversation between Zhou Tai and a grateful Sun Quan.

## Notes

- [1] (前錯用陳紀，每恨本意不遂。今若得康，廬江真卿有也。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 46, Biography of Sun Ce.
- [2] (虎等群盜，非有大志，此成禽耳。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 46, Biography of Sun Ce.

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- Rafe de Crespigny. *Generals of the South* ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos\\_ch3.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos_ch3.pdf)).

# Battle of Wancheng

Battle of Wancheng	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	197 CE
<b>Location</b>	Wancheng (around present-day Wancheng District, Nanyang, Henan)
<b>Result</b>	Zhang Xiu victory
Belligerents	
Zhang Xiu	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang Xiu	Cao Cao Dian Wei †
Strength	
5,000 infantry <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>	

Battle of Wancheng	
Simplified Chinese	宛城之战
Traditional Chinese	宛城之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Wǎnchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Wancheng**, also known as the **Battle of Wan**, was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Zhang Xiu in 197 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Zhang Xiu emerged victorious in the battle while Cao Cao escaped after his defeat.

## Background

In 197, Cao Cao led his army from Xuchang to attack Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), which was governed by Liu Biao. On the way, Cao Cao arrived at Wancheng, which was controlled by Zhang Xiu. Zhang Xiu's strategist Jia Xu suggested to his lord to feign surrender to Cao Cao first, and then draw up a plan to drive Cao away. As Jia Xu predicted, Cao Cao accepted Zhang Xiu's surrender and allowed him to remain in control of Wancheng.

However, later, Cao Cao was attracted to the widow of Zhang Xiu's deceased uncle Zhang Ji (referred as Lady Zou (鄒氏) in *Romance of Three Kingdoms*), and he took her as a concubine. Zhang Xiu felt humiliated and wanted to take revenge on Cao Cao. When Cao Cao heard of Zhang Xiu's displeasure, he plotted to kill Zhang, but the plan was leaked out. Zhang Xiu revolted against Cao Cao and launched a surprise attack on Cao's camp at night.

## The battle

Zhang Xiu gained an advantage over Cao Cao, as the latter was unprepared for the sudden assault. Cao Cao mounted a horse and sped away, while his general Dian Wei remained behind to prevent the enemy from passing through the gate. However, Zhang Xiu's troops broke through the other gates and eventually surrounded Dian Wei. By then, Dian Wei had only slightly more than ten men left with him, and they were fighting desperately. Dian Wei used his long crescent halberds to slash left and right, cutting down ten or more enemy soldiers. The surrounding area was littered with many casualties and dead bodies. Dian Wei had sustained over ten wounds but he continued to fight on, crushing two enemies under his arms with brute strength. The remaining enemy soldiers did not dare to advance further, while Dian Wei continued attacking and killing several of them until he reached his threshold, when he let out a loud yell and died. Zhang Xiu's men dared not move forward to take his head until they were sure he was dead and finally returned to their camp.

Cao Cao's son, Cao Ang, offered his steed to his father, and bravely stayed behind to hold off Zhang Xiu's soldiers. Although Cao Ang managed to buy time for his father to escape, he was eventually overwhelmed and killed. Cao Cao's nephew Cao Anmin also died in the battle. In the meantime, Cao Cao had retreated to Wuyin. He wept upon hearing news of Dian Wei's death.

## Modern references

This battle is featured in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors* as a playable stage and the highlight of Dian Wei's story mode. If the player is not playing as Dian Wei, Dian Wei makes his last appearance in that stage and does not appear again in the subsequent stages. In *Dynasty Warriors 7*, after Cao Cao's escapes from the castle, he attacks Zhang Xiu with Xiahou Dun and Xu Chu and ends up gaining Jia Xu in his ranks. If Zhang Xiu is defeated by Cao Cao, it is not known if he was killed by Cao or retreated from the battle.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biography of Dian Wei.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

# Battle of Xiapi

Battle of Xiapi	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Winter of 198
<b>Location</b>	Xiapi, Xu Province (present-day Pizhou, Jiangsu, China)
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Cao Cao and Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao, Liu Bei	Lü Bu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao, Liu Bei	Lü Bu 呂

Battle of Xiapi	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	下邳之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	下邳之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xiàpī Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xiapi** was fought between the forces of Lü Bu against the allied armies of Cao Cao and Liu Bei in the winter of 198, towards the end of the Han Dynasty. The battle concluded with victory for Cao Cao and Liu Bei.

## Background

In 194, while Cao Cao was away attacking Tao Qian in Xu Province, his subordinates Chen Gong and Zhang Miao rebelled against him and aided Lü Bu in taking over his base in Yan Province. Cao Cao abandoned his invasion of Xu Province and turned back to attack Lü Bu, culminating in the Battle of Yan Province which lasted more than 100 days. By 195, Cao Cao had retaken all his cities in Yan Province and defeated Lü Bu at Juye. Lü Bu and his men fled east to join Liu Bei, who had succeeded Tao Qian as Governor (州牧) of Xu Province.

In 196, Cao Cao found Emperor Xian in the ruins of Luoyang and brought him to Xuchang, where the new capital and imperial court would be based. In the same year, Lü Bu took advantage of the conflict between Liu Bei and Yuan Shu to capture Xiapi (present-day Pizhou, Jiangsu), capital of Xu Province, effectively seizing control of the province from Liu Bei. Liu Bei was forced to surrender his governorship of Xu Province to Lü Bu and settle in the nearby city of Xiaopei. Not long later, Lü Bu felt threatened by Liu Bei's presence and led his troops to attack Liu. Liu Bei was defeated by Lü Bu and had no choice but to join Cao Cao. Cao Cao provided Liu Bei with supplies and sent him to garrison at Xiaopei.

Around 197, Yuan Shao was in control of the three provinces of Ji, Qing and Bing north of the Yellow River, so he wrote a letter to Cao Cao in an arrogant tone. Around the same time, Cao Cao had just been defeated by Zhang Xiu at the Battle of Wancheng and the letter angered him. Cao Cao felt threatened by Yuan Shao's growing influence in northern China and wanted to attack Yuan, but felt that his forces were not strong enough. Cao Cao's strategists Guo Jia and Xun Yu assessed the situation, listing out the various advantages Cao Cao had over Yuan Shao. They also advised him to use the opportunity to eliminate Lü Bu when Yuan Shao was at war with Gongsun Zan, because it was possible that Yuan Shao might ally with Lü Bu to attack him. Cao Cao then made preparations for a campaign against Lü Bu.

## The battle

### Conflict between Lü Bu and Yuan Shu

In 197, Yuan Shu declared himself emperor and sent his official Han Yin to meet Lü Bu, proposing a marriage between his son and Lü Bu's daughter, so as to foster a stronger alliance between him and Lü Bu. Lü Bu initially agreed to the proposal and sent his daughter to follow Han Yin back. However, Lü Bu still bore a grudge against Yuan Shu for attacking him five years ago, so he changed his mind after listening to Chen Gui. Lü Bu pursued the convoy and retrieved his daughter, captured Han Yin and sent him to Xuchang, where Han was executed on Cao Cao's order. Cao Cao appointed Lü Bu as General of the Left (左將軍) and personally wrote him a letter to console him. Lü Bu sent Chen Deng to meet Cao Cao and thank Cao on his behalf. When Chen Deng met Cao Cao, he said that Lü Bu was bold but not very astute, and was untrustworthy, so he should to be eliminated as soon as possible. Cao Cao agreed with Chen Deng's view. Chen Deng was appointed Administrator of Guangling and secretly implanted by Cao Cao as a spy in Lü Bu's forces.

On the other hand, Yuan Shu was angered by Lü Bu's betrayal, so he sent his generals Zhang Xun, Qiao Rui to lead an army to attack Xiapi from seven directions in collaboration with the White Wave Bandits led by Han Xian and Yang Feng. Lü Bu was in an disadvantageous situation, with only 3,000 men and 400 warhorses. He was afraid that he might not be able to resist Yuan Shu so he blamed Chen Gui for giving him poor counsel. Chen Gui, however, thought that Han Xian and Yang Feng were not genuinely loyal to Yuan Shu, so he advised Lü Bu to persuade them to break their alliance with Yuan Shu. When Lü Bu attacked Yuan Shu's forces, Han Xian and Yang Feng defected to his side. Yuan Shu's troops were defeated and Lü Bu pursued them until he reached south of the Huai River.

## Siege of Xiapi

In 198, Lü Bu made peace with Yuan Shu again, and sent his general Gao Shun to attack Liu Bei at Xiaopei. Cao Cao sent Xiahou Dun with an army to reinforce Liu Bei, but they were still defeated by Gao Shun. Xiaopei fell to Lü Bu's forces in the ninth lunar month and Liu Bei escaped but his wives were captured.

Following that, Cao Cao officially launched his military campaign against Lü Bu. When Cao Cao's army reached Pengcheng (present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu), Chen Gong urged Lü Bu to attack Cao Cao because Cao Cao's troops were weary from their long march from Xuchang. Lü Bu, however, insisted on staying in Xiapi and wait for Cao Cao to arrive before attacking. A month later, Cao Cao conquered Pengcheng. At the same time, Chen Deng defected to Cao Cao's side and led his men from Guangling to Xiapi. Lü Bu personally lead his troops out to engage the enemy but was defeated and forced to retreat. Lü Bu returned to Xiapi and defended the city firmly without advancing.

Cao Cao wrote a letter to Lü Bu, explaining the perilous situation the latter was in. Lü Bu became afraid and had the intention of surrendering, but Chen Gong felt that Cao Cao's army had travelled a long distance and would not be able to fight a prolonged battle. Chen Gong advised Lü Bu to garrison part of his forces outside the city, while the rest would remain with him inside, so that they can support each other if either side came under attack. Chen also said the best time to engage Cao Cao's forces would be months later, when Cao's supplies run out. Lü Bu agreed with the plan and wanted to leave Chen Gong and Gao Shun behind to defend Xiapi while he was stationed outside the city. However, Lü Bu's wife claimed that Chen Gong and Gao Shun could not get along with each other, so that would be a problem if Lü Bu was not around. She also felt that Cao Cao treated Chen Gong better (before the latter's defection to Lü Bu) than how Lü Bu was treating Chen now, so Chen might betray Lü Bu. Lü Bu thus aborted Chen Gong's plan.

Lü Bu sent Wang Kai and Xu Si (許汜) to request reinforcements from Yuan Shu, but Yuan rejected when he recalled how Lü Bu reneged on the marriage proposal earlier. Wang Kai and Xu Si attempted to persuade Yuan Shu to send aid, claiming that Yuan Shu would be isolated if Lü Bu was eliminated. Yuan Shu considered sending relief forces, but did not do so immediately. In the meantime, Lü Bu thought that Yuan Shu was unwilling to help him because of the marriage proposal incident, so he personally escorted his daughter out of Xiapi and attempted to send her to Yuan Shu's territory. However, Lü Bu encountered Cao Cao's troops outside the city and was unable to break out of the siege so he had to turn back.

Cao Cao's troops began to become tired and weary after failing to capture Xiapi despite besieging it for a long time. Cao Cao had the intention of withdrawing, but his strategists Xun You and Guo Jia thought that Lü Bu's army was already low on morale after having suffered so many defeats, so they advised Cao Cao to press on the siege. Cao Cao then ordered his soldiers to direct the waters of the Yi and Si rivers to flood Xiapi. The beleaguered Lü Bu prepared to surrender after Xiapi was flooded for over a month, but Chen Gong stopped him.

## Lü Bu's surrender

Lü Bu's general Hou Cheng found a man to help him take charge of 15 horses but the man escaped with the horses, planning to present them to Liu Bei. Hou Cheng personally pursued the man and retrieved the horses. The other generals congratulated Hou Cheng on his achievement and Hou prepared food and wine and presented to Lü Bu. Lü Bu was furious and said, "I ordered a ban on alcohol, and now you prepare wine. Are you planning to make me drunk and then turn against me?" Hou Cheng was unhappy and afraid, so in the 12th lunar month of 198, he plotted with Song Xian and Wei Xu to capture Chen Gong and Gao Shun before surrendering to Cao Cao.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

When Lü Bu heard about Hou Cheng's defection, he led his remaining men to White Gate Tower, where he saw that Cao Cao's troops were closing in on him. He asked his men to kill him and bring his head to Cao Cao, but they refused. Lü Bu then surrendered.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Aftermath

Lü Bu and his followers were tied up and brought before Cao Cao and Liu Bei. Cao Cao ordered Gao Shun to be executed after Gao did not reply when Cao asked him if he had anything to say. Lü Bu complained that he was too tightly bound but Cao Cao said, "A tiger should be tightly tied up." Lü Bu then attempted to persuade Cao Cao to spare him and promised to serve Cao. As Cao Cao was pondering, Liu Bei said, "Haven't you seen what happened to Ding Yuan and Dong Zhuo?" Cao Cao rubbed his jaw. Lü Bu scolded Liu Bei, "You're the most untrustworthy person."<sup>[5]</sup> The *Yingxiong Ji* (英雄記; *Records of Heroes*) stated that Cao Cao initially wanted to spare Lü Bu's life after Lü pledged to serve him. However, Wang Bi (王必), Cao Cao's registrar, immediately stopped Cao Cao and said, "Lü Bu is a formidable prisoner-of-war. His subordinates are nearby, he cannot be spared." Cao Cao then said to Lü Bu, "I wanted to spare you, but my registrar refuses. So, what should I do?"<sup>[6]</sup>

When Cao Cao asked Chen Gong what would happen to his family members, Chen hinted that Cao should spare them. Cao Cao spared Chen Gong's family and treated them well.<sup>[7][8]</sup> Chen Gong then accepted his fate and walked to the execution ground without looking back. Cao Cao was deeply grieved by Chen Gong's death.<sup>[9]</sup> Cao Cao then had Lü Bu executed by hanging. He ordered the dead bodies of Lü Bu and his followers to be decapitated and their heads sent to Xuchang and then later buried.<sup>[10]</sup>

Cao Cao accepted Zhang Liao, Chen Qun and others who previously served Lü Bu, and appointed them as generals or officials under him. Other minor warlords such as Zang Ba, Sun Guan (孫觀), Wu Dun (吳敦), Yin Li, and Chang Xi (昌豨) who used to side with Lü Bu also surrendered to Cao Cao, and he put them in charge of various commanderies along the coastline.

With the end of the Battle of Xiapi, Cao Cao completely eliminated the threat posed by Lü Bu. The following year, Liu Bei broke ties with Cao Cao and seized control of Xu Province after killing Che Zhou (車胄), but Cao Cao quickly defeated Liu and regained control of the province. With Xu Province now firmly in his control, Cao Cao no longer had any impending threats on his home base in Yan and Yu provinces. This became an advantage to Cao Cao in the subsequent Battle of Guandu in 200 against Yuan Shao.

## Order of battle

Cao Cao and Liu Bei forces	Lü Bu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cao Cao               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xun You</li> <li>• Guo Jia</li> <li>• Xiahou Dun                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Han Hao</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Liu Bei               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guan Yu</li> <li>• Zhang Fei</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 𠂆 Lü Bu, executed               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chen Gong, executed</li> <li>• Gao Shun, executed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 𠂆 Hou Cheng</li> <li>• 𠂆 Song Xian</li> <li>• 𠂆 Wei Xu</li> <li>• Cheng Lian (成廉)</li> </ul>

## In fiction

The battle was romanticised in chapters 18 and 19 of the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong - some fictional events were added, while actual ones were modified to large extents for dramatic effect. In the novel, the battle took place in two stages: the first took place near Xiaopei (小沛; present-day Pei County, Jiangsu) while the second was at Xiapi (下邳; present-day Pizhou, Jiangsu) itself.

Some notable events in the novel's account of the battle are as follows:

### Xiahou Dun losing his left eye

Cao Cao sent Xiahou Dun to lead reinforcements to help Liu Bei, who was under attack by Lü Bu at Xiaopei. When Xiahou Dun arrived, he encountered Lü Bu's army led by Gao Shun, and he engaged Gao in a one-on-one fight. Both of them duelled for about 40-50 rounds. Gao Shun could not hold on any longer so he retreated, with Xiahou Dun in pursuit. Lü Bu's subordinate Cao Xing spotted Xiahou Dun on the battlefield, and he fired an arrow which hit Xiahou in his left eye. Xiahou Dun cried out and pulled out the arrow together with his eyeball. He exclaimed, "(This is) the essence of my father and the blood of my mother, (I) cannot waste it!" He then swallowed his eyeball and charged towards Cao Xing. Cao Xing was caught off guard and was killed by Xiahou Dun, who speared him in the face. The soldiers from both sides were shocked by the scene before them.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Historicity

Xiahou Dun's biography in the *Sanguozhi* mentioned briefly when Xiahou Dun participated in a battle against Lü Bu's forces, he was hit by a stray arrow and was injured in his left eye.<sup>[12]</sup> No further details were provided. The *Weilue* stated that after the incident, the soldiers nicknamed Xiahou Dun "Blind Xiahou". Xiahou Dun hated that nickname and when he saw his reflection in the mirror, he would smash the mirror by throwing it to the ground.<sup>[13]</sup>

The only record of Cao Xing in history exists in the *Yingxiong Ji* (英雄記; *Records of Heroes*), which stated that when Hao Meng rebelled against Lü Bu in 196, Hao's subordinate Cao Xing refused to join him in the rebellion. Hao Meng and Cao Xing fought, and Cao was injured by Hao but he managed to slice off Hao's arm. Hao Meng was later killed by Gao Shun. Lü Bu later praised Cao Xing for remaining loyal to him.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Hou Cheng's defection

This incident took place when Lü Bu was besieged by Cao Cao's forces in Xiapi for months. His subordinate Hou Cheng seized back 15 horses stolen from them and Lü Bu's men wanted to celebrate. Hou Cheng feared that Lü Bu might be angry because the latter had already banned his men from consuming alcohol, so Hou presented five bottles of wine to his lord. However, Lü Bu was furious and he wanted to have Hou Cheng executed, but Song Xian, Wei Xu and others pleaded with Lü Bu to spare Hou. Lü Bu agreed and had Hou Cheng flogged 50 times before releasing him. Lü Bu's men were all upset by the incident. Hou Cheng later plotted with Song Xian and Wei Xu to betray Lü Bu. That night, Hou Cheng stole Lü Bu's steed, the Red Hare, and fled to Cao Cao's camp. He told Cao Cao about their plan.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Historicity

The *Sanguozhi* stated that Lü Bu's followers were starting to become disunited after Lü Bu had been besieged in Xiapi by Cao Cao's forces for about three months. His generals Hou Cheng, Song Xian and Wei Xu captured Chen Gong and brought their men to surrender to Cao Cao. The *Jiuzhou Chunqiu* gave a similar account of the story in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, except that Lü Bu did not have Hou Cheng flogged when the latter presented wine to him. Instead, Hou Cheng became afraid after Lü Bu scolded him and threatened to execute him, so he discarded the wine and returned to join the other generals. He later became suspicious of Lü Bu and eventually led his men to surrender to Cao Cao. Lü Bu's biography in the *Houhanshu* combined the original text in the *Sanguozhi* and the *Jiuzhou Chunqiu* account, stating that Hou Cheng and others captured Chen Gong and Gao Shun and surrendered to



Cao Cao.

## Lü Bu's final moments

Lü Bu was resting when his subordinates Song Xian and Wei Xu captured him and tied him up. They threw his *ji* down the walls and opened the gates for Cao Cao's forces to enter. Lü Bu was brought before Cao Cao and he complained that he was too tightly bound, but Cao Cao said, "A tiger must be tied up securely." Lü Bu then said to Hou Cheng, Wei Xu and Song Xian, "I treated all of you well, why do you betray me?" Song Xian replied, "(You) listen to your wives and concubines and ignore our advice. You call this 'treating us well'?" Lü Bu remained silent. Cao Cao then had Gao Shun executed. He wanted to spare Chen Gong but the latter insisted on accepting his fate and was executed as well. Lü Bu attempted to persuade Cao Cao to spare him, saying that he was willing to serve under Cao Cao and help him conquer the empire. When Cao Cao asked Liu Bei for his opinion, Liu replied, "Haven't you seen what happened to Ding Yuan and Dong Zhuo?" Lü Bu glared at Liu Bei and said, "You're the most untrustworthy person!" As he was being dragged away, Lü Bu turned back and shouted at Liu Bei, "Big eared fellow! Have you forgotten the incident when I fired an arrow through the *ji*?"<sup>[16]</sup> Cao Cao then had Lü Bu executed by hanging and his dead body decapitated.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Historicity

The *Sanguozhi* stated that Lü Bu surrendered when he saw that he had been surrounded, instead of him being captured by his own subordinates who had betrayed him. His final words, said to Cao Cao and Liu Bei moments before his death, were similar to those mentioned in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Cao Cao then had Lü Bu hanged. He ordered Lü Bu's dead body to be decapitated and the head sent to the capital Xuchang and later had it buried. Lü Bu's biography in the *Houhanshu* mentioned that Lü Bu asked his subordinates to take his head and surrender to Cao Cao when he saw that he had been surrounded by Cao's forces. However, his subordinates were unwilling to do so, hence they surrendered together. The rest of the account is similar to that in the *Sanguozhi* and its annotations.

## Modern references

The Battle of Xiapi is featured in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors* as a playable stage from the fourth instalment onwards.

## References

- [1] (九州春秋曰：初，布騎將侯成遣客牧馬十五匹，客悉驅馬去，向沛城，欲歸劉備。成自將騎逐之，悉得馬還。諸將合禮賀成，成釀五六斛酒，獵得十餘頭豬，未飲食，先持半豬五斗酒自入詣布前，跪言：「聞蒙將軍恩，逐得所失馬，諸將來相賀，自釀少酒，獵得豬，未敢飲食，先奉上微意。」布大怒曰：「布禁酒，卿釀酒，諸將共飲食作兄弟，共謀殺布邪？」成大懼而去，棄所釀酒，還諸將禮。由是自疑，會太祖圍下邳，成遂領眾降。) *Jiuzhou Chunqiu* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [2] (太祖塹圍之三月，上下離心，其將侯成、宋憲、魏續縛陳宮，將其眾降。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [3] (曹操圍之，壅沂、泗以灌其城，三月，上下離心。其將侯成使客牧其名馬，而客策之以叛。成追客得馬，諸將合禮以賀成。成分酒肉，先入詣布而言曰：「蒙將軍威靈，得所亡馬，諸將齊賀，未敢嘗也，故先以奉貢。」布怒曰：「布禁酒而卿等醞釀，為欲因酒共謀布邪？」成忿懼，乃與諸將共執陳宮、高順，率其眾降。) *Houhanshu* vol. 75.
- [4] (布與麾下登白門樓。兵圍之急，令左右取其首詣操。左右不忍，乃下降。... 布及宮、順皆縊殺之，傳首許市。) *Houhanshu* vol. 75.
- [5] (布與其麾下登白門樓。兵圍急，乃下降。遂生縛布，布曰：「縛太急，小緩之。」太祖曰：「縛虎不得不急也。」布請曰：「明公所患不過於布，今已服矣，天下不足憂。明公將步，令布將騎，則天下不足定也。」太祖有疑色。劉備進曰：「明公不見布之事丁建陽及董太師乎！」太祖領之。布因指備曰：「是兒最叵信者。」) *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [6] (英雄記曰：布謂太祖曰：「布待諸將厚也，諸將臨急皆叛布耳。」太祖曰：「卿背妻，愛諸將婦，何以為厚？」布默然。獻帝春秋曰：布問太祖：「明公何瘦？」太祖曰：「

君何以識孤？」布曰：「昔在洛，會溫氏園。」太祖曰：「然。孤忘之矣。所以瘦，恨不早相得故也。」布曰：「齊桓舍射鉤，使管仲相；今使布竭股肱之力，為公前驅，可乎？」布縛急，謂劉備曰：「玄德，卿為坐客，我為執虜，不能一言以相寬乎？」太祖笑曰：「何不相語，而訴明使君乎？」意欲活之，命使寬縛。主簿王必趨進曰：「布，勅虜也。其眾近在外，不可寬也。」太祖曰：「本欲相緩，主簿復不聽，如之何？」)

*Yingxiong Ji* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.

- [7] (太祖之禽宮也，問宮欲活老母及女不？宮對曰：「宮聞孝治天下者不絕人之親，仁施四海者不乏人之祀，老母在公，不在宮也。」太祖召養其母終其身，嫁其女。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [8] (魚氏典略曰：... 宮死後，太祖待其家皆厚於初。) *Dianlue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [9] (操謂陳宮曰：「公臺平生自謂智有餘，今意何如？」宮指布曰：「是子不用宮言，以至於此。若見從，未可量也。」操又曰：「柰卿老母何？」宮曰：「老母在公，不在宮也。夫以孝理天下者，不害人之親。」操復曰：「柰卿妻子何？」宮曰：「宮聞霸王之主，不絕人之祀。」左傳曰：「齊桓公存三亡國。」固請就刑，遂出不顧，操為之泣涕。) *Houhanshu* vol. 75.
- [10] (於是縊殺布。布與宮、順等皆梟首送許，然後葬之。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [11] *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 18.
- [12] (太祖自徐州還，惇從征呂布，為流矢所中，傷左目。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 9.
- [13] (魏略曰：時夏侯淵與惇俱為將軍，軍中號惇為盲夏侯。惇惡之，每照鏡，恚怒，輒撲鏡於地。) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 9.
- [14] (英雄記曰：... 建安元年六月夜半時，布將河內郝萌反，... 萌將曹性反萌，與對戰，萌刺傷性，性斫萌一臂。順斫萌首，牀輿性，送詣布。布問性，言「萌受袁術謀，謀者悉誰？」性言「陳宮同謀。」時宮在坐上，赤，傍人悉覺之。布以宮大將，不問也。性言「萌常以此問，性言呂將軍大將有神，不可擊也，不意萌狂惑不止。」布謂性曰：「卿健兒也！」善養視之。創愈，使安撫萌故營，領其眾。) *Yingxiong Ji* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 7.
- [15] *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 19.
- [16] Lü Bu was referring to an incident in which he prevented a conflict between Liu Bei and Yuan Shu (represented by Ji Ling) through a gamble. In the gamble, he would fire an arrow through an opening in the blade of his *ji* from a distance of about 100 paces away. If his arrow passed through the opening, Liu Bei and Ji Ling would have to withdraw their forces and make peace. If he failed, then Liu Bei and Ji Ling could prepare for war. Lü Bu succeeded and prevented the conflict. He saw himself as having saved Liu Bei's life because Yuan Shu's forces were more powerful than Liu's at that time, and he was implying that now that he was about to be executed, Liu should also save him.
- [17] *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 19.
- Chen, Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
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# Battle of Yijing

Battle of Yijing	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	198 - March 199
<b>Location</b>	Yijing, Hebei, China
<b>Result</b>	Yuan Shao victory
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao Remnant of Liu Yu's force Wuhuan Xiongnu <sup>[1]</sup> Xianbei	Gongsun Zan Heishan bandits
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao Tadun	Gongsun Zan † Zhang Yan
Strength	
100,000 (Xianyu Fu's and Wuhuan forces) <sup>[2]</sup> 7000 Xianbei cavalry	100,000+ (Zhang Yan's force)

Battle of Yijing	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	易京之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	易京之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yìjīng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yijing** was a military conflict which took place in northern China from 198 to 199 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. It was fought between Gongsun Zan, a warlord known as the "White Horse General", and Yuan Shao, a scion of the esteemed Yuan clan and former leader of the coalition against Dong Zhuo.

## Background

The two warlords had been fighting for dominion over northern China for some time, but eventually Yuan Shao gained the upper hand. However, Gongsun Zan still had a large army which could cause trouble if not finished off.

Gongsun Zan, after recent military defeats in addition to a famine in his lands, decided to secure his supplies. He built a capital city called Yijing where he built many large towers on top of mounds where he and his generals lived. There were ten moats around the city and the towers had iron doors with huge grain supplies for Gongsun Zan to use to live out the civil wars of his country. In doing so, Gongsun Zan let his armies away from his fortress fight for themselves thinking they would see the only option they had was to fight hard. Instead, the soldiers killed their

generals and surrendered or died easily while fighting.

## Battle

In time Yuan Shao's army reached the gates of Yijing, but the city withstood several attacks from Yuan's army for years until 198. Gongsun Zan sent his son Gongsun Xu to request help from the Heishan bandits in the Taihang Mountains. Gongsun Zan's idea was to break through the siege with his cavalry and group with the Heishan bandits, then attack Ji Province (冀州) and cut off Yuan Shao's line of retreat, forcing him to abandon the siege. However, Guan Jing advised against the plan, saying that the defenders were only willing to fight to protect their families in the fortress, and could not be relied on to defend the fortress if Gongsun Zan left the city. Gongsun Zan then took Guan Jing's suggestion to withstand the siege until the time when Yuan Shao would be forced to retreat.

In the spring of 199, Gongsun Xu and Zhang Yan brought relief to Yijing with 100,000 men. Before they arrived, Gongsun Zan had sent a message to his son telling him to lay an ambush of 5,000 elite cavalry on low ground north of the city. They were then to signal Gongsun Zan to charge out of the city with his troops, planning to surround Yuan Shao's troops. However, Yuan Shao's troops caught the messenger and laid their own troops in ambush. Yuan Shao's forces then signaled Gongsun Zan, routing his unit and forcing him back into the city. Yuan Shao's troops followed up their success by digging tunnels under the city and then supporting them with beams which they later torched. The tunnel went into the center of the city and its collapse caused Gongsun Zan's towers to crumble as well. Realizing his doom, Gongsun Zan killed his sisters and wives and committed suicide by self-immolation. Yuan Shao's men climbed into the citadel and cut off Gongsun Zan's head, which was sent to Xuchang to report Yuan Shao's victory to the imperial court.

Feeling that his advice had doomed his lord, Guan Jing charged his horse into Yuan Shao's army to his death, with the intention to follow his lord. Gongsun Xu and Tian Kai were also killed in the battle, and Zhang Yan's bandits were temporarily dispersed.

## Notes

- [1] ((閻柔招誘胡漢數萬人，與瓚所置漁陽太守鄒丹戰於潞北) Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*, Volume 61.  
[2] (烏桓峭王感虞恩德，率種人及鮮卑七千餘騎，共(鮮于)輔南迎虞子和，與袁紹將曲義合兵十萬，共攻瓚。) Fan Ye. *Book of the Later Han*, Volume 73.

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# Campaign against Yuan Shu

Campaign against Yuan Shu	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	197 - 199 CE
<b>Location</b>	Region south of the Huai River, China
<b>Result</b>	Han victory Collapse of the Zhong Dynasty
Belligerents	
Han Dynasty	Zhong Dynasty Shanyue Yuan Shao
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Sun Ce Liu Bei Lǔ Bu Lei Bo Chen Lan Wu Jing Sun Ben	Yuan Shu Yuan Tan Wu Jing ( <b>defected</b> ) Sun Ben ( <b>defected</b> ) Zu Lang 𠄎

Campaign against Yuan Shu	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	袁术讨伐战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	袁術討伐戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yuán Shù Tǎofá Zhàn

The **campaign against Yuan Shu** was a punitive expedition that took place between 197 and 199 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The campaign was initiated by the Han government against the Zhong Dynasty of Yuan Shu, after Yuan declared himself "Son of Heaven", an act perceived as treason against Emperor Xian, the nominal Han ruler. The campaign concluded with the defeat of Yuan Shu and collapse of the Zhong regime.

## Background

The Imperial Seal, a symbol of the Emperor's authority, was lost in Luoyang when Dong Zhuo ravaged the city. Sun Jian, a member of the coalition against Dong Zhuo found the Imperial Seal by chance in the ruins of Luoyang and kept it for himself. Sun Jian was a general under Yuan Shu at this time, so when Yuan heard that Sun had acquired the Seal, he held Sun's wife hostage and forced Sun to pass the Seal to him.

Around 196, when Sun Jian's son and successor Sun Ce was attacking territories in Jiangdong, Yuan Shu perceived his control over southern China as secure. In early 197, he hurriedly declared himself a "Son of Heaven" (i.e. Emperor), starting a new Zhong (中) dynasty in Huainan.<sup>[1]</sup> Yuan Shu's action was viewed as treason against the Han emperor, causing Sun Ce to break ties with him which may have given other warlords a reason to attack his regime. The imperial court, which was under Cao Cao's control then, issued edicts to Sun Ce and Lü Bu, urging them to take aggressive action against Yuan Shu.

## The campaign

Upon receiving news that Yuan Shu had declared himself a "Son of Heaven", Sun Ce sent letters to his uncle Wu Jing and cousin Sun Ben, who both served under Yuan Shu, as an administrator and general, respectively, asking them to sever relations with him. Both Wu Jing and Sun Ben responded to Sun Ce's call and defected to him. As a consequence, Yuan Shu lost Guangling and the territories conquered by Sun Ce in Jiangdong, dramatically reducing his influence in southern China. Meanwhile, Lü Bu defeated Yuan Shu's forces at the north of the Huai River and pillaged the area. In an effort to turn the tide, Yuan Shu sent an army to invade Chen, but was defeated by Han forces led by Cao Cao.<sup>[2]</sup> Yuan Shu then relocated his base to south of the Huai River.

When Yuan Shu's influence had been reduced to a minimal, internal conflict arose among the members of the alliance formed against him. Lü Bu, upon request from Yuan Shu, attacked Liu Bei, who received support from Cao Cao to fight back. The conflict led to the Battle of Xiapi in 198, fought between the allied forces of Cao Cao and Liu Bei against Lü Bu. Facing a dire situation, Lü Bu turned to Yuan Shu for aid. Yuan Shu sent only about 1,000 cavalry to reinforce Lü Bu, but the force was defeated before it reached Xiapi. As Lü Bu's downfall seemed inevitable, Yuan Shu sent messengers to incite the Shanyue tribes and bandit leader Zu Lang to attack Sun Ce. Sun Ce defeated the enemy and continued to strengthen his influence in Jiangdong.

On the other hand, Yuan Shu's was faring badly; his treasury was empty and his military was too weak to resist an invasion or suppress a rebellion. As a result, Yuan Shu opted to incinerate his palace complexes and escape to the Qian hills, where two of his former followers, Lei Bo and Chen Lan, were currently hiding. However, Lei Bo and Chen Lan refused to accept Yuan Shu, so Yuan Shu wrote to his clansman Yuan Shao, promising to give Yuan Shao the Imperial Seal if the latter would help him. In response, Yuan Shao dispatched his son, Yuan Tan, to escort Yuan Shu to Qing Province (covering present-day Shandong). Cao Cao sent Liu Bei and Zhu Ling to intercept Yuan Shu while Yuan was en route to Qing Province, so Yuan had no choice but to turn back to Huainan. Yuan Shu eventually died of illness on the way back to his capital Shouchun.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Aftermath

Yuan Shu's family went to rely on Yuan Shu's former follower Liu Xun, while his other followers Yang Hong and Zhang Xun planned to surrender to Sun Ce, but Liu Xun had them captured and held in Lujiang. In 199, Sun Ce defeated Liu Xun and conquered Lujiang, freeing Yuan Shu's family and men.

## Modern references

The campaign is featured in the sixth and seventh instalments of the video game series *Dynasty Warriors* produced by Koei.

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- [1] ([獻帝建安二年] ... 袁術稱帝於壽春，自稱仲家， ...) Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*, Volume 62.
- [2] (袁術欲稱帝於淮南，使人告呂布。布收其使，上其書。術怒，攻布，為布所破。秋九月，術侵陳，公東征之。術聞公自來，棄軍走，留其將橋蕤、李豐、梁綱、樂就；公到，擊破蕤等，皆斬之。術走渡淮。公還許。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [3] (袁術自敗於陳，稍困，袁譚自青州遣迎之。術欲從下邳北過，公遣劉備、朱靈要之。會術病死。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*.
  - Fan Ye. *Book of the Later Han*.
  - Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*.

# Guandu Campaign - Battle of Dushi Ford

Battle of Dushi Ford	
Part of the Guandu campaign	
<b>Date</b>	First lunar month (February 3 - March 2), 200
<b>Location</b>	Along Yellow River, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao He Mao 卞 Wang Mo 馮	Yu Jin Yue Jin
Strength	
At least 4000	5000
Casualties and losses	
Several thousands	(Unknown)

Battle of Dushi Ford	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	杜氏津之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	杜氏津之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Dùshìjīn Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Dushi Ford** was a battle fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Yuan Shao in the first lunar month of 200 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. In the battle, Yuan Shao launched an attack on Cao Cao's position on the southern bank of the Yellow River, taking advantage of Cao's temporary absence. In response, Cao Cao's general Yu Jin raided Yuan Shao's encampments in the vicinity of present-day Henan, ultimately discouraging Yuan from making a determined attack.

## Background

By the end of the 190s, northern China was divided between two contending warlords, Yuan Shao and Cao Cao. Each had assimilated the smaller powers around them and made political arrangements with the larger powers elsewhere, and were increasingly looking at each other for potential gains. Cao Cao had earlier secured the helpless Emperor Xian into his custody, a move that Yuan Shao regretted not to have made. After the successful conquest of Gongsun Zan's territories to the north, Yuan Shao turned to the south to prepare for an assault on Cao Cao in the summer of 199.<sup>[1]</sup> In response, Cao Cao went on a patrol to the northern front and dispatched several armies to defend positions on the south side of the Yellow River in the eighth lunar month (September 8 - October 7) of 199. Among these was the placement of Yu Jin at Yan Ford (延津; north of present-day Yanjin County, Henan) with 2,000 troops.<sup>[2]</sup> This position blocked Yuan Shao's direct approach over the ford toward Cao Cao's main defense lines at Guandu (官渡; northeast of present-day Zhongmu County, Henan).<sup>[3]</sup>

After his patrol of the front, Cao Cao returned to the capital at Xu City and made further preparations for the future confrontation with Yuan Shao at Guandu. At this time, Yuan Shu, Yuan Shao's cousin who had declared himself "Son of Heaven", turned over his claim to the throne to Yuan Shao and made his way across Cao Cao's territory to reach Yuan Shao's son Yuan Tan in Qing Province. Cao Cao sent Liu Bei and Zhu Ling to block Yuan Shu from getting through, and they succeeded, leaving Yuan Shu to die in infamy in the twelfth lunar month.<sup>[4]</sup> Liu Bei, however, did not return from this campaign and settled his men in Xu Province (徐州) in open rebellion. Cao Cao was determined to eliminate Liu Bei before his forces could accumulate, but Cao Cao's generals remonstrated against any immediate action against Liu Bei, fearing that Yuan Shao might exploit the opportunity to attack Xu City when Cao Cao was away attacking the east. Cao Cao and his strategist Guo Jia disagreed with the generals, saying that Liu Bei would become troublesome if not dealt with immediately, and Yuan Shao would be too slow and indecisive to make a move in time.<sup>[5]</sup> Cao Cao went ahead with his plan and attacked Liu Bei personally in Xu Province.

Tian Feng, the aide-de-camp (別駕) in Yuan Shao's Ji Province (冀州), urged Yuan Shao to grasp this opportunity to mount an attack on Cao Cao's rear, but Yuan excused himself on the grounds that one of his sons was sick. Tian Feng, in dismay, struck the ground with his staff and said: "Alas, in the critical moment he throws away opportunity for the sake of a sick child. The pity of it, the chance is lost."<sup>[6]</sup> However, that is not to say that Yuan Shao did not attempt to make use of Cao Cao's temporary absence.



## The battle

Yuan Shao, using a great deal less than his main strength,<sup>[7]</sup> attacked Yu Jin's position at Yan Ford in a probing action. Yu Jin held his ground firmly and Yuan Shao could not take him, thus the possibility of a rear attack of Xu City was thrashed. To follow up, Yu Jin joined up with Yue Jin and raided Yuan Shao's detached encampments along the Yellow River southwest from Yan Ford with 5,000 infantry and cavalry. They raided up as far as Ji (汲; 25 *li* southwest of present-day Weihui, Henan), and crossed the river to raid Huojia (獲嘉; southeast of present-day Huojia, Henan) to the north.<sup>[8]</sup> In all, they had set fire to some 30 enemy camps, decapitated several thousand heads, captured several thousand men alive, and forced the surrender of some 20 generals including He Mao (何茂) and Wang Mo (王摩).

Cao Cao then ordered Yu Jin to camp at Yuanwu (原武; present-day Yuanyang County, Henan), where he attacked and crushed Yuan Shao's detached encampment at Dushi Ford (杜氏津), at the extreme flank of Cao Cao's position in Henan. Yu Jin was then promoted as Major-General (裨將軍), and returned to Guandu accompanying Cao Cao, who returned from his successful campaign against Liu Bei in Xu Province.

## Aftermath

With these setbacks, Yuan Shao missed an opportunity to take advantage of the situation. His apparent inaction was explained as simple procrastination in the major biographies in the *Book of the Later Han* and the *Records of Three Kingdoms*, but it is very possible that Yu Jin's stiff resistance delayed Yuan Shao's advance and gave Yuan Shao more pause.

Now that Cao Cao was back in Guandu, the opportunity to attack Cao Cao's weakness had passed. Tian Feng reverted his previous plan and advocated a policy of caution against Cao Cao. Holding fast the mountains and the rivers, Tian Feng reasoned that Yuan Shao could fight a battle of attrition to outlast Cao Cao while exhausting the enemy with crack troops from multiple directions, thus winning the battle in two years. Yuan Shao had the idea of a decisive battle and would not use Tian Feng's plan. When Tian Feng continued his remonstrances, Yuan Shao had him imprisoned on charges of demoralizing the army. Cao Cao was said to have been delighted at the news.<sup>[9]</sup>

With his mind set on an all-out offence, Yuan Shao had Chen Lin draft a propaganda pamphlet detailing the rationale of war and Cao Cao's various crimes to be distributed throughout the country. In the second lunar month, open hostilities broke out at the Battle of Boma as Yuan Shao brought his army to the forward base of Liyang (黎陽; northwest of present-day Xun County, Henan).

## Notes

[1] Leban, p. 335

[2] Leban, p. 342

[3] de Crespigny (2007), p. 996

[4] Leban, p. 347 note 63

[5] Leban, p. 351

[6] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 4: C

[7] Leban, p. 352 note 86

[8] At the time, the river flowed south of Huojia, thus Huojia was on the north bank of the river. Leban, p. 353 note 86 continued

[9] Leban, p. 354

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## Guandu Campaign - Battle of Boma

Battle of Boma	
Part of the Guandu campaign	
<b>Date</b>	March to May, 200
<b>Location</b>	Near Hua County, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao Yan Liang †	Cao Cao Liu Yan Guan Yu
Strength	
~10,000 under Yan Liang <sup>[1]</sup>	Unknown, less than Yuan Shao

Battle of Boma	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	白马之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	白馬之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Bómǎ Zhī Zhàn
Alternative Chinese name	
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Báimǎ Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Boma** or **Battle of Baima** was the first of a series of battles that led to the decisive Battle of Guandu between the warlords Yuan Shao and Cao Cao in northern China in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Although Cao Cao won the battle and Yuan Shao lost an elite general Yan Liang, Cao eventually abandoned his position in Boma to entrench at the strategically important Guandu.

## Background

By the 190s, the Han Dynasty had fractured into warlordism. After years of reconfigurations and annexations, northern China was divided along the Yellow River by two warlords — the prominent Yuan Shao to the north and his former ally Cao Cao to the south. As it became obvious that a confrontation was inevitable, the two powers scrambled to gather their forces in defensive positions along the Yellow River.

At the time, Boma (白馬; near present-day Hua County, Henan) laid south of the river across from Liyang (黎陽; northwest of present-day Xun County, Henan), a major base for military recruits.<sup>[2]</sup> The crossing between Boma and Liyang was deemed to be of tremendous importance as a strategic link in the main north-south route between Yuan Shao and Cao Cao's territories.<sup>[3]</sup> In the eighth lunar month (September 8 – October 7, 199), Cao Cao personally advanced to the vicinity of Liyang in a probing action<sup>[4]</sup> and stationed the Grand Administrator of Dong Commandery (東郡太守), Liu Yan (劉延) at Boma.<sup>[5]</sup> The position at Boma would allow Cao Cao's forces to overlook the vital ford while serving as a first line of defense against Yuan Shao's forces. However, Cao Cao had set his sights on a concentrated confrontation at the topographically advantageous city of Guandu (官渡; northeast of present-day Zhongmu County, Henan) to the south,<sup>[6]</sup> thus the purpose of defending Boma might only be to delay enemy advances across the river.

Cao Cao also placed Yu Jin at the nearby Yan Ford (延津; north of present-day Yanjin County, Henan) with 2,000 troops<sup>[7]</sup> and went back to the capital at Xu City to make further battle preparations.<sup>[8]</sup> He returned to his battle command at Guandu after putting down Liu Bei's rebellion in Xu Province in the first lunar month of 200 (February 3 – March 2).<sup>[9][10]</sup>

## The battle

In the second lunar month (March 3 – April 1) of 200, Yuan Shao sent his general Yan Liang with Guo Tu and Chunyu Qiong across the river to attack Liu Yan's position at Boma, while Yuan himself stayed behind at Liyang with the main army with the impression that he was crossing the river.<sup>[11]</sup> Earlier, Yuan Shao's advisor Ju Shou had objected to letting Yan Liang lead the attack, saying that Yan is brave but impatient and cannot manage the task alone, but Yuan Shao ignored the advice.

Liu Yan's small garrison of troops at Boma apparently offered some stubborn resistance, as the siege dragged on for at least 32 days until the fourth lunar month (May 2 – 30), prompting Cao Cao to lead troops in relief of Boma. If Cao Cao had previously considered the position expendable, then Cao Cao might have been motivated by the time gained by the resistance as well as the need to repair the damages in men, supplies, and morale.

As Yuan Shao's forces at Liyang was numerically superior to Cao Cao's forces, Cao Cao's strategist Xun You suggested to split Yuan Shao's forces using a diversionary tactic and take out the weakly guarded Yan Liang. Cao Cao adhered to this plan and marched towards Yan Ford as if trying to cross the river to attack Yuan Shao's rear. Reacting to this apparent threat, Yuan Shao split off his men in Liyang and came west along the northern bank of the river, thus falling for the feint. Rapidly, Cao Cao led light troops east toward Boma, and engaged a startled Yan Liang some ten *li* west of the outpost. Cao Cao sent Zhang Liao and Guan Yu (newly surrendered to Cao Cao after Liu Bei was defeated in Xu Province) to lead the vanguard. Noticing Yan Liang's standard from afar, Guan Yu charged through thousands of enemy troops, virtually unopposed, toward Yan Liang, killed him with a stroke, decapitated him, and returned with Yan's head. Thus the siege of Boma was broken.

## Aftermath

After the victory at Boma, Cao Cao considered the outpost at Boma untenable and evacuated its population and equipage to the west toward Yan Ford. With that, Yuan Shao finally crossed the river in pursuit, attacking the baggage train along the southern bank of the river. In what was to become the Battle of Yan Ford, the plundering party was lured into an ambush set up by Cao Cao, killing another of Yuan Shao's famed generals, Wen Chou. Thus Cao Cao was able to deal a devastating blow to the enemy's morale<sup>[12]</sup> and retreat back to Guandu unmolested,<sup>[13]</sup> where Cao Cao had prepared for the eventual showdown.

For his efforts, Guan Yu was enfeoffed with the rank of marquis. However, thinking that by killing Yan Liang he had done Cao Cao a great service and repaid Cao Cao's generosity, Guan Yu left behind all he had received from Cao Cao with a note of parting and returned to Liu Bei. Cao Cao, in admiration of Guan Yu's loyalty, did not allow his generals to give pursuit.<sup>[14]</sup>

## In fiction

The Battle of Boma was mentioned in chapter 25 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as follows:

With some 100,000 men as the vanguard, Yan Liang attacked Liu Yan at Boma. Answering Liu Yan's repeated requests for aid, Cao Cao launched 150,000 men split into three prongs to relieve Boma. Guan Yu, who had recently pledged service to Cao Cao and was the subject of many rewards by Cao Cao, wanted to participate in the battle against Yan Liang to repay Cao Cao's generosity, but Cao Cao did not think it was necessary to use Guan Yu yet. Cao Cao personally led 50,000 men to engage Yan Liang, but was awed by Yan's arrays of elite troops. Song Xian and Wei Xu, two former generals under Lü Bu, each volunteered to duel Yan Liang, but were both killed in a short time. Xu Huang also rode out to challenge Yan Liang, but he came back defeated after 20 bouts. Both armies ceased battle for the day.

As suggested by his advisor Cheng Yu, Cao Cao then hesitantly summoned Guan Yu, fearing that the latter would leave him once he had repaid his kindness. The next day, as Yan Liang's army lined up on the battlefield, Guan Yu sat with Cao Cao on a hilltop and looked down. From afar he saw Yan Liang under the army standard. Leaping onto his steed, the Red Hare, Guan Yu galloped straight into the enemy ranks, which broke before him like waves before a swift vessel. Before Yan Liang could fight back, he was struck down by Guan Yu. Guan severed Yan Liang's head, tied it to the neck of his steed, and rode back unhindered. Yan Liang's men became demoralized and fell into chaos, providing an opportunity for Cao Cao to attack. The battle of Boma was thus won with uncountable enemy dead and much plundering of supplies.

## Notes

[1] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4: I

[2] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4 note 16

[3] Leban, p. 338 note 38

[4] Leban, p. 340

[5] Leban, p. 341

[6] Leban, p. 323

[7] Leban, p.342

[8] Leban, p. 343

[9] Leban, p. 350

[10] Leban, p.352

[11] Leban, p.355

[12] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4: K

[13] Leban, p. 358

[14] Leban, p. 359 note 105

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# Guandu Campaign - Battle of Yan Ford

Battle of Yan Ford	
Part of the Guandu campaign	
<b>Date</b>	Between May and August, 200 CE
<b>Location</b>	Yanjin County, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Yuan Shao	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Yuan Shao Wen Chou † Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Strength	
5,000-6,000 cavalry	<600 cavalry

Battle of Yan Ford	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	延津之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	延津之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yánjīn Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yan Ford** was a battle that took place along the southern banks of the Yellow River in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was closely preceded by the Battle of Boma, and was part of a series of engagements leading to the decisive confrontation between the rival warlords Yuan Shao and Cao Cao at the Battle of Guandu in 200. Following the death of one of Yuan Shao's elite generals, Yan Liang, in the previous battle, the death of another famed general Wen Chou in this battle greatly demoralised Yuan's army, which was heading towards Guandu.

## Background

Cao Cao and Yuan Shao were heading toward a direct confrontation since the late 190s, and the first months of 200 saw the opening of hostilities at the Battle of Boma after years of manoeuvring. With a feint, Cao Cao was able to split off Yuan Shao's main force gathered at Liyang (黎陽; northwest of present-day Xun County, Henan) across the river from Boma (白馬; near present-day Hua County, Henan) and hence relieve the siege at Boma, killing Yuan Shao's attacking general Yan Liang. Considering that the position at Boma was unsuitable for a determined defence, Cao Cao voluntarily abandoned the outpost and evacuated its population and supplies to the west along the river. With that, Yuan Shao finally crossed the Yellow River in pursuit of Cao Cao's baggage train. However, Cao Cao was not satisfied with just abandoning all lands between Guandu and the river to the enemy — he had also wanted to make his enemy pay dearly by resisting the enemy advance during the predetermined fallback to Guandu.<sup>[1]</sup>

## The battle

As a result of Cao Cao's feint during the Battle of Boma, Yuan Shao had brought the advance-guard of his army up the Yellow River toward the western Yan Ford (延津; north of present-day Yanjin, Henan). It was probably at this ford that Yuan Shao's army made the crossing, which was unhindered by Cao Cao.<sup>[2]</sup> By this time, Yuan Shao was almost due north of Cao Cao's defensive positions at Guandu and his base in the capital of Xu City.<sup>[3]</sup>

Cao Cao's men also reached Yan Ford and made camp below a ridge known as the Southern Slope (南阪), 20 *li* west and 50 *li* south of Boma.<sup>[4]</sup> As Cao Cao's position was on the southern side of a dyke some distance away from the river (meant to control seasonal floodwaters), his men were concealed from Yuan Shao's view while Cao Cao had to send lookouts to scout for enemy movements. The lookout first reported five to six hundred enemy cavalry on their way, then reported that there were slightly more cavalry than before and the size of the infantry force was beyond measurement. At this point Cao Cao stopped the lookout from reporting, and had his horsemen undo the saddles and release the horses.

The baggage train from Boma appeared on the road north of the dyke at this time, in plain view of Yuan Shao's men.<sup>[5]</sup> Some of Cao Cao's officers became uneasy at the prospect of so many enemy horsemen, and suggested to return and defend the camp. Cao Cao's strategist Xun You objected, saying: "This is the way we bait the enemy! How can we leave?"<sup>[6]</sup> Cao Cao glanced at him and smiled.

Wen Chou and Liu Bei, commanders of Yuan Shao's cavalry, leading five to six thousand cavalry, came one after the other. Cao Cao's men asked to mount their horses, but Cao Cao denied them until Yuan Shao's horsemen, ever increasing in number, split off to raid the baggage train. Cao Cao then gave the permission to mount the horses, and all of Cao Cao's horsemen, less than 600 in number, jumped onto their horses and charged at the enemy. Yuan Shao's army was defeated and Wen Chou was killed in action.

## Aftermath

Yan Liang and Wen Chou were the most highly regarded generals in Yuan Shao's army, and both were killed in two successive battles. Yuan Shao's men became greatly shaken.

With the victory at Yan Ford, Cao Cao was able to retreat back to his base in Guandu (官渡; northeast of present-day Zhongmu County, Henan) with the men and supplies without incident. Yuan Shao followed close behind and made camp at Yangwu (陽武; near present-day Yuanyang County, Henan), immediately north of Guandu. He had ignored Ju Shou's advice to leave a garrison at Yan Ford as a cautious step, and had all his forded forces concentrated at Yangwu, and now a decisive battle became imminent.

## In fiction

The Battle of Yan Ford was the opening event in chapter 26 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

The battle described in the novel closely followed the one in history until Cao Cao made the call to charge at Wen Chou's forces. At that time Zhang Liao and Xu Huang, two of Cao Cao's best generals, gave chase. Wen Chou fired two arrows from atop his horse, one of which sliced off the feather on Zhang Liao's helmet and the other hit Zhang Liao's horse in the face. Brandishing his poleaxe, Xu Huang came for Wen Chou but had to retreat when a band of enemy soldiers came to their commander's rescue.

Leading a dozen riders, Guan Yu then cut off Wen Chou's escape and engaged in a duel with the enemy. Within three bouts, Wen Chou withdrew and attempted to evade. However, Guan Yu's horse, the Red Hare, was of a superior breed and soon caught up. Guan Yu then slew Wen Chou from behind.

According to historical texts, Wen Chou was killed by Cao Cao's troops during the rout. Nothing was mentioned about him being slain by Guan Yu.

## Notes

- [1] Leban, p. 343
- [2] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4: note 15
- [3] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4: note 14
- [4] Leban, p. 356 note 98
- [5] de Crespigny, Jian'an 4: note 16
- [6] Leban, p. 358

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# Guandu Campaign - Battle of Guandu

Battle of Guandu	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<p>A map of the battle. It shows the movements during the battles of Boma and Yan Ford. Flanking attempts are not shown. Note that the Yellow River has changed course over the centuries and the places depicted are no longer at the same locations relative to the river.</p>	
<b>Date</b>	September - November 200
<b>Location</b>	Northeast of present-day Zhongmu County, Henan
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shao
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Cao Hong	Yuan Shao Chunyu Qiong Guo Tu
Strength	
~40,000	110,000
Casualties and losses	
(Unknown)	~70,000

Battle of Guandu	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	官渡之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	官渡之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Guāndù Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Guandu** was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Yuan Shao in 200 CE in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle, which concluded with a decisive victory for Cao Cao, was a turning point in the war between the two warlords. It marked the beginning of Cao Cao's gradual reunification of northern China, which made possible the establishment of the state of Cao Wei in the Three Kingdoms period.



## Background

From 196 onwards, it became increasingly obvious that an armed confrontation between the warlords Cao Cao and Yuan Shao was inevitable. Yuan Shao was in control of the lands north of the Yellow River, namely the Hebei region, and had large and powerful armies under his command. Cao Cao controlled most of the lands south of the Yellow River and had the Emperor Xian with him in the new capital city of Xu. The warlords saw each other as the barrier to their individual ambitions to conquer and rule China. Thus, it seemed that a trial of strength between the two warlords was inevitable.

Some years before the battle, Yuan Shao's advisors Ju Shou and Tian Feng had foreseen that Cao Cao would become a threat to their lord in his ambition to dominate China. They advised Yuan Shao to start a campaign against Cao Cao when the latter was still building up his forces, but Yuan Shao ignored their advice as Cao Cao was still nominally his ally. Tension between Cao Cao and Yuan Shao started to build up after Cao Cao moved Emperor Xian from the old capital Luoyang.

## Prelude

The geographical position of Guandu (官渡; northeast of present-day Zhongmu County, Henan) made it a militarily strategic position. It was near Yan Ford (延津; north of present-day Yanjin County, Henan) on the Yellow River and laid on the road leading to the capital city Xu. Cao Cao recognized its strategic importance and in the autumn of 199, he stationed troops there and prepared fortifications. Other deployments along the frontline included Liu Yan (劉延) in Boma (白馬; near present-day Hua County, Henan), Yu Jin in Yan Ford, Cheng Yu in Juancheng (鄆城; near present-day Juancheng County, Shandong), and Xiahou Dun in Meng Ford (孟津; present-day Mengjin County, Henan).<sup>[1]</sup> At the same time, Cao Cao sent Zang Ba to harass Qing Province (青州), which was governed by Yuan Shao's son Yuan Tan, to prevent his eastern flank from coming under attack.

In the first month of 200, Liu Bei rebelled against Cao Cao and seized Xu Province after killing Che Zhou (車胄), Cao Cao's appointed Inspector (刺史) of Xu Province. Cao Cao, in an unexpected move, left his northern front exposed to Yuan Shao and turned east to retake Xu Province. Yuan Shao tried to use the opportunity to start a campaign south, but was daunted by Yu Jin, the defender of Yan Ford.

When Cao Cao returned to Guandu after his victory over Liu Bei, who sought refuge under Yuan Shao afterwards, Yuan Shao wished to renew the campaign against Cao Cao. The aide-de-camp (參軍) Tian Feng, who had urged Yuan Shao to attack Cao Cao while he was away, advised against such a campaign, reasoning that they had lost their chance and must wait. Yuan Shao ignored Tian Feng's repeated remonstrations and imprisoned him under charges of demoralizing the army.

Shortly after, Yuan Shao had Chen Lin draft a document condemning Cao Cao in what is essentially a declaration of war, and marched his main army toward the forward base of Liyang (黎陽; northwest of present-day Xun County, Henan) north of the river. At the time, Yuan Shao's army boasted of numbers up to 110,000, including 10,000 cavalry.

## Skirmishes along the Yellow River

Yuan Shao's general Yan Liang crossed the Yellow River and attacked Cao Cao's fort at Boma, besieging it. Heeding his advisor Xun You's advice, Cao Cao led a battalion toward Yan Ford as a feint to trick Yuan Shao into believing that Cao Cao would attack his camp on the other side of the river. Yuan Shao split off his troops from Liyang to counter Cao Cao's attack. Hence Yan Liang's siege at Boma across from Liyang became unsupported. Cao Cao then struck eastward to lift the siege on Boma. In the ensuing battle, Yan Liang was killed by Guan Yu and Yuan Shao's troops were routed.

Cao Cao then decided to abandon the fort and evacuated its occupants southward. Taking advantage of the situation, Yuan Shao's forces of 6,000 light cavalry led by Wen Chou and Liu Bei set off in pursuit.

However, Cao Cao anticipated the attack and prepared a distraction tactic. He ordered his troops to discard their steeds, weapons and other valuables along the way. Yuan Shao's forces were tempted by greed and broke their ranks to grab the valuables lying ahead. Just as they were grabbing valuables, Cao Cao's 600 elite cavalry, which had been lying in ambush, attacked. In the chaos, Yuan Shao's commander Wen Chou was killed and Liu Bei fled. Even before the main engagement at Guandu, these relatively minor skirmishes inflicted a crushing blow to the morale of Yuan Shao's army as Yuan Shao had already lost two elite generals at the start of the campaign.



Territories of Yuan Shao (red) and Cao Cao (blue) at the time of the battle

## The advance on Yangwu and flanking attempts

Cao Cao was aware that he was fighting under disadvantageous conditions, thus he abandoned the forward bases along the Yellow River to prepare for a determined defence at Guandu. Cao Cao also ordered his officials in charge of his lands in his absence to govern with lenience, so as to minimise chances of chaos within the civilian community that could affect his army's morale.

After the engagements at the river, Yuan Shao's army pushed to Yangwu (陽武; near present-day Yuanyang County, Henan), directly north of Guandu, and began constructing earthen fortifications. By doing so he had ignored Cheng Yu's bastion of 700 men at Juancheng, and possibly missed an opportunity to attack Cao Cao's eastern flank.<sup>[2]</sup> This was according to Cheng Yu's prediction earlier that Yuan Shao would ignore a position with so few men. Yuan Shao's Attendant Officer (從事) Ju Shou had reservations about concentrating all of the main army at Yangwu, and suggested to leave a garrison at Yan Ford as a step of caution in case the attack on Guandu did not go well. Yuan Shao ignored the suggestion again. Ju Shou, in despair, tried to excuse himself by claiming to be ill, but Yuan Shao became annoyed at him and would not grant him leave. Instead, he divested Ju Shou's men and divided them under the commands of Guo Tu and Chunyu Qiong.

Yuan Shao reorganized his forces and sent Liu Bei with an army to support the rebellions against Cao Cao in Yinjiang (𤝵 隱疆; southwest of present-day Xuchang), just 20 *li* south of the capital. Cao Cao became concerned about such developments in his rear, but his cousin Cao Ren observed that Liu Bei could not have too much control over his new men given by Yuan Shao. So Cao Cao sent Cao Ren to deal with the rebellion. Cao Ren succeeded, killing the rebel leader Liu Pi and routing Liu Bei. Yuan Shao also tried to cut off Cao Cao from the west by sending Han Meng (韓猛)<sup>[3]</sup> southwest. Cao Ren again responded to the threat by defeating Han Meng at Mount Jiluo (雞洛山; 50 *li* northeast of present-day Xinmi, Henan). Yuan Shao did not send any detached force into Cao Cao's territory after this.

At Yangwu, several war plans were presented to Yuan Shao. Ju Shou observed that Cao Cao's men were running out of grain, and thus it would be proper to enter a war of attrition, denying Cao Cao a decisive battle. Another advisor, Xu You suggested that Yuan Shao should maintain the front at Guandu but at the same time send men to circle

around and capture the emperor in Xu. Yuan Shao accepted neither plan, saying he preferred to capture the emperor with a direct advance. Xu You was not pleased.

## The siege of Guandu

In the eighth month, Yuan Shao's army slowly advanced southward from Yangwu and engaged Cao Cao's men in trench warfare, behind the earthen embankments that both sides made. Both sides harassed each other with engines of war. Yuan Shao had erected siege-ramps and high platforms which allowed his men to rain arrows onto Cao Cao's forces. In response, Cao Cao's men had to carry their shields above their heads, and retaliated with traction trebuchets that destroyed the archer platforms. Yuan Shao also tried to tunnel under Cao Cao's fort, but Cao Cao had a large ditch dug within his lines to block the tunnels. Subsequently, neither side could overcome each other as Cao Cao and Yuan Shao became locked in a stalemate.

Before long, Cao Cao's army began to run short of supplies and Cao Cao was in a dilemma on whether to retreat in order to lure Yuan Shao deeper into his territory. Xun Yu, the defender of the capital Xu, sent Cao Cao a letter dissuading him from retreat. He wrote, drawing historical examples from the Chu–Han Contention:

...your military supplies are low, but they are not as bad as the situation of Chu and Han at Xingyang and Chenggao. At that time neither Liu nor Xiang were willing to be the first to retreat. The first to retreat reveals that his strength is exhausted. You, Duke, with one-tenth of the enemy's force you have held the ground you marked, and gripping him by the throat, have not let him advance for already half a year. In this situation his strength will be exhausted and there must arise some crisis. This is the time for employing unexpected stratagems; you may not miss this opportunity.<sup>[4]</sup>

Cao Cao followed this advice and held fast to his ground. In the ninth month,<sup>[5]</sup> Xun Yu pointed out that Yuan Shao had been storing supplies at a depot in the village of Gushi (故市; southwest of present-day Yanjin County, Henan), guarded by Han Meng. Cao Cao sent out small cavalry units led by Xu Huang and Shi Huan (史渙) to attack this position. They succeeded, routing Han Meng, disrupting Yuan Shao's supply lines, and burning his grain carts. Yuan Shao was forced to call for relief supplies in response to this raid.

## The raid on Wuchao

In the tenth month, Yuan Shao's general Chunyu Qiong returned with an army of 10,000 from Hebei escorting large reserves of food supplies. Yuan Shao ordered Chunyu to escort the supplies to Wuchao (烏巢; in present-day Yanjin County, Henan), a place 40 *li* away from Guandu near Gushi, and placed him in charge of guarding the supplies there. Yuan Shao's advisor Ju Shou argued that Wuchao, being their important supply depot, was too lightly guarded and insisted that Yuan Shao should send the general Jiang Qi (蔣奇) to serve as a perimeter guard to Chunyu Qiong and cut off any potential raids. Yuan Shao, again, did not heed Ju Shou's advice.

Shortly after, Yuan Shao's advisor Xu You, who had harboured dissatisfaction against Yuan Shao for not using his plan and having his wife arrested by Shen Pei, defected over to Cao Cao. He understood Cao Cao's shortage of supplies and alerted Cao Cao to Yuan Shao's exploitable weakness at Wuchao. Cao Cao's generals were suspicious of this piece of intelligence, but his advisors Xun You and Jia Xu urged Cao Cao to put Xu You's plan to action. Thus at night, Cao Cao led 5,000 infantry and cavalry to attack Wuchao after leaving Cao Hong and Xun You in charge of his main camp at Guandu. Cao Cao's army disguised itself as a reinforcement unit from Yuan Shao and attacked Wuchao. Chunyu Qiong's initial defences were overrun, and he retreated to hold his forts, which Cao Cao attacked and set on fire.

When Yuan Shao's camp received the news that Wuchao was under attack, Zhang He urged Yuan Shao to send reinforcements to Wuchao to save the supplies, on which the fate of the campaign hinges. Guo Tu, however, advocated the opposite: attack Cao Cao's base at Guandu with the hope that Cao Cao will abandon the raid on Wuchao. Yuan Shao used Guo Tu's idea and sent Zhang He and Gao Lan to lead his main army to attack Cao Cao's

main camp at Guandu, while only sending a small cavalry unit to reinforce Wuchao.

With incredible bravado, Cao Cao ignored pleas to split off his force to deal with the reinforcements, thus his men were prepared to fight to the death. The raid on Wuchao was a great success, with Yuan Shao's casualties over a thousand. Yuan Shao's generals Lü Weihuang, Han Juzi, Sui Yuanjin, and Zhao Rui (趙叡) were decapitated; Chunyu Qiong was captured by Yue Jin and had his nose cut off. Almost all of Yuan Shao's food supplies at Wuchao were burnt.

By dawn, Wuchao had turned into an inferno and the morale of Yuan Shao's army plummeted sharply due to the loss of food supplies. Cao Cao also cut off the noses of the dead, mixed them with noses and lips of oxen and horses, and showed them to Yuan Shao's men, as a form of intimidation.

Meanwhile at Guandu, Yuan Shao's army led by Zhang He and Gao Lan failed to break through the enemy lines. Affected by the news of the defeat in Wuchao and rumors of Guo Tu making slanderous remarks about them, Zhang He and Gao Lan surrendered to Cao Hong and destroyed their weapons. The morale of Yuan Shao's army was drastically weakened and Cao Cao's forces seized the opportunity to launch the full attack on Yuan's army. Yuan Shao's numerous armies were destroyed and much of his supplies were captured by Cao Cao. Yuan Shao himself fled north across the Yellow River with only about 800 cavalry, which was what was left of his army. Order was restored only when Yuan Shao reached the camp of his general Jiang Yiqu, from where he gathered his straggling troops.

Some of Yuan Shao's men could not cross the Yellow River in time and were captured by Cao Cao, including Ju Shou. Some of these men had feigned surrender so they could escape later, thus Cao Cao had these men buried alive. In his proclamation of victory to Emperor Xian, Cao Cao claimed to have killed 70,000 enemy troops.

## Aftermath

Cao Cao's victory at the Battle of Guandu was a decisive one and marked the turn of the tide in his struggle for power with Yuan Shao. Yuan Shao died two years later and his youngest son Yuan Shang was made his successor. His oldest son Yuan Tan was furious with the succession and fought with his younger brother. This resulted in internal conflict within Yuan Shao's forces. Yuan Shao's pool of talented advisors and generals were also divided into two factions by the conflict - one supported Yuan Shang and the other supported Yuan Tan. Cao Cao seized the opportunity to launch an attack on Yuan Tan's base at Liyang. Though Cao Cao eventually withdrew, Yuan Tan came to resent Yuan Shang even more during course of the battle, which led to open warfare between the brothers. Yuan Tan eventually allied with to Cao Cao against Yuan Shang, but Cao Cao accused him of violating some terms of the alliance and killed him in battle. On the other hand, Yuan Shang suffered defeats at the hands of Cao Cao and fled north to join his second brother Yuan Xi. Cao Cao's forces pursued them and defeated the Wuhuan tribe, the Yuan brothers' ally, in the Battle of White Wolf Mountain. Yuan Shang and Yuan Xi fled to Liaodong to seek shelter under the warlord Gongsun Kang in 207, but Gongsun killed them instead and sent their heads to Cao Cao. By then, most of northern China was unified under Cao Cao's control, and Cao Cao could begin to turn his attention to the south.

## Legacy and analysis

Throughout the ages, Cao Cao's impressive victory at Guandu, the climatic event of his life, has drawn analysis by both historical commentators and militarists hoping to imitate his success.

Song Dynasty historian Sima Guang, compiler of the chronicle *Zizhi Tongjian*, remarked that while Yuan Shao was generous, elegant and able, he was also obstinate, self-satisfied, and seldom heeded reasonable advice. These negative attributes were the cause of his defeat.<sup>[6]</sup>

In more recent times, both the Chinese Nationalists and Communists have picked up on this battle and made their own interpretations, in various degrees of objectivity.

The Nationalists followed traditional Chinese historiography in that they judged the battle in terms of personalities, rather than the situations and the tactics involved. For example, Cao Cao was seen as capable, decisive, and far-sighted, while Yuan Shao was derided as mediocre, slow, arrogant, and unable to employ men properly.

Communist leader Mao Zedong, in his writings about strategic retreat, used the Battle of Guandu along with the Battle of Chenggao, Battle of Kunyang, Battle of Red Cliffs, Battle of Xiaoting, and Battle of Fei River to illustrate the concept. In all of these battles, he wrote, "...the contestants were unequal in strength, and the weaker one yielding a step at first, pinned down the stronger one through delayed action and defeated him."<sup>[7]</sup> Mao's words attracted some attention to the battle, and many papers were written to analyze the Battle of Guandu in Maoist terms. The Maoist interpretation, while taking note of Yuan Shao's serious errors of judgement, advocates that the strong enemy will make fateful errors, while the weaker opponent need only to await their appearance.<sup>[1]</sup> The Marxist interpretation portrays Yuan Shao as the representative of the great landlord-official class, and Cao Cao as of the middle and small landlord class. The battle was thus a product of class conflict in which Yuan Shao's fall was inevitable.<sup>[8]</sup>

Historian Carl Leban attributes Cao Cao's victory to one single strategic decision — the defender's choice of location. Leban asserts that Cao Cao chose Guandu as the place to make his stand because of his superior understanding of the relation between topography, logistics, and tactics over Yuan Shao. It was the issue about logistics that prompted Cao Cao to abandon the defence at the Yellow River. By luring Yuan Shao far south into Guandu, Cao Cao had forcibly extended Yuan Shao's supply lines and was thus able to pounce on his logistical disadvantage to gain a decisive victory.<sup>[9]</sup>

Another western historian, Rafe de Crespigny, is skeptical of the traditional viewpoint and questions Yuan Shao's supposed advantage over Cao Cao. De Crespigny argues that Yuan Shao's hold on his nominal territories were not as secure as Cao Cao, who had aggressively campaigned to stabilize his surroundings. Taking note that Yuan Shao took ten years to eliminate the isolated Gongsun Zan, de Crespigny suggests that it was not due to indecisiveness that Yuan Shao did not take advantage of Cao Cao's temporal weaknesses, but that Yuan Shao might not have had the men to spare for such ventures. From such a perspective, Yuan Shao, faced with the ever-growing threat of his former ally Cao Cao, concentrated his force in a direct approach to Cao Cao's headquarters in hope that such a strike would overwhelm his enemy. Though he was outwitted and defeated by Cao Cao, Yuan Shao's decisions might not have been so foolish as numerous traditional historians and commentators have said.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors* as one of the highlights of Cao Cao's story mode. In the fifth installment *Boma*, Yan Ford, and Guandu are defended by Cao Cao, Xiahou Dun, and Cao Pi respectively. In the seventh installment, the battle clearly focuses on Cao Pi's point of view, where he leads the attack on Wuchao, defeating and recruiting Zhang He (who'd been its defender instead of attacking Cao Cao's camp as in history).

## Notes

[1] Leban, p. 342

[2] Leban, p. 360

[3] Variouslly recorded as Han Xun (韓荀) or Han Ruo (韓若). Leban, p. 364

[4] Leban, p. 365

[5] Leban. p. 366

[6] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 5: HH

[7] *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, I, pp. 197-98. Cited in Leban, p. 377

[8] Leban, p. 379

[9] Leban, p. 380

[10] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 147-152

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Coordinates: 34°54′26″N 114°37′13″E﻿ / ﻿[http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle\\_of\\_Guandu&params=34\\_54\\_26\\_N\\_114\\_37\\_13\\_E\\_region:CN\\_type:city\\_source:dewiki](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle_of_Guandu&params=34_54_26_N_114_37_13_E_region:CN_type:city_source:dewiki)﻿ / ﻿

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# 201-210

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## Guandu Campaign - Battle of Cangting

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Battle of Cangting	
Part of the Guandu campaign	
<b>Date</b>	Fourth lunar month (May 20 - June 18), 201
<b>Location</b>	North of Yanggu County, Shandong
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shao
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	

Battle of Cangting	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	仓亭之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	倉亭之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Cāngtíng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Cangting** was part of a mop-up operation undertaken by the warlord Cao Cao after his victory over his rival Yuan Shao at the Battle of Guandu in 200 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was also mentioned in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* as the final clash between the forces of Yuan Shao and Cao Cao before Yuan Shao died.

### In history

After Yuan Shao's defeat at Guandu, many cities within his territory north of the Yellow River rebelled and switched allegiance to Cao Cao. Despite this, Cao Cao's forces were too exhausted from the strain of battle to take advantage of the situation.<sup>[1]</sup> Yuan Shao still retained a presence south of the river at Cangting (倉亭; north of present-day Yanggu County, Shandong), a lone bridgehead down the river east from the battlefields of Guandu.

Cao Cao had originally wanted to follow up his victory over Yuan Shao by turning south to attack Liu Biao<sup>[2]</sup> and Sun Quan, the latter who had newly inherited his domain from his deceased brother Sun Ce.<sup>[3]</sup> Cao Cao's strategist Xun Yu cautioned against such action, reasoning that Cao Cao should take the opportunity to settle the matter with Yuan Shao, who was now facing internal turmoil after his recent defeat. Xun Yu also realized the danger of turning the focus to the south at such a time, since the remnants of Yuan Shao's men might band up and attack Cao Cao's rear. Cao Cao then gave up on the idea and continued the campaign against Yuan Shao.

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Cao Cao went to collect grain from Anmin (安民; southeast of present-day Dongping County, Shandong). This position was well to the east of his former defences at Guandu, as well as near to Yuan Shao's position at Cangting. Cao Cao may have been drawing supplies from far afield to mount an attack across the river, but the amount he gathered was no match for Yuan Shao's resources north of the river.<sup>[4]</sup> In the fourth lunar month, in summer, Cao Cao drew up his troops from upriver to attack Yuan Shao's men at Cangting and defeated them. With this battle, Yuan Shao's last units south of the river were eliminated.

Afterwards, Cao Cao returned to his base in the capital Xu City in the ninth lunar month to give his troops a few months of needed rest. Yuan Shao was able to regather his defeated armies to settle the rebellions in his own domain, soon reestablishing order and restored the status quo ante.<sup>[5]</sup> In the fifth lunar month of the next year, summer 202, Yuan Shao died in illness and agony over his defeat, leaving his domain to be contested by his sons and a looming Cao Cao.

## In fiction

In chapter 31 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the scarcely recorded Battle of Cangting was elaborated on and given new light. It became the last battle that Yuan Shao personally commanded, in which he also brought all his sons along. The battle also provided Cao Cao's tactician Cheng Yu with an opportunity to show off his skills of ambushade.

After his defeat at Guandu, Yuan Shao became dispirited and uninterested in politics. That was until his oldest son Yuan Tan brought 50,000 men from You Province, second son Yuan Xi brought 60,000 men from Qing Province, and nephew Gao Gan brought 50,000 from Bing Province. Yuan Shao prepared to face Cao Cao again after assembling the new reinforcements, and brought the total of some 300,000 men to camp at Cangting. Cao Cao marched his force nearby and faced the challenge.

The next day, the two armies arrayed themselves against each other. Yuan Shao's youngest son Yuan Shang rode out to seek a duel to impress his father. Xu Huang's subordinate Shi Huan (史涣) challenged Yuan Shang, but was shot in the left eye and died. Seeing that his son had won the duel, Yuan Shao directed his armies to charge and the two armies battled. At night, Cao Cao held a conference to discuss the battle plan, and it was then Cheng Yu presented his "ambush from ten sides" (十面埋伏) strategy. He suggested that Cao Cao retreat to the riverbank and leave ten brigades in ambush, and lure Yuan Shao's men to the river. Cao Cao accepted and set the plan in motion.

At midnight the following day, Cao Cao sent Xu Chu to pretend to launch a raid on Yuan Shao's camp. Yuan Shao's men responded to the bait and gave chase until Cao Cao's men reached the river. With retreat out of the question, Cao Cao's men turned around and fought to the death, bringing chaos to Yuan Shao's army, who had to turn back after facing such stiff resistance. It was then Xiahou Yuan and Gao Lan emerged from their ambush to block Yuan's way. The Yuans broke through, but then Yue Jin and Yu Jin appeared before them, followed by Li Dian and Xu Huang. With much casualties, the Yuans made their way back to their camp and prepared for a meal. Just then, Zhang Liao and Zhang He came out of ambush and attacked the camp. Yuan Shao hurriedly mounted his horse and fled toward Cangting, with Cao Cao's main army in pursuit. Finally, Cao Hong and Xiahou Dun appeared before him, and the desperate Yuan Shao had to fight his way out.


After the battle, all of Yuan Shao's warhorses were dead, corpses piled across the fields, and blood flowed like creeks. Yuan Xi and Gao Gan were wounded by arrows, and once together, Yuan Shao hugged his three sons and cried. Soon afterwards, he fainted and spat blood ceaselessly. In anguish, he said, "I have campaigned on several occasions, never have I suffered like today! Heaven dooms me! You [sons] shall return to your home provinces and promise to settle matters with Cao once and for all!"<sup>[6]</sup>



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- [1] Leban, Carl. *Ts'ao Ts'ao and the Rise of Wei: The Early Years*. Columbia University. 1971. p. 374
- [2] de Crespigny, Rafe. "To Establish Peace: being the Chronicle of the Later Han dynasty for the years 189 to 220 AD as recorded in Chapters 59 to 69 of the Zizhi tongjian of Sima Guang". Volume 1. ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace1\\_index.html](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/peace1_index.html)) Faculty of Asian Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra. 1996. ISBN 0-7315-2526-4. Jian'an 6: B
- [3] de Crespigny, Jian'an 5: KK
- [4] de Crespigny, Jian'an 6: B note 2
- [5] Leban, p. 375
- [6] Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapter 31.

# Battle of Bowang

Battle of Bowang	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
A scene from the <i>Romance of the Three Kingdoms</i> illustrated in a mural of the Long Corridor in the Summer Palace, Beijing: Zhang Fei scoffs at the newcomer Zhuge Liang and reluctantly takes his orders	
<b>Date</b>	202 CE
<b>Location</b>	Bowang (near present-day Fancheng District, Hubei)
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Liu Bei	Xiahou Dun

Battle of Bowang	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	博望之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	博望之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Bówàng Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Bowang Slope	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	博望坡之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	博望坡之戰

Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Bówàngpō Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Bowang**, also known as the **Battle of Bowang Slope**, was a battle fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Liu Bei in 202 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty.

## Background

Liu Bei originally sought refuge under the northern warlord Yuan Shao after being defeated by Cao Cao in 200 at Xu Province. However, he left Yuan Shao after the latter was defeated by Cao Cao at the Battle of Guandu in late 200, and went to Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan) to seek shelter under the governor Liu Biao. Liu Biao initially welcomed Liu Bei and put him in charge of Xinye, but he gradually grew suspicious of Liu Bei as the latter became increasingly influential in Jing Province. As a result, Liu Biao sent Liu Bei to Bowang near Jing Province's northern border to defend against an invasion by Cao Cao.

At the same time, Cao Cao's forces were at war in northern China with Yuan Shao's remnants, led by Yuan's sons Yuan Tan, Yuan Xi and Yuan Shang. To counter Liu Bei's maneuvers, Cao Cao sent his generals Xiahou Dun, Li Dian and Yu Jin to lead an army south to attack Liu Bei.

## The battle

During the battle, Liu Bei suddenly set fire to his camp and retreated south. Xiahou Dun gave chase but Li Dian cautioned him, "I suspect that there's an ambush because the bandits (referring to Liu Bei's forces) are retreating for no reason. The paths to the south are narrow and the bushes are thick there. Do not pursue." Xiahou Dun ignored Li Dian's warning and left Li behind to guard the camp while he led the rest of his troops to pursue Liu Bei's retreating army. As predicted by Li Dian, Liu Bei did indeed set an ambush, and Xiahou Dun fell into the trap and was defeated. Li Dian's regiment came to Xiahou Dun's rescue and Liu Bei retreated after seeing Li Dian's reinforcements.

In the battle, Liu Bei's general Zhao Yun captured Xiahou Lan, an enemy commander who was from the same hometown as Zhao. Zhao Yun requested for Liu Bei to spare Xiahou Lan's life and recommended Xiahou to be a military judge.

## In fiction

The battle is featured in Chapter 39 of the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong.

Cao Cao sent Xiahou Dun to lead 100,000 troops to attack Liu Bei in Xinye. At that time, Zhuge Liang had just joined Liu Bei's forces and had not made any contributions yet. Liu Bei's sworn brothers Guan Yu and Zhang Fei were reluctant to follow Zhuge Liang's orders, so Zhuge borrowed Liu Bei's sword and official seal to establish his authority. He described the battle plan to counter Xiahou Dun's army: Guan Yu and Zhang Fei would each lead 1,000 men to wait in ambush on the left and right sides of Bowang respectively, and burn the enemy's supplies when they see fires burning at the south; Guan Ping and Liu Feng were tasked with setting fire to Bowang Slope when the enemy approached; Zhao Yun would lead the vanguard to lure the enemy into the ambush; Liu Bei would lead the backup force. Zhuge Liang also asked Liu Bei to prepare for victory celebrations.

When Xiahou Dun arrived at Bowang, he selected half of his troops to be the vanguard while the rest defended the supplies. Zhao Yun and Liu Bei consecutively came to challenge Xiahou Dun, then feigned defeat and retreated to lure Xiahou Dun to chase them. When Xiahou Dun personally led the pursuit, his deputy Han Hao cautioned him

against ambushes, but Xiahou replied, "I see that the enemy is so weak. Even if they set ambushes on ten sides, I have nothing to fear." As Xiahou Dun ventured deeper into the valley, Liu Bei came to engage him again but retreated soon. Xiahou Dun laughed and said to Han Hao, "So this is the ambush you were talking about!", and then advanced towards Xinye.

During the pursuit, Yu Jin and Li Dian arrived in a narrow position, and a worried Li told Yu, "One who underestimates the enemy would certainly encounter defeat. The terrain here is rough, what if the enemy uses fire here?" Yu Jin understood Li Dian's concern and rode ahead to warn Xiahou Dun while Li tried to stop his men from moving further. Xiahou Dun suddenly realised the danger he was in and tried to retreat but Liu Bei's forces lying in ambush had already set fire to his surroundings. Strong winds helped to spread the fire as Xiahou Dun's troops panicked and stumbled on each other as they attempted to flee, while Zhao Yun turned around to attack the enemy. Xiahou Dun escaped by bashing through the flames and smoke. In the rear, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei's men set fire to Xiahou Dun's supplies as Han Hao and Xiahou Lan attempted to save the supplies. Xiahou Lan was slain by Zhang Fei while Han Hao fled, along with Li Dian and Yu Jin. The following morning, Xiahou Dun gathered his surviving soldiers and retreated back to Xuchang.

After the victory, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei changed their attitudes towards Zhuge Liang and treated him with full respect. Meanwhile in Xuchang, Xiahou Dun bound himself and met Cao Cao, requesting death as punishment for his defeat, but Cao Cao forgave him and released him. Cao Cao also rewarded Li Dian and Yu Jin for their foresight.

## Historicity

Liu Bei's biography in the *Sanguozhi* mentioned that Liu Bei resisted Xiahou Dun and Yu Jin at Bowang. He prepared an ambush and set fire to his own camp and pretended to retreat. Xiahou Dun pursued Liu Bei and fell into the ambush and was defeated.<sup>[1]</sup> Besides, although both Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang's biographies did not specify the year in which Zhuge Liang joined Liu Bei's forces, Zhuge Liang was mentioned in Liu Bei's biography only after the Battle of Bowang. There was no mention about Zhuge Liang's involvement in the battle.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Cultural references

The battle provided a basis for many skits in the different types of Chinese opera. For example, it was featured in Cantonese opera and *zaju* (variety plays).

The battle was also featured in many Three Kingdoms-themed video games such as Capcom's *Warriors of Fate*, Koei's *Sangokushi Koumeiden*, *Sangokushi Sousouden*, and *Dynasty Warriors 4*. The battle is the first stage in *Warriors of Fate* and *Sangokushi Koumeiden*.

The ancient battleground of Bowang is now designated a county-level heritage, where a stone monument commemorates the battle. Broken halberds and ashes of grains were discovered there, and were archaeologically determined to be from the late Han Dynasty.

## References

- [1] (使拒夏侯惇、於禁等於博望。久之，先主設伏兵，一旦自燒屯偽遁，惇等追之，為伏兵所破。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 32.
- [2] (使拒夏侯惇、於禁等於博望。久之，先主設伏兵，一旦自燒屯偽遁，惇等追之，為伏兵所破。...先主屯樊，不知曹公卒至，至宛乃聞之，遂將其衆去。過襄陽，諸葛亮說先主攻琮，荊州可有。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 32.
- Chen, Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
- Luo, Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, ch. 39.
- Pei, Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi zhu)*.

# Battle of Xiakou

Battle of Xiakou	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Spring of 203 CE
<b>Location</b>	Along the Yangtze River, near present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive
Belligerents	
Sun Quan	Liu Biao
Commanders and leaders	
Ling Cao †	Huang Zu
Strength	
Several thousands at most	30,000 at least

Battle of Xiakou	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	夏口之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	夏口之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xiàkǒu Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xiakou** was a battle fought between the warlords Sun Quan and Liu Biao in 203 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Sun Quan's forces attempted to conquer Jiangxia Commandery (present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei), which was defended by Liu Biao's general Huang Zu. The battle was inconclusive as Sun Quan's forces were unable to capture Jiangxia even when Huang Zu retreated. The battle is not to be confused with the Battle of Jiangxia that took place five years later, which concluded with victory for Sun Quan over Huang Zu.

## Background

In 200, Sun Quan inherited the territories in Jiangdong conquered by his older brother Sun Ce between 194 and 199. He was confirmed by the Han Dynasty government's de facto leader Cao Cao as a legitimate lord of the Jiangdong lands, and was appointed by the Han government as Grand Administrator of Kuaiji.<sup>[1]</sup>

Two years later, Sun Quan suppressed a rebellion by Li Shu and merged Li's 30,000 troops into his own army. By 203, Sun Quan had achieved a stable control over his territories in Jiangdong, so he set into motion a strategy proposed by his advisor Lu Su. According to the plan, Sun Quan would take Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), governed by Liu Biao, and take control of all the lands in southern China, then use the Yangtze River as a natural barrier to defend against invading forces from the north. The first obstacle on Sun Quan's path to dominating Jing Province was Jiangxia Commandery, which served as the eastern gateway to Jing Province along the Yangtze. In addition, Sun Quan had a personal stake in the campaign on Jiangxia, because Huang Zu, Liu Biao's appointed Administrator of Jiangxia, was responsible for causing the death of his father, Sun Jian, at the Battle of

Xiangyang 12 years ago.<sup>[2]</sup>

## The battle

Sun Quan appointed Ling Cao as leader of the vanguard fleet and ordered him to mobilize first, while he kept the larger vessels with himself for a slower advance. On the other hand, Huang Zu led his army from Jiangxia to Xiakou and set up a defense line in anticipation of the enemy.

En route to Jiangxia, Ling Cao's fleet encountered Huang Zu's navy at the Xiakou riverbank, with Huang's large vessels spread out far and wide.<sup>[3]</sup> Even though Ling Cao was at a numerical disadvantage then, he considered it his duty as a vanguard leader to eliminate any enemy standing in his lord's path. Undaunted, Ling Cao charged ahead of his men and dashed uninterruptedly into the heart of Huang Zu's fleet. Since Huang Zu did not expect such a small unit to engage his larger force, he was unprepared for Ling Cao's attack. Before Huang Zu could react to the situation, Ling Cao had cleared a path in front of him. Fearing for his life, Huang Zu abandoned his flagship and boarded a small boat, leaving his navy impaired to function.<sup>[4]</sup> When Huang Zu's soldiers saw their commander fleeing towards their home base, they started to desert their posts and scrambled to retreat, resulting in a total collapse of the naval formation.

Ling Cao gave pursuit to Huang Zu and boarded a light vessel in the midst of chaos and fighting. However, when he was close to claiming Huang Zu's head, he was hit by an arrow fired by Huang's subordinate Gan Ning and died;<sup>[5]</sup> thus Huang was able to retreat to Jiangxia safely. Huang Zu remained in Jiangxia thereafter and did not respond to the challenges of Sun Quan's main army. Unable to breach Jiangxia's walls, Sun Quan soon withdrew his troops back to Jiangdong to deal with the Shanyue tribes who constantly raided his lands.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Aftermath

Even though Gan Ning saved Huang Zu's life at a critical moment, Huang was unappreciative of his effort because he despised Gan for his background (Gan Ning used to be a pirate).<sup>[7]</sup> Gan Ning then heeded the advice of his comrade, Su Fei, to defect to Sun Quan's side, bringing along with him confidential intelligence on Huang Zu's forces. Sun Quan received Gan Ning warmly and followed Gan's suggestion to launch a full assault on Huang Zu again three years later in 208, starting the subsequent Battle of Jiangxia.

## Modern references

The Battle of Xiakou was featured as a playable stage in the fourth, fifth, and seventh installments of Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. In the games, the battle was merged with the Battle of Jiangxia. In the later installments, the battle became more significant after Ling Tong (Ling Cao's son) became a playable character. In *Dynasty Warriors 5*, it was incorrectly stated that the Battle of Xiakou took place in 208.

## Notes

[1] Rafe de Crespigny. *Generals of the South: The foundation and early history of the Three Kingdoms state of Wu* ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos\\_index.html](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos_index.html)), page 227.

[2] Yu Huan. *Dian Lüe*.

[3] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55.

[4] Wei Zhao. *Chronicles of Wu*.

[5] (祖军败奔走，追兵急，宁以善射，将兵在后，射杀校尉凌操) Wei Zhao. *Chronicles of Wu*.

[6] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.

[7] (祖既得免，军罢还营，待宁如初。) Wei Zhao. *Chronicles of Wu*.

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- Yu Huan. *Dian Lie*.
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# Unification of Northern China - Battle of Liyang

Battle of Liyang	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Ninth month of 202 - fifth month of 203
<b>Location</b>	Henan and Hebei, China
<b>Result</b>	Withdrawal of Cao Cao's main army; mutiny of Yuan Tan
<b>Territorial changes</b>	Cao Cao establishes a bridgehead in Liyang
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shang
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shang Yuan Tan

Battle of Liyang	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	黎阳之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	黎陽之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Líyáng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Liyang**, fought in 202-203 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty, was an invasion attempt by the warlord Cao Cao against the brothers Yuan Shang and Yuan Tan, the sons of Cao's rival Yuan Shao. The battle in the ninth lunar month of 202 was the first between the two factions since the death of Yuan Shao four months ago. Although it ended in Cao Cao's withdrawal, events in this battle brought tensions between the Yuan brothers to the surface as Yuan Tan mutinied against his younger brother Yuan Shang after Cao Cao's temporary exit from the scene.

## Background

After years of civil war since the failed campaign against Dong Zhuo, two major factions emerged from the multitudes of feuding warlords: one led by the northern warlord Yuan Shao who nominally controlled the provinces of Ji (冀), Qing (青), Bing, and You; the other led by his former friend and subordinate Cao Cao, who, in addition to the three provinces of Yan (兗), Yu, and Xu (徐), also had the imperial court and the Han Emperor Xian under his control. The two warlords clashed in the Battle of Guandu of 200, which ended decisively in Cao Cao's favour. Although Yuan Shao was defeated, he managed to reorganize his army, and the rebellions that sought to take advantage of his defeat were quickly suppressed. Yuan Shao died in June 202, said to be in frustration and anger at his defeat, leaving his sons to succeed his legacy.

Yuan Shao was survived by three sons: the eldest son Yuan Tan, the second son Yuan Xi, and the youngest son Yuan Shang. Although it was customary for the eldest son to succeed the father, Yuan Shao had favoured the good-looking Yuan Shang and had arranged for Yuan Tan to be adopted by his elder brother, Yuan Tan's uncle. Since Yuan Shao never formally decided on an heir, the uncertainties regarding the inheritance remained uncertain upon his death, dividing Yuan Shao's camp into two. Among Yuan Shao's advisors, Xin Ping and Guo Tu supported Yuan Tan while Pang Ji and Shen Pei rallied behind Yuan Shang. Despite there was general expectation that the eldest Yuan Tan will succeed his father, the pro-Yuan Shang faction feared reappraisal from Yuan Tan and produced a forged will that proclaimed Yuan Shang as the successor.<sup>[1]</sup> A resentful Yuan Tan then took his army away to Liyang (黎陽; northwest of present-day Xun County, Henan) by the Yellow River which held the frontier against Cao Cao. Yuan Shang sent a few additional troops with Pang Ji to assist (or spy on) Yuan Tan, but refused his brother's plea when Yuan Tan requested further reinforcements. A furious Yuan Tan killed Pang Ji in response.

Cao Cao had shifted his focus away from the Yuan clan after his victorious Guandu campaign, but eventually returned to the frontline fortifications in Guandu in the spring of 202. His advisor Xun Yu had previously warned Cao Cao to not turn his back on his newly defeated enemy, lest the remnants regroup and strike from behind.<sup>[2]</sup> Four months after Yuan Shao's death, Cao Cao led his army across the Yellow River to attack the remnants at Liyang.

## The battle

Cao Cao put Li Dian and Cheng Yu in charge of supplies while he crossed the river. The supplies were to be ferried by water, but Yuan Shang's officer Gao Fan (高蕃) held a position on the river and blocked the supply line. Cao Cao initially suggested that the goods should be brought by land instead, but since Li Dian argued that Gao Fan's men were lightly armed and not prepared for naval warfare, he allowed Li Dian and Cheng Yu to attack Gao Fan. The attack was successful, and the water route was cleared for the supply train.<sup>[3]</sup>

Historical sources vary on the events following Cao Cao's crossing. The official Cao Wei records in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* indicate that Cao Cao won successive battles over the course of six months, forced the Yuan brothers out of Liyang but suddenly lifted the siege of the Yuan headquarters of Ye and withdrew to Xu city. However, Yuan Shao's post-biography in the *Records*, the *Book of the Later Han*, and contemporary references such as the *Chu Shi Biao* contradict the Wei account, while the fact that the operation took so long also suggests that it might not have went as smoothly as Cao Cao's official biography stated. It was more likely, therefore, that the Wei records suppressed mention of Cao Cao's defeats in this region. Using a combination of the aforementioned sources, an alternate account of the battle is presented below.<sup>[4]</sup>

Outmatched by Cao Cao in numbers, Yuan Tan found it difficult to hold his position in Liyang and sent for help. In response, Yuan Shang left Shen Pei to guard Ye while he brought his army in person to reinforce Liyang.<sup>[5]</sup> The two sides fought west and south outside Liyang, where remains of the defenses used in the battle could still be seen during the Tang Dynasty.<sup>[6]</sup> In the third month of 203, the Yuan brothers came out of their fortification, but Cao Cao overran them and forced them back behind the walls of Liyang proper. Before Cao Cao could lay siege to Liyang, though, the brothers withdrew at night to Ye, seventy kilometers to the north.

The next month, Cao Cao's army followed the Yuan brothers' retreat until they reached Ye. Here, however, he appeared to have overstretched himself and was driven back by Yuan Shang's counterattack outside the city. The setback caused Cao Cao to turn his attention away from the Yuan headquarters for the moment, as he turned east to storm the city of Yin'an (陰安; in present-day Qingfeng, Henan) and collected grains from the granaries in southern Wei commandery (魏郡). By the time Cao Cao was ready to attack Ye again in the fifth month, his advisor Guo Jia offered advice to the contrary to take advantage of the Yuan brothers' simmering tensions:

Yuan Shao loved those two sons, but neither was proclaimed as his heir. Now they are rivals for power and each has his own party. If we press them hard they will support one another, but if we ease off they will begin to quarrel. The best plan is to turn south against Jing province and wait for something to happen. When things have changed, we can attack then, and the whole affair may be settled in a single blow.<sup>[7]</sup>

Cao Cao accepted the advice and retreated homeward, placing Jia Xin (賈信) in the beachhead fortress of Liyang while presumably leaving the untenable position of Yin'an to his enemies.<sup>[8]</sup>

When Cao Cao was retreating across the Yellow River, Yuan Tan requested new equipments and additional troops from Yuan Shang so he could catch Cao Cao midriver. Doubtful of his elder brother's intentions, Yuan Shang granted neither. Yuan Tan's advisors Guo Tu and Xin Ping added fuel to the fire by suggesting it was Shen Pei who made Yuan Shao send Yuan Tan away to be adopted by his uncle, causing a furious Yuan Tan turned his army to attack Yuan Shang and Shen Pei in Ye. Yuan Tan was defeated and fled to Nanpi, while Cao Cao returned to his capital Xu city apparently unmolested.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Aftermath

Despite initial successes, Cao Cao had suffered setbacks, and in the end could only retain the beachhead Liyang after nine months of campaigning. He stayed in Xu city for the next three months, possibly to assert his authority to prevent any disorder that might arise from his extended absence. During his stay there, he issued two proclamations that sought to punish and demote officers who had been unsuccessful, with the reason that ranks and rewards should not be given to those who failed to earn them.<sup>[10]</sup>

The threat of the Yuan brothers would soon resolve itself, as Guo Jia had reasoned. The Yuan brothers had turned against each other, with Yuan Shang gaining the upper hand in the fraternal conflict. Yuan Tan was eventually driven from Nanpi and took refuge in Pingyuan; besieged there, he turned to Cao Cao for help. The Governor of Jing Province Liu Biao, an old ally of Yuan Shao, had the famed writer Wang Can write a letter each to Yuan Tan and Yuan Shang on his behalf, urging them to fight against their nemesis Cao Cao, not amongst themselves. The letter to Yuan Tan in particular celebrated the Yuan brothers' victory in Ye against a strong enemy, and sternly disapproved of Yuan Tan's reliance on Cao Cao.<sup>[11]</sup> Still, Liu Biao's remonstrances fell on deaf ears.

Cao Cao was engaged in battle with Liu Biao on their common border when Yuan Tan's ambassador Xin Pi came to him. It turned out that Xin Pi was disillusioned about his lord, and suggested to Cao Cao that this would be the opportunity to destroy both Yuan Shang and Yuan Tan, before the two brothers make up and unite their forces. Xun Yu had also made an argument along these lines previously. Cao Cao accepted the advice, and ostensibly allied with Yuan Tan. In 204, Cao Cao launched an attack from Liyang and routed Yuan Shang's army from Ye to relief Yuan Tan, causing Yuan Shang to seek refuge with Yuan Xi. In the year after that, Cao Cao accused Yuan Tan of ill intent and cancelled the alliance, and followed that by laying siege to Nanpi. Yuan Tan was killed in that battle. The Yuan clan's hold on China's north was thus broken, though they would hold on until their final destruction in 207.



## Notes

- [1] de Crespigny (2010), p. 208
- [2] de Crespigny (1996), p. 303
- [3] de Crespigny (2007), pp. 409-410
- [4] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 209-210
- [5] de Crespigny (1996), p. 304
- [6] de Crespigny (2010), p. 210 note 11
- [7] de Crespigny (2010), p. 213; Original text as follows: 袁紹愛此二子，莫適立也。有郭圖、逢紀為之謀臣，必交鬥其間，還相離也。急之則相持，緩之而後爭心生。不如南向荊州，若征劉表者，以待其變；變成而後擊之，可一舉定也。
- [8] de Crespigny (2010), p.210
- [9] de Crespigny (1996), p.317
- [10] de Crespigny (2010), p. 212
- [11] de Crespigny (1996), p. 318 and de Crespigny (2010), p. 210

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# Unification of Northern China - Battle of Ye

Battle of Ye	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Spring of 204 to September 13, 204
<b>Location</b>	In and around Ye (in present-day Handan, Hebei)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Shang
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Cao Hong	Yuan Shang Shen Pei
Strength	
Said to outnumber Ye defenders	Unknown number of Ye defenders; 10,000+ reinforcements under Yuan Shang
Casualties and losses	
At least 300	More than half starved in the city

Battle of Ye	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	邺之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	鄴之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yè Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Yecheng	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	邺城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	鄴城之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yèchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Ye** or **Battle of Yecheng** took place in 204 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. It was fought between the warlord Cao Cao and Yuan Shang, son and successor of Cao Cao's rival Yuan Shao, in the Yuan clan's headquarters Ye (in present-day Handan, Hebei). Cao Cao had been allied with Yuan Shang's elder brother Yuan Tan, who rebelled in a succession feud, and it was by Yuan Tan's request that Cao Cao laid siege to Ye. The successful siege of the city dislodged Yuan Shang's power from Ji Province (冀州), and Cao Cao would later use the city of Ye as a major base of his military power.

## Background

Yuan Shao, the powerful warlord of the north, had been decisively defeated by his southern neighbour Cao Cao in the Battle of Guandu in 200 and died two years later in frustration. Despite the defeat, the Yuan power bloc was by no means eliminated, for Yuan Shao was survived by his three sons Yuan Tan, Yuan Xi, and Yuan Shang; together with their cousin Gao Gan, the Yuan family still held on to the provinces of Ji, Qing (青), Bing, and You. The Yuan brothers were not on good terms, however - Yuan Tan, the oldest, contested the succession of his younger brother Yuan Shang, who was preemptively made heir by his supporters Shen Pei and Pang Ji, while the second son Yuan Xi was content with controlling the northernmost You Province and stayed out of his brothers' conflict. In the winter of 202, Cao Cao attacked Yuan Tan's position in Liyang, and Yuan Shang brought his troops to help his older brother. The two brothers held out for six months, before eventually driven back to Ye, where they successfully struck back and caused Cao Cao to withdraw for the time being.

As soon as Cao Cao started to retreat in mid-203, the brothers' feud took a turn to the worse. Yuan Tan requested more troops and equipment so he could lead an army to pursue Cao Cao's men, but Yuan Shang refused, not wanting his brother to gain control of a bigger army. This act of distrust proved to be the last straw for Yuan Tan, as he rebelled from his younger brother and attacked the city of Ye in anger. Yuan Shang successfully defended Ye again and chased Yuan Tan 300 kilometers away to Nanpi, the seat of Bohai Commandery (渤海郡). Bohai was on the edge of the border with Qing Province, where Yuan Tan still held the title Inspector of that province; but while he could expect some aid from the base of his power, some of his own men rebelled against him, and the position was very insecure. So when Yuan Shang came to attack Nanpi, Yuan Tan fled south to Pingyuan, where he was again besieged. Here he was close to Cao Cao's Yan province, and his advisor Guo Tu suggested seeking help from Cao Cao. Guo Tu reasoned that Cao Cao's army would attack Ye, and while Yuan Shang was to return to save his capital,

Yuan Tan could expect to take the lands to the north of Ye; and if Cao Cao was to be successful, Yuan Shang's power would be removed and the outstretched Cao Cao would retreat soon after, leaving Yuan Tan to gain control of the north and capable enough to make a stand against Cao Cao.<sup>[1]</sup> Yuan Tan would not agree at first, but later sent Xin Pi as an ambassador to seek an alliance with Cao Cao.

Since his withdrawal from Ye, Cao Cao's policy on the Yuan brothers was to let them wear each other out while he dealt with their ally Liu Biao in Jing Province (荊州; covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), and thus he was unsure what to make of the envoy.<sup>[2]</sup> Cao Cao's advisor Xun Yu, who long advocated settling the north before turning elsewhere, reasoned that Liu Biao was not ambitious enough to be a threat, and it was high time to reap the benefits of the Yuan family feud before the brothers reunite.<sup>[3]</sup> Cao Cao agreed, but he continued to put Jing Province first. Observing that Cao Cao was doubtful of Yuan Tan's sincerity in an alliance, Xin Pi spoke his mind:

"Your Excellency has no reason to be concerned about Yuan Tan's loyalty. You have only to consider his military strength. [...] Now, however, one of them is suddenly asking your help, and you can see from this how weak they are. Yuan Shang has Yuan Tan in trouble, but he cannot defeat him, and this is because his strength is exhausted. [...] If you move against Ye, for his own preservation Yuan Shang must go back to guard his base. And as he does so, Yuan Tan will follow at his heels. Attacking an enemy distressed and desperate, striking a rebel discouraged and weary, with your power, it will be like strong wind moving the autumn leaves. Heaven has put Yuan Shang into your hands. [...] If, on the other hand, you fail to settle them now and decide to wait another year, then next harvest there may be grain, and your enemies will have recognised their errors. They will reform their government and revive their power, so you will have lost the chance to use your soldiers. Far the best policy for you now is to follow Yuan Tan's request and bring him help. Of all your enemies, none are greater than those to the north of the Yellow River, while once you have brought the north of the River under control, then your imperial army will have gained its full strength, and all the empire will tremble before you."<sup>[4]</sup>

Cao Cao accepted this advice, and Xin Pi thus transferred his allegiance. By the end of the year 203, Cao Cao again led his army across the Yellow River to Liyang and cemented the alliance by marrying his son Cao Zheng (曹整) with Yuan Tan's daughter. Yuan Shang indeed lifted the siege on Pingyuan and returned to guard Ye. With Yuan Tan's position safe, Cao Cao returned for the time being.<sup>[5]</sup>

## The battle

### Laying siege to Ye

In the spring of 204 Cao Cao crossed the Yellow River again and, mindful of the logistical problems for him to operate north of the Yellow River, started several waterworks projects to ease the transportation of supplies. While these works were under way, Yuan Shang apparently thought it safe to renew his attack on Yuan Tan in Pingyuan again, and left his loyal supporter Shen Pei to defend Ye. Some within Yuan Shang's camp found his priorities questionable, so when Cao Cao indeed advanced on Ye some time around the second or third month, the city's defenders under Su You intended to rebel and capitulate Ye to Cao Cao. The scheme was discovered, its plotters suppressed by Shen Pei within the city, and Su You fled to Cao Cao.

Now Cao Cao's army was at the gates of Ye. He had mounds erected and tunnels dug to lay siege to the city. Having done this, Cao Cao left the general Cao Hong to maintain the siege while he turned west in the fourth month to attack Yin Kai (尹楷), a county magistrate under Yuan Shang who guarded the supply route from Bing Province. After storming Yin Kai's fortress Maocheng (毛城) at the foot of the Taihang Mountains, Cao Cao's army bypassed the defenses at Ye and defeated Ju Hu in Handan, north of Ye. This development brought about more defections from Yuan Shang's county magistrates, and the local Heishan bandit lord Zhang Yan offered his assistance to Cao Cao.<sup>[6]</sup> By this time Ye was cut off from the south, west, and north, while Yuan Shang was at its east facing Yuan Tan.

Cao Cao's army returned to the siege-lines of Ye in the fifth month. Shen Pei vigorously defended the city throughout the siege; he had dug trenches within the city of Ye to counter Cao Cao's tunnels, and dealt with dissension among his ranks. One of his officers, Feng Li (馮禮) opened a sally port to let the enemy in. Shen Pei found out and had boulders dropped into the opening, blocking the gates and killed the roughly 300 soldiers who entered.

Only a few weeks after the siege mounds and tunnels were constructed, Cao Cao changed tactics and ordered them destroyed. In their place, a shallow moat 40 *li* long was dug surrounding the city. At first the moat was shallow enough to be crossed, so Shen Pei laughed when he saw it and paid it no heed. Then, in a single night, Cao Cao dug the trench further, 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep, drawing water from the nearby Zhang River to the west and encompassing the Yanpi Marsh (晏陂澤) to the south and the Huan River to the east and north.<sup>[7]</sup> The city became isolated, and by the beginning of autumn it was said that more than half in the city died of starvation.<sup>[8]</sup>

### The arrival and repulsion of Yuan Shang

Some time in the summer Yuan Shang decided to abort his campaign against Yuan Tan and turned back to help defend his headquarters. Yuan Shang sent his Registrar (主簿) Li Fu (李孚) ahead to notify the defenders that relief was coming. To avoid detection by the besiegers, Li Fu brought only three horsemen, broke his staff of authority, and traveled by night. When he reached Cao Cao's camps surrounding the city from the north, he styled himself as a disciplinary officer and went through the camps finding fault with the sentries and punishing them. In this fashion he passed through the eastern camps from the northern camps into the camps on the southern side, where Cao Cao's personal camp was. Turning west from here, he arrested the officers on picket duty, tied them up, then made a dash to the city walls. He called to the defenders above, and they drew him in by rope. The ecstatic defenders sounded the drums in celebration of Li Fu's arrival, and Cao Cao laughed when he was made known of Li Fu's exploits.<sup>[9]</sup>

Li Fu was to return to relay Ye's situation to Yuan Shang. He realized that he could not use the same trick to get past the siege-lines and so conjured another ploy. He had Shen Pei arrange to have the old and weak sent out in the night to save food. During the night, several thousand people selected were sent away through three different gates, carrying white flags to surrender. Li Fu and his followers blended into the crowd and exited Ye by the northern gate, then escaped the surrounding camps from the northwest. Yuan Shang was glad to see Li Fu back, while Cao Cao clapped his hands and laughed again when he knew Li Fu escaped.<sup>[10]</sup>

Through the ruckus surrounding Li Fu's infiltration, Cao Cao's men knew that Yuan Shang was leading troops to relief Ye. Some of Cao Cao's officers were concerned that since Yuan Shang was coming home with Yuan Tan at his heels, Yuan Shang's soldiers would theoretically be on "death ground" (死地), where they would fight more fiercely to save themselves according to Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Cao Cao pointed out that he should indeed avoid battle with the reinforcements if Yuan Shang came on the main road from the east; but if Yuan Shang moved across to the northwestern hills, he would have friendly territory (Gao Gan's Bing province) behind him and his army would be easier to deal with.<sup>[11]</sup> Yuan Shang approached obliquely from the north, to the delight of Cao Cao. When his scouts told him Yuan Shang's army reached Handan, Cao Cao candidly announced to his generals "I already have Ji Province, did you know? You shall see soon."<sup>[12]</sup>

From the western hills, Yuan Shang turned east to Yangping village (陽平亭), 17 *li* from Ye. On the bank of the Fu River (滏水) flowing north of the city, the relief army set camp and lit torches to signal the defenders for a coordinated attack, who lit another fire in acknowledgement. Shen Pei made a sortie to the north to rendezvous with Yuan Shang, but Cao Cao defeated both armies, driving Shen Pei back within the walls and Yuan Shang to Quzhang (曲漳), a bend on the Zhang River. Cao Cao then moved to surround Yuan Shang's position, but before the encirclement was completed, an afraid Yuan Shang sent Yin Kui (陰夔) and Chen Lin to negotiate for surrender. Cao Cao refused, and pressed Quzhang harder. One night, Yuan Shang abandoned Quzhang for Lankou (濫口) in the western Qi Hills (祁山), where Cao Cao followed and defeated Yuan Shang once more. Yuan Shang's army was

completely scattered, his generals Ma Yan (馬延) and Zhang Yi (張顛) surrendered, and Yuan Shang himself fled far north to Zhongshan Commandery (中山). Cao Cao's men captured his baggages, seals, and other insignia.

### End of the siege

Cao Cao had the trophies of his victory against Yuan Shang shown to the defenders of Ye, which greatly lowered their morale, but Shen Pei was adamant. He rallied the troops based on the hope that Yuan Shang's second brother Yuan Xi would soon come to the rescue from You Province, thus they have no reason to worry about Yuan Shang's rout. When Cao Cao rode out to inspect the siege-works, Shen Pei had crossbowmen fire at him; the shots missed narrowly. A few nights later, on September 13 of the Julian calendar, Shen Pei's nephew Shen Rong (審榮) betrayed the city and opened the east gate at night to let in the enemy.<sup>[13]</sup> As Cao Cao's men breached the city, Shen Pei executed the families of Xin Pi's brother Xin Ping, whom he considered traitorous and responsible for the downfall of the Yuan clan, then personally joined the defense at the gates. Shen Pei and the remaining defenders were pushed into the city proper, where fighting continued in the streets for a while. Two sources, the "Parallel Annals of the Duke of Shanyang" (山陽公載記) and the "Chronicle of Emperor Xian" (獻帝春秋), claim that Shen Pei hid in a well when all seemed lost, but the compiler Pei Songzhi rejects this account.<sup>[14]</sup> Whatever the circumstance, Shen Pei was captured alive, and the siege finally ended after dragging on for more than half a year.

### Aftermath

Shen Pei remained defiant until the very end. He rebuked those who surrendered to Cao Cao and cursed the fact that the crossbow bolts did not hit Cao Cao. Cao Cao became impressed by his fierce loyalty and wanted to spare him, but Xin Pi and the others begged for his execution, so Shen Pei was to be beheaded. On the execution grounds, Shen Pei demanded to be allowed to face north as he died, since his lord Yuan Shang was in that direction.

Cao Cao paid his respects at the tomb of Yuan Shao, where he wept for his friend-turned-enemy. He also offered condolences and pensions for members of Yuan Shao's family at Ye, though Cao Cao's son Cao Pi took Yuan Xi's wife Lady Zhen as his own wife in a serious breach of propriety. Politically, Cao Cao employed many of Yuan Shao's former officials, relieved all newly conquered territories of taxes for one year, and devoted his policies to rebuild country devastated by the three-way war among Cao Cao and the Yuan brothers. All these gained him wide popularity, which, along with the contingents of Bing Province troops sent to settle at Ye, prevented the outbreak of rebellion in favour of the former rulers. Gao Gan, the Inspector of Bing Province, offered his nominal surrender to Cao Cao for the time being. For Cao Cao's successes, an imperial decree named him the Governor of Ji Province, but Cao Cao excused himself from the honour and continued with his old post as Governor of Yan Province.<sup>[15]</sup>

For the most part, the fall of Ye removed the Yuan clan's power from Ji province. Yuan Tan, who had been taking advantage of the siege of Ye to take territories that belonged to Yuan Shang, defeated Yuan Shang in Zhongshan and drove him further north to You Province. Since Yuan Tan was at least expected to help during the siege, Cao Cao now accused Yuan Tan of acting in bad faith, and cancelled the marriage between their families. Months later, Yuan Tan returned to Nanpi and Cao Cao moved to attack him, killing him in battle in the first month of 205.<sup>[16]</sup> Yuan Shang and Yuan Xi were unable to reorganize their men in You province after their setbacks and rebellions under their rule, and were decisively defeated along with their allies the Wuhuan in the Battle of White Wolf Mountain in 207.

Ye proved to be a useful acquisition for Cao Cao, who took the city as his chief residence soon after its capture. Over the years the city and its surrounding Wei Commandery (魏郡) became the heart of Cao Cao's power, as he initiated several works in and around the city, including the much-celebrated Bronze Bird Terrace (銅雀臺) and the Xuanwu Pond (玄武池), where he trained his navy. In 213 Cao Cao was enfeoffed as the Duke of Wei, named after Ye's commandery, and the name stuck throughout the rise of the Cao family's fortunes, culminating in the state of Cao Wei that succeeded the Han Dynasty in 220. According to *Shui Jing Zhu*, Ye was regarded as the Northern Capital during the Wei Dynasty.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] *Records of Heroes*, cited in Biography of Xin Pi, Volume 25, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*; Original quote: 今將軍國小兵少，糧匱勢弱，顯甫之來，久則不敵。愚以為可呼曹公來擊顯甫。曹公至，必先攻鄴，顯甫還救。將軍引兵而西，自鄴以北皆可虜得。若顯甫軍破，其兵奔亡，又可斂取以拒曹公。曹公遠僑而來，糧餉不繼，必自逃去。比此之際，趙國以北皆我之有，亦足與曹公為對矣。不然，不諧。
- [2] de Crespigny (2010), p. 213
- [3] de Crespigny (1996), p. 319
- [4] de Crespigny (1996), pp. 319-320; Original quote: 明公無問信與詐也，直當論其勢耳。[...] 今一旦求救於明公，此可知也。顯甫見顯思困而不能取，此力竭也。[...] 今往攻鄴，尚不還救，即不能自守。還救，即譚踵其後。以明公之威，應困窮之敵，擊疲弊之寇，無異迅風之振秋葉矣。天以袁尚與明公。[...] 欲待他年，他年或登，又自知亡而改脩厥德，失所以用兵之要矣。今因其請救而撫之，利莫大焉。且四方之寇，莫大於河北；河北平，則六軍盛而天下震。
- [5] de Crespigny (1996), p. 321
- [6] de Crespigny (1996), p. 325
- [7] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 179-180
- [8] de Crespigny (1996), p. 325 and de Crespigny (2010), p. 216
- [9] de Crespigny (1996), p. 326
- [10] *Brief Account of the Wei Dynasty*, cited in Biography of Jia Kui, Volume 15, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*
- [11] de Crespigny (2010), p. 330
- [12] *Biography of Cao Man*, cited in *Chronicles of the Martial Emperor*, Volume 1, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*; original quote: 孤已得冀州，諸君知之乎？[...] 諸君方見不久也。
- [13] de Crespigny (1996), p. 327
- [14] Biography of Yuan Shao, Volume 6, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*
- [15] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 218-219
- [16] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 219-220
- [17] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 332-334, main text and note 2.

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- de Crespigny, Rafe (1996). *To establish peace : being the chronicle of Later Han for the years 189 to 220 AD as recorded in chapters 59 to 69 of the Zizhi tongjian of Sima Guang*. Canberra, Australia: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University. ISBN 0-7315-2526-4.
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# Unification of Northern China - Battle of Nanpi

Battle of Nanpi	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	January to February 205
<b>Location</b>	Nanpi County, Hebei
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Yuan Tan
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Cao Chun	Yuan Tan †

Battle of Nanpi	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	南皮之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	南皮之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Nánpí Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Nanpi** happened in the first month of 205, during the period known as the end of the Han Dynasty. The battle spelled the annihilation of Yuan Tan, one of Yuan Shao's sons vying to succeed their father, by their common enemy Cao Cao, one of the serving Three Ducal Ministers. Having already dealt a major blow to another son Yuan Shang, Cao Cao's victory at Nanpi gave him uncontested control of the North China Plain, while the remnant Yuan power blocs were chased further north.

## Background

Yuan Shao, the powerful warlord of northern China, had been decisively defeated at the Battle of Guandu by Cao Cao in 200. Two years later, he died, leaving his expansive territories of Ji province (冀州), Qing province (青州), Bing province, and You province to his three sons and a nephew: Yuan Tan, Yuan Xi, Yuan Shang, and Gao Gan. Although the eldest son was expected to succeed his father, Yuan Shang's supporters forged a document declaring the youngest son, him, as the successor. Yuan Tan, predictably resentful, rebelled against Yuan Shang after fending off Cao Cao's invasion together in 203. Yuan Tan had wanted to take the Yuan family headquarters of Ye, but Yuan Shang defeated the besiegers chased them three hundred kilometers away to Nanpi, the capital of Bohai commandery (渤海郡). The commandery was north of Qing province, where Yuan Tan had held the title of Inspector (刺史) since his father's time. Here he was joined by his former subordinates such as Wang Xiu and Guan Tong (管統), but at the same time some of them rebelled against him under Liu Xun (劉詢) - Yuan Tan's foothold in Nanpi could hardly have been stable.

In the autumn of 202, Cao Cao waged war against the Yuans' ally Liu Biao to his south, part of a strategy to let the Yuan brothers tire themselves out. Taking advantage of Cao Cao's apparent absence, Yuan Shang marched his men

to Nanpi and defeated Yuan Tan there. Yuan Tan fled south into Qing province, to Pingyuan. Though it was Yuan Tan's former domain, Qing province had been slowly encroached by Cao Cao's general Zang Ba. So when Yuan Shang followed up his attack by laying siege to Pingyuan, Yuan Tan could not expect much help within his province. Yuan Tan's key advisor Guo Tu summarized the situation and proposed an unlikely alliance:

"Now, general, your domains are small and your soldiers are few, your supplies are lacking and your forces are weak. [Yuan Shang]'s coming cannot be fought off for long. Your dotting servant believes it is possible to summon Duke Cao to attack [Yuan Shang]. When Duke Cao comes, he must first attack Ye, and [Yuan Shang] will return to save it. The general need only lead his soldiers to the west, and all north of Ye can be seized. If [Yuan Shang]'s army is defeated, his men will come fleeing, and they can be appropriated to resist Duke Cao. Duke Cao will be far afield, and with his food and provisions unsustainable, he shall surely flee. At that time, all to the north of state of Zhao shall be ours, and then it will be sufficient to confront Duke Cao. If you don't take this advice, all shall be in discord."<sup>[1]</sup>

Guo Tu's proposal was a marked departure from the calls for reconciliation by Wang Xiu and Liu Biao, and though Yuan Tan was initially reluctant to act on this advice, he soon sent Xin Pi to negotiate with his father's nemesis.

When Xin Pi reached Xiping (西平), Cao Cao's staging post for his planned attack on Liu Biao, Cao Cao consulted with his advisors on how to react to the current situation. Xun Yu reasoned that Liu Biao was not ambitious enough to be a threat, so the time was right to take advantage of the Yuan family feud before the brothers reunite. Cao Cao agreed in principle, but was unsure of Yuan Tan's sincerity in an alliance. Now Xin Pi revealed his true colours, and reasoned that Cao Cao need not worry about Yuan Tan's intentions as long as the Yuan brothers remained at odds, since Cao Cao could easily triumph over their armies separately. Cao Cao, now happily convinced, turned his army north and crossed the Yellow River by the end of 203, also arranging to have one of his sons Cao Zheng (曹整) marry a daughter of Yuan Tan. Yuan Shang hurriedly led his army from Pingyuan back to Ye in response to the new alliance, while some of Yuan Shang's officers like Lü Xiang and Lü Kuang fled over to Cao Cao. The Lües were rewarded with enfeoffment, but Yuan Tan offered them seals in an attempt to persuade them to join him instead. This was regarded as Yuan Tan's first breach of trust, but Cao Cao took no action at this point.

Cao Cao made preparations to attack Ye in the year 204. Seemingly oblivious to this threat, Yuan Shang led another attempt to subdue Yuan Tan. Although Yuan Shang eventually returned with a relief force of 10,000 men when Cao Cao actually laid siege to Ye, Cao Cao had no trouble crushing his army and sent him fleeing north to Zhongshan commandery (中山郡); and in September, the city of Ye capitulated. Yuan Tan, now unchecked by his brother, marched north from Pingyuan and took the commanderies of Ganling (甘陵), Anping (安平), Bohai, and Hejian (河間), culminating in an assault in Zhongshan that drove Yuan Shang out of Ji province. At this point Cao Cao, having no more use for the alliance, accused Yuan Tan of not doing his part in the siege of Ye and only sought to further his own ends. The accusation was followed by the cancellation of the alliance, the returning of Yuan Tan's daughter, and the movement of troops into Yuan Tan's territories at the beginning of 205.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Battle

Yuan Tan pitched camp at Longcou (龍湊) after his conquests, positioning himself between Pingyuan and Nanpi against Cao Cao. Despite his recent achievements, he had only reestablished himself in the northern part of Ji province for a few weeks at most and could not have held Longcou and Nanpi securely.<sup>[3]</sup> When Cao Cao brought his army forth to Longcou, Yuan Tan fled the position and retreated to Nanpi at night, where he set up camp on the nearby Qing River (清河). Yuan Tan's retreat left Pingyuan undefended, and Cao Cao entered the city and established control over its counties.<sup>[4]</sup> At this time, another of the Yuan clan's traditional allies, the Wuhuan tribe to the north under Supuyan (蘇僕延) prepared a force of 5,000 horsemen to help Yuan Tan. Cao Cao's envoy to the Wuhuan Qian Zhao (牽招) made an impressive show of force against a rival envoy at Supuyan's court and successfully convinced the Wuhuan king to disband the relief force.<sup>[5]</sup>



In the next month, Cao Cao turned north to attack Nanpi and Yuan Tan came out to fight. The casualties were high on both sides, and Cao Cao contemplated a temporary truce. Cao Chun, the head of Cao Cao's Tiger and Leopard Cavalry (虎豹騎) force, dissuaded him from taking such a decision, apparently aware of Cao Cao's difficulties that Guo Tu had pointed out to Yuan Tan:

"Now we have trod after our enemies for a thousand miles, if we go back without victory we shall certainly lose face. Also, our army is isolated, we are a long way into enemy territory, and it will be difficult to keep this position for long. When they win, they grow vain; when we lose, we grow fearful. Using fear to fend against vanity, we shall surely be victorious."<sup>[6]</sup>

Cao Cao agreed, ordered an aggressive strike, personally beat the drums to lead his soldiers in attack, and routed Yuan Tan's army before they had a chance to regroup. Yuan Tan himself fell off his horse while fleeing Cao Chun's men, and in a desperate bid to save himself, he turned to his pursuer and pled: "Tut! Spare me, I can make you wealthy." It was recorded that he was beheaded before he finished talking.<sup>[7]</sup> With the death of Yuan Tan, Cao Cao captured Nanpi.

## Aftermath

As Cao Cao entered the city, he heeded the advice of Li Fu (李孚), the newly surrendered Registrar of Ji Province (冀州主簿), to not sack the city, and sent Li Fu to announce to the populace that business should carry on as usual. However, Cao Cao was not as merciful towards Yuan Tan's chief associates — Guo Tu and the other leaders were summarily executed along with their families, while Yuan Tan's own family may have shared the same fate.

The fall of Nanpi, combined with the previous capture of Ye, ousted the Yuan clan from the Ji province and hence confirmed Cao Cao's authority over the North China Plain. The Heishan bandits confederacy leader Zhang Yan fully submitted to Cao Cao, as with most local officials who previously served the Yuan family. Guan Tong held out in Le'an commandery (樂安) of Qing province and refused to surrender, and Cao Cao ordered Wang Xiu, who submitted to Cao Cao after arriving too late to save Yuan Tan, to kill him. Wang Xiu, however, argued that Guan Tong was being a loyal servant to a fallen state, and a pleased Cao Cao pardoned Guan Tong and took Wang Xiu onto his staff.<sup>[8]</sup> With the two provinces of Ji and Qing under his control, Cao Cao took the advice of his advisor Guo Jia and invited local gentry leaders to join his administration. He also suppressed private feuding and vendetta, while also setting some sumptuary laws forbidding excessive funerary rites, over-extravagant tomb constructions, and the erection of steles.<sup>[9]</sup>

Further north, Yuan Shang sought refuge with his second brother Yuan Xi, who was the Inspector of You Province. Even in the northern province of You, there were some who saw the turn of the tide. Wang Song (王松) in Zhuo commandery (涿郡) and Xianyu Fu (鮮于輔) in Yuyang commandery (漁陽郡) pledged allegiance to Cao Cao, while in Yuan Xi's headquarters he was faced with internal mutiny by Jiao Chu (焦觸) and Zhang Nan (張南). Jiao Chu succeeded in driving away the Yuan brothers, proclaimed himself the Inspector of You Province in Yuan Xi's place, and led many local officials to go over to Cao Cao.<sup>[10]</sup> Yuan Xi and Yuan Shang fled northeast to their allies the Wuhuan, who soon attacked Xianyu Fu in Gongping (犇平; northeast of present-day Miyun) in support of the Yuans.<sup>[11]</sup> Another source of opposition to Cao Cao was found in Zhao Du (趙犢) and Huo Nu (霍奴), local leaders apparently sympathetic to the Yuans, who attacked and killed the Grand Administrator of Zhuo and the Inspector of You.<sup>[12]</sup> By autumn 205, after settling Ji province, Cao Cao came north to destroy Zhao Du and Huo Nu, and relieved Xianyu Fu from the Wuhuan. The Wuhuan remained a threat, but Cao Cao had no opportunity to deal with them as the recently surrendered Gao Gan in Bing province rebelled, perhaps inspired by the hope that the support from the Wuhuan may reverse the Yuan family's fortunes.<sup>[13]</sup> Cao Cao defeated Gao Gan for good in 206, and it would be late 207 before he had decisively crushed the united forces of the Yuan family and the Wuhuan and become the uncontested power in northern China.

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- [1] *Records of Heroes*, cited in Biography of Xin Pi, Volume 25, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*; Original quote: 今將軍國小兵少，糧匱勢弱，顯甫之來，久則不敵。愚以為可呼曹公來擊顯甫。曹公至，必先攻鄴，顯甫還救。將軍引兵而西，自鄴以北皆可虜得。若顯甫軍破，其兵奔亡，又可斂取以拒曹公。曹公遠僑而來，糧餉不繼，必自逃去。比此之際，趙國以北皆我之有，亦足與曹公為對矣。不然，不諧。
- [2] de Crespigny (2010), p. 219
- [3] de Crespigny (2010), p. 220
- [4] de Crespigny (1996), p. 336 note 27
- [5] de Crespigny (1996), p. 331
- [6] Chen Shou. Biography of Cao Ren, Volume 9, *Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms*; Original quote: 今千里蹈敵，進不能克，退必喪威；且縣師深入，難以持久。彼勝而驕，我敗而懼，以懼敵驕，必可克也。
- [7] Fan Ye. Biography of Yuan Tan, Volume 74B, *Book of Later Han*; Original Yuan Tan quote: 咄，兒過我，我能富貴汝。
- [8] de Crespigny (1996), p. 338
- [9] de Crespigny (2010), p. 221
- [10] de Crespigny (2010), pp. 221-222
- [11] de Crespigny (1996), p. 340
- [12] de Crespigny (1996), p. 340. The Inspector of You Province referred to here may or may not be Jiao Chu — his personal name had been recorded as one of the sponsors of a Cao Wei imperial stele in 220, see de Crespigny (2010), p. 222 note 35.
- [13] de Crespigny (2010), p. 222

# Unification of Northern China - Battle of White Wolf Mountain

Battle of White Wolf Mountain	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Late September or early October 207
<b>Location</b>	Near Lingyuan, Liaoning
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Wuhuan Yuan Shang
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Zhang Liao Cao Chun	Tadun † Louban Wuyan Yuan Shang Yuan Xi
Strength	
	at least 100,000

Battle of White Wolf Mountain	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	白狼山之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	白狼山之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Bólángshān Zhī Zhàn / Báilángshān Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of White Wolf Mountain** was a battle fought in 207 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle took place in northern China, beyond the frontiers of the ruling Han Dynasty. It was fought between the warlord Cao Cao and the nomadic Wuhuan tribes, who were allied with Cao's rivals Yuan Shang and Yuan Xi. The victory attained by Cao Cao dashed the hopes of a Wuhuan dominion, and the Wuhuan eventually became weakened, lost importance, and were gradually absorbed into China or the Xianbei tribes.

## Background

The northern warlord Yuan Shao had maintained good relations with the Wuhuan beyond Chinese borders during his campaign against rival warlord Gongsun Zan, their common enemy, in the 190s. Yuan Shao gave the chieftains of his Wuhuan allies seals and insignia as chanyu after the final destruction of Gongsun Zan in the Battle of Yijing, and reinforced the alliance by marrying the daughters of his subordinates to the Wuhuan leaders, pretending as though the daughters were his own. The Wuhuan war leader Tadun was especially powerful and was thus very well-treated by Yuan Shao.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Wuhuan continued to support the Yuan clan after Yuan Shao's defeat at the Battle of Guandu against Cao Cao, shortly after which Yuan died. Subsequently, Yuan Shao's oldest and youngest son, Yuan Tan and Yuan Shang respectively, fought among themselves in a succession feud, which Cao Cao exploited for himself. Soon Yuan Tan was killed in a battle against Cao Cao and Yuan Shang had to flee to his second brother, Yuan Xi, in You Province. The Yuan brothers in You Province then became attacked in a mutiny against them, and fled further north to seek protection from the Wuhuan. The Wuhuan at this time had been united under the military leadership of Tadun, and his apparent strength prompted rumours that he was seeking to emulate Modu Chanyu of the Xiongnu and Tanshihuai (檀石槐) of the Xianbei in creating a hegemony over the northern nomadic tribes. With the arrival of the Yuan brothers, accompanied by a considerable number of their followers, Tadun had gained command of a combined Wuhuan and Chinese force that was said to have numbered up to 300,000.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the name of helping Yuan Shang regain his territories, the Wuhuan made several raids across the Chinese border. These raids were said to have kidnapped over 100,000 Chinese families. Posed with such danger in the north, Cao Cao contemplated the elimination of the Wuhuan threat.

## Plans and preparations

To prepare for a campaign far to the north of the Chinese heartland, Cao Cao put Dong Zhao in charge of digging two canals, the Pinglu Trench (平虜渠; "Pacify-the-Caitiffs Trench") and the Quanzhou Trench (泉州渠), from the autumn of 206 to spring of 207 so he could use these waterways to ship supplies to the north.<sup>[3]</sup> While these works were under way, some generals tried to dissuade Cao Cao from campaigning so far to the north in case of an attack from the south:

Yuan Shang is an enemy in flight. The barbarians are selfish and have no feeling of affection for him, so why should they support him? If we advance deep into their territory, Liu Bei will certainly persuade Liu Biao to raid [the capital] Xu City. Should they make trouble there, you will have no chance for

second thoughts.<sup>[4]</sup>

However, Cao Cao's strategist Guo Jia urged a swift attack with the following analysis:

- The northern barbarians are deluded by a false sense of security since they are so far away from the Chinese heartlands, thus if Cao Cao takes advantage of their miscalculation and attack them quickly, they can be defeated and destroyed.
- If Cao Cao turns his military prowess to the south before settling the north, the Yuan brothers and the Wuhuan will cause trouble, and the newly settled northern provinces will be lost.
- Liu Biao, the Governor of Jing Province, will not be persuaded by Liu Bei to launch an attack on Xu City, since Liu Biao is a person who does nothing but sit and talk. Liu Biao also does not trust Liu Bei as Liu Bei is a more competent man than he is — if he gives Liu Bei an important post he must be concerned that Liu Bei will become too powerful, but if he gives him a lesser position Liu Bei will be reluctant to serve him.

Cao Cao agreed with Guo Jia's analysis, and in the summer of 207, Cao personally marched his army to Yijing (易京; present-day Yi County, Hebei) and made the city his base camp for the campaign. From there he advanced to Wuzhong (無終; present-day Ji County, Tianjin), where the local leader Tian Chou (田疇) submitted to him.

## The oblique approach

The base of Wuhuan power was located at Liucheng (柳城; in present-day Xingcheng, Liaoning), and the obvious line of attack from Wuzhong was through the plains along the coastline of the Bohai Sea. However, in the seventh lunar month, the monsoon season set in and the heavy rains flooded the low-lying areas and drenched the roads in mud, making the terrain impassible. The Wuhuan also anticipated such an attack route and held the river crossings, and for some time Cao Cao's army could not advance.

Cao Cao turned to Tian Chou, who was familiar with the area and had run-ins with the Wuhuan before, for advice regarding this situation. Tian Chou notified Cao Cao of a disused road that led to the abandoned Former Han frontier lands. From there the army can march through undefended territory and attack the Wuhuan where they least expect it, and by doing so "Tadun's head can be taken without a single battle", Tian Chou said.<sup>[5]</sup> Cao Cao, most pleased, accepted the plan and led his army back (presumably to Wuzhong). He had his men erect signs on the roads by the water, which wrote "It is the middle of summer, and the road is impassable. We are waiting for autumn or winter to resume the advance." Enemy scouts saw the sign and apparently believed that Cao Cao really retreated. As Tian Chou had predicted, the Wuhuan were convinced that any force that could not advance through the plains had to turn back, which was a miscalculation most grave.

Guo Jia had advised that "swiftness is the key in war" (兵貴神速, which became a Chinese idiom), and thus suggested that Cao Cao should leave the baggage behind and make a forced march with light troops to take the enemy by surprise, since carrying too much baggage bogs the army down and alerts the enemy of the army's presence. Cao Cao took the suggestion to heart. With Tian Chou leading the way, Cao Cao led a light force to embark on what has been called one of his most remarkable military adventures of his career.<sup>[6]</sup> They climbed the hills of Xuwu (徐無; west of present-day Zunhua, Hebei), exited the Chinese frontiers through Lulong Pass (盧龍塞; present-day Xifeng Pass 喜峰口) into the upper valley of the Luan River, and marched through difficult terrain for over 500 *li*. Turning east at Pinggang (平岡; near present-day Pingquan County, Hebei), the expedition force crossed the grazing fields of the Xianbei and re-entered the mountain ranges that served as Later Han Dynasty's borders. By now Cao Cao's men had flanked Tadun's defensive positions and was advancing on a line to the sea which would divide the enemy territory into two.

## The battle

By autumn in the eighth lunar month, as Cao Cao's army reached the valley of Daling River (大凌河), Tadun and his allies realized what was happening and hastily withdrew from their prepared positions and gathered to face Cao Cao to the north. With tens of thousands of men gathered, Tadun, along with Yuan Shang, Yuan Xi, and the two Wuhuan chanyu Louban and Wuyan (烏延),<sup>[7]</sup> met Cao Cao's army at White Wolf Mountain (白狼山; near present-day Lingyuan, Liaoning).

The encounter was sudden for both parties. Faced with superior numbers and the baggage left in the rear, Cao Cao's lightly armoured men became afraid. The Wuhuan, on the other hand, were evidently unprepared for battle as they were not in proper formations, nor did they attempt to take the initiative by harassing Cao Cao's march.<sup>[8]</sup> Undaunted, Cao Cao climbed a slope to observe the enemy's formations. He saw that the Wuhuan were unordered, and immediately unleashed his soldiers to exploit this weakness. With general Zhang Liao leading the offensive, the light force swiftly defeated the Wuhuan cavalry, and Cao Chun's brigade captured Tadun.<sup>[9]</sup> Within a short time, Tadun and many of his men were killed and the battle was over. Over 200,000 Chinese settlers and Wuhuan tribesmen surrendered to Cao Cao.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Aftermath

The battle was decisive — in one single engagement, Cao Cao had broken the back of Wuhuan resistance. With a few thousand horses, the Yuan brothers and the surviving Wuhuan leaders, Supuyan (蘇僕延), Louban, Wuyan and others, fled east to Liaodong (遼東; eastern Liaoning), where the warlord Gongsun Kang enjoyed some degree of independence from the Han Dynasty imperial court due to Liaodong's distance from the capital and the chaotic state in China. In the ninth lunar month Cao Cao continued his march into Liucheng, and there he halted, making no intention to attack Liaodong despite the urgings of his subordinates. "I shall arrange that Gongsun Kang cuts off the heads of Yuan Shang and Yuan Xi and sends them to me. No need to bother with soldiers," he said. He later explained that applying pressure to Liaodong may bind Yuan Shang and Gongsun Kang against him, but if he left them to their devices, they would quarrel within.<sup>[11]</sup>

A few days after Yuan Shang and Yuan Xi arrived in Liaodong, Gongsun Kang arranged to see them. Yuan Shang plotted to kill Gongsun Kang and take his territory for the Yuans, but Gongsun Kang struck first, killing the brothers and sending their heads to Cao Cao. The Wuhuan leaders who followed the Yuans were not spared either and were all decapitated.

After this, Cao Cao returned to the North China Plain after a particularly difficult withdrawal from Liucheng, where the coldness of early winter, shortage of food, and drought all took their toll on Cao Cao's men. Guo Jia, whose advice immensely helped Cao Cao's cause, and the former warlord Zhang Xiu were among those who perished during this campaign. Upon his return, Cao Cao rewarded and complimented the counsellors who had advised against the Wuhuan campaign earlier, acknowledging that the venture had been dangerous and risky and he had been blessed by fortune.<sup>[12]</sup> Indeed, Liu Bei had tried to persuade Liu Biao to attack while Cao Cao was away in the north. Even though, as Guo Jia predicted, Liu Biao did not take the opportunity and later regretted this decision.<sup>[13]</sup>

In the eleventh month, at the bank of the Yi River (易水), the Wuhuan leaders Nanlou (難樓) and Pufulu (普富廬), who did not join Tadun's ill-fated resistance, came to Cao Cao and offered their homage and congratulations, formally submitting to him.<sup>[14]</sup> The Wuhuan who had surrendered were brought into China proper en masse, and their horsemen became known as the finest cavalry force in the empire.<sup>[15]</sup> In Cao Cao's remaining years, the Wuhuan would not pose any serious danger to his domain, though there were minor revolts in 216 and 218.

With the death of Tadun and the Yuan brothers, Cao Cao's domination of northern China was now unchallenged. The success in the north brought Cao Cao tremendous prestige as he took the title of Imperial Chancellor in 208, and the secured northern frontiers allowed Cao Cao to focus his military attention against Liu Biao to the south in the same year.<sup>[16]</sup>

On the other hand, the Battle of White Wolf Mountain scattered the Wuhuan tribes, with remnants taking refuge in Manchuria, Goguryeo, and the western borders of Liaodong. As the years went by, these remnant Wuhuan tribes were eventually absorbed by the stronger powers nearby — some were assimilated by the Chinese, but most were incorporated into the Xianbei. The decline that began at the Battle of White Wolf Mountain destroyed the Wuhuan identity and their ability to remain politically independent, and for the most part, the Wuhuan ceased to be viewed as an independent people of the northern frontiers of China.<sup>[17]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 11: J
- [2] de Crespigny (1984), p. 407
- [3] The precise courses of these canals are not known and have been the subject of several conflicting interpretations. See de Crespigny (1984), pp. 552-555, note 100.
- [4] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: B
- [5] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: D
- [6] de Crespigny (1984), p. 410
- [7] *Records of Three Kingdoms* mentions Nengchendizhi (能臣抵之), chanyu of Youbeiping, as among the commanders of the battle. However, the chanyu of Youbeiping at the time was actually Wuyan and Nengchendizhi was a Wuhuan chieftain of the distant Dai Commandery. *Zizhi Tongjian* suggests that Wuyan and Nengchendizhi may be the same person, but it is more probable that the record is in error. See de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: E, note 11.
- [8] de Crespigny (1984), p. 411
- [9] Chen, vol. 9
- [10] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: E
- [11] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: F
- [12] de Crespigny (1984), p. 413
- [13] de Crespigny (1996), Jian'an 12: L
- [14] de Crespigny (1984), p. 412
- [15] de Crespigny (1984), p. 415
- [16] de Crespigny (2007), p. 37
- [17] de Crespigny (1984), p. 416

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# Battle of Jiangxia

Battle of Jiangxia	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	Spring of 208 CE
<b>Location</b>	Jiangxia (present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei)
<b>Result</b>	Sun Quan victory; Huang Zu beheaded
Belligerents	
Sun Quan	Liu Biao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhou Yu Lü Meng Ling Tong	Huang Zu Chen Jiu † Zhang Shuo †
Strength	
25,000	30,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>
Casualties and losses	
	30,000

Battle of Jiangxia	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	江夏之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	江夏之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jiāngxià Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Jiangxia** was a battle fought between the warlords Sun Quan and Liu Biao in 208 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was the last part of a series of military engagements between Sun Quan and Liu Biao's general Huang Zu in the vicinity of Jiangxia Commandery (present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei).

## Background

In the spring of 208, Gan Ning, who defected from Huang Zu to Sun Quan's side, suggested to his new lord to prepare a full assault on Jiangxia. Gan Ning mentioned that Huang Zu was already old, and his right-hand men only knew how to do business and bully lower-ranked officials, and Huang's arsenal had not been replenished for some time.<sup>[2]</sup>

Despite opposition from his chief civil clerk, Zhang Zhao,<sup>[3]</sup> Sun Quan still appointed Ling Tong to lead the vanguard force, Lü Meng to be the naval commandant, and Zhou Yu as Front Commander to regulate the operation. The campaign had two main objectives: elimination of Huang Zu, who was responsible for the death of Sun Quan's father Sun Jian at the Battle of Xiangyang; conquest of Jiangxia, which stood in Sun Quan's path to dominating Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan).

## The battle

### Initial clashes

In response to Sun Quan's aggression, Huang Zu assigned his general Zhang Shuo as the vanguard, and Chen Jiu as the admiral, but he would stay behind the high walls of Jiangxia to avoid conflict in the frontline. Before the battle started, Zhang Shuo led his troop on a large vessel to reconnoitre the riverbank, but was located by Ling Tong, who was also scouting the area. At the time, Ling Tong only had tens of his closest warriors on a light vessel,<sup>[4]</sup> yet he was able to climb Zhang Shuo's vessel probably under the cover of nightfall or the disguise as Zhang's own men, and surprise attacked his enemy. Zhang Shuo was slain by Ling Tong, and his mariners were captured.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Deadlock

Upon hearing the news that Zhang Shuo was killed, Huang Zu immediately ordered Chen Jiu to block the entrance of Miankou River with two of his largest capital ships (*mengchong*) covered with ox-hide at the choke point.<sup>[6]</sup> In addition, Huang had strong men and archers ambushed on top of the cliff next to the river to throw down rocks and fire on large enemy vessels. To bring down Huang Zu's *mengchongs*, Zhou Yu sent out his large vessels, but only to be destroyed by the rocks thrown down from the cliff. After several hours of fighting, Zhou Yu realized Huang Zu's arsenals were not that unchecked, and that Sun Quan's men were exhausted and dealt with casualties by the heavy cross fire from the elite crossbows on the *mengchongs*.

### Fall of the great capital ships

To change the tide of battle, Zhou Yu had Ling Tong and Dong Xi, along with 100 "die-hard" soldiers, donned two suits of armour each and charged towards the enemy despite the rain of rocks from the cliff and heavy fire from the *mengchongs*.<sup>[7]</sup> Through fierce fighting, Ling and Dong finally succeeded in breaking the connections between the two vessels, and the downfall of the *mengchongs* aspired the fighting spirit of Sun Quan's forces. Lü Meng even engaged in melee combat, and had Chen Jiu killed in a duel.<sup>[8]</sup> With the admiral gone, Huang Zu's massive navy was annihilated by Sun Quan's smaller forces. Before the time Lü Meng could eliminate Huang's navy, Ling Tong had led a separate command to attack Jiangxia, and took over the city.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Doom of Huang Zu

Unable to resist Sun Quan's forces, Huang Zu fled the city, but was caught up and killed by a horseman named Feng Ze.<sup>[10]</sup> His head was specifically requested by Sun Quan to be placed inside a container for examination. After receiving Huang Zu's head, Sun Quan presented it as a sacrifice at his late father Sun Jian's temple.

## Aftermath

### Conflict between Ling Tong and Gan Ning

With Huang Zu killed, Sun Quan had taken his revenge; however, Ling Tong's father, Ling Cao, was killed by an arrow fired by Gan Ning during the previous Battle of Xiakou, and had not be avenged. Thus, Ling Tong would attempt to provoke Gan Ning during a banquet held in Lü Meng's house some time later. In the end, Sun Quan settled this conflict through political maneuver, as he "exiled" Gan Ning to station at Half Island, hence Ling Tong would perceive as justice done.



## Abandonment of Jiangxia

Liu Biao's son Liu Qi wanted to succeed Huang Zu's position, and went east after Sun Quan took away the captives.<sup>[11]</sup> However, Liu Qi was not allowed the time to solidify his control over Jiangxia because northern Jing Province had been incorporated into Cao Cao's domain without much resistance after his father died of illness. Therefore, Liu Qi stationed his troop at Han Ford, where he met Liu Bei, who was escaping from Cao Cao's pursuit, they then joined forces and went to Xiakou to ask help from Sun Quan.<sup>[12]</sup> As Jiangxia was famous for being the cradle of the Huang clan, Sun Quan gave up the idea to hold the city after he received news that Cao Cao had acquired northern Jing Province. Liu Biao's general Wen Ping, who defected to Cao Cao after Liu's death, became the new governor of Jiangxia.


## Notes

- [1] There were several tens of thousands of captives after the war, but the exact size of Huang Zu's army remains unknown.
- [2] (祖今年老，昏耄已甚，財谷並乏，左右欺弄，務於貨利，侵求吏士，吏士心怨。舟船戰具，頓廢不修，怠於耕農，軍無法伍。至尊今往，其破可必。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [3] (張昭時在坐，難曰：“吳下業業，若軍果行，恐必致亂。”) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding. Zhang Zhao argued that Sun Quan's territories in the Wu region were unstable and rebellions might break out if the army was away.
- [4] (统为前锋，与所厚健儿数十人共乘一船，常去大兵数十里。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [5] (行入右江，斬黃祖將張碩，盡獲船人。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [6] (祖橫兩蒙冲挾守沔口，以楫闕大纆系石为碇，上有千人，以弩交射，飞矢雨下，军不得前。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [7] (襲與淩統俱為前部，各將敢死百人，人被兩鎧，乘大舸船，突入蒙冲裡。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [8] (蒙勒前鋒，親梟就首) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [9] (时吕蒙败其水军，而统先搏其城，於是大获。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biographies of Cheng, Huang, Han, Jiang, Zhou, Chen, Dong, Gan, Ling, Xu, Pan, and Ding.
- [10] (祖挺身亡走，骑士冯则追梟其首) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [11] (...黃祖為孫權所殺，琦遂求代其任。) Fan Ye. *Book of the Later Han*, Volume 74.
- [12] (先主斜趨漢津，適與羽船會，得濟沔，遇表長子江夏太守琦眾萬餘人，與俱到夏口。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.

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# Red Cliffs Campaign - Battle of Changban

Battle of Changban	
Part of the Red Cliffs campaign	
	
The painting "Zhao Yun's Fight at Changban" inside the Long Corridor on the grounds of the Summer Palace in Beijing	
<b>Date</b>	October 208 CE
<b>Location</b>	Changban, Dangyang, Jing Province (south of present-day Duodao District, Jingmen, Hubei)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory Liu Bei evacuated to Xiakou
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Liu Bei
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	Liu Bei
Strength	
5,000 elite cavalry advance guard	2,000-10,000 infantry 100,000 mostly unarmed civilians

Battle of Changban	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	长坂之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	長坂之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Chángbǎn Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Changban** was a battle fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Liu Bei in 208 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle took place at Changban (south of present-day Duodao District, Jingmen, Hubei).<sup>[1]</sup>

## Background

After Cao Cao unified northern China in 207, he made arrangements for a southern campaign on Jing Province (荊州; covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), governed by Liu Biao at the time. Initial minor invasions led by Xiahou Dun were repelled by Liu Biao's vassal Liu Bei, whose forces were stationed at Xinye at the northern border of Jing Province. Following that, Cao Cao personally led his armies south to attack Jing province in the seventh lunar month of 208.

In the eighth month, when Cao Cao's forces had reached Wancheng (present-day Nanyang, Henan), Liu Biao died of illness and was succeeded by his younger son, Liu Cong. Liu Cong's advisers Kuai Yue and Fu Xun (傅巽) convinced Liu Cong that he could not resist Cao Cao even with Liu Bei's help, so Liu Cong agreed to surrender. Liu Bei, who was at Fancheng at the time, was not informed of Liu Cong's decision to surrender. When Liu Bei became suspicious, he sent an attendant to Xiangyang to question Liu Cong, and only then would Liu Cong pass the news to Liu Bei through his subordinate official Song Zhong (宋忠). Dismayed, Liu Bei drew his sword on Song Zhong, but did not kill him. Surrender was not an option to Liu Bei, since he had been involved in an assassination plot to remove Cao Cao when Liu was in the service of Cao roughly ten years ago and it was unlikely that Cao would forgive him.

Liu Bei then called for a council of his advisors. Zhuge Liang suggested that Liu Bei should attack Liu Cong to secure Jing Province and defend against Cao Cao there, but Liu Bei rejected this and said, "as Liu Jingzhou (Liu Biao) was dying, he entrusted his orphans to me. I cannot turn from this obligation and seek my own advantage. How am I to face Liu Jingzhou after I die?". Not willing to fall under the hands of Cao Cao, Liu Bei gathered his men and marched to the south. As he passed Xiangyang he called out to Liu Cong, but Liu Cong dared not see him and hid. Many officials and civilians of Xiangyang followed Liu Bei as he left, as he was greatly respected by the people.

In the ninth month, Liu Cong set out from Xiangyang towards Xinye to receive Cao Cao, surrendering Jing Province. Cao Cao took over the command of Jing Province's military, especially its naval fleet, a component which Cao Cao's forces lacked. Fearing that Liu Bei would take the southern base of Jiangling, Cao Cao swiftly gave chase to Liu Bei with 5,000 elite horsemen, leaving his baggage behind. As Liu Bei was bringing along more than 100,000 unarmed people and thousands of carts of luggage, his force could not move very quickly. Someone suggested to Liu Bei that he should abandon the people for his safety, but Liu Bei did not have the heart to desert them when the people risked their own lives to follow him. Instead, Liu Bei had Guan Yu sail ahead down the Han River with a detachment of several hundred ships and take a roundabout route to Jiangling, where they planned to rendezvous.

## The battle

Cao Cao's cavalry caught up to Liu Bei's congregation at Changban, Dangyang Commandery, and Liu Bei had to flee for his life, galloping away south with Zhang Fei, Zhao Yun and Zhuge Liang, while leaving his family and the populace behind. Cao Cao's forces captured all his army and his baggage. Xu Shu, a friend of Zhuge Liang who was also serving Liu Bei at the time, requested leave from Liu and left to serve Cao Cao after learning that his mother was captured by Cao's men. Liu Bei's two daughters were also captured by Cao Chun in the battle.

Zhang Fei commanded 20 horsemen as rearguard. He held the river and broke the bridges down; looking fierce and shaking his lance, he shouted, "I am Zhang Yide.

Come and battle me to the death!" None of Cao Cao's men dared to go near him, buying time for Liu Bei to escape.

As Zhang Fei retreated with Liu Bei, Cao Cao ordered his men to build pontoon bridges and launch an assault, but a timely arrival of Guan Yu and his forces prevented Cao Cao from fully attaining victory.

In the chaos, Zhao Yun disappeared to the north, prompting suspicion that he had surrendered to Cao Cao. When someone reported that to Liu Bei, Liu angrily threw a handaxe and said "Zilong (Zhao Yun) would never desert me." Surely enough, Zhao Yun came back with Liu Bei's infant son Liu Shan in his arms along with Lady Gan. With this, Zhao Yun was promoted to General of the Standard (牙門將軍).

Turning east from Changban, Liu Bei and the remnants of his party had crossed the Han River to the east where Liu Qi, Liu Biao's elder son, still held control of Jiangxia Commandery (present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei). They met Guan Yu's fleet and over 10,000 men led by Liu Qi in Hanjin (漢津). Together, they sailed down the river to Xiakou.

Cao Cao did not follow up in immediate pursuit. The main objective of his drive to the south had been the base at Jiangling, and he pressed on south to secure that base first.

## Aftermath

After the Battle of Changban, the land of Jing Province west of the Han River became territories of Cao Cao. Cao Cao entered Jiangling and pacified the officials and peasants there. Cao Cao's advisor Jia Xu suggested that Cao should make full use of the resources in Jing Province to settle his troops before further territorial expansions, but Cao Cao preferred to use the momentum from his victories to attack Jiandong next.

Lu Su, a statesman under the Jiandong warlord Sun Quan, was originally on a mission to offer condolences for Liu Biao's death. By the time he reached Jing Province, however, Liu Cong had already surrendered and Liu Bei had fled south. Lu Su went to see Liu Bei at Changban and, after Liu's defeat, followed him to Xiakou. There he asked where Liu Bei was heading after, and Liu replied that he plans to take refuge under Wu Ju (吳巨), an old friend, in the distant Cangwu Commandery (蒼梧; eastern portion of present-day Guangxi). To this, Lu Su dissuaded Liu Bei from joining Wu Ju, saying Wu was only an ordinary fellow who would not be independent for long; and persuaded Liu Bei to form an alliance with his lord Sun Quan against Cao Cao. Liu Bei was pleased at this suggestion, and sent



Zhuge Liang to follow Lu Su back to meet Sun Quan and secure the alliance.

The successful formation of the Sun-Liu alliance led to the Battle of Red Cliffs shortly after in the same year, where the allied forces defeated Cao Cao's overwhelming fleets, driving him back north and forming the basis of the Three Kingdoms.

## In fiction

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the battle was romanticised into a showcase of the power and bravery of Zhang Fei and Zhao Yun.

Liu Bei's wife Lady Mi and infant son A'dou (Liu Shan) were isolated from the rest during an attack by Cao Cao's 5,000 horsemen. Zhao Yun braved danger by fighting his way through enemy lines in search of Lady Mi and A'dou. He encountered the enemy general Xiahou En, defeated him and took Cao Cao's prized Qinggang Sword from him. When Zhao Yun finally found Lady Mi and A'dou beside a well, he urged them to mount his horse quickly, but Lady Mi refused as she did not want to be a burden to Zhao Yun. She entrusted A'dou to Zhao Yun and committed suicide by throwing herself into the well. Zhao Yun then strapped A'dou to his body and fought his way out against overwhelming numbers of enemy forces, bringing A'dou safely back to Liu Bei.

Cao Cao's forces pursued Zhao Yun until they arrived at Changban Bridge, where Zhang Fei stood guard alone. Zhang Fei bellowed a challenge at the enemy and shocked Xiahou Jie to death. Cao Cao's soldiers also observed that the woods behind Zhang Fei were clouded in dust and believed that there was an ambush, so they retreated without a fight and Zhang Fei had the bridge destroyed and withdrew as well. Zhang Fei had earlier ordered his men to tie tree branches to the tails of their horses and ride around in the woods, churning up dust to create an illusion of an ambush.

By then, Zhao Yun had returned with A'dou to Liu Bei's side safely. When he presented A'dou to his lord, Liu Bei threw his infant son to the ground and exclaimed that his son had nearly cost him one of his best warriors. Zhao Yun caught A'dou in time and reaffirmed his allegiance to Liu Bei, pledging to serve his lord with his life and yet he did serving him till A'dou became the new ruler of shu.

## Historicity

Zhao Yun's biography in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* briefly stated that during the Battle of Changban, after Liu Bei abandoned his family and fled, Zhao protected A'dou (carrying A'dou close to him) and Lady Gan and escorted them to safety.<sup>[2]</sup> Both Lady Gan and Lady Mi also survived the battle. Zhang Fei's biography in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* also briefly mentioned that Zhang remained behind with 20 horsemen to block Cao Cao's pursuing forces. The bridge was already destroyed when Zhang Fei bellowed a challenge, similar in tone to the one in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, but without the highly exaggerated effect on the enemy. Cao Cao's men did not dare to come near and Zhang Fei was safe.<sup>[3]</sup> Xiahou En and Xiahou Jie were not mentioned in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* at all.

## Modern references

The Battle of Changban is the highlight of Zhao Yun's and Zhang Fei's story mode in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*.

The battle is also featured in John Woo's 2008 film *Red Cliff*.

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# Red Cliffs Campaign - Battle of Red Cliffs: order of battle

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The following is the **order of battle** for the Battle of Red Cliffs.

## Cao Cao forces

- Chancellor (丞相) **Cao Cao**<sup>[1]</sup>
  - (Acting) General Who Attacks the South (行征南將軍) **Cao Ren**<sup>[2]</sup>
  - Commandant-Protector of the Army (都督護軍) **Zhao Yan** (趙儼), oversaw the units commanded by the following seven officers:<sup>[3]</sup>
    - General of Tiger's Might (虎威將軍) **Yu Jin**<sup>[4]</sup>
    - General Who Rocks Bandits (盪寇將軍) **Zhang Liao**<sup>[5]</sup>
    - General Who Pacifies the Di (平狄將軍) **Zhang He**<sup>[6]</sup>
    - General Who Defeats Barbarians (破虜將軍) **Li Dian**<sup>[7]</sup>
    - **Zhu Ling**
    - **Lu Zhao** (路招)
    - **Feng Kai** (馮楷)
  - General Who Sweeps Across the Wilderness (橫野將軍) **Xu Huang**<sup>[8]</sup>
  - General Who Inspires Martial Might (奮武將軍) **Cheng Yu**<sup>[9]</sup>
  - Palace Counsellor (太中大夫) **Jia Xu**<sup>[10]</sup>
  - Administrator of Runan (汝南太守) **Man Chong**<sup>[11]</sup>
-

Total strength of combined land and naval forces:  $\approx 800,000$  (according to Cao Cao's claim);<sup>[12]</sup>  $\approx 220,000\text{--}240,000$  (according to Zhou Yu's estimations)<sup>[13]</sup>

## Sun Quan forces

- General Who Attacks Barbarians (討虜將軍) **Sun Quan**<sup>[14]</sup>
- Central Protector of the Army (中護軍) **Zhou Yu**, served as the Left Commander (左都督).<sup>[15][16]</sup>
- General of the Household Who Rocks Bandits (盪寇中郎將) **Cheng Pu**, served as the Right Commander (右都督).
- Colonel Who Praises the Army (贊軍校尉) **Lu Su**<sup>[17]</sup>
- General of the Household Who Attacks Barbarians (征虜中郎將) **Lü Fan**<sup>[18]</sup>
- General of the Household Who Sweeps Across the Wilderness (橫野中郎將) **Lü Meng**<sup>[19]</sup>
- General of the Household (中郎將) **Han Dang**<sup>[20]</sup>
- Commandant of Danyang (丹陽都尉) **Huang Gai**<sup>[21]</sup>
- Commandant of Vehemence (承烈都尉) **Ling Tong**<sup>[22]</sup>
- Chief of Yichun (宜春長) **Zhou Tai**<sup>[23]</sup>
- **Gan Ning**<sup>[24]</sup>

Total strength of combined land and naval forces:  $\approx 30,000$ <sup>[25]</sup>

## Liu Bei forces

- General of the Left (左將軍) **Liu Bei**<sup>[26][1]</sup>
- Lieutenant-General (偏將軍) **Guan Yu**<sup>[27]</sup>
- General of the Household (中郎將) **Zhang Fei**<sup>[28]</sup>
- **Zhuge Liang**<sup>[1]</sup>
- Administrator of Jiangxia (江夏太守) **Liu Qi**<sup>[29]</sup>

Total strength of combined land and naval forces:  $\approx 20,000$


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# Red Cliffs Campaign - Battle of Red Cliffs

Battle of Red Cliffs	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
Engravings on a cliff-side mark one widely accepted site of Chibi, near present-day Chibi City, Hubei. The engravings are at least a thousand years old.	
<b>Date</b>	Winter of 208 CE (Northern Hemisphere)
<b>Location</b>	Close to the Yangtze River, China. Precise location is debated. Referred to as Chibi (Red Cliffs), on the southern bank of the Yangtze.
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Sun Quan and Liu Bei victory
<b>Territorial changes</b>	Cao Cao fails to conquer lands south of the Yangtze River
Belligerents	
Sun Quan, Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhou Yu, Cheng Pu, Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Strength	
50,000	800,000 (Cao Cao's claim) to 220,000–240,000+ (Zhou Yu's estimate of Cao's core force)
Casualties and losses	
Unknown	Unknown, though described as significant

Battle of Red Cliffs	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	赤壁之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	赤壁之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Chìbì Zhī Zhàn
<b>Min</b>	
<b>Hokkien POJ</b>	Chhek-pek-chi-chiàn
<b>Cantonese</b>	
<b>Jyutping</b>	cek3 bik1 zi1 zin3

The **Battle of Red Cliffs**, otherwise known as the **Battle of Chibi**, was a decisive battle fought at the end of the Han Dynasty, about 12 years prior to the beginning of the Three Kingdoms period in Chinese history. It was fought in the winter of 208/9 AD<sup>[1]</sup> between the allied forces of the southern warlords Liu Bei and Sun Quan and the numerically superior forces of the northern warlord Cao Cao. Liu Bei and Sun Quan successfully frustrated Cao Cao's effort to conquer the land south of the Yangtze River and reunite the territory of the Eastern Han Dynasty. The allied victory at Red Cliffs ensured the survival of Liu Bei and Sun Quan, gave them control of the Yangtze (de Crespigny 1990:273), and provided a line of defence that was the basis for the later creation of the two southern states of Shu Han and Eastern Wu.

Descriptions of the battle differ widely on details, and the location of the battle is fiercely debated (de Crespigny 1990:256 78*n*). Although its precise location remains uncertain, the majority of academic conjectures place it on the south bank of the Yangtze River, southwest of present-day Wuhan and northeast of Baqiu (present-day Yueyang, Hunan). The most detailed account of the battle comes from the biography of Zhou Yu in the 3rd century historical text *Records of the Three Kingdoms* by Chen Shou. An exaggerated and romanticised account is also a central event in Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature.

## Background

By the early 3rd century, the Han Dynasty, which had ruled China for almost four centuries (albeit with a 16-year interruption, dividing the dynasty into its Western and Eastern periods), was crumbling. Emperor Xian had been a political figurehead since 189, with no control over the actions of the various warlords controlling their respective territories. One of the most powerful warlords in China was Cao Cao, who, by 207, had unified northern China and retained total control of the North China Plain. He then completed a successful campaign against the Wuhuan in the winter of the same year, thus securing his northern frontier. Upon his return in 208, he was appointed Chancellor, a position that granted him absolute authority over the entire imperial government (de Crespigny 1969:253, 465 6*n*). Shortly afterwards, in the autumn of 208, his army began a southern campaign (Eikenberry 1994; de Crespigny 2003).

The Yangtze River in the area of Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan provinces) was key to the success of this strategy. If Cao Cao was to have any hope of reuniting the sundered Han empire, he had to achieve naval control of the middle Yangtze and command the strategic naval base at Jiangling as a means of access to the southern region (de Crespigny 2003). Two warlords controlled the regions of the Yangtze that were key to Cao Cao's success: Liu Biao, the Governor of Jing Province, controlled the area west of the mouth of the Han River, roughly encompassing the area around the city of Xiakou and all territory south of that region. Sun Quan controlled the river east of the Han and the southeastern territories abutting it (de Crespigny 2007:773). A third ally, Liu Bei, was living

in refuge with Liu Biao at the garrison in Fancheng (in present-day Xiangyang), having fled from the northeast to Jing Province following a failed plot to assassinate Cao Cao and restore power to the imperial dynasty (de Crespigny 2007:480; de Crespigny 1969:258).

The initial stages of the campaign were an unqualified success for Cao Cao, as the command of Jing Province had been substantially weakened and the Jing armies exhausted by conflict with Sun Quan to the south (de Crespigny 2007:486). Factions had arisen supporting either of Liu Biao's two sons in a struggle for succession. The younger son prevailed, and Liu Biao's dispossessed eldest son, Liu Qi, departed to assume a commandery in Jiangxia (present-day Yunmeng County, Hubei) (de Crespigny 1990:241). Liu Biao died of illness only a few weeks later, while Cao Cao was advancing from the north and, under these circumstances, Liu Biao's younger son and successor, Liu Cong, quickly surrendered. Cao Cao thus captured a sizeable fleet and secured the naval base at Jiangling. This provided him with a key strategic military depot and forward base to harbour his ships (de Crespigny 1990:246,250,255).

When Jing Province fell, Liu Bei quickly fled south, accompanied by a refugee population of civilians and soldiers. This disorganised exodus was pursued by Cao Cao's elite cavalry, and was surrounded and decisively beaten at the Battle of Changban (near present-day Dangyang, Hubei). Liu Bei escaped, however, and fled further east to Xiakou, where he liaised with Sun Quan's emissary Lu Su. At this point historical accounts are inconsistent; Lu Su may have successfully encouraged Liu Bei to move even further east, to Fankou (樊口; around present-day Ezhou, Hubei).<sup>[2]</sup> In either case, Liu Bei was later joined by Liu Qi and levies from Jiangxia (de Crespigny 1990:255). Liu Bei's main advisor, Zhuge Liang, was sent to Chaisang (柴桑; in present-day Jiujiang, Jiangxi) to negotiate forming a mutual front against Cao Cao with Sun Quan (de Crespigny 1969:263).

By the time Zhuge Liang arrived, Cao Cao had already sent Sun Quan a letter boasting of commanding 800,000 men and hinting that he wanted Sun to surrender.<sup>[3]</sup> The faction led by Sun Quan's Chief Clerk, Zhang Zhao, advocated surrender, citing Cao Cao's overwhelming numerical advantage. However, on separate occasions, Lu Su, Zhuge Liang, and Sun Quan's chief commander, Zhou Yu, all presented arguments to persuade Sun Quan to agree to the alliance against the northerners. Sun Quan finally decided upon war, chopping off a corner of his desk during an assembly and stating: "Anyone who still dares argue for surrender will be [treated] the same as this desk."<sup>[4]</sup> He then assigned Zhou Yu, Cheng Pu, and Lu Su with 30,000 men to aid Liu Bei against Cao Cao (de Crespigny 1996).

Although Cao Cao had boasted command of 800,000 men, Zhou Yu estimated Cao Cao's actual troop strength to be closer to 220,000. Furthermore, this total included 70,000 impressed troops from the armies of the recently deceased Liu Biao, so the loyalty and morale of a large number of Cao Cao's force was uncertain (Eikenberry 1994:60). With the 20,000 soldiers that Liu Bei had gathered, the alliance consisted of approximately 50,000 marines who were trained and prepared for battle (de Crespigny 1990:252;255).

## Battle

The Battle of Red Cliffs unfolded in three stages: an initial skirmish at Red Cliffs followed by a retreat to the Wulin (烏林) battlefields on the northwestern bank of the Yangtze, a decisive naval engagement, and Cao Cao's disastrous retreat along Huarong Road.

The combined Sun-Liu force sailed upstream from either Xiakou or Fankou to Red Cliffs, where they encountered Cao Cao's vanguard force. Plagued by disease and low morale due to the series of forced marches they had undertaken on the prolonged southern campaign (de Crespigny 2003), Cao Cao's men could not gain an advantage in the small skirmish

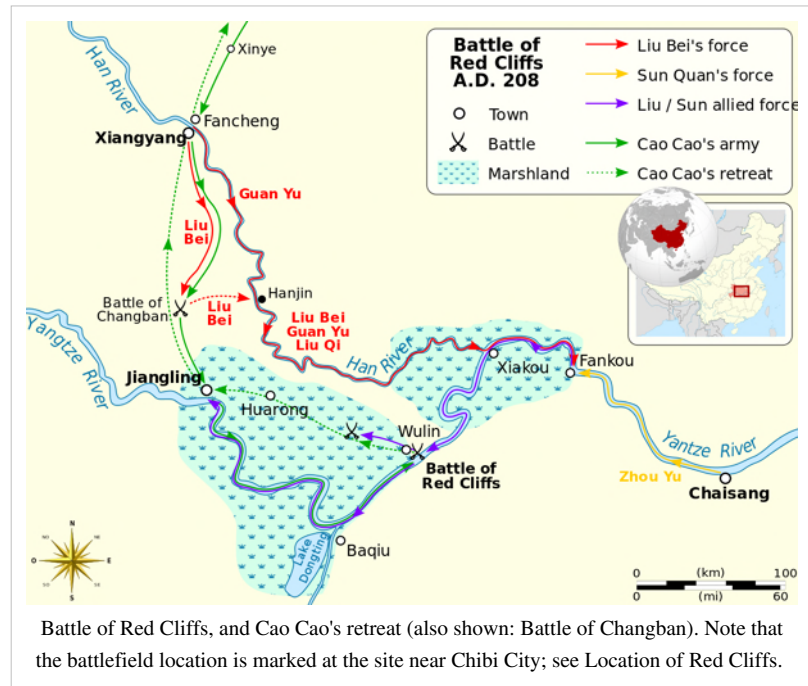
which ensued, so Cao Cao retreated to Wulin (north of the Yangtze River) and the allies pulled back to the south (de Crespigny 1990:257).

Cao Cao had chained his ships from stem to stern, possibly aiming to reduce seasickness in his navy, which comprised mostly northerners who were not used to living on ships. Observing this, divisional commander Huang Gai sent Cao Cao a letter feigning surrender and prepared a squadron<sup>[5]</sup> of capital ships described as *mengchong doujian* (蒙衝鬥艦).<sup>[6]</sup> The ships had been converted into fire ships by filling them with bundles of kindling, dry reeds, and fatty oil. As Huang Gai's "defecting" squadron approached the midpoint of the river, the sailors applied fire to the ships before taking to small boats. The unmanned fire ships, carried by the southeastern wind, sped towards Cao Cao's fleet and set it ablaze. Within a short time smoke and flames stretched across the sky, and a large number of men and horses either burned to death or drowned (Chen c. 280:54.1262–63).

Following the initial shock, Zhou Yu and the allies led a lightly armed force to capitalise on the assault. The northern army was thrown into confusion and was utterly defeated. Seeing the situation was hopeless, Cao Cao then issued a general order of retreat and destroyed a number of his remaining ships before withdrawing (Chen c. 280).

Cao Cao's army attempted a retreat along Huarong Road, including a long stretch passing through marshlands north of Dongting Lake. Heavy rains had reduced the track to a thick mire, making the road so treacherous that many of the sick soldiers had to carry bundles of grass on their backs and use them to fill the road, to allow the horsemen to cross. Many of these soldiers drowned in the mud or were trampled to death in the effort. To the misery of Cao Cao's army, the allies, led by Zhou Yu and Liu Bei, gave chase over land and water until they reached Nan Commandery (南郡; present-day Jiangling County, Jingzhou, Hubei); combined with famine and disease, this decimated Cao Cao's remaining forces. Cao Cao then retreated north to his home base of Ye (in present-day Handan, Hebei), leaving Cao Ren and Xu Huang to guard Jiangling, Yue Jin stationed in Xiayang, and Man Chong in Dangyang (Chen c. 280).

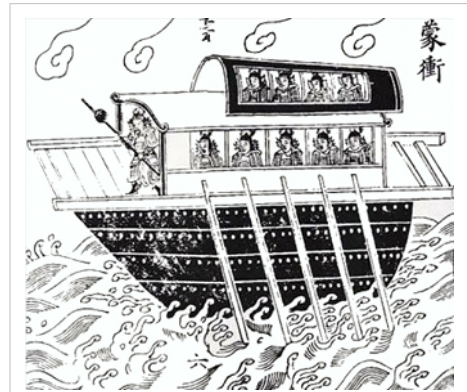
The allied counterattack might have vanquished Cao Cao and his forces entirely. However, the crossing of the Yangtze River dissolved into chaos as the allied armies converged on the riverbank and fought over the limited number of ferries. To restore order, a detachment led by Sun Quan's general Gan Ning established a bridgehead in Yiling to the north, and only a staunch rearguard action by Cao Ren prevented further catastrophe (Eikenberry



1994:60; de Crespigny 2007:239).

## Analysis

A combination of Cao Cao's strategic errors and the effectiveness of Huang Gai's ruse had resulted in the allied victory at the Battle of Red Cliffs. Zhou Yu had previously observed that Cao Cao's generals and soldiers comprised mostly cavalry and infantry, and few had any experience in naval warfare. Cao Cao also had little support among the people of Jing Province, and thus lacked a secure forward base of operations (Eikenberry 1994:60). Despite the strategic acumen Cao Cao had displayed in earlier campaigns and battles, in this case he had simply assumed that numerical superiority would eventually defeat the Sun and Liu navy. Cao's first tactical mistake was converting his massive army of infantry and cavalry into a marine corps and navy: with only a few days of drills before the battle, Cao Cao's troops were ravaged by sea-sickness and lack of experience on water. Tropical diseases, to which the southerners had long been immune, also plagued the soldiers of the north with the debilitating effects of sickness rampant in Cao Cao's camps. Although numerous, Cao Cao's men were already exhausted by the unfamiliar environment and the extended southern campaign, as Zhuge Liang observed: "Even a powerful arrow at the end of its flight cannot penetrate a silk cloth" (Military Documents 1979:193).



One type of ship used in the battle - the *mengchong* (蒙衝): leather-covered assault warship designed to break enemy lines.

The uncharacteristically poor preparation and miscalculations displayed by Cao Cao during this campaign may have been partly due to the recent death of his strategist and advisor Guo Jia. Cao Cao himself had commented: "Had Guo Jia been with us, I would never have got into such trouble" (Chen c. 280:14:433). Another key advisor, Jia Xu, had recommended after the surrender of Liu Cong that the overtaxed armies be given time to rest and replenish before engaging the armies of Sun Quan and Liu Bei, but Cao Cao disregarded the advice (Eikenberry 1994:60). Cao Cao's own thoughts regarding his failure at Red Cliffs suggest that he held his own actions and misfortunes responsible for the defeat, rather than the strategies utilised by his enemy during the battle: "... it was only because of the sickness that I burnt my ships and retreated. It is out of all reason for Zhou Yu to take the credit for himself." (Chen c. 280:54:1265).

## Aftermath



Han-era painted ceramic statues of a Chinese cavalryman and ten infantrymen with armor, shields, and missing weapons

By the end of 209, the post Cao Cao had established at Jiangling fell to Zhou Yu. The borders of the land under Cao Cao's control contracted about 160 kilometres (99 mi), to the area around Xiangyang (de Crespigny 1990:291). Liu Bei, on the other hand, had gained territory by taking over the four commanderies (Wuling, Changsha, Lingling and Guiyang) south of the Yangtze River. Sun Quan's troops had suffered far greater casualties than Liu Bei's in the extended conflict against Cao Ren following the Battle of Red Cliffs (de Crespigny 1990:291–292), and the death of Zhou Yu in 210 resulted in a drastic weakening of Sun Quan's strength in Jing Province (de Crespigny 1990:297). Liu Bei also occupied Jing Province that Cao Cao had

recently lost — a strategic and naturally fortified area on the Yangtze River that Sun Quan claimed for himself. The control of Jing Province provided Liu Bei with virtually unlimited access to the passage into Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) and important waterways into Wu (southeastern China), as well as dominion of the southern Yangtze River.

Never again would Cao Cao command so large a fleet as he had at Jiangling, nor would a similar opportunity to destroy his southern rivals present itself again (de Crespigny 2007:37). The Battle of Red Cliffs and the capture of Jing Province by Liu Bei confirmed the separation of southern China from the northern heartland of the Yellow River valley, and also foreshadowed a north-south axis of hostility which would resonate for centuries (de Crespigny 1990:260).

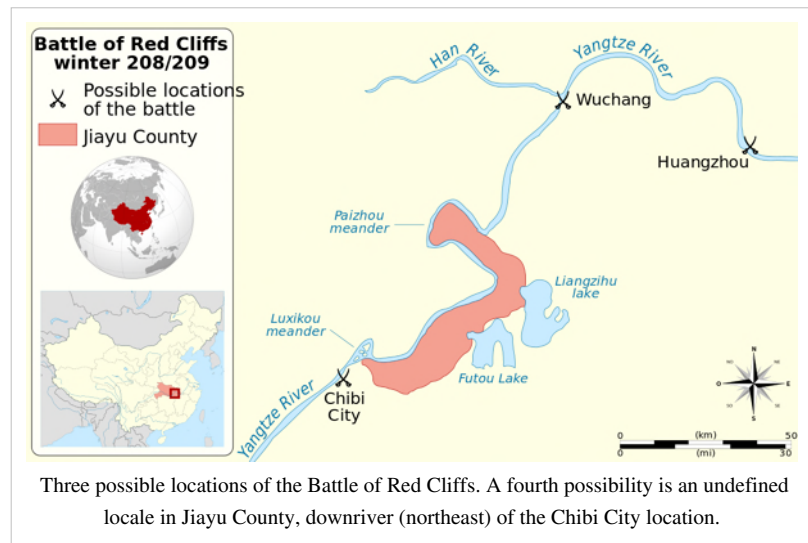
## Location

The precise location of the Red Cliffs battlefield has long been the subject of both popular and academic debates, but has never been conclusively established.<sup>[7]</sup> Scholarly debates have continued for at least 1,350 years (Zhang 2006:215), and a number of arguments in favour of alternative sites have been put forward. There are clear grounds for rejecting at least some of these proposals, but four alternative locations are still advocated. According to Zhang (2006), many of the current debates stem from the fact that the course and length of the

Yangtze River between Wuli and Wuhan has changed since the Sui and Tang dynasties (Zhang 2006:225). The modern-day debate is also complicated by the fact that the names of some of the key locations have changed over the following centuries. For example, although modern Huarong city is located in Hunan, south of the Yangtze, in the 3rd century the city of that name was due east of Jiangling, considerably north of the Yangtze (Zhang 2006:229; de Crespigny 1990:256–78*n*). Moreover, one candidate site, Puqi (蒲圻), was renamed "Chibi City" (赤壁市) in 1998 in a direct attempt to tie this location to the historical battlefield.<sup>[8]</sup>

Historical records state that Cao Cao's forces retreated north across the Yangtze after the initial engagement at Red Cliffs, unequivocally placing the battle site on the south bank of the Yangtze. For this reason, a number of sites on the north bank have been discounted by historians and geographers. Historical accounts also establish east and west boundaries for a stretch of the Yangtze which encompasses all possible sites for the battlefield. The allied forces travelled upstream from either Fankou or Xiakou. Since the Yangtze flows roughly eastward towards the ocean (with northeast and southeast meanders), Red Cliffs must at least be west of Fankou, which is farther downstream. The westernmost boundary is also clear, since Cao Cao's eastern advance from Jiangling included passing Baqui (present-day Yueyang, Hunan) on the shore of Dongting Lake. The battle must also have been downstream (northeast) of that location (de Crespigny 1990:256–257; Zhang 2006:217).

One popular candidate for the battle site is Chibi Hill in Huangzhou, sometimes referred to as "Su Dongpo's Red Cliffs" or the "Literary Red Cliffs" (文赤壁). Support for this conjecture arises largely due to the famous 11th-century poem "First Rhapsody on the Red Cliffs", which equates the Huangzhou Hill with the battlefield location. Excluding tone marks, the pinyin romanization of this cliff's name is "Chibi", the same as the pinyin for





Red Cliffs. However, the Chinese characters are completely different (赤鼻) as is their meaning ("Red Nose Hill"). This site is also on the north bank of the Yangtze, and is directly across from Fankou rather than upstream from it (Zhang 2006:215). Moreover, if the allied Sun-Liu forces left from Xiakou rather than Fankou, as the oldest historical sources suggest, then the hill in Huangzhou would have been *downstream* from the point of departure, a possibility which cannot be reconciled with historical sources.

Puqi, now named Chibi City, is perhaps the most widely accepted candidate. To differentiate from Su Dongpo's Red Cliffs, the site is also referred to as the "Military Red Cliffs" (武赤壁). It is directly across the Yangtze from Wulin. This argument was first proposed in the early Tang Dynasty (Zhang 2006:217). There are also characters engraved in the cliffs (see image at the top of this page) suggesting that this is the site of the battle. The origin of the engraving can be dated to between the Tang and Song dynasties, making it at least 1,000 years old (Zhang 2006:219;228).

Some sources mention the south banks of the Yangtze in Jiayu County (嘉鱼县) in the prefecture-level city of Xianning in Hubei province as a possible location. This would place the battlefield downstream from Puqi (Chibi City), a view that is supported by scholars of Chinese history such as Rafe de Crespigny, Wang Li and Zhu Dongrun, following the Qing Dynasty historical document *Shui Jing Zhu* (de Crespigny 1990:256).

Another candidate is Wuhan, which straddles the Yangtze at the confluence of the Yangtze and Han rivers. It is east of both Wulin (and Chibi City across the river) and Jiayu. This metropolis was incorporated by joining three cities. There is a local belief in Wuhan that the battle was fought at the junction of the rivers, southwest of the former Wuchang city, which is now part of Wuhan (de Crespigny 1990:256 *n* 78). Zhang (2006:215;223) asserts that the Chibi battlefield was one of a set of hills in Wuchang that were levelled in the 1930s so that their stone could be used as raw material.<sup>[9]</sup> Citing several historical-geographical studies, Zhang (2006) shows that earlier accounts place the battlefield in Wuchang. Sheng Honzhi's 5th-century *Jingzhou ji* in particular places the Chibi battlefield a distance of 160 li (approximately 80 kilometres (50 mi)) downstream from Wulin, but since the Paizhou and Luxikou meanders increased the length of the Yangtze River between Wuli and Wuchang by 100 li (approximately 50 kilometres (31 mi)); *see map*) some time in the Sui and Tang dynasties (Zhang 2006:225), later works do not regard Wuchang as a possible site.

## Fictionalised account

The romantic tradition that originated with Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* differs from historical accounts in many details. For example, Cao Cao's army strength was exaggerated to over 800,000 men. This may be attributed to the ethos of later times, particularly of the Southern Song Dynasty (de Crespigny 2007:483). The state of Shu Han, in particular, was viewed by later literati as the "legitimate" successor to the Han Dynasty, so fictionalised accounts assign greater prominence than the historical records warrant to the roles of Liu Bei, Zhuge Liang and other heroes from Shu. This is generally accomplished by minimising the importance of Eastern Wu commanders and advisors such as Zhou Yu and Lu Su (de Crespigny 1990:xi). While historical accounts describe Lu Su as a sensible advisor and Zhou Yu as an eminent military leader and "generous, sensible and courageous" man, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* depicts Lu Su as unremarkable and Zhou Yu as cruel and cynical (de Crespigny 1990:300; 305–306 *29n*). Both are depicted as being inferior to Zhuge Liang in every respect (de Crespigny 1990:264).

The romances added wholly fictional and fantastical elements to the historical accounts and these were repeated in popular plays and operas. Examples from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* include Zhuge Liang pretending to use magic to call forth favourable winds (that he had in fact predicted by astronomical observation) for the fire ship attack, his strategy of "using straw boats to borrow arrows", and Guan Yu capturing and releasing Cao Cao at Huarong Trail. The fictionalised accounts also name Zhuge Liang as a military commander in the combined forces, which is historically inaccurate (de Crespigny 1990:260–264).

## Cultural impact

Present-day Chibi City in Hubei province was formerly named Puqi. In 1998, the Chinese State Council approved the renaming of the city in celebration of the battle at Red Cliffs. Cultural festivals held by the city have dramatically increased tourism. (Xinhua 1997). In 1983, a statue of prominent Song Dynasty poet, Su Shi, was erected at the Huangzhou site of 'Su Dongpo's Red Cliffs' in tribute to his writings regarding Red Cliff (Xinhua 1983).

Video games based on the Three Kingdoms era (such as Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* series, *Sangokushi Koumeiden*, *Destiny of an Emperor* and *Kessen II*) have scenarios that include the battle. Other games utilise the Battle of Red Cliffs as their central focus. These include titles popular in Asia, such as the original Japanese version of *Warriors of Fate* and *Dragon Throne: Battle of Red Cliffs*.

A 2008 film titled *Red Cliff*, directed by John Woo, showcased the Red Cliff legacy and was a massive box-office success in China.

*Battle at the Red Cliffs* is one of the 10 volumes in an illustrated rendition of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by a Singapore publishing company, Asiapac Books, in English.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] "The engagement at the Red Cliffs took place in the winter of the thirteenth year of Jian'an, probably about the end of 208."
- [2] Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms* repeatedly asserts that Liu Bei was at Xiakou. Other historical accounts support this version as well. Annotations to the text of the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* made nearly two centuries later by Pei Songzhi support the Fankou version, thus Xiakou appears in the main text and Fankou in the annotations. This discrepancy is later reflected in contradictory passages in the *Zizhi Tongjian* by Sima Guang (and its English translation, ), which has Liu Bei "quartered at Fankou" at the same time as Zhou Yu is requesting to send troops to Xiakou, and Liu Bei "waits anxiously" in Xiakou for the reinforcements. For a detailed discussion, see .
- [3] (江表傳載曹公與權書曰：「近者奉辭伐罪，旄麾南指，劉琮束手。今治水軍八十萬衆，方與將軍會獵於吳。」權得書以示羣臣，莫不嚮震失色。) Annotations from the *Jiang Biao Zhuan* (江表傳) to Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [4] (江表傳曰：權拔刀斫前奏案曰：「諸將吏敢復有言當迎操者，與此案同！」) Annotations from the *Jiang Biao Zhuan* (江表傳) to Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biography of Zhou Yu.
- [5] The number of vessels in the squadron is unclear. As de Crespigny observes, "Firstly, the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* states that the number of vessels in Huang Gai's squadron was 'several tens,' but the parallel passage in *Zizhi Tongjian*... allocates Huang Gai only ten ships"
- [6] The exact nature of these vessels is unclear. refers to them as "leather-covered assault warships," but the reference is parenthetical, as this issue is peripheral to the topic of Zhang's paper. In a lengthier discussion, separates the two terms, describing *mengchong* as "... covered with some form of protective material ... used to break the enemy line of battle and perhaps to damage their ships and men with a ram or by projectiles" and *doujian* as "... fighting platforms for spearmen and archers to engage in close combat ...". He concludes that *mengchong doujian* is a "general description for vessels of war" .
- [7] This discussion is largely drawn from .
- [8] See <http://www.chibi.com.cn> (<http://www.chibi.com.cn/col2080/col6057/>)
- [9] C.P. Fitzgerald described the location in 1926: "But there was the ... two rivers, the Han and the ... Yangtze, across them, respectively, Hanyang and Wuchang ... The confluence of the Han ... and the Yangtze ... made Wuhan ... a key strategic centre. Hanyang is backed by a long, low hill, called Tortoise Mountain, which faces the hill on the eastern slope of which Wuchang is built. The two hills narrow the Yangtze at this point by perhaps as much as a third of its width above and below them. The passage is dominated by a high bluff, called Chi Bi, "The Red Cliff," the scene of a famous naval battle in the fourth [sic] century. It is at this point that the great bridge, carrying railway and road, has been constructed in the fledgling years of the People's Republic of China .
- [10] <http://www.asiapacbooks.com/product.asp?pid=768>



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Coordinates: 29°52′11″N 113°37′13″E﻿ / ﻿[http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle\\_of\\_Red\\_Cliffs&params=29\\_52\\_11\\_N\\_113\\_37\\_13\\_E\\_region:CN\\_type:event](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle_of_Red_Cliffs&params=29_52_11_N_113_37_13_E_region:CN_type:event)﻿ / ﻿

# Red Cliffs Campaign - Battle of Yiling

Battle of Yiling	
Part of the Red Cliffs campaign	
<b>Date</b>	Winter of 208 CE
<b>Location</b>	Yiling (Present-day Yichang, Hubei)
<b>Result</b>	Sun Quan victory
Belligerents	
Sun Quan	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhou Yu	Cao Ren
Strength	
31,000 (this number assumes there were no casualties for Eastern Wu in the battle of Red Cliffs)	6,000 cavalry
Casualties and losses	
	3,000+

Battle of Yiling	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	夷陵之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	夷陵之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yí líng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yiling** was fought between the warlords Sun Quan and Cao Cao in 208 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was an integral part in the Red Cliffs campaign, as it was fought immediately after the major engagement at Wulin (烏林; in present-day Honghu, Hubei) during the Battle of Red Cliffs. The Battle of Yiling was also the prelude to the subsequent Battle of Jiangling.

## Background

Immediately after Cao Cao's defeat at Wulin in the Battle of Red Cliffs, Zhou Yu led 30,000 troops into Nan Commandery in a move to capture Jing Province's capital city, Jiangling (江陵; in present-day Jingjiang 荆江, not to be confused with present-day Jiangling County, Hubei). Zhou Yu's army camped on the southern bank of the Yangtze River. Before engaging Cao Cao's general Cao Ren, Zhou Yu ordered Gan Ning to take Yiling (夷陵; present-day Yichang, Hubei) as a preemptive move to secure the entrance to Yi Province (covering the Sichuan Basin).<sup>[1]</sup> In addition, if Yiling was captured, Cao Ren would be isolated from Yi Province's governor Liu Zhang, who was sending reinforcements to support him.<sup>[2]</sup>

## The battle

### Defection of Xi Su

The commander of Yiling, Xi Su (襲肅), was originally an official under Liu Zhang and he hated Cao Cao. When Gan Ning's troops reached Yiling, Xi Su surrendered without a fight. As Gan Ning's force reached 1,000 (Gan had 700 men initially), Zhou Yu wanted to merge Xi Su and his 300 troops into Lü Meng's unit to strengthen the main force. Lü Meng refused the offer and appealed to Sun Quan not to reassign Xi Su and his 300 men, but rather, keep Xi Su with Gan Ning to reinforce defenses at Yiling. Sun Quan agreed to Lü Meng's proposal. When Cao Ren learnt that Yiling had fallen, he immediately sent 6,000 cavalry to retake the city. Under intense pressure, Gan Ning remained calm and stabilized his army's morale.

### Lü Meng's strategies

As Gan Ning's request for reinforcements reached Zhou Yu, nearly "everyone pointed out that there were not enough men to spare as a relief force".<sup>[3]</sup> However, Lü Meng stood up and urged his colleagues to go and support Gan Ning, and guaranteed that Ling Tong could defend their main camp on his own for at least ten days.<sup>[4]</sup>

Ling Tong took up the burden of facing Cao Ren and Xu Huang alone, in order to buy time for Zhou Yu, Lü Meng, and others to help Gan Ning at Yiling. Cao Ren did not expect Zhou Yu to ignore his massive army at Jiangling, and was consequently defeated at Yiling, suffering more than 3,000 casualties. Meanwhile, Ling Tong deceived Cao Ren into believing that was still a sizable army left in Zhou Yu's main camp, so Cao did not launch an all-out assault on Ling. Instead, Cao Ren sent Xu Huang to attack Ling Tong but was failed. En route back to the main camp, Lü Meng suggested a plan to capture enemy warhorses: he would lead 300 soldiers to block the enemy's retreat route with bundles of firewood so the horses were unable to pass through. As Lü Meng expected, in order to escape from Zhou Yu's pursuit, Cao Ren's cavalry abandoned their steeds and fled back to Jiangling on foot.<sup>[5]</sup> Zhou Yu returned with over 300 captured enemy warhorses and Yiling remained firmly in Sun Quan's control for the rest of the war.

## Aftermath

The fall of Yiling meant that Sun Quan's forces had opened up the entrance to Yi Province. It also implied that Cao Ren, who was in Jiangling, would no longer receive any reinforcements from Liu Zhang.

## Order of battle

### Cao Cao forces

- General Who Attacks the South (征南將軍) **Cao Ren**, stationed in Jiangling (江陵; located in present-day Jingjiang 荊江, not to be confused with present-day Jiangling County, Hubei)
  - General **Xi Su** (襲肅), from Yi Province, stationed at Yiling (夷陵, present-day Yichang, Hubei), later defected to Sun Quan

## Sun Quan forces

- General in the Center Protecting the Army (中護軍將軍) **Zhou Yu**
  - Colonel Who Praises the Army (贊軍校尉) **Lu Su**, served as Zhou Yu's deputy
  - Right Area Commander (右都督) **Cheng Pu**
  - Commandant of Danyang (丹陽都尉) **Huang Gai**, served as vanguard of the navy
  - General of the Household Who Swipes Across the Wilderness (橫野中郎將) **Lü Meng**
  - Prefect of Dangkou (當口令) **Gan Ning**
  - General of the Household (中郎將) **Han Dang**
  - Chief of Yichun (宜春長) **Zhou Tai**
  - General Who Attacks Barbarians (征虜將軍) **Sun Ben**
  - Colonel of Strong Might (競威校尉) **Lu Xun**
  - Colonel of Military Ferocity (武猛校尉) **Pan Zhang**
  - Commandant Who Inherits Fierceness (承烈都尉) **Ling Tong**

## Notes

- [1] (兵未交鋒，瑜即遣甘寧前據夷陵。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.
- [2] (益州牧刘璋始受徵役，遣兵给军。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [3] (曹仁分衆圍寧，寧困急，使使請救。諸將以兵少不足分...) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.
- [4] (蒙謂瑜、普曰：“留凌公績，蒙與君行，解圍釋急，勢亦不久，蒙保公績能十日守也。”) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.
- [5] (敵夜遁去，行遇柴道，騎皆捨馬步走。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.

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# Red Cliffs Campaign - 1st Battle of Hefei

Battle of Hefei	
Part of the Red Cliffs campaign	
<b>Date</b>	208-209
<b>Location</b>	Hefei, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Sun Quan retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Sun Quan
Commanders and leaders	
Liu Fu, Jiang Ji	Sun Quan, Zhang Zhao, Zhang Hong

Battle of Hefei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Hefei** was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Sun Quan between late 208 and early 209 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty.

## Background

In the 11th lunar month of 208, Cao Cao was defeated by Sun Quan and Liu Bei at the Battle of Red Cliffs, but he still had a large army garrisoned at the northern part of Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan). The following month, Sun Quan's general Zhou Yu led an attack on Jiangling (江陵; located in present-day Jingjiang 荆江, not to be confused with Jiangling County, Hubei), which was defended by Cao Cao's cousin Cao Ren.

## The battle

At the same time, Sun Quan personally led an assault on Cao Cao's fortress at Hefei, which was defended by Liu Fu, in an attempt to open two war fronts in the west and north. Sun Quan also sent Zhang Zhao to attack Dangtu (當塗), Jiujiang (九江) commandery, but was unsuccessful.

When Cao Cao heard news of the attack, he sent Zhang Xi (張喜) to lead an army to reinforce Hefei. The battle dragged on until the following year, but Sun Quan's forces were unable to breach Hefei. Sun Quan intended to personally lead a light cavalry contingent on a charge at the enemy, but Zhang Hong advised him against it, "Using the military is an offensive move, battles are dangerous. Now that our army's morale is high, if we suddenly launch a fierce attack, the troops will be disappointed. Even though it is possible to slay enemy generals, capture their flags and instil fear in them, this is a mission to be carried out by a subordinate general, and not the commander-in-chief. I

hope you can control your zeal and courage, and possess the strategies of a conqueror-king."<sup>[1]</sup> Sun Quan heeded Zhang Hong's advice and aborted his plan.

As Hefei had been constantly under attack for several months, compounded by heavy rain, the fortress' walls were starting to collapse, so Liu Fu ordered his men to use straw and palm leaves to cover up cracks in the walls. At night, Liu Fu had torches lit to brighten the scene outside Hefei, so he could observe the enemy's movements and prepare defences. Zhang Xi's relief force had yet to arrive, and Liu Fu was at a loss on how to resist the enemy. Liu Fu's deputy Jiang Ji (蔣濟) suggested using a strategy to deceive the enemy that Hefei's reinforcements had arrived: spread false news that Zhang Xi's 40,000 strong relief army had reached Yulou (雩婁); send an official to pretend to receive Zhang Xi; send three officers to bring fake letters out of Hefei. Only one of the three officers returned to the fortress as the other two were captured by Sun Quan's men, who found the letters on them. Sun Quan read the letters and thought that Zhang Xi's reinforcements had indeed arrived, so he ordered his troops to burn down the camp and hastily retreat.

## Order of battle

### Cao Cao forces

- Inspector of Yang Province (揚州刺史) **Liu Fu**, was in charge of Hefei until the end of 208.
  - Attendant Officer of Yang Province (揚州別駕) **Jiang Ji** (蔣濟), was in charge of Hefei from the end of 208 until Sun Quan's withdrawal.
- General **Zhang Xi** (張喜), led 1,000 troops to reinforce Hefei.

### Sun Quan forces

- General Who Exterminates Barbarians (破虜將軍) **Sun Quan**, led an attack on Hefei from Chaisang.
  - Chief Clerk (長史) **Zhang Zhao**, led an attack on Dangtu.
  - Chief Clerk (長史) **Zhang Hong**, served as Sun Quan's deputy during the attack on Hefei.

## In fiction

In chapter 53 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Sun Quan's general Taishi Ci was killed in the battle. Taishi Ci proposed a strategy involving a man named Ge Ding (戈定), who was from the same hometown as him. Ge Ding and a defector from Hefei would assassinate Zhang Liao (Cao Cao's general who was defending Hefei) and open the city gates for Sun Quan's army. That night, Ge Ding and the defector started a fire in the city to create chaos, but they were caught and executed. Zhang Liao recognised the enemy's plot and decided to turn it against them, so he set up an ambush and opened the gates to lure the enemy in. Outside Hefei, Taishi Ci saw the fire and thought that it was a signal from Ge Ding, indicating that he had succeeded and opened the gates for him. Taishi Ci charged into the city, but fell into the ambush and was hit by several arrows. At that moment, enemy forces led by Li Dian and Yue Jin attacked Taishi Ci from behind. Taishi Ci narrowly escaped under the protection of Dong Xi, but later died from his wounds in camp at the age of 41.

## Historicity

No details on Taishi Ci's death were provided in historical records. Taishi Ci's biography in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* simply mentioned that he died at the age of 41 (by East Asian age reckoning) in the 11th year of Jian'an (corresponds to 206), around two years before this battle took place.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Notes

[1] (夫兵者兇器，戰者危事也。今麾下恃盛壯之氣，忽強暴之虜，三軍之衆，莫不寒心。雖斬將奪旗，威震敵場，此乃偏將之任，非主將之宜也。願抑賁、育之勇，懷王霸之計。)

Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 53, Biography of Zhang Hong.

[2] (年四十一，建安十一年卒。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 49, Biography of Taishi Ci.

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- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapter 53.

# Red Cliffs Campaign - 1st Battle of Jiangling

Battle of Jiangling	
Part of the Red Cliffs campaign	
<b>Date</b>	Winter of 208 - 209 CE
<b>Location</b>	Jiangling (present-day Jingjiang 荆江)
<b>Result</b>	Allied victory
Belligerents	
Sun Quan Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhou Yu Ling Tong	Cao Ren
Strength	
40,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>	120,000+ (the troops Cao Ren had prior to the battle was more than that of Zhou Yu, <sup>[2]</sup> and he received reinforcements from Yi Province, <sup>[3]</sup> Xiangyang, <sup>[4]</sup> Runan, <sup>[5]</sup> Jiangxia, <sup>[6]</sup> Dangyang, <sup>[7]</sup> and numerous other cities controlled by Cao Cao.)

Battle of Jiangling (208)	
Simplified Chinese	江陵之战
Traditional Chinese	江陵之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Jiānglǐng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Jiangling** was fought by the allied forces of Sun Quan and Liu Bei against Cao Cao in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was an integral part of the Red Cliffs campaign, and was fought immediately after the Battle of Yiling in 208, and the preceding engagement at Wulin (烏林; in present-day Honghu, Hubei) on land and the marine Battle of Red Cliffs where Cao Cao's navy was destroyed. Note that the battle at Wulin was a byproduct of the Battle of Red Cliffs, and they were not the same battle.

While the fighting around the city of Jiangling was vigorous, there were not much fierce battles taking place in southern Jing Province. Unable to isolate Jiangling from its supporting cities (except those in Yi Province, see Battle of Yiling (208) for details), the campaign became a war of attrition, which resulted in enormous casualties for Cao Cao's side. After a year or so, Cao Cao could no longer afford the continuous losses in personnel and materiel, so he ordered Cao Ren to withdraw from Jiangling.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Background

After the great victory in the Battle of Red Cliffs, the allies immediately carried out their next step of their strategy by attempting to take control of Nan Commandery from Cao Cao by driving the retreating enemy toward Jiangling (江陵, located in present-day Jingjiang 荆江, not to be confused with present-day Jiangling County, Hubei).

## The battle

### Infiltration into the enemy's rear

Zhou Yu was worried about Cao Cao's unscathed units totaling over 100,000 strong, which were scattered around strategic locations, so he urged Liu Bei to send Guan Yu to block Cao Ren's supply lines via infiltration. Zhou Yu wanted to have Guan Yu attack the enemy rear while bypassing the strongpoint of Jiangling, in order to isolate Jiangling for a coordinated attack. Thus, Guan Yu, along with Su Fei (relationship to the Su Fei who served Eastern Wu remains unclear), led a special force composed of navy and elite infantry, sailed up the Han River, and attacked the city of Xiangyang, which was guarded by Yue Jin. However, Guan Yu was soundly expelled by Yue Jin outside the city.<sup>[9]</sup> At Xiakou, Guan Yu's fleet met Yue Jin and Wen Ping,<sup>[10]</sup> and Guan was held off by his rivals. Wen Ping trailed Guan Yu to Han Ford, in which he had Guan's food storage blunt to the ground.<sup>[11]</sup> As a result, Guan Yu attempted to recuperate at Jingcheng (荊城); however, his pursuers would not allow him to rest, and Guan was forced to fight a naval battle with Wen Ping, which resulted in a total disaster.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Southern Jing Province

Liu Bei asked for and obtained Zhou Yu's permission to cover the rear and the flank of Zhou's navy by taking the remaining four commanderies to the south of the Yangtze River from Cao Cao. There were hardly any troops left to defend the region, so all of the administrators of Cao Cao's four commanderies, including Jin Xuan at Wuling (武陵), Han Xuan at Changsha (長沙), Zhao Fan at Guiyang (桂陽), and Liu Du at Lingling (零陵) all surrendered without a fight. More importantly, Liu Bei's conquest of these commanderies was an integral portion of the Red



Cliffs campaign as part of the goal of the allies. Liu Bei finally had a base of his own and he named Zhuge Liang as Military Advisor General of the Household (軍師中郎將) to oversee the administrative affairs of Changsha, Guiyang and Lingling.

The biggest gain for Liu Bei; however, was that he was joined by Lei Xu (雷緒) and his troops, which almost doubled Liu Bei's force instantly.<sup>[13]</sup> As soon as the news of Cao Cao's defeat at Wulin was heard, Lei Xu at Lujiang (廬江, in present-day Chaohu City, Anhui) rebelled. Cao Cao's earlier strategy of keeping his veteran force in a separate force in the north to prepare for possible rebellions had paid off as he was able to summon the force to suppress the rebellion quickly by putting Xiahou Yuan in charge, but the victory was not complete: though defeated and lost his turf, Lei Xu's force was largely unscathed; he led them to Liu Bei, strengthening the latter.

### Attempt to cut Cao Ren's supply lines

Liu Bei authorized Zhang Fei and Guan Yu to command his troops. He suggested to Zhou Yu to block Jiangling from receiving new supplies as a means of driving Cao Ren out. Thus, Guan Yu was sent north to intercept enemy reinforcements, and blockades were set along the main passages.<sup>[14]</sup> However, Cao Cao's general Li Tong fought valiantly; he dismounted and removed the blockades one by one, and advanced forward.<sup>[15]</sup> Unable to suppress his enemy, Guan Yu ordered a retreat and Li Tong managed to enter Jiangling.

Meantime, Liu Bei placed Xiang Lang in charge of Zigui (秭歸), Yidao (夷道), Wushan (巫山), and Yiling (夷陵)<sup>[16]</sup> (Yiling was assigned to Liu Bei by Sun Quan after negotiation) counties, all of them were vital to invade Yi Province (covering the Sichuan Basin).

### Stalemate

The allies appeared to be suffering losses but their failures were considered minor as compared to that of Cao Cao's side. A few months earlier, Cao Ren had his elite cavalry suffered a casualty of more than 3,000 men in a single day in an attempt to retake Yiling, besides, Cao Ren and his aide, Xu Huang, were unable to suppress Ling Tong, who were defending Zhou Yu's main camp on his own. Hence, the soldiers inside Jiangling were low on morale, and Cao Ren knew he needed to do something to change the tide of war. To prevent morale from dropping further, Cao Ren recruited 300 volunteers<sup>[17]</sup> to form an assault force led by general Niu Jin, in hope that they could score a minor victory or demonstrate bravery on the field to boost the morale. While the enemy vanguard reached the outskirts of the city, the small detachment was immediately besieged. Cao Ren ordered several tens of his strongest men to be ready for the rescue, and his Chief Clerk Chen Jiao (陳矯) advised against it, claiming that "the enemy force was too high on morale, and losing several hundred men was not a big deal to us."<sup>[18]</sup> Cao Ren ignored Chen Jiao's plea and went out, charging directly into the enemy. As Chen Jiao lost sight of Cao Ren, he was certain that Cao Ren was dead. However, to everyone's surprise, not only did Cao Ren rescue Niu Jin on the first attempt, he went back for the second time to save the remaining survivors. As Cao Ren and his troops safely returned to the safety behind the city wall, the total fatalities of combined forces of Cao Ren and Niu Jin were minimal. The surprised Chen Jiao could only mutter one sentence: "General (Cao Ren), you are truly a man from Heaven." As Cao Cao learned this soon after, he rewarded Cao Ren the rank of Marquis of Safeness (安平亭侯) for his bravery in this battle. Encouraged with this incident, Cao Ren set up camps outside the city walls. Zhou Yu personally led raids on Cao Ren's camps, and during one such raid, he was seriously wounded after he was hit by an arrow that broke one of his right ribs.<sup>[19]</sup>

## Withdrawal of Cao Ren

In addition, the allied force was unable to block the numerous reinforcements continually sent by Cao Cao, so the siege turned out to be a prolonged one. As Zhou Yu could hardly command the troops, the battles were left to Ling Tong, Lü Meng and others, who were forced to expediently alter their temporary objective into inflicting damage to the enemy units. After a year of intense fighting, Zhou Yu regained health and insisted on personally leading the army, he purposefully flaunted before Cao Ren and rallied his army to illustrate his determination to keep on the offensive. Being deceived by Zhou Yu, who was actually still in critical condition, Cao Cao unwillingly ordered Cao Ren to retreat under the rationale that his forces could no longer afford continuous loss of materiel and labour.<sup>[20]</sup> Therefore, Sun Quan's forces finally succeeded in their objective of capturing Nan Commandery, which holds the upper stream of the Yangtze River, a strategic stronghold that would never be reclaimed by the state of Cao Wei.

## Aftermath

After Liu Bei became a powerful warlord of southern Jing Province, Sun Quan was a bit apprehensive of him, so he arranged a marriage for Liu and his sister.<sup>[21]</sup> With the help of Sun Quan's strategist, Lu Su, Liu Bei also successfully "borrowed" Nan Commandery from Sun. Thus, Liu Bei had secured everything he needed for the invasion of Yi Province, and he would mobilize his troops towards Yi Province in 211.

Traditionally, the Battle of Jiangling is regarded as the end of the Red Cliffs campaign because as the confrontations ended and the battle turned into a siege, Cao Cao returned to his forward base in Qiao (譙) in the north in March, 209, and Sun Quan also gave up his attack on Hefei (合肥) in the east, and the remainder of the siege of Jiangling was no longer considered as part of the campaign by most historians. The fall of Jiangling to Sun Quan is generally regarded as the aftermath of the campaign.

## Order of battle

### Cao Cao forces

- General Who Attacks the South (征南將軍) **Cao Ren**, stationed in Jiangling (江陵; located in present-day Jingjiang 荊江, not to be confused with present-day Jiangling County, Hubei)
  - Chief Clerk (長史) **Chen Jiao** (陳矯)
  - General Who Swipes Across the Wilderness (橫野將軍) **Xu Huang**
  - General **Niu Jin**
- Administrator of Xiangyang (襄陽太守) **Yue Jin**
- Administrator of Runan (汝南太守) **Li Tong**
- Administrator of Jiangxia (江夏太守) **Wen Ping**
- General Who Demonstrates Bravery (奮威將軍) **Man Chong**

### Sun Quan forces

- General in the Center Protecting the Army (中護軍將軍) **Zhou Yu**, served as commander-in-chief of the allied forces
  - Right Area Commander (右都督) **Cheng Pu**
  - General of the Household (中郎將) **Han Dang**
  - General of the Household Who Swipes Across the Wilderness (橫野中郎將) **Lü Meng**
  - Commandant Who Inherits Fierceness (承烈都尉) **Ling Tong**
  - Chief of Yichun (宜春長) **Zhou Tai**
  - Prefect of Dangkou (當口令) **Gan Ning**

## Liu Bei forces

- General on the Left (左將軍) **Liu Bei**, served as vanguard of the allied ground forces
  - Lieutenant General (偏將軍) **Guan Yu**, served as commander of Liu Bei's naval forces
  - General of the Household (中郎將) **Zhang Fei**
  - Chief of Linju (臨沮長) **Xiang Lang**

## In fiction

For dramatic effect, in many literary works, Liu Bei's conquest of the four commanderies south of the Yangtze River were listed as separate battles, and there was a match between Guan Yu and Huang Zhong which became the source of other cultural works, such as Beijing opera. In reality; however, none of these were true.

Contrary to what was depicted in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, Han Xuan was not killed by Wei Yan, while there was no record when Wei Yan became a subject of Liu Bei or whether Wei Yan took part in this battle.

## Notes


- [1] This number is a rough estimate assuming the allied forces suffered minimal casualties during the Battle of Red Cliff
- [2] (曹仁分衆圍寧，寧困急，使使請救。諸將以兵少不足分) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.
- [3] (益州牧刘璋始受徵役，遣兵给军。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.
- [4] ((乐进)后从平荆州，留屯襄阳) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biographies of Zhang, Yue, Yu, Zhang, and Xu.
- [5] (刘备与周瑜围曹仁於江陵，别遣关羽绝北道。通率众击之) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan. (通) in this passage refers to Li Tong, who was the Administrator of Runan at the time.
- [6] ((文聘)与乐进讨关羽於寻口，有功，进封延寿亭侯。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan. Wen Ping was the Administrator of Jiangxia by the time.
- [7] (建安十三年，从太祖征荆州。大军还，留宠行奋威将军，屯当阳。) Man Chong was given authority as acting General Who Demonstrates Bravery by Cao Cao specifically to lead troops in anticipation of Sun Quan's invasion, and was stationed at Danyang with substantial number of soldiers.
- [8] (瑜、仁相守歲余，所殺傷甚衆。仁委城走。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [9] (留屯襄阳，击关羽、苏非等，皆走之) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biographies of Zhang, Yue, Yu, Zhang, and Xu.
- [10] (与乐进讨关羽於寻口，有功，进封延寿亭侯，加讨逆将军。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan.
- [11] (又攻羽輜重於汉津) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan.
- [12] ((文聘)烧其(关羽)船於荆城。) Chen Shou. *Record of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan.
- [13] (廬江雷緒率部曲數万口稽顙。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.
- [14] (刘备与周瑜围曹仁于江陵，别遣关羽绝北道。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan.
- [15] (通率众击之，下马拔鹿角入围，且战且前。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pang, and Yan.
- [16] (先主定江南，使朗督秭歸、夷道、巫(山)、夷陵四縣軍民事。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 41, Biographies of Huo, Wang, Xiang, Zhang, Yang, and Fei.
- [17] (仁登城望之，乃募得三百人) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biographies of the Xiahou and Caos.
- [18] (贼众盛，不可当也。假使奔数百人何苦，而将军以身赴之！) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biographies of the Xiahou and Caos.
- [19] (瑜親跨馬攔陳，會流矢中右脅，瘡甚) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biographies of Zhou Yu, Lu Su, and Lü Meng.
- [20] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [21] (权稍畏之，进妹固好) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.

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# 211-220

## Northwestern Subjugation - Battle of Tong Pass

Battle of Tong Pass	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
The fictional duel between Xu Chu and Ma Chao, portrait at the Long Corridor of the Summer Palace, Beijing	
<b>Date</b>	March – September 211 CE
<b>Location</b>	Tongguan County, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Coalition of Guanxi forces
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Cao Ren Xu Huang Zhu Ling	Ma Chao Han Sui Hou Xuan Cheng Yin Yang Qiu Li Kan † Zhang Heng Liang Xing Cheng Yi †
Strength	
60,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>	100,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Battle of Tong Pass	
Simplified Chinese	潼关之战
Traditional Chinese	潼關之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Tóngguān Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Weinan	
Simplified Chinese	渭南之战
Traditional Chinese	渭南之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Wèinán Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Tong Pass**, also known as the **Battle of Weinan**, was fought between the warlord Cao Cao and a coalition of forces from Guanxi (west of Hangu Pass) from March to September 211 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle was initiated by Cao Cao's western expansion, which triggered uprisings in Guanxi. Cao Cao scored a decisive victory over the Guanxi coalition and established a hold of the Guanzhong region.

## Background

Before the end of the Han Dynasty, the warlord Ma Teng commanded a sizable army in the northwestern frontiers of China that threatened the North China Plain controlled by Cao Cao. When Cao Cao finished his unification of northern China in 207, he wished to turn south to attack Liu Bei and Sun Quan; so to avoid being attacked from behind, Cao Cao appointed Ma Teng as an official and summoned him to Ye City. Ma Teng and some of his family members were effectively held hostage to prevent Ma Teng's son, Ma Chao, from invading Cao Cao's territory.

Cao Cao's southern expedition did not go well; however, as he was defeated by the combined forces of Sun Quan and Liu Bei at the Battle of Red Cliffs in 208. He soon turned his attention west instead, with the intention to invade Guanzhong. In March 211, Cao Cao sent Zhong Yao to attack Hanzhong (Han'ning),<sup>[1]</sup> which was controlled by Zhang Lu, while sending Xiahou Yuan to rendezvous with Zhong's forces. Gao Rou cautioned Cao Cao against such a move, saying that sending massive armies west could draw suspicion from the western warlords and cause the latter to revolt. However, Cao Cao paid no heed to his advice.

As predicted, the western forces began suspecting an assault from Cao Cao, and soon Ma Chao, Han Sui, Hou Xuan, Cheng Yin, Yang Qiu, Li Kan, Zhang Heng, Liang Xing, Cheng Yi, and Ma Wan (馬玩) rallied their armies and marched on Tong Pass (in present-day Tongguan County, Shaanxi). The coalition comprised a mixture of Han Chinese, Qiang, and Hu soldiers. Many counties of the area joined the uprising, and some civilians had to escape into Hanzhong via Ziwu Valley (子午谷).

In response, Cao Cao ordered Cao Ren to defend against the invading forces and issued orders that they must refrain from engaging the enemy.

## The battle

In July, Cao Cao left the capital to lead his troops against Ma Chao, while leaving his son Cao Pi to defend his headquarters in Ye City. In August, his troops arrived at Tong Pass where the standoff between his forces and the Guanxi forces was taking place. As the standoff dragged on, more and more Guanxi reinforcements came to Tong Pass, but Cao Cao seemed gleeful at every instance of enemy arrival. When asked by his officers why he was so happy when the enemy was gaining numbers, he replied "The road to Guanzhong is long, and if the barbarians defended themselves along the treacherous terrain, we cannot conquer them in one or two years. But now that they all assembled here in this uneasy alliance, it will be much easier to eliminate them. That is why I am happy."

Cao Cao gave the Guanxi forces an impression that a frontal assault was imminent, but had Xu Huang and Zhu Ling covertly travelled north. The two men had slithered cross the Yellow River via Puban Ford (蒲阪津) to the west with 4,000 men, and pitched camp there, circumventing Tong Pass. A month later, Cao Cao's main force followed, while Cao Cao and Xu Chu guarded the rear. When Ma Chao got wind of Cao Cao's maneuver, he led roughly 10,000 men to give chase. Arrows poured down on the rearguard, but Cao Cao was in no hurry. Seeing that the situation became dire, Xu Chu helped Cao Cao onto a boat, but the ferryman was shot dead. Xu Chu then used a saddle to shield arrows with his left hand, and paddled the boat with his right. Ma Chao's men kept on firing arrows on Cao Cao's boat even though it had sailed for miles. It was then Ding Fei (丁斐), a general under Cao Cao, gave the command to release the livestock. Seeing this, the pursuing army, being mostly herders, gave up on the chase and went for the horses and oxen instead. It was through these efforts that Cao Cao safely crossed the river.

Cao Cao's force then regrouped with Xu Huang's, and marched south along the river. The Guanxi armies then accordingly positioned themselves against attack from the north. Then, Cao Cao sent out some decoy troops to distract enemy defense while setting up a pontoon bridge crossing the Wei River that would allow his forces to complete the circumvention of Tong Pass. At night, a portion of Cao Cao's forces crossed the river and tried to set camp; however, the soil was too sandy to be used for building fortification, and Ma Chao's cavalry soon chased away the builders. Eventually, on the advice of Lou Gui, Cao Cao had his men pour water on piled-up sand. The mixture froze in the cold night and became solid, and thus a bridgehead was established south of the Wei River. The icy fortress was shortly attacked by Ma Chao, but the attackers were repelled by Cao Cao's ambushes.

As the battle dragged on, Ma Chao attempted a ceasefire and requested the lands west of the Wei River, but Cao Cao rejected. Ma Chao would try to entice Cao Cao's men to attack his newly established camp, but Cao Cao did not bite the bait. In an attempt to negotiate, Cao Cao, Han Sui, and Ma Chao came together bringing no one but their close guards. Ma Chao had hoped that, with his strength, he could capture Cao Cao and force him to agree to their terms, but he had heard of the prowess of Cao Cao's bodyguard, so he asked, "Is the Tiger Marquis with you today?" Cao Cao pointed at Xu Chu, who glared at Ma Chao, and Ma dared not make a move.

To avoid attrition, the generals of the Guanxi armies agreed to cede territories and send their sons to Cao Cao as hostages in exchange for peace. Cao Cao's strategist Jia Xu suggested that he could pretend to accept the terms, and then turn the allied forces against each other. Cao Cao agreed, and arranged for an armistice. Han Sui was sent by the Guanxi armies as the representative. He was once a friend of Cao Cao, and when they met, they did not talk about military affairs but instead recollected their youths in the capital, occasionally clapping their hands and laughing amiably. When the meeting was over, Ma Chao demanded to know what Cao Cao said, but Han Sui responded that it was nothing much. Ma Chao became suspicious of Han Sui from there on. A few days later, Cao Cao sent Han Sui a letter with certain words smudged out as if Han did it himself. Ma Chao saw this letter and thought Han Sui was collaborating with Cao Cao, and did not trust Han any more.

To capitalize on this suspicion, Cao Cao set the time for a final clash between the two forces. First, he challenged the allied forces with lightly armoured soldiers, then surrounding the allied forces with heavy cavalry in both flanks. The allies were routed and several commanders including Cheng Yi and Li Kan were killed in battle. Han Sui and Ma Chao fled to Liang Province and Yang Qiu to Anding (present-day Anding District, Gansu). Cao Cao emerged victorious.

## Aftermath

The forces of Guanxi were unable to regroup again in a coalition and their strengths were greatly weakened after this battle. Of the remnants of the coalition, Yang Qiu soon surrendered, Han Sui was defeated by Xu Huang and Zhang He, and only Ma Chao was actively causing trouble for Cao Cao.

After Cao Cao's main army retreated due to an uprising back home, Ma Chao attacked the commanderies in Longxi with the forces of the western tribes and the commanderies took their lead from him, except for the city of Jicheng (冀城, capital of Tianshui Commandery). When he conquered Jicheng, Ma Chao killed the Inspector of Liang Province, Wei Kang (韋康), occupied the city and controlled Wei's forces. He called himself the General Who Conquers the West and took over the governance of Bing Province and the military matters of Liang Province. The deputies who served under Wei Kang, Yang Fu, Jiang Xu (姜叙), Liang Kuan (梁寬), Zhao Qu (趙衢) and others plotted against Ma Chao. Yang Fu and Jiang Xu revolted in Lucheng and Ma Chao left Jicheng in an attempt to quell the uprising. Meanwhile, Liang Kuan and Zhao Qu closed the gates of Jicheng and Ma Chao could not return to the city. He had little choice but to seek refuge with Zhang Lu in Hanzhong.

Later, Cao Cao had Ma Teng's household executed for Ma Chao's uprising. Only Ma Chao and his cousin Ma Dai remained in his once great family.

## In fiction

The battle was mentioned in chapters 58 and 59 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*).

Ma Chao rallied an army to attack Cao Cao for revenge after the latter murdered his father Ma Teng and younger brothers Ma Xiu and Ma Tie.

Cao Cao was defeated by Ma Chao in the first skirmish of the battle. Amidst the chaos, Cao Cao fled and was pursued by Ma Chao. Ma Chao shouted that the man dressed in the red robe was Cao Cao, so Cao took off his robe and discarded it to avoid being recognised. When Ma Chao saw that he shouted again that the man with a long beard was Cao Cao, so Cao drew his sword and quickly trimmed his beard until it was very short. Ma Chao then shouted that the man with a short beard was Cao Cao, and Cao responded by wrapping a flag around his jaw. Cao Hong appeared and held off Ma Chao long enough for Cao Cao to escape.

The following day, Ma Chao engaged Cao Cao's general Xu Chu in a duel. Xu Chu removed his upper garments, fighting topless against Ma Chao both on horseback and on foot. Neither of them managed to overcome his opponent.

Cao Cao eventually followed Jia Xu's strategy to turn Ma Chao and his ally Han Sui against each other. Ma Chao fell for the ruse and believed that Han Sui was planning to betray him so he barged into Han Sui's tent and attacked him. Han Sui lost his left arm during the fight and narrowly escaped under the protection of his subordinates. Cao Cao then took advantage of their internal conflict to attack them and defeated Ma Chao.

Ma Chao fled to join the warlord Zhang Lu in Hanzhong after his defeat.

## Historicity

Both Ma Chao and Cao Cao's biographies in the *Sanguozhi* confirmed that Ma Chao started a rebellion in 211 together with Han Sui, Yang Qiu, Li Kan and Cheng Yi in Guanzhong and they formed a coalition army to attack Cao Cao, leading to the Battle of Tong Pass.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The *Dianlue* stated that around a year after Ma Chao rebelled, Emperor Xian issued an imperial decree to Cao Cao, ordering him to have Ma Chao's entire family executed.<sup>[4]</sup> This proves that the order of events had been reversed in *Sanguo Yanyi*, because Ma Chao started a rebellion in the first place, and then his clan was exterminated by Cao Cao about a year later.



The duel between Ma Chao and Xu Chu is not documented in the *Sanguozhi* and is likely to be fictional. Ma Chao, Cao Cao and Xu Chu's biographies gave an account of a meeting between Cao Cao, Ma Chao and Han Sui during the battle. Cao Cao rode forth on horseback to speak with Ma Chao and Han Sui. Cao Cao was accompanied only by Xu Chu. Ma Chao had confidence in himself and secretly harboured the intention of charging forward and capturing Cao Cao when they met. However, he had heard of Xu Chu before and suspected that the man with Cao Cao was Xu Chu. He then asked Cao Cao, "Where's your Tiger Marquis?" Cao Cao pointed at Xu Chu, and Xu glared at Ma Chao. Ma Chao was afraid and did not dare to make his move.<sup>[5][6][7]</sup>

Ma Chao, Cao Cao and Jia Xu's biographies all mentioned about Cao Cao heeding Jia Xu's suggestion to sow discord between Ma Chao and Han Sui and turn them against each other. Cao Cao's biography gave a detailed account of this incident, which is mainly similar to the description in *Sanguo Yanyi*, except that there is no mention about Ma Chao cutting off Han Sui's arm in a fight. Besides, the generals Cheng Yi, Li Kan, Yang Qiu and others were not subordinates of Han Sui, but rather, independent members who joined Ma Chao's alliance.<sup>[8][9][10]</sup>

## Modern references

The Battle of Tong Pass is one of the playable stages in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors* for the PS2. If the player is on Cao Cao's side and follows the order of events in both history and the novel by making Han Sui defect, it is an easy victory. In the original releases of *Dynasty Warriors 6* for the PS3 and the Xbox 360 the stage was removed, but the stage was brought back, along with the Battle of Ruxukou and the Battle of Jieting, in the later release for the PS2.

## References

- [1] The area was named by Zhang Lu to be Han'ning, and got its name changed back to Hanzhong after Zhang's surrender to Cao Cao later. For simplicity reason, this article uses "Hanzhong" in reference to the area.
  - [2] (超既統衆，遂與韓遂合從，及楊秋、李堪、成宜等相結，進軍至潼關。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
  - [3] (是時關中諸將疑繇欲自襲，馬超遂與韓遂、楊秋、李堪、成宜等叛。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
  - [4] (詔收滅超家屬。) *Dianlue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
  - [5] (曹公與遂、超單馬會語，超負其多力，陰欲突前捉曹公，曹公左右將許褚瞋目眈之，超乃不敢動。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
  - [6] (曹公與遂、超單馬會語，超負其多力，陰欲突前捉曹公，曹公左右將許褚瞋目眈之，超乃不敢動。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
  - [7] (其後太祖與遂、超等單馬會語，左右皆不得從，唯將褚。超負其力，陰欲前突太祖，素聞褚勇，疑從騎是褚。乃問太祖曰：「公有虎侯者安在？」太祖顧指褚，褚瞋目眈之。超不敢動，乃各罷。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 18.
  - [8] (曹公用賈詡謀，離間超、遂，更相猜疑，軍以大敗。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
  - [9] (超等數挑戰，又不許；固請割地，求送任子，公用賈詡計，偽許之。韓遂請與公相見，公與遂父同歲孝廉，又與遂同時儕輩，於是交馬語移時，不及軍事，但說京都舊故，拊手歡笑。既罷，超等問遂：「公何言？」遂曰：「無所言也。」超等疑之。他日，公又與遂書，多所點竄，如遂改定者；超等愈疑遂。公乃與克日會戰，先以輕兵挑之，戰良久，乃縱虎騎夾擊，大破之，斬成宜、李堪等。遂、超等走涼州，楊秋奔安定，關中平。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
  - [10] (太祖後與韓遂、馬超戰於渭南，超等索割地以和，並求任子。詡以為可偽許之。又問詡計策，詡曰：「離之而已。」太祖曰：「解。」一承用詡謀。語在武紀。卒破遂、超，詡本謀也。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 10.
- Chen, Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
  - Luo, Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo Yanyi)*, ch. 58-59.
  - Pei, Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi zhu)*.
  - Sima, Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*.

# Conquest of Yi Province

Liu Bei's takeover of Yi Province	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	212 - 215 CE
<b>Location</b>	Yi Province (present-day Sichuan and Chongqing), China
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Liu Zhang
Commanders and leaders	
Liu Bei	Liu Zhang 𠄎
Strength	
60,000+ <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>	30,000+ <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>

Liu Bei's takeover of Yi Province	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	刘备争夺益州之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	劉備爭奪益州之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Líu Bèi Zhēngduó Yìzhōu Zhī Zhàn

**Liu Bei's takeover of Yi Province** was a military campaign by the warlord Liu Bei in taking control of Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) from its Governor, Liu Zhang. The campaign took place between 212 and 215 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. It concluded with victory for Liu Bei and his successful takeover of the province from Liu Zhang. Yi Province would serve as the foundation of the state of Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms period.

## Background

After the Battle of Red Cliffs, Sun Quan invited Liu Bei to take Yi Province with him, but the latter strongly rebutted the former, saying: "if you're going to conquer the land of Shu, I will loosen my hair and become a hermit in the deep hills. Earth under Heaven can hear my promise, and I'll live up to my words!"<sup>[1]</sup> Believing Liu Bei, Sun Quan aborted his plan; however, Liu was actually trying to take Yi Province for himself and negotiated Yiling County and Nan Commandery from Sun.<sup>[2]</sup> In 211, Liu Zhang, Governor of Yi Province, heard that Cao Cao was planning to attack Zhang Lu in Hanzhong. As Hanzhong was a strategic location and the "gateway" into Yi Province, Liu Zhang sent Fa Zheng to form an alliance with Liu Bei after persuasion from Zhang Song. Liu Bei then led his men to Yi Province under the pretense of helping Liu Zhang conquer Hanzhong.

## The campaign

### Takeover of Jiameng

Liu Bei led an expedition force into Sichuan after leaving behind Zhuge Liang, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei and Zhao Yun to guard Jing Province. Liu Zhang received Liu Bei warmly and provided him with more troops under his command as well as abundant provisions and equipment. Liu Bei headed to Jiameng Pass (southwest of present-day Guangyuan, Sichuan) at the border between Liu Zhang and Zhang Lu's territories. Instead of engaging Zhang Lu, Liu Bei halted his advance and focused on building up connections and gaining influence around the area in preparation for his takeover of Yi Province.<sup>[3]</sup>

In 212, Pang Tong outlined three plans for Liu Bei to choose from: The first was to advance swiftly to seize Chengdu from Liu Zhang. The second was to take command of Liu Zhang's armies in the north and then move to capture Chengdu. The third one was to return to Baidicheng to await further action. Liu chose the second option and lied to Liu Zhang that he needed more troops to divert Cao Cao's attention away from the east (where Sun Quan was under attack), and requested for another 10,000 soldiers and additional provisions to aid in the defense of Jing Province. Liu Zhang gave him 40% of the troops and half of the others he asked for.

Zhang Su (張肅), Zhang Song's older brother, discovered his brother's secret communications with Liu Bei and reported the issue to Liu Zhang. Liu Zhang was furious and stunned when he heard that Zhang Song had been helping Liu Bei to plot against him - he had Zhang executed, and ordered his generals guarding the passes to Chengdu to keep secret his knowledge of Liu Bei's intention. Despite so, Liu Bei was informed by his spies planted around Liu Zhang, and before Liu Zhang's men could reach Yang Huai and Gao Pei (高沛), generals guarding Boshui Pass, Liu Bei summoned and killed them on the excuse that they were disrespectful towards him. Liu Bei then took over their troops and turned to attack Fucheng (涪城). On his way, Liu Bei's troops bypassed the city of Zitong, where the defenders closed the gates and resisted the invasion.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Bribery strategy

In the spring of 213, Liu Zhang sent Liu Gui (劉瓚), Ling Bao (冷苞), Zhang Ren, Deng Xian (鄧賢), and other generals under Wu Yi (吳懿) to defend Mianzhu (綿竹). Despite being the most trusted vassal of Liu Zhang, Wu Yi soon changed allegiance, so Li Yan and Fei Guan (費觀) were sent to replace him, but they surrendered to Liu Bei as well. At the time, Liu Zhang's soldiers were not used to intense combat and were low on morale, and he did not dish out intimidating punishments to the families of those surrendered, so only a few generals were determined to fight the invaders. On the contrary, Liu Bei was promising to provide wealth and positions to those who would switch allegiance, so many generals simply welcomed him along his way until he reached the city of Luo (雒, today's Guanghan, northwest of Chengdu), where the ones who could not be bought by wealth nor power played their staunch defense.

### Defense of Luo

The remnant force was now placed under command of Liu Zhang's son Liu Xun, and he retreated to Luo to join forces with Ling Bao. There, Liu Bei had the city surrounded, and his advisor Pang Tong personally led a major assault, but the defenders fought back with projectiles and Pang was killed by a stray arrow. Thus, the siege became a prolonged one, forcing Liu Bei to call forth reinforcements from Jing Province. Zhang Fei led an army from Jing Province to attack Jiangzhou (in present-day Chongqing), where he captured an enemy general, Yan Yan. Facing Zhang Fei's insults, Yan Yan condemned him for invading Yi Province. Yan Yan was originally ordered to be executed by the angry Zhang Fei, but his fearlessness of death impressed Zhang, who pardoned the captive's life. Following the Dian River (墊江), Zhang Fei broke through a thin defense line, guarded by an enemy major, and rendezvoused with Liu Bei. Zhao Yun and Zhuge Liang also arrived from another route.

One of Liu Zhang's general, Zhang Ren, attempted to broke the siege by leading his men onto the Wild Goose Bridge and charging Liu Bei's forces, but he was defeated and captured. His loyalty and bravery were well known, so Liu Bei ordered his army to force the captive into submission. However, Zhang Ren cried out his famous line: "A loyal subject will never serve two masters!" Liu Bei lamented on his determination and had him executed.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Fall of Chengdu

More than a year had passed and Luo finally fell, but Liu Zhang continued to hold on inside Chengdu. Ma Chao, a former Liang Province warlord and a vassal of Zhang Lu, was persuaded by Liu Bei to kill his comrade, Yang Bai (楊柏), and joined Liu. Upon seeing Ma Chao's army to the north of Chengdu, the citizens inside the city was terrified, but they still insisted on fighting a desperate war.<sup>[6]</sup> However, Liu Zhang came out, and said to the public that the people had already fought for him for more than three years, and his heart was broken upon seeing the commoners dying on the field just for the sake of him. Thus, he opened the city gates and surrendered himself to Liu Bei; everyone inside the city wept for Liu Zhang's sacrifice.<sup>[7]</sup> Liu Bei then succeeded Liu Zhang as Governor of Yi Province, and he conferred on the latter the seal and tassel of General Who Inspires Awe (奮威將軍) before expatriating him to Gong'an.

Liu Bei married Wu Yi's sister and attempted to solidify his control on the newly conquered domain. Most of Liu Bei's followers, new and old, were promoted to higher ranks; and a set of straight law code was applied to Yi Province, replacing the softer one set by Liu Zhang.

## Aftermath

Upon hearing Liu Bei had taken Yi Province, Sun Quan sent envoys to ask him for the return of his interest in southern Jing Province, but Liu said: "Jing Province will be returned after I take Liang Province."<sup>[8]</sup> Sun Quan was furious when his envoy reported Liu Bei's words, and he sent Lü Meng and Ling Tong with another four generals to take over southern Jing province. Three commanderies were soon conquered, and Liu Bei personally went to Gong'an in an attempt to retake them, but he finally came to a border treaty with Sun Quan when he heard Cao Cao was planning to attack Hanzhong.

## Order of battle

### Liu Bei forces

- Liu Bei
- † Pang Tong
- Liu Feng
- Huang Zhong
- Wei Yan
- Huo Jun
- Zhang Fei
- Zhuge Liang
- Zhao Yun
- Ma Chao, defected over from Zhang Lu's side to Liu Bei

## Liu Zhang forces

- 卞 Liu Zhang
- Zhang Ren, captured and executed
- 卞 Zhuo Ying (卓膺)
- 卞 Wu Lan (吳蘭)
- 卞 Lei Tong
- 卞 Liu Xun
- Yang Huai, executed by Liu Bei
- Gao Pei (高沛), executed by Liu Bei
- † Liu Gui (劉璣)
- † Ling Bao (冷苞)
- 卞 Deng Xian (鄧賢)
- 卞 Wu Yi (吳懿)
- 卞 Li Yan
- 卞 Fei Guan (費觀)
- 卞 Zhang Yi (張翼)
- Yan Yan, captured and surrendered
- 卞 Huang Quan

## Modern references

The campaign is featured as one of the playable stages in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. In the game, all the battles in the campaign were aptly summed up in one single battle, called the "Battle of Chengdu", although technically, there was no battle fought at Chengdu at all in the campaign. In *Dynasty Warriors 3* and *Dynasty Warriors 4*, Liu Zhang's surrender is optional and often a special requirement for certain unlockable items. The concept was removed in *Dynasty Warriors 5* and Liu Zhang surrenders immediately after his defeat. In *Dynasty Warriors 6*, the battle is renamed to "Pacification of Chengdu" and the geographical design of the stage has changed but the events remain almost the same. In *Dynasty Warriors 7*, the campaign is split into two battles with the Battle of Luo Castle and battle of Chengdu. Battle of Luo Castle has Liu Xun as commander of Liu Zhang's forces and Pang Tong as commander of Liu Bei's forces. The battle serves as Pang's only appearance in story mode. The Battle of Chengdu follows Lou Castle with Zhuge Liang as commander after Pang's death.

## References

- [1] ((孫權)遣孫瑜率水軍住夏口。備不聽軍過，謂瑜曰：「汝欲取蜀，吾當被發入山，不失信於天下也。」) Sun Quan once wanted to attack Yi Province with Liu Bei, but was remonstrated by the latter. Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.
- [2] Yiling was an entrance to Yi Province from Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan).
- [3] (先主北到葭萌，未即討魯，厚樹恩德，以收衆心。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.
- [4] (劉璋時入蜀為梓潼令。先主起事葭萌，進軍來南，連閉城不降) A prefect of Zitong sealed the gates when Liu Bei rebelled at Jiameng Pass, and refused to surrender.
- [5] (益部耆舊雜記曰：任勒兵出於雁橋，戰復敗。禽任。先主聞任之忠勇，令軍降之，任厲聲曰：「老臣終不復事二主矣。」乃殺之。先主嘆惜焉。) *The Old folklore of Yi Province* by Chen Shou records the capture of Zhang Ren.
- [6] (先主遣人迎超，超將兵徑到城下。城中震怖) This passage from *Records of Three Kingdoms* states that the residents within the city were stunned and terrified. Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 36, Biographies of Guan, Zhang, Ma, Huang, and Zhao.
- [7] (城中尚有精兵三萬人，谷帛支一年，吏民咸欲死戰。璋言：「父子在州二十餘年，無恩德以加百姓。百姓攻戰三年，肌膏草野者，以璋故也，何心能安！」遂開城出降，群下莫不流涕。) This passage from *Records of the Three Kingdoms* states that the residents of Chengdu wished to fight Liu Bei to the death,

but Liu Zhang said to them that he did not want to see them die for him and surrendered. Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 31, Biographies of the two Governor Lius.

[8] (孫權以先主已得益州，使使報欲得荊州。先主言：「須得涼州，當以荊州相與。」權忿之) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.

## 1st Battle of Ruxukou

Battle of Ruxu	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	213
<b>Location</b>	Ruxu, Yang Province, on the eastern side of present-day Lake Chaohu, Anhui.
<b>Result</b>	Sun Quan overall victory; Cao Cao retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Sun Quan
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao Sun Guan †?	Sun Quan Lü Meng
Strength	
400,000 <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>	70,000 <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>

Battle of Ruxu (213)	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	濡須之戰
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	濡須之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Rúxū Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Ruxukou	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	濡須口之戰
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	濡須口之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Rúxūkǒu Zhī Zhàn

**The Battle of Ruxu**, also known as the **Battle of Ruxukou**, was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Sun Quan in 213 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle consisted of multiple attacks led by Cao Cao, but all were eventually lifted after efforts by Sun Quan's forces.

## Background

Before 213, Cao Cao was undergoing war with Ma Chao and Sun Quan following his defeat during the Battle of Red Cliffs. One of the movements that Cao wanted to make in his war against Sun Quan was to intimidate Sun by placing general Xie Qi (謝奇) in Huangcheng, (皖城; present-day Huaining, Anhui) and spread his forces to Qichun (蕲春) in order to agitate Sun Quan.<sup>[1]</sup>

In order to stop Cao's harassment, Sun sent his general Lü Meng to demand Xie Qi to surrender at once. However, Xie Qi refused, therefore Lü then was forced to respond in means of an attack. Xie Qi went down easily and retreated.<sup>[2]</sup> Two of Xie Qi's subordinates, Sun Zicai and Song Hao, quickly surrendered to Lü Meng, fishing up morale. Cao Cao then began to mobilize troops to attack Ruxu (濡須) and captured a captain general named Gongsun Yang under Sun Quan. Sun Quan, in response, ordered Lü Meng to follow his personal lead of his forces to stop Cao's march onto Ruxu.

## The battle

While Sun Quan was setting up a plan for the defense of Ruxu, Lü Meng had schemed a defense against Cao consisting of warships readied at a quickly established dock,<sup>[3]</sup> to be used to backfire Cao Cao's advance after a flood that was supposed to occur not long into the battle.

Sun Guan, who died in battle at Ruxu in either 213 or 217, was perhaps fatally injured in his attack onto Sun Quan's line of defense by Xu Sheng. Sun Guan died not long after his rescue at Cao's camp.<sup>[4]</sup>

Lü Meng's prediction quickly was proven correct,<sup>[5]</sup> Sun Quan then started to send out his warships onto Cao's army, but a few of their ships were blown off course, but not much.<sup>[6]</sup> (This could have been the death of Dong Xi) Having realized the experience of Sun's army, Cao Cao eventually decided to withdraw.

In a momentum burst, a few other generals of Sun Quan joined Lü Meng in a following assault onto Wan and Lujiang.

## Aftermath

Zhang Liao, following this withdraw, stationed his troops at Hefei,<sup>[7]</sup> where in 215 he played a major role in the Battle of Xiaoyao Ford.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Order of battle

<p><b>Cao Cao's forces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cao Cao, in command.</li> <li>• Sun Guan †?, perhaps attacked the front lines and was fatally injured by Xu Sheng. He died immediately after his attack in Cao Cao's main camp. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zhu Guang, Governor of Wan, captured by Gan Ning afterwards.<sup>[9]</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Sun Quan's forces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun Quan, in command.</li> <li>• Lü Meng, aided Sun Quan in the commanding of their forces. Came up with the plan to use the docks to their advantage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zhou Tai, helped protect Sun Quan's defense lines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Xu Sheng, assisted Zhou Tai with Zhu Ran. Injured Sun Guan.<sup>[10][11]</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gan Ning, helped Lü Meng with Ling Tong to take Wan and Lujiang.<sup>[12]</sup></li> <li>• Ling Tong, helped Lü Meng with Gan Ning to take Wan and Lujiang.</li> <li>• Dong Xi, possibly could have been involved and died during this battle.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## References

- [1] (魏使廬江謝奇為蕪春典農，屯皖田鄉，數為邊寇) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 54, Biography of Lü Meng.
- [2] (伺隙襲擊，奇遂縮退). Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 54, Biography of Lü Meng.
- [3] (權特為案行至濡須塢，因會諸將，大為酣樂) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Zhou Tai.
- [4] (盛獨將兵，上突斫敵，敵披退走，有所傷殺) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Xu Sheng.
- [5] (後從權拒曹公於濡須，數近奇計，又勸權夾水口立塢，所以備御甚精) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 54, Biography of Lü Meng.
- [6] (時乘蒙沖，遇迅風，船落敵岸下) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Xu Sheng.
- [7] (权守合肥十餘日，城不可拔，乃引退) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [8] (辽率诸军追击，几复获权. 太祖大壮辽，拜征东将军. 建安二十一年，太祖复征孙权，到合肥，循行辽战处，叹息者良久.) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [9] (後從攻皖，為升城督. 寧手持練，身緣城，為吏士先，卒破獲朱光.) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Gan Ning.
- [10] (曹公出濡須，從權御之) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Xu Sheng.
- [11] (魏嘗大出橫江，盛與諸將俱赴討) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Xu Sheng.
- [12] (後曹公出濡須，寧為前部督，受敕出斫敵前營) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Gan Ning.
- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, volumes 17, 54, 55.

## Northwestern Subjugation - Battle of Jicheng

Siege of Jicheng	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	213 CE
<b>Location</b>	Gangu County, Gansu, China
<b>Result</b>	Ma Chao victory
Belligerents	
Ma Chao Zhang Lu Qiang people Hu people	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Ma Chao Yang Ang	Wei Kang Yang Yue
Strength	
10,000 <sup>[1]</sup>	1,000



Siege of Jicheng	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	冀城之围
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	冀城之圍
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jìchéng Zhī Wéi

The **Siege of Jicheng** was a part of the campaign Ma Chao initiated in an attempt to retake Liang Province after the coalition of Guanxi (west of Hangu Pass) was defeated at the Battle of Tong Pass in the winter of 211 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty.

## Background

After the coalition melted down, Ma Chao took the remainder of his army toward Lantian, where he could prepare a stand against Cao Cao. Unexpectedly, Su Bo in Hejian rebelled, and Cao Cao decided to lead his main army to quell the uprising, sparing Ma Chao the time to recuperate. Thus, Ma Chao gradually regained his strength, and once again wielded great influence over local non-Han people. To resist Cao Cao, Ma Chao had recruited many Qiang and Hu soldiers, and received reinforcements from Zhang Lu of Hanzhong. He had planned to conquer all counties in Longxi (west of Long Ridges), and within a year, all cities except Jicheng (capital city of Tianshui Commandery) in the area surrendered to the allied force.

## The siege

In 213 Ma Chao started to besiege Jicheng, but it proved to be difficult. Even the Inspector of Liang Province, Wei Kang (韋康), faced an extremely numerical disadvantage, his assistant, Yang Fu, greatly encouraged the defenders by taking lead in protecting the city. Yang Fu recruited scholars and clansmen numbered to around 1,000 to place under the command of his cousin, Yang Yue, and he himself acted as Yang Yue's strategist. Yang Fu told Yang Yue to set up the crescent moon formation atop the city wall to counter Ma Chao's siege and wait for reinforcement from the east. However, from the first month to the eighth month, there had never been any sign that a relief force was on its way, so Wei Kang sent his staff, Yan Wen, out in the middle of a night in an attempt to get help from Xiahou Yuan, who was stationed at Chang'an.

Unfortunately, the old Yan Wen was caught by Ma Chao's soldiers, and Ma Chao tried to use the respected elder to his advantage. The warlord forced the captive to go to the city's front and tell the defenders that no hope would come from Chang'an. However, the stubborn old man shouted, "A grand force from the east is coming, keep holding until they arrive!" For this Ma Chao asked Yan Wen whether the latter treasured his very own life, but Yan did not reply.<sup>[2]</sup> Since Ma Chao had been struggling to breach the city wall for a long time, he wanted to lure the influential Yan Wen to change allegiance, so he gave Yan Wen another chance, asking whether the latter knew anyone inside the city who would welcome the invaders, but the old man still remained silent. Now, Ma Chao was irritated and censured the elder venomously, causing Yan Wen to finally stand up and say, "A gentleman serving a lord can die for him but not betray him, yet you desired an old man to conduct evil speeches! Am I a person who would rather live in shame?"<sup>[3]</sup> Then, a speechless Ma Chao executed Yan Wen in rage.

After witnessing the death of Yan Wen, however, both Wei Kang and the Administrator of Jicheng were terrified, and they hesitated to resist further. Although Yang Fu strongly opposed surrender, Wei Kang opened the city gates and let Ma Chao in. Once Ma Chao got himself inside the fortress-city, he arrested Yang Yue, and asked Zhang Lu's general, Yang Ang, to murder Wei Kang and the Administrator of Jicheng.

## Aftermath

At the beginning of the siege, Cao Cao was fighting Sun Quan in Ruxukou, and after he returned to the city of Ye, he was busy launching the establishment of the principality of Cao Wei.<sup>[4]</sup> Therefore, he was too occupied to send reinforcement, only until the eighth month did he let Xiahou Yuan lead a relief force to Jicheng. Not knowing the city had already fallen, Xiahou's unit ran into that of Ma Chao's 200 *li* outside of Jicheng, where general Xiahou was defeated. Such a victory greatly impressed King Qianwan, leader of the Di tribe, so the latter allied with Ma Chao, who now named himself General Who Conquers The West, Governor of Bing Province.

Conquering Jicheng, Ma Chao had gained a base from which to command the majority of Liang and exert influence around the area. However, Ma Chao's success would not last long, as Yang Fu contacted some former officers of Wei Kang to rebel against Ma Chao simultaneously at the ninth month of 215. At the end, Ma Chao, Pang De, and his cousin Ma Dai fled Liang Province and took refuge under Zhang Lu.

## Modern references

The Siege on Jicheng is featured in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends* and is called Battle of Ji Castle.

## Notes

[1] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 25, Biographies of Xin Pi, Yang Fu, and Gaotang Long.

[2] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pangs, and Yan.

[3] (夫事君有死无贰，而卿乃欲令长者出不义之言，吾岂苟生者乎?) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biographies of the two Lis, Zang, Wen, Lü, Xu, Dian, the two Pangs, and Yan.

[4] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Biography of Cao Cao.

## References

- Chen Shou (2002). *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Yue Lu Shu She. ISBN 7-80665-198-5.

# Northwestern Subjugation - Battle of Lucheng

Battle of Lucheng	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	213 CE
<b>Location</b>	Li County and Gangu County, Gansu
<b>Result</b>	Yang Fu victory; Ma Chao flees
Belligerents	
Ma Chao	Yang Fu Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Ma Chao	Yang Fu Jiang Xu Xiahou Yuan

Battle of Lucheng	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	鹵城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	鹵城之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Lǔchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Lucheng** of 213 was part of a rebellion led by Yang Fu against the warlord Ma Chao in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The revolt was initiated by disgruntled parties under the new rule of Ma Chao, who forcefully took over governorship of Liang Province from Wei Kang (韋康) in the Siege of Jicheng.

## Background

Yang Fu wanted to rebel against Ma Chao to avenge his former lord Wei Kang. He had the support of his two friends Zhao Qu (趙衢), and Liang Kuan (梁寬). One day he went to Ma Chao and told him his wife died and he wanted to take two months off to bury her. On the way he visited his cousin Jiang Xu (姜叙) for aid. he decided to take action along with his two aides, Zhao Ang, and Yin Feng.

## The battle

Zhao Qu gave Ma Chao false advice to attack Jiang Xu, Yang Fu, Zhao Ang, and Yin Feng immediately, and he would guard Jicheng in Ma's absence. After Ma Chao left with Ma Dai and Pang De to put down the rebellion, Zhao Qu, and Liang Kuan took over and slaughtered Ma Chao's family. Meanwhile Ma Chao, Ma Dai, and Pang De went to oppose Yang Fu and Jiang Xu in Lucheng. At first it look like the defenders had no chance, but then they retreated and Ma Chao pursued. They kept on retreating until the second army led by Zhao Ang and Yin Feng arrived. Then Xiahou Yuan's army sent by Cao Cao arrived. Even Ma Chao was unable to withstand an attack from three sides so he retreated.

## Retreat from Jicheng

Ma Chao retreated back to Jicheng. He hailed the gates, but his response was a flight of arrows. Zhao Qu and Liang Kuan appeared and they threw his wife's dead body down. Ma Chao filled with rage almost fell off his horse. Eventually they reached Lucheng, the night guards thought that they were their own troops returning. As soon as they were inside they began the slaughter of every one. The even killed Jiang Xu's aged mother.

The next day, Xiahou Yuan arrived and Ma Chao retreated west, only to run into Yang Fu seven miles later. He gripped his spear in rage and charged towards Yang Fu, injuring him five times, but Yang lived. Ma Chao then retreated with Ma Dai and Pang De and took refuge under the warlord Zhang Lu of Hanzhong.

## Aftermath

Ma Chao went and took refuge under Zhang Lu, but he grew unhappy with him and him and his cousin went to live with the Di people. Pang De later went to serve Cao Cao after Zhang Lu surrendered Hanzhong to Cao.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.

# Northwestern Subjugation - Battle of Yangping

Battle of Yangping	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	215 CE
<b>Location</b>	Hanzhong, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Zhang Lu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Cao	Zhang Lu 𠂆

Battle of Yangping	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	阳平之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	陽平之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yángpíng Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Yangping Pass	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	阳平关之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	陽平關之戰

Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Yángpíngguān Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Yangping**, also known as the **Battle of Yangping Pass**, was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Zhang Lu in 215 CE during the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The battle concluded with a victory for Cao Cao.

## Background

In the third lunar month of 215, Cao Cao launched a campaign against Zhang Lu in Hanzhong commandery. When Cao Cao's army arrived at Chencang (陳倉; present-day Chencang District, Baoji, Shaanxi) and was about to pass through Wudu (武都; around present-day Longnan, Gansu), the Di tribes in the area blocked their path, so Cao sent Zhang He, Zhu Ling and others to attack the Di and clear the way. In the fourth month, Cao Cao's army passed through San Pass (散關) and arrived at Hechi (河池). The Di king, Dou Mao (賈茂), led thousands of tribesmen to resist Cao Cao, but Cao defeated them by the following month and he massacred the Di population. Qu Yan (麴演), Jiang Shi (蔣石) and other generals from Xiping (西平) and Jincheng (金城) killed Han Sui and sent his head to Cao Cao.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the seventh month, Cao Cao's forces reached Yangping Pass (陽平關; in present-day Ningqiang County, Hanzhong, Shaanxi) after making a long and arduous journey through mountainous terrain. When his soldiers started complaining, Cao Cao announced that he would remember them for their contributions to encourage them to move on.<sup>[2]</sup>

## The battle

Zhang Lu ordered his younger brother Zhang Wei and officer Yang Ang to lead troops to defend the pass. Zhang Wei and Yang Ang had defensive structures built in the mountainous areas, spanning over 10 *li*, to deter Cao Cao's advances. Cao Cao was unable to overcome the enemy after launching assaults so he withdrew his forces. Zhang Lu's men lowered their defences when they saw Cao Cao retreating. Cao Cao gave secret orders to Xie Biao (解↑剽) and Gao Zuo (高祚) to lead a sneak attack on the enemy at night and they achieved success. Yang Ang was killed in action while Zhang Wei fled under the cover of night.

## Aftermath

Zhang Lu retreated to Bazhong (巴中; in present-day eastern Sichuan) when he heard that Yangping Pass had been taken. Cao Cao's army occupied Nanzheng (南鄭; present-day Nanzheng County, Hanzhong, Shaanxi), the capital of Hanzhong commandery, and seized the precious items stored in Zhang Lu's treasuries.<sup>[3]</sup>

The people in Hanzhong surrendered to Cao Cao, who then renamed the place to "Hanzhong" from its previous name "Hanning" (漢寧).<sup>[4]</sup> Cao Cao separated Anyang (安陽) and Xicheng (西城) counties from Hanzhong and placed them under the jurisdiction of Xicheng commandery (西城郡) and appointed an Administrator (太守) to oversee the commandery. He also partitioned Xi (錫) and Shangyong commandery (上庸郡) and appointed Commandants (都尉) to govern those areas.<sup>[5]</sup> In the ninth month, the tribal king Pu Hu (朴胡) and Du Huo (杜濩), the Marquis of Congyi (竇邑侯), led the people in Bayi (巴夷) and Cong (竇) to submit to Cao Cao. Cao Cao split Ba commandery (巴郡) into Badong (巴東; "East Ba") and Baxi (巴西; "West Ba") commanderies and appointed Pu Hu and Du Huo, who also received marquis titles, as their Administrators respectively. Emperor Xian also granted Cao Cao the authority to confer titles upon the nobles and officials in the area.<sup>[6]</sup>

In the 11th month, Zhang Lu led his followers out of Bazhong and came to surrender to Cao Cao. Cao Cao accepted their surrender and granted marquis titles to Zhang Lu and his five sons. Around the time, Liu Bei had recently seized control of Yi Province (益州; covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) from its governor Liu Zhang and occupied Bazhong after Zhang Lu left. Cao Cao ordered Zhang He to lead a force to attack Liu Bei, but Zhang He lost to Liu's general Zhang Fei at the Battle of Baxi.<sup>[7]</sup>

In the 12th month, Cao Cao left Nanzheng and headed back to Ye (鄴; in present-day Handan, Hebei), leaving behind Xiahou Yuan to guard Hanzhong.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends* and *Dynasty Warriors 7*.

## Notes

- [1] ([二十年]三月，公西征張魯，至陳倉，將自武都入氐；氐人塞道，先遣張郃、朱靈等攻破之。夏四月，公自陳倉以出散關，至河池。氐王竇茂衆萬餘人，恃險不服，五月，公攻屠之。西平、金城諸將麴演、蔣石等共斬送韓遂首。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [2] (魏書曰：軍自武都山行千里，升降險阻，軍人勞苦；公於是大饗，莫不忘其勞。) *Wei Shu* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [3] (秋七月，公至陽平。張魯使弟衛與將楊昂等據陽平關，橫山築城十餘里，攻之不能拔，乃引軍還。賊見大軍退，其守備解散。公乃密遣解、高、高祚等乘險夜襲，大破之，斬其將楊任，進攻衛，衛等夜遁，魯潰奔巴中。公軍入南鄭，盡得魯府庫珍寶。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [4] Hanzhong commandery (漢中郡; covering the area around present-day Hanzhong, Shaanxi) had been called "Hanzhong" since the Warring States period. It was renamed to "Hanning commandery" (漢寧郡) in the late Eastern Han Dynasty, but Cao Cao restored its old name "Hanzhong" in 215 after taking control of the place from Zhang Lu.
- [5] (巴、漢皆降。復漢寧郡為漢中；分漢中之安陽、西城為西城郡，置太守；分錫、上庸郡，置都尉。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [6] (九月，巴七姓夷王朴胡、賓邑侯杜濩舉巴夷、賓民來附，於是分巴郡，以胡為巴東太守，濩為巴西太守，皆封列侯。天子命公承制封拜諸侯守相。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [7] (十一月，魯自巴中將其餘衆降。封魯及五子皆為列侯。劉備襲劉璋，取益州，遂據巴中；遣張郃擊之。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.
- [8] (十二月，公自南鄭還，留夏侯淵屯漢中。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 1.

## References

- Chen, Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
- Pei, Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi zhu)*.

# Hanzhong Campaign

Hanzhong Campaign	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	217-219
<b>Location</b>	Hanzhong, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory; Liu Bei takes control of Hanzhong
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao, Xiahou Yuan †,

Hanzhong Campaign	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	汉中之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	漢中之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Hànzhōng Zhī Zhàn

The **Hanzhong Campaign** was a military campaign launched by the warlord Liu Bei to seize control of the commandery of Hanzhong from his rival Cao Cao. The campaign took place between 217 and 219 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period. Liu Bei emerged victorious and took control of Hanzhong in 219, subsequently declaring himself "King of Hanzhong" in autumn that year.

## Background

In 215, Cao Cao attacked the warlord Zhang Lu in Hanzhong commandery, defeating the latter at the Battle of Yangping. Zhang Lu surrendered and Hanzhong came under Cao Cao's control.

On Liu Bei's side, he had also recently seized control of Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) from Liu Zhang, and was in the midst of a dispute with his ally Sun Quan over Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan). Liu Bei felt threatened when he received news that Hanzhong had fallen to Cao Cao, because Hanzhong was the northern "gateway" into Yi Province, and he was now in danger of losing his home base to Cao Cao. Hence, Liu Bei came to a border treaty with Sun Quan, who had seized Changsha (長沙), Guiyang (桂陽), and Lingling (零陵) from him. Liu Bei asked Sun Quan to divert Cao Cao's attention by attacking Hefei and demanded Lingling back. In return, he recognised Sun Quan's control over Jing Province's commanderies of Changsha, Jiangxia (江夏) and Guiyang.

## Strategic difference

In Hanzhong, Sima Yi and Liu Ye urged Cao Cao to use the opportunity to attack Yi Province, but Cao rejected the idea, saying, "We should not be discontent. Now that we've already conquered Longyou (referring to present-day eastern Gansu), you're still longing about merging Shu (referring to Yi Province)!"<sup>[1]</sup> Cao Cao then left his generals Xiahou Yuan, Zhang He and Xu Huang behind to defend Hanzhong, and his Chief Clerk (長史) Du Xi to oversee affairs in Hanzhong.

In 217, Liu Bei's advisor Fa Zheng analysed the reason Cao Cao left Xiahou Yuan to guard Hanzhong-- the newly conquered Hanzhong was still unstable (partly due to the massive relocation enforced by Cao Cao). Fa Zheng also believed Xiahou Yuan and Zhang He were not good commanders, so the pair could not defend the commandery. Hence, Fa Zheng urged Liu Bei to attack Hanzhong, stating three advantages if the commandery was in Liu's control: the ideal usage of Hanzhong was that it served as a base of operations to attack Cao Cao and revive the Han Dynasty; a decent usage of Hanzhong was that Liu Bei could attack Yong and Liang provinces from it (Hanzhong granted access to the two provinces) and expand his territory; a more conservative mean was that defense of Hanzhong could be a long-lasting strategy for the survival of the Shu regime. Liu Bei agreed to Fa Zheng's insight and ordered him to plan for the upcoming campaign.

## The campaign

### Initial clashes

In 217, Liu Bei followed Huang Quan's strategy and defeated the enemy generals Pu Hu (朴胡) and Du Huo (杜濩), taking control of Badong (巴東) and Baxi (巴西) commanderies, which were respectively guarded by them previously. Liu Bei's army then advanced towards Yangping Pass (陽平關) near Hanzhong. At the same time, Liu Bei also sent Zhang Fei, Ma Chao, Wu Lan (吳蘭), Lei Tong and Ren Kui (任夔) to attack Wudu (武都) commandery, and they garrisoned at Xiabian (下辨). During this time, Lei Ding (雷定) of the Di ethnic group led seven tribes to join Liu Bei. As for Cao Cao's side, Xiahou Yuan defended Yangping Pass, Zhang He and Xu Huang respectively guarded Guangshi (廣石) and Mamingge (馬鳴閣), while Cao Hong and Cao Xiu led a separate force to resist Zhang Fei.

In 218, Zhang Fei and Ma Chao's army garrisoned at Mount Gu (固山), where they spread news that they were going to blockade the enemy's retreat route. Cao Hong wanted to attack Wu Lan at Xiabian, but the other generals were suspicious of Zhang Fei's movements. Cao Xiu thought that if Zhang Fei was really planning to seal their retreat route, he should keep his plan covert; now that Zhang Fei had overtly revealed his intention, they should make use of the opportunity to feign retreat and perform a frontal assault. Cao Hong consented to Cao Xiu's tactic and attacked. Lei Tong and Ren Kui were killed in battle, while Wu Lan fled to join the Di tribes, where he was subsequently killed by a Di leader, Qiang Duan. After such a defeat, Zhang Fei and Ma Chao withdrew their army by the third lunar month.

On another front, Liu Bei was facing Xiahou Yuan at Yangping Pass. In the seventh lunar month, Liu Bei sent Chen Shi to attack Mamingge, but the latter was defeated by Xu Huang, and some of the fleeing soldiers fell into the deep valleys during their escape. Liu Bei personally led an assault on Zhang He at Guangshi but was unable to overcome his enemy. He then sent an urgent letter to Zhuge Liang in his capital, Chengdu, requesting for reinforcements. Zhuge Liang vacillated and consulted Yang Hong (楊洪), who said, "Hanzhong is the throat of Yi Province. This is a critical point of survival and destruction. Without Hanzhong there will be no Shu (Yi Province). A disaster has befallen on the gates of our home. At this moment, the men should go to war, the women should help in transporting supplies, what's there to hesitate about sending reinforcements?"<sup>[2]</sup> Zhuge Liang accepted Yang Hong's advice and sent a relief force to Liu Bei, as Liu Bei continued his standoff against Cao Cao's forces.



## Turn of the tide

In the ninth lunar month of 218, Cao Cao moved from Ye City to Chang'an near Hanzhong to direct the defence against Liu Bei, but had been held up by internal problems including a major coup d'état and some local uprisings. In the meantime, Liu Bei and Xiahou Yuan had been locked in a stalemate for a year. In the first lunar month of 219, to break the deadlock, Liu Bei crossed the Mian River (沔水) south of Yangping Pass and advanced towards Hanzhong through the mountains. Liu Bei's army set up camp at Mount Dingjun. In response, Xiahou Yuan and Zhang He led their forces out in an attempt to take control of higher ground, and they made camp at Zouma Valley (走馬谷). During the night, Liu Bei followed Huang Quan's plan and set fire to the enemy camp fences. Xiahou Yuan led a force to defend the southern flank while sending Zhang He to guard the eastern side. Liu Bei launched a direct assault on Zhang He and Zhang started to falter, so Xiahou Yuan despatched half of his forces to support Zhang. At this point, Fa Zheng told Liu Bei that it was an opportune time to attack. Liu Bei ordered his men to shout loudly and beat the drums, and sent Huang Zhong to charge at the enemy. The mettlesome soldiers of Huang Zhong broke through the enemy lines and slew Xiahou Yuan and Zhao Yong (趙顛), while Zhang He fled with his surviving troops to north of the Han River, where they set up camp.

As Cao Cao's forces had just lost their commander, Xiahou Yuan, a tempest ensued. Du Xi and Guo Huai regrouped their scattered troops and (unofficially) nominated Zhang He to replace Xiahou Yuan. Zhang He accepted and gave orders to his troops, restoring peace and order in his army. The following day, Liu Bei planned to cross the Han River and attack Zhang He, whose officers pointed out they were outnumbered, and suggested to Zhang to set up camps along the Han riverbank.<sup>[3]</sup> Guo Huai felt that their forces were displaying weakness to the enemy by doing so, he proposed setting up camp far away from the river to lure the enemy to cross the shallow, during which they counterattack the enemy.<sup>[4]</sup> Zhang He agreed with Guo Huai's idea and moved his camp further away from the river. Liu Bei became suspicious and did not dare to cross the river. In Chang'an, when Cao Cao heard that Xiahou Yuan had been killed in action, he despatched Cao Zhen with an army to reinforce their forces at Yangping Pass. When Cao Zhen arrived, he directed Xu Huang to attack Liu Bei's general Gao Xiang. Xu Huang scored a victory and temporarily restored some morale for Cao Cao's side.

## Battle of Han River

In the third lunar month of 219, Cao Cao personally led an army from Chang'an to Hanzhong via Xia Valley (斜谷). Liu Bei was not worried, as he thought, "Even if Cao Cao came, he cannot do anything. I'll definitely take control of the Han River."<sup>[5]</sup> Hence, Liu Bei gathered his forces and put up a firm defence, refusing to engage Cao Cao's army.

Later, when Cao Cao's forces were transporting supplies via Beishan (北山), Huang Zhong led a force to rob the enemy's supplies, but had yet to return on time. Zhao Yun led ten horsemen out of camp in search of Huang Zhong and encountered Cao Cao's army. They were surrounded but Zhao Yun fought his way out and retreated back to camp with the enemy in pursuit. Upon reaching camp, Zhao Yun ordered the gates to be opened, flags and banners to be lowered, and the beating of war drums to be stopped. Cao Cao's men feared an ambush in the camp and turned back. Just then, Zhao Yun ordered his troops to beat the drums loudly and his archers to rain arrows on the enemy. Cao Cao's soldiers were thrown into confusion and trampled on each other as they attempted to flee, while many drowned as they tried to escape across the Han River.

As Cao Cao had been in a standoff against Liu Bei for several months and had been facing serious logistics problem, he eventually gave an order, "chicken rib" (雞肋). Cao Cao's men were puzzled as they did not understand what "chicken rib" meant, except for Cao Cao's registrar Yang Xiu. Yang Xiu explained that it was a pity to discard chicken's rib, even though it did not have much meat to be eaten. This was an analogy to the situation Cao Cao was facing: Cao knew that he had little chance of defeating Liu Bei, but felt that it was a pity to just relinquish Hanzhong and withdraw. By the fifth lunar month, Cao Cao retreated back to Chang'an and gave up Hanzhong to Liu Bei.

## Aftermath

A month after successfully conquering Hanzhong, Liu Bei sent Meng Da to attack Fangling (房陵) via Zigui (秭歸). Meng Da defeated and killed Fangling's Administrator, Kuai Qi (蒯祺), and took control of the area. Liu Bei later sent his adopted son, Liu Feng, to attack Shangyong (上庸) via sailing down the Mian River (沔水) from Hanzhong. Shangyong's Administrator Shen Dan (申耽) surrendered to Liu Feng. In the seventh lunar month of 219, Liu Bei declared himself "King of Hanzhong".

On the other hand, after withdrawing, Cao Cao was worried that Liu Bei might attack Wudu (武都) commandery, so he ordered the Inspector (刺史) of Yong Province, Zhang Ji, to relocate 50,000 Di people from Wudu to Fufeng (扶風) and Tianshui (天水) commanderies.

## Order of battle

### Liu Bei forces

- Director of Retainers (司隸校尉) **Liu Bei**
  - General Who Spreads Martial Might (揚武將軍) **Fa Zheng**
  - Protector of the Army (護軍) **Huang Quan**
  - General Who Attacks Barbarians (討虜將軍) **Huang Zhong**
  - General of the Standard (牙門將軍) **Wei Yan**
  - Vice General of the Household in the Army (副軍中郎將) **Liu Feng**
  - **Chen Shi**
  - **Gao Xiang**
- Assisting General of the Army (翊軍將軍) **Zhao Yun**
  - **Zhang Zhu** (張著)
- General Who Attacks Barbarians (征虜將軍) **Zhang Fei**
- General Who Pacifies the West (平西將軍) **Ma Chao**
  - † **Wu Lan** (吳蘭)
  - † **Lei Tong**
  - † **Ren Kui** (任夔)

### Cao Cao forces

- King of Wei (魏王) **Cao Cao**
  - Protector of the Army Who Attacks Shu (征蜀護軍) **Cao Zhen**
  - Registrar (主簿) **Yang Xiu**
  - North General of the Household (北中郎將) **Cao Zhang**
- † General Who Attacks the West (征西將軍) **Xiahou Yuan**
  - † Inspector of Yi Province (益州刺史) **Zhao Yong** (趙顛)
  - General Who Rocks Bandits (盪寇將軍) **Zhang He**
  - Imperial Son-in-Law and Commandant (駙馬都尉) **Du Xi**
  - Major (司馬) **Guo Huai**
  - † **Xiahou Rong** (夏侯榮)
- Protector-General (都護將軍) **Cao Hong**
  - Cavalry Commandant (騎都尉) **Cao Xiu**
  - Administrator of Wudu (武都太守) **Yang Fu**
- General Who Pacifies Bandits (平寇將軍) **Xu Huang**

- † **Pu Hu** (朴胡)
- † **Du Huo** (杜濩)

## Notes

- [1] (人苦無足，既得隴右，復欲得蜀！) Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1, Biography of Sima Yi.
- [2] (漢中則益州咽喉，存亡之機會，若無漢中則無蜀矣。此家門之禍也。方今之事，男子當戰，女子當運，發兵何疑？) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 41, Biography of Yang Hong.
- [3] (其明日，备欲渡汉水来攻。诸将仪众寡不敌，备便乘胜，欲依水为陈以拒之。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Biography of Guo Huai.
- [4] (淮曰：“此示弱而不足挫敌，非算也。不如远水为陈，引而致之，半济而后击，备可破也。”既陈，备疑不渡，淮遂坚守，示无还心。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Biography of Guo Huai.
- [5] (曹公雖來，無能為也，我必有漢川矣。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 32, Biography of Liu Bei.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
- Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*.
- Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*.

# Hanzhong Campaign - Battle of Baxi

Battle of Baxi	
Part of the Hanzhong Campaign	
<b>Date</b>	215 CE
<b>Location</b>	Baxi (near present-day Hanzhong, Shaanxi), China
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang Fei	Zhang He

Battle of Baxi	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	巴西之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	巴西之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Bāxī Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Baxi** was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Cao Cao in 215 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Liu Bei's forces, led by Zhang Fei, scored a victory over Cao Cao's army, which was led by Zhang He.

### The battle

Cao Cao defeated Zhang Lu at the Battle of Yangping and conquered Hanzhong. He stationed Xiahou Yuan and Zhang He to defend the Han valley. Zhang He led several battalions from the main army separately south to Baxi, intending to evacuate and relocate civilians to Hanzhong. He advanced to Dangqu, Mengtou, Dangshi and opposed Zhang Fei's army for approximately 50 days. Zhang Fei directed more than 10,000 soldiers through an alternate route to intercept and ambush Zhang He from another direction. Zhang He's army was divided and its divisions were unable to support each other because of difficulty traversing the mountain paths, Zhang Fei subsequently defeated Zhang He. Zhang He retreated, and arrived at Nanzheng with only a few dozen men.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Notes

[1] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 36, Biography of Zhang Fei.

### References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.

## Hanzhong Campaign - Battle of Mount Dingjun

Battle of Mount Dingjun	
Part of the Hanzhong Campaign	
	
Caltrops excavated from Mount Dingjun, dated to the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	218 - 219 CE
<b>Location</b>	Foot of Mount Dingjun, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Liu Bei Huang Zhong	Xiahou Yuan †

Battle of Mount Dingjun	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	定军山之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	定軍山之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Dìngjūnshān Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Mount Dingjun** was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Cao Cao in 219 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Liu Bei's victory in the battle marked a major milestone in his Hanzhong Campaign.

## The battle

In 217, Liu Bei led a campaign to attack Hanzhong, which was under the control of Cao Cao. His force met with resistance led by Xiahou Yuan at Yangping Pass (陽平關). The confrontation dragged on for more than a year until one night, Liu Bei set fire to the barbed fence around Xiahou Yuan's camp at the foot of Mount Dingjun. Alarmed by the attack, Xiahou Yuan sent Zhang He to defend the eastern corner of the camp, while he guarded the south. Liu Bei's main force pressed against Zhang He, outmatching the latter. Xiahou Yuan had to dispatch a fraction of his own troops to Zhang He's rescue.

Accompanied by drums, the division led by general Huang Zhong then descended upon Xiahou Yuan's dwindling force. The battle became a rout and Xiahou Yuan and his son Xiahou Rong were both killed in action along with his deputy.

## In fiction

In chapter 71 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Xiahou Yuan had his camp set up on Mount Dingjun, so he could easily see the enemy camp at the bottom of the mountain. Huang Zhong moved his camp nearer and nearer to Xiahou Yuan's camp every few days.

Later, Xiahou Yuan came up with a strategy to lure Huang Zhong and capture him. He sent Xiahou Shang to Huang Zhong's camp, challenging Huang to come out and fight him. However, Chen Shi, Huang Zhong's subordinate, volunteered to fight Xiahou Shang. Xiahou Shang feigned defeat and retreated. Chen Shi would not give up and pursued Xiahou Shang, but fell into an ambush set by Xiahou Yuan and was captured. Xiahou Yuan was not very happy as he had expected to capture Huang Zhong. Xiahou Shang was later captured by Huang Zhong in battle.

Xiahou Yuan decided to release Chen Shi in return for Xiahou Shang, which Huang Zhong agreed. The next day, at the frontline, where the prisoners were exchanged, Huang Zhong fired an arrow at Xiahou Shang and wounded him. Xiahou Yuan was furious and wanted to fight Huang Zhong but was stopped by Zhang He. Xiahou Yuan had no choice but to return to his camp and defend firmly.

At the advice of Fa Zheng, Huang Zhong moved his forces to Mount Tiandang, a nearby mountain with a higher peak. Xiahou Yuan could not tolerate enemy forces having the vantage point, and decided to attack Mount Tiandang. Huang Zhong, however, kept his forces back and did not engage Xiahou Yuan.

Later, Fa Zheng saw that Xiahou Yuan's forces were dispirited. He then signaled Huang Zhong to attack Xiahou Yuan. Xiahou Yuan could not respond in time and was killed by Huang Zhong, who cleaved Xiahou right beneath the shoulders. The victory consolidated Huang Zhong's position as one of the Five Tiger Generals.

When Cao Cao heard of Xiahou Yuan's death, he broke down in tears. Only then did he understand the words of the soothsayer Guan Lu (管辂):

**Three and eight run criss-cross** (The year was the twenty-fourth of Jian'an or AD 219);

**A yellow Pig meets a Tiger** (It was the month of the Tiger in the year of the Pig);

**South of the halted army** (Actually the south of Mount Dingjun (which means a halted army));

**A limb will be lost** (Referring to Xiahou Yuan, who was said to be a good, loyal friend and cousin of Cao Cao).

## Peking opera

The battle is also reenacted in Peking opera, based on the novel. It was said that the actor playing Xiahou Yuan would get a red envelope for his performance during the Chinese New Year, since it is considered bad fortune to be "killed" on stage at that time of the year. The first Chinese film ever made, *The Battle of Dingjunshan* (1905), was a recording of the Peking opera.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Coordinates: 32°52′46″N 103°51′53″E<sup>[1]</sup>

## References

- [1] [http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle\\_of\\_Mount\\_Dingjun&params=32\\_52\\_46\\_N\\_103\\_51\\_53\\_E\\_region:CN\\_type:event\\_source:dewiki](http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle_of_Mount_Dingjun&params=32_52_46_N_103_51_53_E_region:CN_type:event_source:dewiki)

# Hanzhong Campaign - Battle of Han River

Battle of Han River	
Part of the Hanzhong Campaign	
<b>Date</b>	219 CE
<b>Location</b>	Hanzhong, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Liu Bei victory
Belligerents	
Liu Bei	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Zhao Yun	Cao Cao
Strength	
3,000-5000	

Battle of Han River	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	汉水之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	漢水之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Hànshuǐ Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Han River** was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Cao Cao in 219 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle was the last major engagement in the Hanzhong Campaign, in which Liu Bei emerged victorious and subsequently declared himself King of Hanzhong.

## Background

Cao Cao was defeated by Liu Bei at the Battle of Mount Dingjun in 219 and his general Xiahou Yuan was killed in action. In retaliation, Cao Cao led a large army to attack Liu Bei's camp at the south of the Han River. Liu Bei sent his generals Zhao Yun and Huang Zhong to defend. Huang Zhong and Zhang Zhu went to destroy the enemy's supplies while Zhao Yun would remain in the camp with Zhang Yi unless they did not return.

## The battle

Huang Zhong's army moved to burn the supplies of grain Cao Cao had at the North Mountain; his troops marched in the night, and at sunrise they reached the granary. Wei general Zhang He's army arrived before Huang Zhong could successfully burn the grain. Cao Cao then sent Wei general Xu Huang to intercept Huang Zhong and block his retreat. He succeeded, and Huang Zhong's army was surrounded. Zhao Yun's army dispatched to look for Huang Zhong after he had not returned by noon.

Zhao Yun left Zhang Yi in charge of the camp's defense. He then departed to find Huang Zhong in battle, and successfully rescued him and retreated back to the main camp.

When Zhang Yi heard that Cao Cao's army was in pursuit of Zhao Yun, and was headed towards the main camp he thought they should close the gates and while they make preparation. However, as soon as Zhao Yun returned to camp he ordered all flags and banners removed, all drums silenced, and the gates to be left open completely. He stationed all his archers and crossbowmen in a covered area outside, and he stood in front of the gates. Fearing an ambush, Cao Cao ordered his men to retreat. As his men began to retreat Zhao Yun ordered his men to beat the drums as loudly as they could, and rain arrows down on the retreating enemy.

Zhao Yun, Huang Zhong, and Zhang Zhu closed down on Cao Cao's army. They rushed toward the Han River, and in confusion many were pushed in to the river and drowned. Meanwhile Meng Da and Liu Feng arrived and burned all the enemy supplies at the North Mountain.

## Aftermath

Liu Bei came and inspected the battlefield and exclaimed, "Zhao Yun has valor through and through". He ordered a celebration to late that night honoring Zhao Yun. From then on, Liu Bei's army called Zhao Yun "General of Tiger's Might" (虎威將軍).

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends*. The player can choose to play as Zhao Yun or Huang Zhong, with both characters following different paths even though they are in the same battleground.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
  - Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
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# Battle of Xiaoyao Ford

Battle of Xiaoyao Ford	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	214–215
<b>Location</b>	East of Hefei, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao victory; Sun Quan retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Sun Quan
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang Liao Li Dian Yue Jin	Sun Quan
Strength	
325,000 from the 26 armies under general Xiahou Dun, <sup>[1]</sup> 7,000 standardised soldiers inside Hefei fortress, Qingzhou Corps under Zang Ba and Sun Guan, 800 volunteer soldiers	~100,000, 1,000 bodyguards under Sun Quan, 300 men under Ling Tong
Casualties and losses	
700+	1300+

Battle of Xiaoyao Ford	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	逍遥津之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	逍遙津之戰
<b>Literal meaning</b>	Battle of Leisure Ford
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xiāoyáojīn Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Hefei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xiaoyao Ford**, also known as the **Battle of Leisure Ford**, **Battle of Hefei**, and **Hefei Campaign**, was fought between the warlords Cao Cao and Sun Quan between 214 and 215 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. The two

contending sides were fighting for control over a strategic fortress at Hefei, which was defended by Cao Cao's general Zhang Liao. Towards the end of the campaign, Zhang Liao made use of force concentration and launched a sneak counteroffensive on Sun Quan at Leisure Ford, where Sun only had 1,000 soldiers with him at the time. Amidst the chaos, Sun Quan was nearly captured if not saved by his general Ling Tong, and this pursuit effectively placed Zhang Liao at the zenith of all of Cao Cao's generals.

## Background

Long before Sun Quan solidified his control over southeastern China, Cao Cao had already appointed Liu Fu as the Inspector of Yang Province, and ordered him to build up fortifications that could withstand besiegers. Thus, Liu Fu oversaw the construction of Hefei fortress (合肥城), and prepared plenty of military supplies, including boulders, logs, and several thousand cans of fish oil.

In late 208 after the Battle of Red Cliffs, Sun Quan led an army to invade Hefei but was unsuccessful despite several months of progress. The following year, the local parvenus and two former subordinates of Yuan Shu and Liu Fu, Chen Lan and Mei Cheng (梅成), rebelled in Lujiang (廬江) after the death of Liu Fu (whom they trusted), but the revolt was suppressed by Cao Cao's generals Zhang Liao and Zang Ba. Cao Cao then ordered Zhang Liao, Yue Jin and Li Dian to lead 7,000 troops to enter Hefei fortress, Xiahou Dun to lead 26 *juns* (325,000 men) to prepare for probable attacks, and Xiahou Yuan to handle logistics. Chen Lan's ally, Lei Bo, surrendered to another warlord Liu Bei.

In 213 Cao Cao brought with him a 400,000 strong army to attack Sun Quan's 70,000 men at Ruxukou (濡須口), but was unable to suppress his foe for more than a month, so he was forced to change from an offensive stand to a defensive one. After his repeated failures against the southerners, Cao Cao was worried that the various counties along the Yangtze River would be taken by Sun Quan, so he adopted a Fabian strategy and started to form military communities (families of soldiers were concentrated and ordered to live together within fortifications in the district). The Yangtze region became depopulated as residents were relocated except for Huancheng (皖城, present-day Huaining County, Anqing, Anhui), which was situated south of Hefei. Cao Cao appointed Zhu Guang (朱光) as Administrator of Lujiang and ordered him to garrison at Huancheng, promoting agriculture and bribing wealthy locals in Poyang (鄱陽) to spy on Sun Quan's side and harass the enemy's rear.

## The campaign

### Battle of Huan City

In the fifth lunar month of 214, Sun Quan took advantage of heavy rains and floods in the Huai River region to sail up the Yangtze and attack Huancheng (citadel or headquarter of Huan City), which served as a cushion and storehouse for Zhang Liao's and Xiahou Dun's armies. Sun Quan faced two options: to build siege engines and use them to attack or order his foot soldiers to attack right away. Lü Meng suggested the latter option and recommended Gan Ning to lead the vanguard to initiate the offensive. Upon knowing Sun Quan had arrived on the battlefield, Zhang Liao moved out of Hefei fortress to reinforce Huancheng. However, Sun Quan's highly spirited troops conquered Huancheng within a day, and Zhu Guang, as well as his advisor Dong He (董和), were captured. By the time Zhang Liao reached Jiashi (夾石), he received news of the fall of Huancheng, so he withdrew back to Hefei.

Around this time, Liu Bei had taken over Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) from Liu Zhang, so Sun Quan sent Zhuge Jin to demand from Liu Bei the return of Jing Province. Liu Bei refused, and Guan Yu also drove away the officials Sun Quan sent to three commanderies in southern Jing Province. Sun Quan then withdrew his elite generals from the northern frontier and ordered Lü Meng and Ling Tong to lead 20,000 troops to take the three commanderies of Jing Province, while sending Lu Su to lead 10,000 men to garrison at Baqiu (巴丘) to resist Guan Yu, while he personally stationed at Lukou (陸口) to serve as backup. Liu Bei also led his army to Gong'an (公安) and sent Guan Yu with 30,000 men to Yiyang (益陽). Lü Meng and Ling Tong took three

commanderies by strategy and led their men with Sun Jiao and Pan Zhang to support Lu Su at Yiyang. Taking the opportunity of the Liu-Sun conflict, Cao Cao led an army to attack Zhang Lu of Hanzhong. Liu Bei was afraid that if Hanzhong fell to Cao Cao, Yi Province would be in peril as Hanzhong was the "gateway" to Yi Province. Hence, Liu Bei made peace with Sun Quan by dividing southern Jing Province. In return, Sun Quan promised to divert Cao Cao's attention from the west by attacking Hefei fortress.

### An unorthodox order

Before Cao Cao left to attack Zhang Lu, he left his representative Xue Ti (薛悌) with a letter that read "Open when the enemy arrives" on the envelope.<sup>[2]</sup> As Sun Quan's army was already advancing towards Hefei, the defending generals then opened the letter as instructed. It stated, "When Sun Quan arrives, generals Zhang (Liao) and Li (Dian) will engage him; General Yue (Jin) will remain behind to defend and not go to battle."<sup>[3]</sup> The generals were puzzled by the instructions. It was well known that Li Dian and Zhang Liao had a personal feud, and Yue Jin lacked experience on defending a fortress, even though he was renowned to be the best vanguard in Cao Cao's forces. As the three of them did not get along well with each other, Zhang Liao feared that they might disobey orders.<sup>[4]</sup> He said, "Our lord is away at war. By the time his reinforcements reach here, we're already done for. So he is actually instructing us to take advantage of the situation, when the enemy has just arrived and not fully gathered yet, to attack them and devastate their morale so as to calm our men and strengthen our defences. Victory or defeat, it all depends on this battle. Why are the two of you still hesitating?"<sup>[5]</sup> Li Dian was moved and he said, "This is a national crisis. We'll see how your strategy works out. How can I allow my personal affairs take precedence over my official duties?"<sup>[6]</sup> Zhang Liao then selected 800 "die-hard" soldiers overnight in preparation for the upcoming battle, and threw a banquet for his men.

### Battle around the fortress

The following morning, Zhang Liao led the 800 soldiers on a charge targeting Sun Quan's camp. Sun Quan's forces were setting up camps and did not expect that the small detachment of Zhang Liao would perform a frontal assault. Xu Sheng and Song Qian in the front were routed after a brief skirmish. Xu Sheng was wounded and lost his personal weapon in the process. Soon, Zhang Liao had penetrated Sun Quan's camp. After personally slaying several enemy soldiers and two officers, he cried out, "Zhang Liao is here!" Chen Wu, the commander of Sun Quan's bodyguards, answered Zhang Liao's challenge and went forth to fight him. However, Chen Wu's unit was no match for Zhang Liao's and he was killed by Hao Zhao in the clash.<sup>[7]</sup> Sun Quan was shocked by Zhang Liao's fierce attack and the scene of Chen Wu's death. Xu Sheng and Song Qian's troops turned their backs when they saw their commanders being killed or fleeing. Pan Zhang killed two deserting soldiers, forcing them to fulfil their duties.<sup>[8]</sup> Ling Tong, who just arrived on the field, led Sun Quan to a hill and ordered his men to use the long *jis* to form a defensive formation before he went down to battle Zhang Liao. At the bottom of the hill, Zhang Liao shouted for Sun Quan to come down and fight him, but Sun did not dare to move. When Sun Quan saw that the situation had become more stable and Zhang Liao was only left with slightly more than a hundred men, he ordered He Qi to surround Zhang Liao and his men. During the battle He Qi retrieved Xu Sheng's *mao* (矛, a weapon that resembled a 4.74m long spear), which the latter lost earlier.<sup>[9]</sup> However, Zhang Liao fought fiercely and succeeded in breaking out of the encirclement. When his remaining men who were still trapped inside shouted, "Has our general abandoned us?"<sup>[10]</sup> Zhang Liao turned back and punched through layers of enemy soldiers to save his men, eventually succeeding in bringing them out. Sun Quan's men were stunned by Zhang Liao's valour and did not dare to stand in his way.

Pan Zhang was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General while Ling Tong was appointed as Right Commander after the engagement, but the battle, which lasted from the early morning until noon, had drastically drained the morale of Sun Quan's troops. Zhang Liao brought his surviving men back to the city and fortified his defences. Zhang Liao's victory boosted his men's fighting spirits and instilled confidence in the defenders.

When Sun Quan's forces had all arrived and gathered, they launched an assault on the city. However, Hefei's walls were not easy to breach, as its previous defending official, Liu Fu, had put in a lot of effort to strengthen the fortress' fortifications and the defenders were well equipped. After several days, Sun Quan was still unable to take the city. At that time, a plague broke out in his army, so Sun Quan had no choice but to withdraw his army.

### **Battle at Xiaoyao Ford**

In order to avoid being infected with the plague, Sun Quan ordered the rest of his units to retreat first while his guards, numbering only about 1,000, were the last to move.<sup>[11]</sup> While observing the enemy, Zhang Liao found the best time to counterattack, as Sun Quan had the least number of troops with him at that moment. He waited until Sun Quan's army had reached the northern crossing of Xiaoyao Ford when he, Li Dian and Yue Jin, led all their forces out of Hefei for an all-out assault on the enemy.

When Sun Quan saw that all the armies in Hefei were advancing out to attack him, he realised he was in danger and hurriedly sent men to recall back his units that retreated before him. However, as those units had already boarded the ships for quite some time, Sun Quan was unable to recall them back in time. As the 1,000 men of Sun Quan were engulfed by Zhang Liao's veteran cavalries, Ling Tong led 300 horsemen to pierce into the encirclement, keeping any enemy away from Sun Quan and engaging Zhang Liao's army in a bloody battle.<sup>[12]</sup> At that time, Sun Quan's side was thrown into confusion and the battle signals were not given, only Ling Tong's 300 men reacted swiftly, so Gan Ning shouted at the drummers to beat their drums loudly to give out orders for other units to fight, while he personally held a bow to fire arrows at the enemy.<sup>[13]</sup>

As soon as Ling Tong dragged Sun Quan out from the thick of the enemies, he urged Sun to leave the battlefield while he stayed behind to buy time for his lord's escape. Sun Quan hurried to the southern shore until he reached the crossing at Xiaoyao Ford, but the bridge had been destroyed, leaving a near 10 metre-long gap in the middle. Gu Li, Sun Quan's attendant, told his master to sit tight, grab the reins firmly, and maintain control of the horse. Gu Li then went behind the horse and gave it a few whips to drive it forward. The horse then leapt across the broken bridge successfully to the southern side.<sup>[14]</sup> Ling Tong turned back to command his remaining men to hold off the enemy after seeing that Sun Quan had leapt across the bridge to safety.

On the northern shore, Ling Tong, who was determined to sacrifice for his lord's cause, remained fighting until all his 300 men had died and the other units had retreated. He was targeted by Zhang Liao, Li Dian, and Hao Zhao, and sustained wounds all over his body. Knowing Sun Quan must have long reached to safety by this time, Ling Tong also attempted to fight a way out. He single-handedly killed dozens of enemy horsemen along his way, and succeeded in breaking out from Zhang Liao's tether, but was despaired by the sight that all roads were blockaded. As the enemies were closing in quickly, without hesitation, Ling Tong dived into the water before discarding his armour.<sup>[15]</sup>

At that time, Sun Quan had already boarded a boat, and he was surprised and delighted to see Ling Tong still alive on the water. He immediately brought Ling Tong onto his ship and rejoiced in this miraculous reunion, but Ling was deeply saddened as none of his close aides survived and he could not help weeping. Sun Quan comforted him, saying, "Gongji (Ling Tong's courtesy name), let the dead go. As long as you live, why worry that you'll have no men under you?"<sup>[16]</sup> Sun Quan later put Ling Tong in command of twice the number of troops he originally had.

## Aftermath

During a banquet hosted by Sun Quan after the battle, He Qi wept and said, "My lord, as a leader of men, you should be prudent. Like what happened today, we were almost wiped out and the men are traumatised. I hope you'll take this as a life lesson." Sun Quan thanked He Qi for his advice and promised to remember it for life.

When the battle was over, Zhang Liao, Li Dian, and Yue Jin were still lingering on the battlefield in hope that they would find Sun Quan's corpse. They were not aware that Sun Quan had already escaped until Zhang Liao asked a surrendered enemy soldier, "Who was that purple-bearded, long-bodied, short-legged man so skilled in mounted archery?" The soldier replied that the man was Sun Quan. Zhang Liao then told Yue Jin that he regretted not chasing after that purple-bearded general (Sun Quan) or else he would have caught him.

When the news reached Cao Cao, he could hardly believe his subordinates had achieved a deed he had been unable to attain, so he later travelled to Leisure Ford to observe the battlefield for a long time.<sup>[17]</sup> Cao Cao was so pleased with the three generals' shining accomplishment. Zhang Liao was promoted to the rank of "General Who Conquers the East".<sup>[18]</sup> Li Dian was granted 100 more households, with a total of 300 under him now. Yue Jin received 500 more taxable households, now having a total of 1,200 households. 500 households were split to Yue Jin's son, who also participated in the battle. Yue Jin's son also received the title of a marquis, while the father was promoted to "General of the Right".<sup>[19]</sup>

On Sun Quan's side, Ling Tong and Pan Zhang were promoted to "Lieutenant General"<sup>[20]</sup> while Jiang Qin was appointed "General Who Eliminates Bandits".<sup>[21]</sup> Sun Quan also attended Chen Wu's funeral and ordered Chen's favourite concubine to join him in death.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Order of battle

Cao Cao forces	Sun Quan forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Who Rocks Bandits (蕩寇將軍) <b>Zhang Liao</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hao Zhao</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• General Who Breaks and Charges (折衝將軍) <b>Yue Jin</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yue Jin's son</li> </ul> </li> <li>• General Who Defeats Barbarians (破虜將軍) <b>Li Dian</b></li> <li>• <b>Zang Ba</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wu Dun</b> (吳敦)</li> <li>• <b>Yin Li</b></li> <li>• <b>Sun Guan</b> (孫觀)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Protector of the Army (護軍) <b>Xue Ti</b> (薛悌)</li> <li>• <b>Xiahou Dun</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Han Hao</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General of Chariots and Cavalry (車騎將軍), Governor of Xu Province (徐州牧) <b>Sun Quan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colonel of Military Ferocity (武猛校尉) <b>Pan Zhang</b></li> <li>• General of Military Vigour (奮武將軍) <b>He Qi</b></li> <li>• General of the Household Who Pacifies Bandits (平賊中郎將) <b>Xu Sheng</b></li> <li>• † Lieutenant General / Five Regiments Inspector (偏將軍 / 五校督) <b>Chen Wu</b></li> <li>• Colonel Who Inherits Fierceness (承烈校尉) <b>Ling Tong</b></li> <li>• General Who Breaks and Charges (折衝將軍) <b>Gan Ning</b></li> <li>• General of Tiger Might (虎威將軍) <b>Lü Meng</b></li> <li>• General of the Household Who Attacks Yue (討越中郎將) <b>Jiang Qin</b></li> <li>• Center Major (中司馬) <b>Zhuge Jin</b></li> <li>• Center Major (中司馬) <b>Song Qian</b></li> <li>• <b>Gu Li</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. In the games, the battle is known as the "Battle of He Fei", and is not to be confused with another stage (Battle of He Fei Castle), which refers to the Battle of Hefei (234).

## Notes

- [1] According to *Zhou Official - Grand Marshal* (周官·大司馬), every 125,00 soldiers form a *jun* (military unit).
- [2] (賊至乃發) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [3] (若孫權至者，張、李將軍出戰；樂將軍守護軍，勿得與戰。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [4] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biography of Li Dian.
- [5] (公遠征在外，比救至，彼破我必矣。是以教指及其未合逆擊之，折其盛勢，以安衆心，然後可守也。成敗之機，在此一戰，諸君何疑?) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [6] (此国家大事，顾君计何如耳，吾可以私憾而忘公义乎!) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biography of Li Dian.
- [7] (随张辽先登陷陈，斩偏将军陈武。) The *Shanxi Tongzhi* (山西通志) edited by scholars under supervision of the local government of Shanxi in China.
- [8] (璋身次在後，便馳進，橫馬斬謙、盛兵走者二人，兵皆還戰。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
- [9] (時城中出戰，徐盛被創失矛，齊引兵拒擊，得盛所失。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 60, Biography of He Qi.
- [10] (將軍棄我乎!) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [11] (會疫疾，軍旅皆已引出，唯車下虎士千餘人。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Gan Ning.
- [12] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Ling Tong.
- [13] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Gan Ning.
- [14] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [15] (統復還戰，左右盡死，身亦被創，所殺數十人，度權已免，乃還。橋敗路絕，統被甲潛行。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Ling Tong.
- [16] (公績，亡者已矣，苟使卿在，何患無人?) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Ling Tong.
- [17] (太祖复征孙权，到合肥，循行辽战处，叹息者良久。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [18] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- [19] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Yue Jin
- [20] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
- [21] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Jiang Qin.
- [22] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Chen Wu.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*.

## 2nd Battle of Ruxukou

Battle of Ruxu	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	217 CE
<b>Location</b>	Yang Province, China
<b>Result</b>	Indecisive, Cao Cao retreat
Belligerents	
Sun Quan	Cao Cao
Commanders and leaders	
Sun Quan	Cao Cao
Strength	
73,000 (estimated) <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>	400,000 (estimated) <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>

Battle of Ruxu (217)	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	濡須之戰
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	濡須之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Rúxū Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Ruxukou	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	濡須口之戰
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	濡須口之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Rúxūkǒu Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Ruxu**, also known as the **Battle of Ruxukou**, was fought between the warlords Sun Quan and Cao Cao in 217 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Two years earlier, Sun Quan attempted to take control of Hefei fortress, but failed due to a sudden plague and the staunch resistance put up by Cao Cao's forces under Zhang Liao. Since then, Cao Cao had been making preparations for a counterattack on Sun Quan, and he personally led his navy to Ruxu to fight a decisive battle.

This battle is not to be confused with another earlier battle that also took place at Ruxu in 213, where Cao Cao defeated Sun Quan.

## The battle

Before Cao Cao's massive army arrived at the battlefield, Sun Quan's second-in-command, Lü Meng, had already started to strengthen the defense of Ruxu fort, leaving the transportation and retreat route open for Sun.

On the other hand, Cao Cao had his Hefei fortress operated as a front-line base, where he and Zhang Liao station their troops; in addition, Cao Cao ordered Zang Ba and Sun Guan to mobilize their "Qingzhou Corps" to the battlefield.

When Cao Cao pressed on Ruxu fort, Sun sent out Ling Tong, Xu Sheng and the likes to do battle. During the ensuing engagement, Sun Guan was killed in action, and Cao Cao temporarily waived the attack. The development was not as optimistic as Cao had expected, so he set up numerous camps across a river, and gestured a long-term war. Cao ordered Xiahou Dun to lead his "29 armies" from Juchao to the frontline; Xiahou Yuan was responsible for the supply to the "29 armies".

Facing the growing number of Cao Cao's troops, Sun Quan ordered his generals to maintain a line of defense, which Cao was never able to break.

The tide of battle turned heavily in Sun Quan's favor when Gan Ning led 100 men into Cao Cao's main camp under cover of nightfall and laid waste to the camp, throwing Cao's armies into confusion. Gan Ning and his unit left without any casualties, and the demoralized armies of Cao Cao withdrew from the battle.

## Order of battle

Sun Quan forces	Cao Cao forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun Quan</li> <li>• Lü Meng</li> <li>• Han Dang</li> <li>• Gu Li</li> <li>• Jiang Qin</li> <li>• Xu Sheng</li> <li>• Zhou Tai</li> <li>• Gan Ning</li> <li>• Sun Jiao</li> <li>• Ling Tong</li> <li>• Xu Xiong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cao Cao</li> <li>• Xiahou Dun</li> <li>• Cao Ren</li> <li>• Zhang Liao</li> </ul>

## Modern references

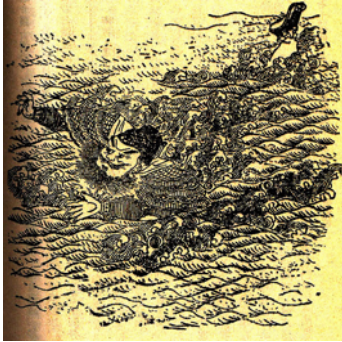
The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends*. If the player is playing on Sun Quan's side, he can use Gan Ning's night raid to win the battle. In earlier versions of the game, this battle is merged with the Battle of He Fei.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Gan Ning.
- Rafe de Crespigny. *Generals of the South*.



# Battle of Fancheng

Battle of Fancheng	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
	
Illustration of Pang De in a scene during the Battle of Fancheng from a Qing Dynasty edition of <i>Romance of the Three Kingdoms</i>	
<b>Date</b>	July – September, 219
<b>Location</b>	Fancheng (present-day Fancheng District, Xiangyang, Hubei, China)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Cao Pyrrhic victory
Belligerents	
Cao Cao	Liu Bei
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Ren Yu Jin Pang De Xu Huang	Guan Yu
Strength	
≈100,000 men	70,000+ men (30,000 from surrendered troops + several thousand rebels)
Casualties and losses	
40,000+ men	40,000+

Battle of Fancheng	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	樊城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	樊城之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Fánchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Fancheng** was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Cao Cao in 219 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. It was named after Fancheng (樊城; also known as Fan Castle or Fan City), an ancient fortress situated in present-day Fancheng District, Xiangyang, Hubei.

## Background

In October 218, Cao Cao's general Hou Yin (侯音) and his deputy Wei Kai (衛開) of Wan (宛; present-day Nanyang, Henan) rose in rebellion with several thousand troops, and they requested Guan Yu for assistance.<sup>[1]</sup> It would take four months for Cao Ren to finally crush the rebellion by killing both Hou Yin and Wei Kai, but Guan Yu did not respond to the rebels throughout the duration. After taking Hanzhong by defeating Cao Cao in May 219, Liu Bei further expanded his gains in June 219 by sending Meng Da and Liu Feng to take Fangling (房陵; present-day Fang County, Hubei) and Shangyong (上庸; north of present-day Zhushan County, Hubei). Cao Cao was temporarily forced to be on the defensive after a continuous setback and Sun Quan of Jiangdong decided to take the opportunity to attack Cao Cao while their newly defeated men were regrouping and resting.

Realizing the imminent attacks of Liu Bei and Sun Quan, Cao Cao planned to launch a preemptive strike on Jing Province (荊州; covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), the eastern part of Liu Bei's territory defended by Guan Yu. The plan reasoned that Liu Bei could not continue his offensive in the north due to the need to consolidate his new gains, and so an attack into Jing Province would not be hindered by Liu's invasion elsewhere. However, the plan was called off because Cao Cao's troops still needed time to recover, regroup and re-supply from the campaign to suppress the rebellion of Hou Yin and Wei Kai, as well as from earlier setbacks in the struggles for Hanzhong. The worn-out troops were not ready for another campaign.

## Battle

### Initial stages

In July, 219, Sun Quan mobilized his forces in preparation to attack Hefei, and Cao Cao's forces were redeployed to the region to the south of the Huai River to fend off the possible invasion. Seizing the opportunity, Guan Yu decided to launch an offensive of his own against Cao Cao. Mi Fang, Administrator of Nan Commandery (南郡; present-day Jiangling County, Hubei) was ordered to stay behind to guard Jiangling (江陵) city of Nan Commandery, while general Shi Ren was ordered to stay behind to guard Gong'an (公安; northwest of present-day Gong'an County, Hubei). Liu Bei's main force in the region was led by Guan Yu himself to attack Cao Cao's strongholds in the north.

The campaign's objective was not clearly stated, but Guan Yu led his army along the Han River northward until he laid siege to Fancheng (present-day Fancheng District Xiangyang, Hubei). From the advance route and the fact that Guan chose to concentrate his main forces on Fancheng, his primary objective was believed to be the conquest of Nanyang commandery. Initially, the cities being attacked were not heavily guarded, as Cao Ren at Fancheng and Lü Chang (呂常) at Xiangyang (襄陽; present-day Xiangzhou District Xiangyang, Hubei) were both surrounded. Therefore, Cao Cao ordered Yu Jin to aid Cao Ren. After pitching camp on a lower ground about 4km north to Fancheng, Yu Jin started to prepare a counteroffensive. Eager to prove his loyalty as he was suspected by others, general Pang De volunteered to lead a detachment to engage Guan Yu, successfully forcing the latter to retreat several times. On one occasion, Pang De shot an arrow that became embedded in Guan Yu's helm. Since then Pang De was widely known and feared among the enemy as General White Horse, from the white steed he rode into battle.

Although Guan Yu could not surpass Pang De in battle, he nevertheless held firm control over the water routes around the area and maintained the encirclement of Fancheng. A few setbacks were far from enough to discourage Guan Yu.

### Turning of the tide

In August, heavy rain caused the Han River to flood. Forces under the command of Yu Jin and Pang De were completely annihilated by the natural disaster, suffering at least 40,000 fatalities, and another 30,000 were captured by Guan Yu's navy. Pang De and Yu Jin were both captured; Yu begged for his life and surrendered, while Pang refused to surrender and was executed. Cao Ren, with several thousand of his surviving troops were forced on the defensive by staying behind the safety of the walls. At the time, Xu Huang, who stationed in Wancheng with his force purely consisted of new recruits, could only put up a defensive posture instead of venturing out to relief Cao Ren. Sensing the swift change, the Inspector of Jing Province (the position that had the authority to raise troops from within the entire Jing Province<sup>[2]</sup>), Hu Xiu (胡修), and Cao Cao's Administrator of Nan Town (Nan Town was located southeast of present-day Xichuan County, Henan), Fu Fang (傅方), both defected to Guan Yu. The rebel leaders of Liang (梁), Xia (郟), and Luhun (陸渾, located southeast of present-day Song County, Henan) also officially accepted Guan Yu's command.

Guan Yu's threat to Cao Cao after his initial success was so immense that Cao Cao once considered relocating the capital. As Cao Cao asked his subjects for input, Sima Yi and Jiang Ji (蔣濟) strongly opposed. They pointed out that the alliance between Liu Bei and Sun Quan was shaky at the best due to the feuding of the control of Jing Province, and Sun Quan would definitely be unhappy to see Guan Yu's success. They suggested that Cao Cao should send an emissary to Sun Quan to recognize the latter's control over Jiangnan should Sun Quan agree to flank Guan Yu's rear.

Initially, Sun Quan sent an emissary to Guan Yu relating his wish for a marriage be arranged between his own son and Guan's daughter. However, Guan Yu insulted the emissary and rejected the marriage proposal, infuriating Sun Quan, an ally Liu Bei could not afford to lose. The initial victory also proved to be the prelude to catastrophe for Guan Yu because it had made him overconfident. At the outbreak of the battle, Liu Bei controlled three commanderies of Jing Province: Nan, Lingling, and Wuling, albeit the most among all three powers, Guan Yu lacked the experience to handle a huge army, especially one with the size under his command at the time, when his force nearly doubled as 30,000 troops captured in his earlier victory joined his army. In order to feed his army, Guan Yu sent out troops to confiscate grains stored by Sun Quan in the local border region. This further irritated Sun Quan, and coupled with Guan Yu's rejection of Sun Quan's marriage proposal and insult, Sun Quan made up his mind to sever the alliance with Liu Bei.

### Stalemate

After the confiscation of Sun Quan's food supply, Guan Yu further ordered reinforcement from Jiangling and Gong'an to lay siege to the now flooded Fancheng. With only several thousand troops left, Cao Ren was also harassed by low food supplies, so he considered abandoning the city. However, the Administrator of Runan, Man Chong, convinced Cao Ren to stay put by indicating that the flood was only temporary and would not last long. Man Chong also noted that Guan Yu's vanguard had already advanced to Jia (郟) County yet his main force dared not to follow, because he was afraid of being cut off from behind and attacked from both sides. The strategic strongholds Fancheng and Xiangyang were still in Cao Cao's hands, which posed a serious threat to the advancing enemy force that bypassed the two cities. Man Chong argued that if the two fortresses were abandoned, the entire region to the south of Yellow River would be in danger of being overrun by the enemy, because not only the region Guan Yu attacked would be lost, the vast region in the east would be lost to Sun Quan since Cao Cao's force deployed there would risk being cut off should Guan Yu decide to strike in that direction. Hence, Man Chong concluded, these two citadels must be held at all costs and the defenders must fight to the very last man. Cao Ren agreed and strengthened the defense, and boosted his troops to over 10,000 by drafting every available man in the city.

As Xu Huang was ordered to reinforce Cao Ren, Cao Cao sent two generals, Xu Shang (徐商) and Lü Jian (呂建) to lead additional reinforcements to join Xu Huang, ordering the latter that he should never attack until all of the reinforcement sent to him had arrived. To wait for further reinforcements, Xu Huang pushed toward Yangling (陽

陵) Slope, located to the north of Fancheng. As the majority of Cao Cao's force under Xu Huang's command consisted of new recruits, Xu faithfully carried out Cao Cao's order to restrain from attacking. Guan Yu was well aware of Xu Huang's situation, and coupled with the earlier victory, he thus completely ignored Xu Huang's threat and committed a serious blunder by dividing his force by sending another army to Xiangyang, because he mistakenly believed that Fancheng would easily fall into his control. However, due to the defenders' strong resolve, the city remain defiant.

Guan Yu made further strategic blunders in allowing his vanguard advancing too far ahead of his main force and not linking up with the vanguard promptly in a time he could not afford to split his force. As a result, the vanguard was around three miles to the north of Fancheng, leaving a huge gap between itself and the main camp. Seizing the opportunity, Xu Huang faked the digging of a long trench, giving the false impression of cutting off Guan Yu's vanguard, which fell for the trick and retreated.<sup>[3]</sup> Xu Huang's army therefore took the abandoned Yan (偃) City and pressed further toward Guan Yu's main army. By this time, Xu Huang's force was large enough to pose a threat to Guan Yu, because the 10,000 strong army, which consisted of battle hardened veterans led by Yin Shu (殷署) and Zhu Gai (朱蓋), had joined Xu Huang.

## Strategies

As the stalemate was reached again, Cao Cao's emissary returned to the capital Luoyang with a letter from Sun Quan, which informed Cao that Sun planned to attack Guan Yu from his rear, Jing Province. Sun Quan asked Cao Cao to keep this secret so that Guan Yu would not be prepared, and most of Cao Cao's advisors agreed with the plan. However, Dong Zhao objected, pointing out that Liu Bei and Sun Quan would also be the two adversaries of Cao Cao despite the temporary subjection of Sun Quan to Cao Cao. For the long term goal, it would be in the best interest of Cao Cao to weaken both adversaries, instead of letting one adversary become too strong in the long run. In the short run, if Guan Yu knew about Sun Quan's attack in his rear, he would certainly withdraw his army to reinforce his home base in Jing Province, and the siege of Fancheng would be lifted. In addition, Fancheng was under siege for some period of time, and the morale of Cao Cao's forces was low. If this critical information was not passed along to the defenders, some people inside Fancheng might turn their back on Cao Cao's side, because the food supplies were running out and they knew nothing about the secret agreement with Sun Quan. Furthermore, Dong Zhao pointed out that even if Guan Yu knew Sun Quan's intention, he would not retreat swiftly because of his stubbornness and his confidence on the two cities of Jiangling and Gong'an.

Cao Cao and others were convinced by Dong Zhao and did exactly what he had proposed: copies of Sun Quan's letter was tied to arrows, which were then shot into Fancheng and Guan Yu's camp by Xu Huang's archers. The defenders' morale increased, while Guan Yu was in a dilemma: he neither wanted to abandon the assaults on Cao Cao, because he believed that Jiangling and Gong'an, his rear bases, would not easily fall. Furthermore, if he (Guan Yu) succeeded in defeating the enemy defenders, Sun Quan would certainly exploit the opportunity to attack Cao Cao's weakened defenses instead of attacking the three commanderies under Liu Bei, because it seemed to Guan Yu that Sun Quan had much more to gain in taking the vast region in the eastern region downstream the Yangtze River from Cao Cao. As it turned out, things did not go as Guan Yu had planned. As Guan Yu was hesitating, Cao Cao had personally led another reinforcement army on his way, and had already reached Mo Slope (摩陂; southeast of present-day Jia County, Henan).

## Conclusion

The bulk of the forces under Guan Yu's command was camped in Weitou (圍頭), while the remaining camped in Sizhong (四冢). Xu Huang spread word of an imminent attack on Weitou, but instead, he led his forces to strike Sizhong unexpectedly. Fearing the Sizhong camp would be lost, Guan Yu led 5,000 troops for the rescue, but the attack of Sizhong was only a decoy, as Guan Yu became ambushed by Xu Huang's men when he was on his way for the rescue mission. The defeated Guan Yu withdrew to his main camp, but Xu Huang's force followed closely

behind and charged into Guan's main camp, successfully killing the defectors Hu Xiu and Fu Fang. With his camp overrun by the enemy, Guan Yu was forced to concede defeat by lifting the siege of Fancheng and retreating southward.

All of Cao Cao's commanders at the frontline believed that they should take advantage of the situation and pursue Guan Yu, except Army Advisor Zhao Yan (趙儼), who pointed out that they should not pursue Guan Yu because Guan's force should be left alone so that they could fight Sun Quan, thus weakening both Cao Cao's adversaries. Cao Ren agreed with Zhao Yan and did not pursue Guan Yu, and sure enough, when news of Guan Yu's retreat reached Cao Cao, he sent an emissary to Cao Ren, prohibiting Cao Cao's force from giving a chase for exactly the same reason Cao Ren and Zhao Yan believed in.

## Aftermath

When Guan Yu returned south, he discovered that his rear bases in Jiangling and Gong'an had both surrendered to Lü Meng, the commander of Sun Quan's westward army. Lü Meng held hostage the wives and children of Guan Yu's men, but treated them and the citizenry of Jing Province with the utmost care. Guan Yu's soldiers, hearing that Jing Province had fallen to Sun Quan and their families were in good hands, lost their will to fight and deserted.

Guan Yu, with only a handful of men left, became isolated in Maicheng (麥城; southeast of present-day Dangyang, Hubei) with Sun Quan's forces on three sides and Cao Cao's at the north. As Guan Yu attempted to escape, he and his surviving followers, including his son Guan Ping, his Commandant Zhao Lei, were captured in an ambush in Zhang (章) Town (east of present-day Anyuan County, Hubei) by Sun Quan's generals Zhu Ran and Pan Zhang. Guan Yu was later executed by Sun Quan at Linju (臨沮), along with Guan Ping and Zhao Lei.

## Order of battle

Cao Cao forces	Liu Bei forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Who Subdues the South (征南將軍) <b>Cao Ren</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator of Runan (汝南太守) <b>Man Chong</b></li> <li>Army Advisor (參軍) <b>Zhao Yan</b> (趙儼)</li> <li>General <b>Lü Chang</b> (呂常)</li> </ul> </li> <li>𠂔 General on the Right (右將軍) <b>Yu Jin</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Who Establishes Righteousness (立義將軍) <b>Pang De</b>, captured and executed</li> </ul> </li> <li>General Who Conquers Bandits (平寇將軍) <b>Xu Huang</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General <b>Xu Shang</b> (徐商)</li> <li>General <b>Lü Jian</b> (呂建)</li> <li>General <b>Yin Shu</b> (殷署)</li> <li>General <b>Zhu Gai</b> (朱蓋)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General of the Vanguard (前將軍) <b>Guan Yu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hu Xiu</b> (胡修), the former Inspector of Jing Province (荊州刺史) under Cao Cao</li> <li><b>Fu Fang</b> (傅方), the former Administrator of Southern Town (南鄉太守) under Cao Cao</li> <li><b>Zhao Lei</b> (趙累), Guan Yu's Commandant</li> <li><b>Guan Ping</b>, Guan Yu's son</li> <li><b>Yang Yi</b>, a former official of Jing Province under Cao Cao</li> <li><b>Liao Hua</b>, Guan Yu's secretary</li> <li><b>Sun Lang</b> (孫狼), a peasant rebel leader from Luhun (陸渾)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Analysis

Guan Yu's campaign failed because Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang did not give enough support to Guan Yu (or were unable to give their support), and Guan had overestimated his own capabilities. After Guan captured Yu Jin, he could have declared victory by restating his military goal as destroying the enemy reinforcement, or he could've continued besieging Fancheng. To return to Jiangling was not a bad option for Guan, because he would have consolidated the gain of the campaign, and avoid the risks involved in a prolonged war. Amongst the alternatives, Guan chose to continue the siege, which also was a reasonable choice for him at the time, if the siege would not be a long one. Although the initial success was brought to him by a natural flooding, it did indeed crush the morale of the defenders, and Guan attempted to capitalize on that.

Guan's blunder was not in continuing the siege, but severing ties with Sun Quan. At the beginning of the campaign, he had sent an emissary to Sun to ask for help, and Sun did so, though the reinforcement he sent arrived at the battlefield very slowly. Guan should have realized that he was not deemed trustworthy by Sun at the time; however, instead of strengthening the alliance, he chose to insult Sun's emissaries and rejected his marriage proposal, then confiscated Sun's food shortage on the border without prior notice. At this point, it should not be hard for one to see that Sun would retaliate. However, Guan was overconfident on his signal towers, which were erected on high grounds along the Yangtze River to watch over the movement of Sun's forces. This move had a devastating effect on Guan's fate (as can be seen in Lü Meng's invasion of Jing Province), but only had limited effect on the battle of Fancheng, because Guan was not affected by the news Sun attacked his rear (Guan Yu set up fortifications to fight Xu Huang instead).

The first mistake that Guan did relating directly to his military operations was the misconception of a quick capture of Fancheng. He did not realize that the flood was only temporary, and that Cao Cao could still send reinforcement after reinforcement if he failed to take the city in a short period of time. There is a strategic mistake which contributed to the mistake mentioned — Guan divided his forces into at least three parts: the vanguard in Jia County, the detachment besieging Xiangyang, and the main army he directly controlled. In doing so, he violated the law of force concentration, and the siege on any single point would be longer than if he concentrated his forces. Then, when Xu Huang arrived the battlefield with some untrained and weak soldiers, Guan should have delivered a crushing blow to his old friend before Xu could even get prepared, but he instead focused on building fortifications and attempted to mimic what Zhou Yu did in the Battle of Jiangling. The last operational mistake is that Guan underestimated his old acquaintance (perhaps Guan actually did a fair evaluation on Xu Huang, as the latter was not highly regarded before the siege of Fancheng). Besides setting up two camps, Guan had 10 layers of barricades facing the direction of Xu's army, but the latter still ordered an attack after he received some elite troops and successfully conquered Guan's camps.

Other historians took a more sympathetic stands for Guan because at the outbreak of the battle, he faced the dilemma of an unfavorable result regardless the offensive was launched or not. In the west, although Liu Bei successfully gained the strategic stronghold, Hanzhong, Liu Bei could not continue his momentum because the population of Hanzhong was drastically reduced as 80,000 residents were relocated into Cao Cao's territories when the latter defeated Zhang Lu years ago.<sup>[4]</sup> Although the Hanzhong region was still possessed of a sizable population, Liu Bei would face logistic problems had he continued his campaign against Cao Cao, because the latter had asked one of his officers to relocate 50,000 households of Di tribes to Liang Province.<sup>[5]</sup> Eliminating his reliable platform to Guanzhong, Cao hindered Liu's offensive in the north. Therefore, Guan led his army north in order to keep pressure on Cao, at the same time buying Liu the time to consolidate his gain. However, the unexpected flood had changed Guan's original goal into conquering northern Jing Province, which is a goal that requires Liu Bei's reinforcement from the west, and Sun Quan's entry from the east. Had Guan Yu not made the blunder of destroying the alliance between Liu Bei and Sun Quan, but instead, strengthened it, he might have a chance of succeeding what he started.

The biggest winner of the conflict was Sun Quan, who not only took back Jing Province from the hand of Liu Bei, but also received Yu Jin and his 30,000 elite troops, and most importantly, Sun Quan had secured Nan Commandery, which was very vital for the survival of the future Eastern Wu regime (it took a short time to travel from Jing Province to Yang Province downstream, if Jing Province was not controlled by the same power that controlled Yang Province, the power controlling Yang Province would be facing probable threat from the other party everyday). Cao Cao also secured his domain in Jing province by successfully fending off Liu Bei's attack, but he was more pleased that the alliance between Liu Bei and Sun Quan melted down, however, Cao Cao would die shortly after the war, and was not able to capitalize on that.

## In fiction

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the flooding of the Han River was not a natural occurrence, but instead, was pre-planned by Guan Yu. Guan had the rivers dammed and the dam opened when it was full, thus drowning Cao Cao's armies in the lower plains. This event was known as the *Drowning of the Seven Armies* (水淹七軍). Pang De put up firm resistance and attempted to escape by swimming, but was captured by Guan Yu's subordinate Zhou Cang. In contrast, Yu Jin was depicted pleading for his life and surrendering to Guan Yu.

Several weeks later, Sun Quan, who had secretly allied with Cao Cao, attacked Guan Yu's army at Jiangling. Sun Quan surprised and defeated Guan Yu's forces there, forcing Guan to lift the siege on Fancheng and retreat. Guan Yu and his son, Guan Ping, while fleeing to Yi Province (covering the Sichuan Basin), were caught and executed by Sun Quan's soldiers.

In the novel, the strength of Guan Yu was greatly exaggerated for dramatic effect, and the most obvious example was that the entire Jing Province was depicted as under Liu Bei's control. In reality, the state was divided into three parts at the time, controlled separately by the three powers, with Liu Bei controlling the least portion, both in terms of population and area, and could only field 25,000 troops at any one time from the region it controlled, with Guan Yu leading only 15,000 troops at the start of the battle. Other important historical facts not mentioned in the novel included the fact that it was Cao Cao who originally planned a preemptive strike against Guan Yu, but failed to materialize because of the need to crush the rebellion first. Logistic support, another deciding factor of the result of the battle, was not mentioned either in novel. Though Guan Yu in real life certainly deserves some credits for his bravery of leading a token force attacking an enemy that was almost ten times of his strength, as well as achieving an astonishing victory during the initial stage, his exploits were exaggerated in the novel because the author, Luo Guanzhong, personally adored Guan Yu, the most eulogized and glorified character in his work.

## Modern references

In Koei's video games *Dynasty Warriors 4* and *Dynasty Warriors 5*, Guan Yu is depicted as simultaneously defending the lands of Jing Province and besieging Fan Castle (Fancheng). The second location is the focus of the stage. Cao Ren is the defending commander, and Sun Quan's forces later appear as reinforcements for Cao Ren. Notably, Pang De takes a prominent role, and proves to be a dangerous opponent for Guan Yu and his allies in this stage. In *Dynasty Warriors 7*, the defense of Fancheng is focused on Wei's side, the invasion of Jing Province is focused on Wu's side, and retreating to Maicheng is focused on Shu's side.

## Notes

- [1] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 1, Note *Biography of Cao Man*.
- [2] de Crespigny, Rafe (1996) *Later Han Military Organisation*. Canberra: Australian National University. Internet Edition.
- [3] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biographies of Zhang, Yue, Yu, Zhang, and Xu.
- [4] (以丞相長史杜襲為駙馬都尉，留督漢中事。襲綏懷開導，百姓自樂出徙洛、鄴者八萬餘口。) Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*, Volume 67.
- [5] (使既之武都，徙氏五萬餘落出居扶風、天水界。) Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*, Volume 68.

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## Invasion of Jing Province

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Lü Meng's invasion of Jing Province	
Part of the wars at the end of the Han Dynasty	
<b>Date</b>	219
<b>Location</b>	Hubei, China
<b>Result</b>	Sun Quan victory
Belligerents	
Sun Quan	Liu Bei
Commanders and leaders	
Lü Meng	Guan Yu

Lü Meng's invasion of Jing Province	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	吕蒙攻取荆州之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	呂蒙攻取荊州之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Lǚ Méng Gōngqǔ Jīngzhōu Zhī Zhàn

**Lü Meng's invasion of Jing Province** was fought between the warlords Sun Quan and Liu Bei in 219 in the late Eastern Han Dynasty. Sun Quan's forces, led by Lü Meng, invaded Liu Bei's territory of Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan), which was defended by Guan Yu, and succeeded in annexing the entire province. The campaign occurred after the Battle of Fancheng and provided the trigger for the subsequent Battle of Xiaoting (also known as the Battle of Yiling).



## Background

In 219, Guan Yu led his troops from Jing Province to attack Cao Cao's stronghold at Fancheng (present-day Fancheng District, Xiangyang, Hubei), that was defended by Cao Ren. Cao Ren was besieged at Fancheng by Guan Yu for some time. Cao Cao's adviser Sima Yi sent an emissary to see Sun Quan, requesting that Sun sent his forces to flank Guan Yu's rear in order to lift the siege on Fancheng. The Jiangnan region was to be given to Sun Quan as spoils of war.

Sun Quan sent an emissary to Guan Yu, relating his wish for a marriage to be arranged between his son and Guan Yu's daughter (possibly named Guan Yinping). Guan Yu rejected the marriage proposal and insulted the emissary, infuriating Sun Quan.

Sun Quan's forces stationed at Lukou (陸口) at the border were commanded by Lü Meng. Lü Meng claimed to be ill and was called back to the headquarters while Lu Xun was sent to replace Lü Meng as acting commander at Lukou. Lü Meng was actually feigning illness and he returned to the headquarters to discuss his plans with Sun Quan. In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Lu Xun wrote a letter to Guan Yu, creating an impression that his forces were weaker than Guan Yu's, to put Guan Yu off guard. Guan Yu fell for the ruse and lowered his guard, thinking that the younger and inexperienced Lu Xun posed no threat to him.

Sun Quan's invasion force gradually increased in size after subsequent reinforcements arrived but since the army was stationed at Xunyang, behind the frontier, Guan Yu's intelligence service was unaware of that and provided no warning to him about a possible invasion by Sun Quan. At the same time, Guan Yu's troops were running low on supplies after Yu Jin's 30,000 surrendered troops joined his army. Guan Yu seized some food supplies from one of Sun Quan's storage bases near the Xiang River and his action further infuriated Sun Quan.

## Capturing Jing Province

In around early December 219, Sun Quan's forces advanced west towards Jing Province. Jiang Qin was in command of a fleet that moved up the Han River to defend against any counterattack. Sun Jiao led his men to the river junction to act as a reserve army and to defend against possible intervention by Cao Cao's forces in their communication lines. Lü Meng led the main force from the base at Xunyang and moved upstream along the Yangtze River. Lü Meng's troops were hidden in barges rowed by soldiers disguised as civilians. They captured all of Guan Yu's surveillance outposts in a surprise attack before the guards could let out any warning signal. The event was known as "crossing the river in civilian clothing" (白衣渡江).

Guan Yu's main defense posts were at Gong'an and Jiangling, guarded by his subordinates Shi Ren and Mi Fang respectively. Shi Ren and Mi Fang were in charge of supplies but they did not assist Guan Yu in the Battle of Fancheng. Guan Yu was furious and replied that he would punish them according to military law once he returned. Shi Ren and Mi Fang were fearful and Mi secretly agreed to defect to Sun Quan's side. When Lü Meng's army attacked Jiangling, Mi Fang surrendered and welcomed Lü Meng's troops into the city. Shi Ren followed suit and surrendered as well, allowing Lü Meng's troops to overrun the entire Jing Province. Lu Xun's army also swiftly captured the counties of Zigui, Zhijiang and Yidao (夷道) as well.

## Retreat and isolation at Maicheng

When Guan Yu learnt that Jing Province had fallen into Lü Meng's control, he ordered a retreat from Fancheng and advanced southwards to retake Jing Province. Lü Meng treated the surrendered troops and civilians of Jing Province well and allowed Guan Yu's messengers to meet their families. The morale of Guan Yu's army plummeted as his soldiers were unwilling to attack their homes and were more inclined to surrender instead when they saw that their families were well-treated. Besides, Cao Cao had already sent Xu Huang to reinforce Cao Ren. Guan Yu was unsuccessful in defeating Xu Huang's army and forced to retreat to Maicheng (麥城; also known as Mai Castle or Mai City, located southeast of present-day Dangyang, Hubei). By then, Guan Yu's army had shrunk in size from

thousands until only a few hundred were left.

Within a few weeks after the start of the campaign, Guan Yu was isolated within Maicheng and surrounded by Sun Quan's forces on three sides and Cao Cao's from the north. On the west, at Zhangxiang, Guan Yu's troops deserted and surrendered. Guan Yu attempted to break out of the encirclement with his surviving men, among whom include his son Guan Ping and his Commandant Zhao Lei. They were captured in an ambush at Zhang Town (章; east of present-day Anyuan County, Hubei) by Sun Quan's generals Zhu Ran and Pan Zhang.

## Aftermath

Sun Quan asked for Guan Yu's surrender but Guan refused. On the advice of his followers and for fear that Guan Yu might pose a threat to him, Sun Quan eventually ordered Guan Yu, Guan Ping and Zhao Lei to be executed in Linju (臨沮). Liao Hua surrendered to Sun Quan but later faked his own death and escaped to rejoin Liu Bei.

Two years later in 221, Liu Bei attacked Sun Quan to retake Jing Province and to avenge Guan Yu, leading to the Battle of Xiaoting (also known as the Battle of Yiling).

## Order of battle

### Sun Quan forces

- Left Protector of the Army / General of Tiger's Might (左護軍 / 虎威將軍) **Lü Meng**
  - Lieutenant General / Right Division Commander (偏將軍 / 右部督) **Lu Xun**
  - General Who Attacks the North (征北將軍) **Zhu Ran**
  - Lieutenant General (偏將軍) **Pan Zhang**
    - Major (司馬) **Ma Zhong**, captured Guan Yu, Guan Ping and Zhao Lei in an ambush

### Liu Bei forces

- General of the Vanguard (前將軍) **Guan Yu**, captured and executed
  - **Guan Ping**, captured and executed
  - **Zhao Lei**, an area commander (都督) under Guan Yu, captured and executed
  - 𠂆 **Liao Hua**, after surrendering he escaped from Sun Quan to rejoin Liu Bei
- 𠂆 **Shi Ren**, defended Gong'an (公安)
- 𠂆 **Mi Fang**, defended Jiangling (江陵)
- 𠂆 Assistant Officer in Headquarters Office (治中從事) **Pan Jun**
- Assistant Officer in Division Office (部從事) **Fan Zhou** (樊岫), refused to surrender and rose in revolt, but failed and was captured and executed
- Administrator of Yidu (宜都郡守) **Fan You** (樊友), escaped
- 𠂆 **Zhan Yan** (詹晏)

## Modern references

The campaign is featured as a playable stage in some installments of Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*, in which it is known as the "Battle of Mai Castle". In some installments this battle is merged with the Battle of Fan Castle into one single stage. Some of Sun Quan's generals, such as Cheng Pu and Gan Ning, who did not participate in the battle in history, appeared in this stage.

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- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 54, Biography of Lü Meng.
- Rafe de Crespigny. *Generals of the South*<sup>[1]</sup> (pages 22–25).

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# 221-230

## Battle of Xiaoting

Battle of Xiaoting	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	July 221 – July 222 CE
<b>Location</b>	Xiaoting (north of present-day Yidu, Hubei) and Yiling (southeast of present-day Yichang, Hubei)
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Wu victory
Belligerents	
Kingdom of Wu	Shu Han, Tribal people in Wuling
Commanders and leaders	
Lu Xun	Liu Bei, Shamoke †
Strength	
50,000 <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>	amounted to 43,000 (40,000 infantry and 2-3,000 cavalry) plus several tens of thousands Wuling barbarian <sup><span>[</span><i>citation needed</i><span>]</span></sup>
Casualties and losses	
	80,000 <sup>[1]</sup>

Battle of Xiaoting	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	猓亭之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	猓亭之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xiāotíng Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Yiling	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	夷陵之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	夷陵之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Yílíng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xiaoting**, also known as the **Battle of Yiling** and the **Battle of Yiling and Xiaoting**, was fought between the kingdom of Wu and the state of Shu Han in 222 CE during the early Three Kingdoms period. The battle was most significant for the decisive Wu victory, which halted the Shu invasion and preceded the death of Shu's emperor Liu Bei in Baidicheng.

## Background

### Guan Yu's death and the fall of Jing Province

In 219, Sun Quan's general Lü Meng invaded and annexed Liu Bei's territory in Jing Province. Guan Yu, the general appointed by Liu Bei to defend Jing Province, was captured after his defeat and executed. Liu Bei was enraged by the sudden attack because Sun Quan was formerly his ally, and also due to his close relationship with Guan Yu.

In 220, Cao Pi forced Emperor Xian to abdicate in his favour, effectively ending the Han Dynasty and establishing the state of Cao Wei. A year later, Liu Bei declared himself "Emperor of Shu Han" in Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing). Sun Quan had not declared himself emperor yet then, but his state (a kingdom), was known as Wu. In 221, Liu Bei planned to attack Wu to retake Jing Province and avenge Guan Yu. However, many of his subjects, including Zhao Yun, opposed his decision, but Liu Bei ignored them.

### Zhang Fei's death

As Liu Bei mobilised his troops in preparation for the attack on Wu, another of his generals, Zhang Fei, was assassinated by his subordinates Fan Qiang and Zhang Da. Zhang Fei was growing impatient with the preparations for war, so he imposed strict deadlines on Fan Qiang and Zhang Da, but his subordinates failed to meet the time limit. Zhang Fei disparaged them before warning them that they would be executed under military law if they foundered again. Out of fear, Fan Qiang and Zhang Da killed Zhang Fei while he was asleep, cut off his head, and defected to Wu.

Liu Bei was overwhelmed with grief over the loss of two of his generals who had accompanied since the beginning of his military exploits. Zhang Fei's death hardened his decision to attack Wu for revenge. Again, many of Liu Bei's subjects, including Zhao Yun and Qin Mi, attempted to dissuade their lord from attacking Wu but Liu dismissed their advice. Eventually, Liu Bei departed from his capital Chengdu with a large army and advanced towards Jing Province on both land and water (along the Yangtze River). He left his chancellor Zhuge Liang and crown prince Liu Shan to defend Chengdu.

## The battle

### First stage

#### Wu defeats

Initially, Wu forces underestimated the enemy's tenacity due to their superiority in numbers. As the advancing Shu army captured regions including Zigui, Wu County, Mount Ba and Mount Xing, Wu forces that set out from their fortifications to engage the enemy were nearly all annihilated. The initial defeat made Sun Quan decide to adopt Lu Xun's strategy and appoint the latter as Grand Viceroy (the *de facto* commander-in-chief of Sun Quan's forces).

Wu forces realised that the Shu troops were better versed in warfare in mountainous terrain as they were mostly ground troops. Thus, they decided to abandon their defences at certain territories and retreat to vital positions and defend them instead. After that, they would hold on to those positions and wait for an opportunity to launch a counterattack.

### **Retreat and stalemates**

In January, Shu naval forces led by Wu Ban and Chen Shi captured Yiling. Liu Bei built his headquarters in Zigui but did not stay there for long as his forces continued to make progress and push further into the heartland of Wu. In February, the Shu vanguard broke through enemy lines at Yidao and defeated the Wu defenders in engagement outside the city. The Wu general Sun Huan, who was guarding Yidao, retreated with his remaining troops into the city and held on to their positions until a stalemate was reached.

Meanwhile, the main Shu force led by Liu Bei reached Xiaoting and was unable to push any further as Wu forces led by Lu Xun held on firmly to their positions. With no further retreat by Wu forces, both sides reached a stalemate at Xiaoting.

### **Falling morale of the Shu army**

As Shu troops ventured further into Wu territory, their supply lines from Chengdu lengthened and supplies took longer to arrive. They also became gradually weary and tired from battle. The terrain became flatter and the Shu infantry lost its advantage in mountainous terrain. Liu Bei deployed his troops in over 50 camps along the 350 km line from Wuxia to Yiling on the southern bank of the Yangtze River. His vanguard army was isolated 150 km away at Yidao. Wu forces thought that it was the best time to launch their counterattack but Lu Xun ordered them to hold on.

By March, most of the Wu forces have evacuated from mountainous terrain and held up in their fortifications on flat terrain. Summer soon arrived and the sweltering heat killed several plants and shrubs. Liu Bei's forces camped at Yiling were directly next to a forest so the heat became even more unbearable. Some Shu soldiers were affected by heatstroke. By then, the Shu army's morale had fallen significantly as compared to at the start of the campaign, as the troops were now weary and suffering from the intense heat.

Liu Bei planned an ambush which turned out to be a failure. He deployed 8,000 elite troops to lie in ambush in nearby valleys and sent Wu Ban to lead a weaker force to challenge and lure Wu forces out of their fortifications into the ambush. However, Lu Xun saw through Liu Bei's ruse and ordered his troops to ignore taunts from the enemy. It was said that he even ordered his troops to put wax into their ears. The failure of the ambush caused the Shu army's morale to plummet even lower.

## **Second stage**

### **Burning of the camps**

Shu troops were suffering from the summer heat as the stalemate, which began in March, continued to progress. Liu Bei decided to shift his camp into the nearby forest for shade and shelter from the heat even though his adviser Ma Liang opposed his decision.

In July, Lu Xun knew that the time was ripe for the counterattack. He ordered saboteurs to encircle Liu Bei's camp by travelling on water with the navy. Once they were behind Liu Bei's camp at Yiling, the saboteurs set the camp on fire. The woods gradually became a fiery inferno within hours as wildfires fuelled by dead plants and dry air erupted everywhere. As Shu soldiers rushed towards the Yangtze River for water to put out the fires, Wu archers lying in ambush shot them down. Shu forces attempted a counterattack, but Wu forces led by Pan Zhang broke through the lines they reformed and made retaliation impossible.

### Shu retreat

The Shu navy fared slightly better by barely managing an orderly retreat. Cheng Ji, a Shu official, personally led a group of men to cover the navy as it withdrew. Wu marine forces caught up with the rear guard of the Shu navy and engaged in battle. Cheng Ji and his men were surrounded by the Wu vanguard force but they managed to hold on by sinking the smaller enemy boats. However, they were eventually outnumbered when the bulk of the Wu navy arrived and were all killed.

Shu forces lost over 40 of their original 50 camps on the 350 km line to a rockslide at the Ma'an Hills. Liu Bei attempted to reform and regroup his remaining forces at the hills to make a last stand. However, his troops were split up before they could regroup as one. The Wu general Zhu Ran led an army of 5,000 to disrupt the lines and prevent Liu Bei from reforming. Lu Xun personally led an attack on Shu forces together with Xu Sheng and Han Dang, and succeeded in preventing Liu Bei from making his last stand. The entire Shu army was nearly wiped out at the Ma'an Hills.

### Liu Bei's escape and death

The remaining camps of the Shu army were set ablaze by retreating Shu soldiers to hinder Wu forces' pursuit. Meanwhile, the isolated Shu vanguard force at Yidao was also completely destroyed by Wu forces. Huang Quan managed to escape together with his deputy Pang Lin and 318 horsemen to the northern bank of the Yangtze River, where they were cut off from the rest of the Shu army, and eventually they decided to surrender to Wei.

Liu Bei fled to Zigui with Wu forces hot on his heels and the demoralised Shu troops were unable to hold their ground and kept retreating. During the withdrawal, Wang Fu, the Shu official in charge of Jing Province, was killed in the ensuing battle, but his death bought time for Liu Bei to continue retreating. Xiang Chong, who was stationed at Jing Province, managed to regroup the surviving Shu troops and lead them on an orderly retreat without them suffering any further great losses.

Xiang Chong also led Liu Bei safely to Yufu (present-day Fengjie County, Chongqing) and managed to repel any further attacks by pursuing enemy forces. Liu Bei was impressed with Xiang Chong and promoted him to the rank of Viceroy. Eventually, reinforcements from Jiangzhou led by Zhao Yun arrived and a stalemate was reached before Wu forces retreated on their own accord, thus ending their counterattack. Of all the Shu commanders who participated in the battle, most of them were killed and only the naval commanders Wu Ban and Chen Shi managed to return safely.

Liu Bei died a year later in the spring of 223 at Baidicheng from dysentery. He was succeeded by his crown prince Liu Shan, with the chancellor Zhuge Liang and the general Li Yan serving as regents.

## Aftermath

The Battle of Xiaoting sealed the fate of Shu as a large portion of its armed forces were destroyed in the battle. Ever since then, Shu's military was not as powerful as it once was.<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup> After Liu Bei's death, Shu was ruled by the chancellor-regent Zhuge Liang on behalf of the new emperor Liu Shan. Zhuge Liang sought to make peace with Wu and restore their alliance. This was achieved in 223.

On the other hand, the Battle of Xiaoting allowed Wu to establish its control over Jing Province after the victory. Lu Xun rose to fame for his role in the battle, and his victory marked the beginning of an illustrious career that led to his appointment as chancellor of Wu more than 20 years after the battle.

## Order of battle

### Shu forces

- **Liu Bei**, Emperor of Shu.
  - **Wu Ban** defeated Li Yi and Liu E in Wu (巫) when the two Wu generals directly faced the Shu army at Nanshan (南山). He garrisoned a naval force at Yiling (彝陵) on the western bank of the Yangtze River to secure the retreat route.
  - † **Feng Xi** defeated Li Yi and Liu E in Wu together with Wu Ban. He served as commissioner (or overall commander) of the land forces.
  - † **Zhang Nan** (張南) served as commander of the vanguard and commissioned the front divisions.
  - **Chen Shi** garrisoned a naval force at Yidao (彝道) on the western bank of the Yangtze River and guarded the supply route.
  - † Palace Attendant (侍中) **Ma Liang** served as the ambassador for Liu Bei to contact the Wuling tribes.
  - General of the Standard (牙門將) **Xiang Chong** (向寵) was responsible for the defence of Liu Bei's camp. He was defeated at Zigui (秭歸).
  - Administrator of Yidu (宜都太守) **Liao Hua** served as a detachment commander (別督).
  - † **Wang Fu** was killed in action at Zigui (秭歸).
  - **Li Chao** (李朝)
  - † **Fu Rong** was killed in action while covering the Shu army's retreat.
  - † **Cheng Ji** (程畿) was killed in action during the Shu army's retreat.
  - **Fu Kuang** (輔匡) served as a detachment commander (別督).
  - **Zhao Rong** (趙融) served as a detachment commander (別督).
  - 𠄎 **Du Lu** (杜路) surrendered to Wu.
  - 𠄎 **Liu Ning** (劉寧) surrendered to Wu.
- General Who Guards the North (鎮北將軍) **Huang Quan** oversaw all the forces stationed north of the Yangtze River. He defected to Wei after the battle.
  - Assistant Officer in Jing Province's Headquarters Office (荊州治中從事) **Pang Lin** (龐林), Pang Tong's younger brother. He surrendered to Wei together with Huang Quan.
- **Zhao Yun** defended Jiangzhou (江州) and moved to Yong'an as reinforcement.
- **Zhang Fei** was supposed to lead a force from Langzhong (閬中) to rendezvous with Liu Bei in Jiangzhou (江州), but was assassinated by his subordinates during mobilisation.
  - **Zhang Da** assassinated Zhang Fei after being abused by the latter. He surrendered to Wu.
  - **Fan Qiang** assassinated Zhang Fei together with Zhang Da and they defected to Wu.

### Wuling tribe

† **Shamoke**, a tribal king allied with Shu.

### Wu forces

- Right Protector of the Army / General Who Guards the West (右護軍 / 鎮西將軍) **Lu Xun**. He was later appointed Grand Viceroy (大都督).
  - General of Martial Brightness (昭武將軍) **Zhu Ran** defended Yidu. He later blocked Shu's return route.
  - General Who Inspires Might (振威將軍) **Pan Zhang**, defended Yiling with Lu Xun. He killed Feng Xi later.
  - Lieutenant General / Administrator of Yongchang (偏將軍 / 永昌太守) **Han Dang**, under Lu Xun's instruction, defeated the Shu army at Yidu.



- **Song Qian** conquered five Shu garrisons during the counterattack.
- General Who Builds Loyalty (建忠將軍) **Luo Tong** defeated the Shu army at Yidu.
- **Xu Sheng** conquered some Shu garrisons during the counterattack.
- **Jiang Yi** (蔣壹), Jiang Qin's son.
- General Who Pacifies the East (安東將軍) **Sun Huan** was besieged in Yidao in the early stages.
  - **Xianyu Dan** (鮮于丹)
  - **Li Yi** (李異) garrisoned at Wu (巫) and Zigui (秭歸).
  - **Liu E** (劉阿) defended Zigui along Li Yi.

### Size of armies

Liu Bei personally led the bulk of Shu's army out for the campaign, with his force amounting to more than 100,000. He was supported by his allies, the tribes along the five creeks further south of Jing Province, amongst them, the strongest was the Wuling tribal king Shamoke, who commanded warriors numbering tens of thousands; while the forces of Wu was anticipating a probable invasion from the state of Wei, and had the army split: the Wu forces in Xiaoting amounted to about 50,000.

### In fiction

The events before, during, and after the Battle of Xiaoting are mentioned in chapters 81-84 of the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi*) by Luo Guanzhong, in which some fictitious stories were included, and actual events largely exaggerated, for dramatic effect.

The following are some notable events related to the battle, as described in the novel:

### Opposition to Liu Bei's decision to go to war

Liu Bei planned to go to war with Sun Quan to avenge Guan Yu and retake Jing Province, but his decision was opposed by many of his subjects. The first person who attempted to dissuade Liu Bei was Zhao Yun, but Liu ignored Zhao and gave orders to prepare for war.<sup>[2]</sup> Following that, several officials came to see the chancellor Zhuge Liang and urge him to stop Liu Bei, so Zhuge brought them along to meet Liu and advise him against his decision, but Liu Bei refused to accept their advice. Just as Liu Bei was preparing for war, Qin Mi opposed his decision to attack Sun Quan, and Liu Bei was so angry that he wanted to have Qin executed, but Zhuge Liang intervened and Qin was spared. Zhuge Liang then submitted a memorial to Liu Bei, explaining why they should not go to war with Sun Quan, but Liu Bei threw the memorial to the ground after reading and exclaimed, "My decision is final. There is no need to advise me against my decision anymore!"<sup>[3]</sup>

### Historicity

The historical text *Sanguozhi* did not mention anything about Zhuge Liang opposing Liu Bei's decision to go to war with Sun Quan. However, it did state that Zhao Yun and Qin Mi attempted to dissuade Liu Bei. The *Yun Biezhuan* mentioned that Zhao Yun advised Liu Bei against attacking Sun Quan, but Liu ignored him and proceeded with his campaign.<sup>[4]</sup> Qin Mi's biography in the *Sanguozhi* stated that Liu Bei had Qin thrown into prison when the latter urged him not to attack Sun Quan on the grounds that the circumstances were unfavourable to them. Qin Mi was released from prison later.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Huang Zhong's death

The Shu general Huang Zhong participated in the campaign against Sun Quan even though he was already over 70 years old at that time, but he was still fit and strong nonetheless. He slew Pan Zhang's subordinate Shi Ji (史蹟) and defeated Pan in an engagement on the first day. On the second day, while pursuing the retreating Pan Zhang, he fell into an ambush and was surrounded by Sun Quan's generals Zhou Tai, Han Dang, Ling Tong and Pan. He was hit by an arrow fired by Ma Zhong. Guan Xing and Zhang Bao saved him, but he died from his wound that night in camp. Liu Bei mourned his death. Since the Battle of Xiaoting historically took place between 221-222, by the novel's account, Huang Zhong's year of death should be around that time.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Historicity

Huang Zhong's biography in the *Sanguozhi* stated that Huang Zhong died in 220, a year after the Hanzhong Campaign ended. His cause of death was not specified.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Guan Xing killing Pan Zhang

In one of the early engagements, Guan Xing encountered the Wu general Pan Zhang, who captured his father Guan Yu in an ambush during the Battle of Maicheng. In his eagerness to avenge his father, Guan Xing pursued Pan Zhang into a valley but lost his way inside. Night fell and Guan Xing wandered around for hours until he found a small house inhabited by an old man, and he requested for food and lodging for the night. Inside the house, Guan Xing saw his father's portrait on the wall. Later that night, Pan Zhang also found his way to the house and asked to stay there. Guan Xing saw Pan Zhang and shouted at him. Just as Pan Zhang was about to walk out of the door, he encountered Guan Yu's ghost and was petrified. Guan Xing caught up with Pan Zhang, killed him, dug out his heart and placed it on the altar as a sacrifice to his father's spirit.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Historicity

Pan Zhang's biography in the *Sanguozhi* stated that he died in 234 — more than 10 years after the Battle of Xiaoting. His cause of death was not specified though.<sup>[9]</sup> Besides, Guan Yu's biography mentioned that Guan Xing served as a civil official in Shu after reaching adulthood (around the age of 19) and died a few years later while in office.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Gan Ning's death

The Wu general Gan Ning was down with dysentery around the time of the Battle of Xiaoting, but he still participated in the battle regardless of his illness. He was resting when he heard that enemy forces were approaching, so he quickly mounted his horse and prepared for battle. He encountered a group of barbarian warriors led by Liu Bei's ally, the tribal king Shamoke. He saw that the enemy force was too large and decided to withdraw without fighting. While retreating on horseback, Gan Ning was hit in the head by an arrow fired by Shamoke. He fled, with the arrow still embedded in his head, reached Fuchi (富池; in present-day Yangxin County, Hubei), sat down under a big tree and died. Dozens of crows on the tree flew around Gan Ning's body. When Sun Quan heard of Gan Ning's death, he was deeply saddened and ordered Gan Ning to be buried with full honours.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Historicity

No details were given on Gan Ning's cause and time of death in his biography in the *Sanguozhi*. Gan Ning's death was briefly stated as follows: When Gan Ning died, Sun Quan deeply lamented his death.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Zhao Yun killing Zhu Ran

Liu Bei retreated under the protection of Guan Xing and Zhang Bao after his camps were set on fire by the Wu forces, and he was pursued by the enemy while withdrawing. At a critical moment, Zhao Yun showed up and blocked the attacks from the Wu soldiers. Zhao Yun encountered the Wu general Zhu Ran during the battle and he killed Zhu and covered Liu Bei as the latter headed towards Baidicheng.<sup>[13]</sup>

### Historicity

The *Yun Biezhuan* stated that Zhao Yun did not participate in the Battle of Xiaoting. Zhao Yun previously urged Liu Bei not to go to war with Sun Quan (see the section above) but Liu ignored his advice and proceeded with the campaign. Liu Bei ordered Zhao Yun to remain behind and put him in charge of Jiangzhou (江州; within present-day Chongqing). When Zhao Yun learnt that Liu Bei had been defeated by Wu forces at Zigui (秭歸), he led a force to Yong'an (永安; within present-day Chongqing) to help Liu Bei, but the Wu forces had already retreated.<sup>[14]</sup>

Zhu Ran's biography in the *Sanguozhi* stated that he died in 249 at the age of 68 (by East Asian age reckoning), about 27 years after the Battle of Xiaoting.<sup>[15]</sup> Besides, Zhu Ran outlived Zhao Yun, who historically died in 229.<sup>[16]</sup>

### Lady Sun's death

News of Liu Bei's defeat in the battle reached his ex-wife Lady Sun, who had returned to Sun Quan's territory in Wu. After hearing rumours that Liu Bei had been killed in battle, Lady Sun ventured out to the bank of the Yangtze River, where she faced the west and cried before drowning herself in the river.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Historicity

Nothing was recorded in history about what happened to Lady Sun after she left Liu Bei and returned to Sun Quan's territory.

### Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*, in which it is known as the "Battle of Yi Ling".

### References

- [1] (權將陸遜大敗劉備，殺其兵八萬餘人，備僅以身免) Fu Xuan's *Fu Zi* explicitly pointed out that the casualty rate was 80,000 on Liu Bei's side.
- [2] (說先主起兵東征。趙雲諫曰：... 遂不聽趙雲之諫，下令起兵伐吳。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 81.
- [3] (當下孔明引百官來奏先主曰：... 次日，先生整兵要行。學士秦宓奏曰：... 孔明聞知，即上表救秦宓。其略曰：... 先主看畢，擲表於地曰：「朕意已決，無得再諫！」) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 81.
- [4] (雲別傳曰：... 孫權襲荊州，先主大怒，欲討權。雲諫曰：「國賊是曹操，非孫權也，且先滅魏，則吳自服。操身雖斃，子丕篡盜，當因衆心，早圖關中，居河、渭上流以討凶逆，關東義士必裹糧策馬以迎王師。不應置魏，先與吳戰；兵勢一交，不得卒解也。」先主不聽，遂東征，留雲督江州。) *Yun Biezhuan* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
- [5] (先主既稱尊號，將東征吳，宓陳天時必無其利，坐下獄幽閉，然後貸出。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 38.
- [6] (卻說章武二年春正月，... 言訖，不省人事，是夜殞於御營。... 先主見黃忠氣絕，哀傷不已，敕具棺槨，葬於成都。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 83.
- [7] (建安二十四年，... 明年卒，...) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.

- [8] (原來關興殺入吳陣，正遇饑人潘璋，驟馬追之。... 早被關興手起劍落，斬於地上，取心瀝血，就關公神像前祭祀。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 83.
- [9] (嘉禾三年卒。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [10] (子興嗣。興字安國，少有令問，丞相諸葛亮深器異之。弱冠為侍中、中監軍，數歲卒。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
- [11] (卻說甘寧正在船中養病，聽知蜀兵大至，火急上馬，正遇一彪蠻兵，人皆披髮跣足，皆使弓弩長鎗，搥牌刀斧；為首乃是番王沙摩柯，生得面如噴血，碧眼突出，使兩個鐵蒺藜骨朵，腰帶兩張弓，威風抖擻。甘寧見其勢大，不敢交鋒，撥馬而走；被沙摩柯一箭射中頭顱。寧帶箭而走，到得富池口，坐於大樹之下而死。樹上群鴉數百，圍繞其屍。吳王聞之，哀痛不已，具禮厚葬，立廟祭祀。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 83.
- [12] (寧卒，權痛惜之。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [13] (雲正殺之間，忽遇朱然，便與交鋒；不一合，一鎗刺朱然於馬下，殺散吳兵，救出先主，望白帝城而走。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 84.
- [14] (先主不聽，遂東征，留雲督江州。先主失利於秭歸，雲進兵至永安，吳軍已退。) *Yun Biezhuan* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
- [15] (年六十八，赤烏十二年卒，...) *Sanguozhi* vol. 56.
- [16] ([建興]七年卒，追謚順平侯。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 36.
- [17] (時孫夫人在吳，聞猊亭兵敗，訛傳先主死於軍中，遂驅車至江邊，望西遙哭，投江而死。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 84.
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# Invasion of Wu

Cao Pi's invasions of Eastern Wu	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
A map showing the invasions (not drawn to scale)	
<b>Date</b>	September 222 - 225
<b>Location</b>	Numerous location along the Yangtze River, Ruxu, Dongkou, and Jiangling
<b>Result</b>	Stalemate
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Pi Cao Ren Cao Zhen Xiahou Shang Cao Xiu Zang Ba	Sun Quan Lü Fan Zhu Ran He Qi
Strength	
100,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>	

During the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history, **Cao Pi**, the first emperor of the state of Cao Wei, **invaded the rival state of Eastern Wu** thrice during his reign in 222-223, 224, and 225. The *casus belli* for the attack was the Wu leader Sun Quan's refusal to send his son Sun Deng as a hostage to the Wei court, under which Wu was a nominal vassal at the time. The invasions were separated into two parts. The first attack occurred in the years 222-224 before Cao Pi ordered total retreat. The second and last part was fought in 225.

## Background

After the Shu Han emperor Liu Bei was defeated by Sun Quan's forces at the Battle of Xiaoting, Sun benefited from his submission to Cao Pi, who would help him in the conflict against Liu Bei.<sup>[2]</sup> However, on both sides, this was never a popular concept, especially in the ranks of Sun Quan,<sup>[2]</sup> who defeated Cao Cao at the Battle of Red Cliffs 14 years ago. To make matters worse, Sun Quan and his officers were uneasy about Sun's titles and ranks (such as King of Wu) because it was quite inappropriate since they were seen as a vassal state under Wei.<sup>[2]</sup> It was even considered within Sun Quan's forces that the alliance with Wei was futile, because the defeat they caused Liu Bei at Xiaoting was so critical that it meant that their alliance with Wei was no longer an asset for survival. Sun Quan also appeared as if he was planning to have this alliance go not much longer than it was supposed to.<sup>[2]</sup>

In a matter of time, Cao Pi's plan to keep Sun Quan and Shu's relations sour backfired as Sun Quan and Liu Bei rekindled their alliance. In an attempt to improve his own relations with the Sun clan, he demanded Sun Deng (Sun Quan's eldest son) to be sent to the Wei capital Luoyang as a hostage. However, Sun Quan declined this request, and later apologized to Cao Pi, stating his son was still very young and vulnerable in his health to be away from his home and family.<sup>[3]</sup> Cao Pi did not bring up or press the matter. However Cao Pi demanded Sun Deng as hostage soon again. This was also declined.

Diplomatic ties between the two continued to sour until finally, Cao Pi would attack Sun Quan. Sun Quan would repetitively send envoys to negotiate peace between the two, but resulted in failure. Soon after, Sun Quan would proceed into declaring independence in November 222.<sup>[3]</sup>

## **First, second, and third invasions: (222-223)**

### **Dongkou**

In the autumn of 222, Wei general Cao Xiu led a naval fleet down the Zijiang tributary river to the Yangtze onto the Wu stronghold at Dongkou, under the command of Wu general Lü Fan. The initial efforts of Wei were a success in battle against the Wu commander, but the Wu reinforcements led by Sun Shao and Xu Sheng managed to stalemate the naval attack. The battle concluded in late spring of 223.

### **Jiangling**

Further west of the Yangtze, Wei generals Cao Zhen, Zhang He, and Xiahou Shang attacked two Wu positions in Jing Province from Xiangyang. Zhang He led the attack to overrun the outpost at Nan Commandery, successfully defeating Sun Sheng in the process. Cao Zhen and Xiahou Shang opened the siege of Jiangling, capital of Jing Province. Though, the Wu forces there were not strong and were under control of Zhu Ran. Though the siege was put on hold when Wu reinforcements led by Pan Zhang and Zhuge Jin arrived. Eventually the Wei camp was plagued by a disease, thus forcing another retreat and another stalemate.

### **Ruxu**

The third invasion was not directed into the region of Changsha nor Jing Province, but more closer to the Wu emperor Sun Quan instead. The late Wu general Gan Ning helped take the Wei outpost in Yang Province at Ruxu, on the eastern bay of present-day Lake Chao, therefore Cao Ren attacked Ruxu. Ironically, the assault also ended in retreat when Cao Ren learned that the other two armies attacking Dongkou and Jiangling withdrew from their positions.

## **Rebellion of Jin Zong**

In the summer of 223, Wu general Jin Zong (晋宗) defected to Wei and moved to the new Wei outpost north of the Yangtze at Qichun. Wu general He Qi led the attack on Jin Zong, however, his forces decided to withdraw due to extremely hot weather conditions. He Qi managed to capture Jin Zong in the process.

## **Fourth invasion: Incident at Guangling**

The last invasion occurred in 225, though no fighting officially occurred. Cao Pi led more than 100,000 in numbers made up of naval vessels towards the location at Guangling, on the opposite side of the Yangtze River from Jianye (present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu). However, the Wu blockade was prepared and the winter was harsh; thus Cao Pi had a slim chance of critical success if he was to engage in combat with Sun Quan. He sighed, and ordered the withdrawal of his forces.

## Notes

- [1] de Crespigny 2004, p. 15: "His headquarters were established in the former capital of the commandery, and it was claimed that the army under his command was more than a hundred thousand."
- [2] de Crespigny 2004, p. 10: "With the full defeat of Liu Bei in the late summer and early autumn of 222, Sun Quan had obtained all possible benefit from his formal submission to Cao Pi and the empire of Wei, and he wasted very little time in breaking that connection. It had never been popular with his officers. ... and even at the time of his enfeoffment as King of Wu there had been those who argued against accepting such a rank from the usurping Emperor, and who suggested that Sun Quan should take some independent title as Lord of Nine Provinces, claiming hegemony in support of Han. This was, as we have discussed, quite inappropriate and impractical in the circumstances, and the submission to Cao Pi was an essential preparation for dealing with Liu Bei. On the other hand, the alliance with the north was always a matter of expediency, and there seems no probability that Sun Quan intended it to last any longer than it needed."
- [3] de Crespigny 2004, p. 11: "Sun Quan sent up a letter of apology, saying that his son was too young and delicate in health to be sent away from home, and for the time being Cao Pi did not press the matter. ... At this ultimatum, surely by no means unexpected, in the tenth month, being early November of 222, Sun Quan declared his independence of Wei."

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# Invasion of Wu - Battle of Dongkou

Battle of Dongkou	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	Autumn (ninth lunar month) of 222 - winter (11th lunar month) of 222 <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Location</b>	Dongkou (洞口; present-day Dongkou County, Hunan, China)
<b>Result</b>	Wu Pyrrhic victory; overall stalemate
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Sun Quan
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Xiu	Lü Fan

The **Battle of Dongkou** was a naval battle fought in late 222 and early 223 between forces of the states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle concluded in a Wu Pyrrhic victory.

## Background

After the Shu emperor Liu Bei was defeated by Sun Quan's forces at the Battle of Xiaoting, Sun benefited from his submission to the Wei ruler Cao Pi; who would help Sun in the conflict against Liu Bei. However, on both sides of the two forces, this was never a popular concept, especially in the ranks of Sun Quan, who defeated Cao Cao at the Battle of Red Cliffs 14 years ago after resisting surrender. To make matters worse, Cao Pi and his officers were uneasy about Sun's titles and ranks (such as King of Wu) because it was quite inappropriate since they were considered a vassal state under Wei. It was even considered within Sun Quan's forces that the alliance with Wei was futile, because the defeat they caused Liu Bei at Xiaoting was so critical that it meant that their alliance with Wei was no longer an asset for survival. Sun Quan also appeared as if he was planning to have this alliance go not much longer than it was supposed to.

In a matter of time, Cao Pi's plan to keep Sun Quan and Shu's relations sour backfired as Sun Quan and Liu Bei rekindled their alliance. In an attempt to improve his own relations with the Sun clan, he demanded Sun Deng (Sun Quan's eldest son) to be sent to the Wei capital Luoyang as a hostage. However Sun Quan declined this request, and later apologised to Cao Pi, stating his son was still very young and vulnerable in his health to be away from his home and family. Cao Pi did not bring up or press the matter. However Cao Pi demanded Sun Deng as hostage soon again. This was also declined.

Diplomatic ties between the two continued to sour until finally, Cao Pi would attack Sun Quan. Sun Quan would repetitively send envoys to negotiate peace between the two, but resulted in failure. Soon after, Sun Quan would proceed into declaring independence in November 222.



## The battle

### First moves

In autumn (ninth lunar month of 222) Cao Pi ordered Cao Xiu, Zhang Liao and Zang Ba to attack Dongkou (洞口); Cao Ren to attack Ruxu (濡須); and Cao Zhen, Xiahou Shang, Zhang He and Xu Huang to besiege Nan Commandery (南郡).<sup>[2]</sup> In response, Sun Quan put Lü Fan in command of five armies to resist Cao Xiu; Zhuge Jin, Pan Zhang and Yang Can (楊粲) were dispatched to relieve the siege on Nan Commandery, Zhu Huan to defend Ruxu from Cao Ren.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Wei offensive

The Wei forces were initially easily penetrating the Wu front lines, no doubt because of their strength. In addition, Lü Fan's forces were hit by a storm, causing serious damage though Cao Xiu, because of the storms, achieved little out of his initial efforts. He was hot-headed, and he had to be advised strongly by his troops. Dong Zhao also assured to Cao Pi that Cao Xiu's troops would do this. Sun Quan was afraid when he heard that Zhang Liao was participating in the campaign, and said to his subordinates, "Even though Zhang Liao is ill, we should not underestimate him. Be careful!" Zhang Liao and the Wei generals later defeated Lü Fan.<sup>[4]</sup> When Cao Xiu, Zhang Liao and Zang Ba launched their attack, Lü Fan, along with Xu Sheng, Quan Cong and Sun Shao, led naval forces to resist the enemy at Dongkou.<sup>[5]</sup>

By this time it was early 223, and Cao Xiu ordered Zang Ba to attack Sun's small stronghold at Xuling. Though, Zang Ba achieved nothing and was quickly defeated. However, Cao Xiu eventually managed to gain the advantage as Lü Fan's forces were beginning to struggle.

### Turn of events and Wei retreat

Miraculously, reinforcements arrived and Lü Fan's generals Sun Shao and Xu Sheng managed to put out a resistance against the Wei forces, continuously gaining morale due to the Wei struggle at Nan commandery and other locations along the western area of the Yangtze. Eventually, Cao Xiu and the Wei forces at Dongkou were ultimately repelled and withdrew to the Wei capital Luoyang.

### Aftermath

Following the Wei defeat at Dongkou and failed invasion of the western Yangtze region, Sun Quan took his chance to launch an offensive during the summer of 223, successfully destroying the new Wei commandery at Qichun. The success of Sun Quan during his resistance against the Wei invasions would soon inspire Sun Quan to declaring himself emperor of Eastern Wu, being the last to establish the three dynasties during the Three Kingdoms period.

Sun Lang, also was banished from the Sun clan, and had to change his name to Ding Lang and was expelled from the army.

## Order of battle

Wei forces	Sun Quan's forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great General who Conquers the East (征東大將軍) <b>Cao Xiu</b> (曹休), commanded the Wei forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor of the Capitol <b>Zang Ba</b> (臧霸), attacked Xuling</li> <li>General of the Vanguard (前將軍) <b>Zhang Liao</b> (張遼), initially was involved in the battle, but was sent back to Wei due to illness</li> <li>Assistant General (偏前軍) <b>Zhang Hu</b> (張虎), no historical information states he was involved in the battle</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrator of Danyang (丹楊太守) <b>Lü Fan</b> (呂範), commanded Sun Quan's forces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sun Quan's brother <b>Sun Lang</b> (孫朗), burnt his own forces supplies accidentally when trying to set fire to the Wei fleet.</li> <li>Senior General-in-Chief (上大將軍) <b>Lü Dai</b> (呂岱), no official histories state that he was involved in the battle</li> <li>General <b>Quan Cong</b> (全琮), part of the main army</li> <li>Governor of Lujiang <b>Xu Sheng</b> (徐盛), reinforced the main army and repelled the Wei forces</li> <li>Marquis of Shanyin (山陰侯) <b>He Qi</b> (賀齊), reinforced the main army and restored morale</li> <li>General Who Fortifies the North (鎮北將軍) <b>Sun Shao</b> (孫韶), reinforced the main army and helped repel the Wei forces</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## In fiction

In the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the Wei general Zhang Liao was killed in this battle while defending Cao Pi from an attack by the Wu general Ding Feng. He was hit in the waist by an arrow fired by Ding Feng and died from his wound not long after the battle. Cao Pi held a grand funeral for Zhang Liao.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Historicity

Zhang Liao's biography in the *Sanguozhi* stated that he died of illness. In 222, he participated in the Battle of Dongkou against Wu forces even though he was ill. When Sun Quan heard that Zhang Liao was involved in the battle, he warned his men to be careful. Zhang Liao and other Wei generals defeated the Wu general Lü Fan in that battle. However, Zhang Liao's condition worsened and he died later that year in Jiangdu (江都; present-day Jiangdu District, Yangzhou, Jiangsu).<sup>[7]</sup>

## In modern references

The battle is a playable stage in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game franchise. The stage is the final stage of the Wu story mode, and the player uses Sun Quan, and Sun Quan kills Zhang Liao. In the stage, though Cao Pi surrenders, later the game reveals in a following Wu cinematic clip that Sun Quan was dreaming.

## References

- ↑ (秋九月，魏乃命曹休、張遼、臧霸出洞口，曹仁出濡須，曹真、夏侯尚、張郃、徐晃圍南郡。...冬十一月，大風。呂範等兵溺死者數千，余軍還江南。曹休使臧霸以輕船五百、敢死萬人襲攻徐陵，燒攻城車，殺略數千人。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- ↑ (秋九月，魏乃命曹休、張遼、臧霸出洞口，曹仁出濡須，曹真、夏侯尚、張郃、徐晃圍南郡。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- ↑ (權遣呂範等督五軍，以舟軍拒休等，諸葛瑾、潘璋、楊粲救南郡，朱桓以濡須督拒仁。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- ↑ (權甚憚焉，敕諸將：「張遼雖病，不可當也，慎之！」是歲，遼與諸將破權將呂範。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang Liao.
- ↑ (曹休、張遼，臧霸等來伐，范督徐盛、全琮、孫韶等，以舟師拒休等於洞口。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 56, Biography of Lü Fan.
- ↑ *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 86.

[7] (遼還屯雍丘，得疾。帝遣侍中劉曄將太醫視疾，虎賁問消息，道路相屬。疾未瘳，帝迎遼就行在所，車駕親臨，執其手，賜以御衣，太官日送御食。疾小差，還屯。孫權復叛，帝遣遼乘舟，與曹休至海陵，臨江。權甚憚焉，敕諸將：「張遼雖病，不可當也，慎之！」是歲，遼與諸將破權將呂范。遼病篤，遂薨於江都。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 17.

## Invasion of Wu - 2nd Battle of Jiangling

Battle of Jiangling (223)	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	Autumn 222 - June 223
<b>Location</b>	Western banks and middle region of the Yangtze River, in Jing Province (Jiangling and Nan Commandery)
<b>Result</b>	Wei retreat; overall stalemate
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Pi (stationed in Wancheng) Cao Zhen (frontline commander)	Zhu Ran
Strength	
	5,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>

The **Battle of Jiangling** took place between forces of the states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The armed conflict occurred at Jiangling, Nan Commandery in Jing Province. This battle was an integral part of Wei emperor Cao Pi's three-pronged campaign against Wu leader Sun Quan, and spanned from the autumn of 222 to June 223. Of the three fronts, Wei's most critical attacks were concentrated against Jiangling fortress.

### Background

When Liu Bei attacked Sun Quan in the Battle of Xiaoting, Sun sent his envoys with gifts to relate his wish to submit to Cao Pi, who in 220 ended the Han Dynasty and established the state of Wei. As such, Sun Quan nominally became a vassal under Wei, but actually operated his Wu regime independently like he used to. Cao Pi's strategist Liu Ye suggested to his lord to attack Sun Quan while the latter was fighting Liu Bei, but Cao Pi rejected the proposal because he needed Sun Quan's submissive posture to solidify his authority as the legitimate founder of a new dynasty. After Sun Quan defeated Liu Bei in August, Cao Pi began to make plans on taking advantage on Sun Quan, despite opposition from Liu Ye.<sup>[2]</sup> Wei troops were mobilised in the ninth lunar month of 222, and Cao Pi repeatedly requested Sun Quan to send his firstborn son to Wei as a hostage, prompting Sun Quan to send a humble letter of apology.<sup>[3]</sup> However, Sun Quan could not agree on sending his son to Cao Pi, which ended the peace negotiation and started the war.

Cao Xiu was ordered by Cao Pi to attack Dongkou and Cao Ren was entrusted to take Ruxu; Cao Zhen and Xiahou Shang were put in charge of taking Jiangling, capital of Nan Commandery and Jing Province. In the late October or early November, Sun Quan adopted his own era name, Huangwu (黃武), and formally declared his independence of Wei.

## The battle

### Wei's advancement

When the armies were moving onto Wu, Sun Quan tried to arrange diplomatic agreements between himself and Wei, but they were all rejected. The only other choice was to send an envoy to Liu Bei, which succeeded.

The first objective of the Wei forces was to attack and capture Nan commandery, which would open up the opportunity to swallow the Jing Province capital at Jiangling. The forces of Wei were dispatched from possibly Xiangyang and Fancheng. Cao Zhen, Xiahou Shang and Zhang He attacked Jiangling,<sup>[4]</sup> as Cao Pi moved a support army from the capital of Luoyang to Wancheng in case of any required backup.<sup>[5]</sup> At this time, it was very critical and uneasy for the Wu forces, since the commander, Zhu Ran was in control of a very low amount of troops. Quickly, the Wei forces overran the Wu forces at Nan commandery, after Zhang He defeated Sun Sheng (孫盛). The Wei forces then made way to assist the main army's siege of Jiangling.

### Siege of Jiangling

The forces led by Zhang He immediately used the south side of the Yangtze below Jiangling and the north banks to build pontoon bridges in order to cut off supplies from the Wu commander and Grand Administrator of Jiangling known as Zhu Ran, who's forces were shut inside the city. Zhu Ran also had to face the task of keeping order within the city, such as for example, when the city was low on water some civilians and soldiers tried to surrender to Wei by opening up the gates, but Zhu Ran put an end the plot.

However, the position where the Wei forces set up the pontoon bridges was too exposed to be maintained by the Wei forces. Soon, another batch of Wu reinforcements led by Zhuge Jin and Yang Can (楊粲) arrived.<sup>[6]</sup> Pan Zhang said, "The Wei army's prowess was formidable at the beginning, and the river waters were shallow, so we could not match them at first."<sup>[7]</sup> Pan Zhang then ordered his men to move to 50 *li* upstream from the Wei army's location. They cut down and bundled together large quantities of reeds from the river to make big rafts, and sent them afloat down the river towards the pontoon bridges. The reeds were set on fire, therefore burning down the pontoon bridges to crisps.<sup>[8]</sup> The Wu forces then executed a counter-attack on the Wei forces.

The conflict would go on sixth months well into June 223 before the Wei forces had a disease spread in their camp, therefore causing them to withdraw from the siege in defeat. By early summer, Cao Pi had already returned to the capital at Luoyang.

## Aftermath

During the time of the withdrawal from the Jiangling invasion, the battles at Dongkou and Ruxu also ended in failure for the Wei forces and they withdrew as well.

## Order of battle

### Wei forces

#### Forces attacking Jiangling and Nan Commandery:

- Senior General-in-Chief (上軍大將軍) **Cao Zhen**<sup>[9]</sup>
  - Palace Attendant (侍中) **Xin Pi**<sup>[10]</sup>
  - Senior General Who Attacks the South (征南大將軍) **Xiahou Shang**<sup>[11]</sup>
    - **Shi Jian** (石建)<sup>[citation needed]</sup>
    - **Gao Qian** (高遷)<sup>[citation needed]</sup>
  - General of the Left (左將軍) **Zhang He**
  - General of the Right (右將軍) **Xu Huang**<sup>[12]</sup>

**Supporting forces at Wancheng:**

- Emperor of Wei **Cao Pi**<sup>[13]</sup>
  - Palace Attendant (侍中) **Dong Zhao**<sup>[14]</sup>
  - Palace Attendant (侍中) **Liu Ye**<sup>[citation needed]</sup>
  - General Who Attacks Rebels (討逆將軍) **Wen Ping**<sup>[15]</sup>

**Wu forces****Defending forces in Jiangling:**

- General Who Attacks the North (征北將軍) **Zhu Ran**<sup>[16]</sup>
  - Prefect of Jiangling (江陵令) **Yao Tai** (姚泰). On seeing that Jiangling's defenders were outnumbered by Wei forces, and supplies in the fortress were running low, he attempted to collaborate with the enemy. However his plot was discovered and he was killed.<sup>[17]</sup>
  - **Jiang Yi**<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

**Reinforcements:**

- General Who Pacifies the North (平北將軍) and Administrator of Xiangyang (襄陽太守) **Pan Zhang**<sup>[18][19]</sup>
- General of the Left (左將軍) **Zhuge Jin**<sup>[20][21]</sup>
- **Yang Can** (楊粲)
- **Sun Sheng** (孫盛)

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- [2] (備軍敗退，吳禮敬轉廢，帝欲興衆伐之，曄以為「彼新得志，上下齊心，而阻帶江湖，必難倉卒。」帝不聽。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 14, Biography of Liu Ye.
- [3] (秋九月，魏乃命曹休、張遼、臧霸出洞口，曹仁出濡須，曹真、夏侯尚、張郃、徐晃圍南郡。權遣呂範等督五軍，以舟軍拒休等，諸葛瑾、潘璋、楊粲救南郡，朱桓以濡須督拒仁。時揚、越蠻夷多未平集，內難未弭，故權卑辭上書，求自改厲，"若罪在難除，必不見置，當奉遷土地民人。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
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- [5] (魏遣曹真、夏侯尚、張郃等攻江陵，魏文帝自住宛，為其勢援，連屯圍城。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 56, Biography of Zhu Ran.
- [6] (諸葛瑾、楊粲並會兵赴救，未知所出，而魏兵日渡不絕。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
- [7] (璋曰："魏勢始盛，江水又淺，未可與戰。") Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
- [8] (便將所領，到魏上流五十里，伐葦數百萬束，縛作大筏，欲順流放火，燒敗浮橋。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*. Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
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- [10] (上軍大將軍曹真征硃然於江陵，毗行軍師。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 25, Biography of Xin Pi.
- [11] (黃初三年，車駕幸宛，使尚率諸軍與曹真共圍江陵。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biography of Xiahou Shang.
- [12] (秋九月，魏乃命曹休、張遼、臧霸出洞口，曹仁出濡須，曹真、夏侯尚、張郃、徐晃圍南郡。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 47, Biography of Sun Quan.
- [13] (帝自許昌南征，諸軍兵並進，權臨江拒守。十一月辛丑，行幸宛。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 2, Biography of Cao Pi.
- [14] (大駕幸宛，征南大將軍夏侯尚等攻江陵，未拔。...) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 14, Biography of Dong Zhao.

- [15] (與夏侯尚圍江陵，使聘別屯沔口，止石楚，自當一隊，御賊有功，遷後將軍，封新野侯。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 18, Biography of Wen Ping.
- [16] (權遣將軍孫盛督萬人備州上，立圍塢，為然外救。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 56, Biography of Zhu Ran.
- [17] (江陵令姚泰領兵備城北門，見外兵盛，城中人少，穀食慾盡。因與敵交通，謀為內應。垂發，事覺，然治戮泰。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 56, Biography of Zhu Ran.
- [18] (權遣潘璋、楊粲等解而圍不解。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 56, Biography of Zhu Ran.
- [19] (魏將夏侯尚等圍南郡。分前部三萬人作浮橋，渡百里洲上。諸葛瑾、楊粲並會兵赴救，未知所出，而魏兵日渡不絕。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 55, Biography of Pan Zhang.
- [20] (吳錄曰：曹真、夏侯尚等圍硃然於江陵，又分據中州，瑾以大兵為之救援。) Pei Songzhi. Annotations from *Wu Lu* to Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 52, Biography of Zhuge Jin.
- [21] (權將諸葛瑾與尚軍對江，瑾渡入江中渚，而分水軍於江中。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biography of Xiahou Shang.

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# Invasion of Wu - 3rd Battle of Ruxukou

Battle of Ruxu (222-223)	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	Late 222 - Early 223
<b>Location</b>	Ruxu, Yang Province, on the eastern side of present-day Lake Chaohu, Anhui.
<b>Result</b>	Wei retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Ren	Zhu Huan

The **Battle of Ruxu**, also known as the **Battle of Ruxukou**, took place in 222-223 between the forces of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period. The battle was the third battle taking place between the Cao and Sun clan at Ruxu, but this particular conflict was the only of the three to take place actually during the Three Kingdoms period, as the other two took place in 213 and 217.

## Background

Following the Shu Han defeat at the Battle of Xiaoting, the alliance between Cao Pi and Sun Quan was tested, because the protection the agreement held was no longer needed as the Shu forces reestablished their own relations with the Sun clan. After Sun Deng, the crown prince and eldest son of Sun Quan, was demanded by Cao Pi as hostage, Sun Quan's relations with Wei ultimately plummeted. However, Cao Pi was trying to sour diplomatic relations between the Liu clan and the Sun clan. In November 222, Sun Quan declared himself independent once again from Wei, and Cao Pi responded with force.

The plan for Wei was to strike Wu in three different ways along the Yangtze River. Wei generals Xiahou Shang and Cao Zhen attacked Jiangling and Nan commandery, Cao Xiu and Zang Ba attacked Dongkou, and Cao Ren attacked Ruxu.

## The battle

The defense of Ruxu was under the command of Wu general Zhu Huan, who had a much smaller force than the Wei invaders.

Cao Ren sent his son Cao Tai (曹泰) to attack Ruxu. He also sent Chang Diao (常雕) to supervise Zhuge Qian (諸葛虔) and Wang Shuang to attack an island on the river.<sup>[1]</sup> The defenders wives and children were there, but the Wei forces were quickly defeated at the island. The battle was not in favor of the Wei forces, so they later burnt their camps and retreated.

## Aftermath

Cao Ren died after the battle ended in 223. He was posthumously named "Marquis Zhong" (忠侯).

## Order of battle

Wei forces	Wu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minister of War (大司马) <b>Cao Ren</b></li> <li><b>Chang Diao</b></li> <li><b>Wang Shuang</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area Commander of Ruxu <b>Zhu Huan</b></li> <li><b>Zhou Shao</b>, Zhou Tai's son</li> <li><b>Luo Tong</b></li> <li><b>Yan Gui</b></li> </ul>

## References

[1] (仁果遣其子泰攻濡須城，分遣將軍常雕督諸葛虔、王雙等，乘油船別襲中洲。) Chen Shou.

*Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 56, Biography of Zhu Huan.

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- Rafe de Crespigny. *Generals of the South*, Chapter Seven: Claim to the Mandate 222-229.
- Rafe de Crespigny. (2007). A biographical dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220 AD).

Coordinates: 31°38′7.22″N 117°53′20.29″E﻿ / ﻿http://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle\_of\_Ruxu\_(222&223)&params=31\_38\_7.22\_N\_117\_53\_20.29\_E\_



# Invasion of Wu - Battle of Qichun

Battle of Qichun	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	June 223
<b>Location</b>	Qichun, northern bay of the Yangtze River, southwest of Chaohu Lake.
<b>Result</b>	Wu victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Kingdom of Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Jin Zong	He Qi

The **Battle of Qichun** took place in June 223 between the state of Cao Wei and the kingdom of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history.

After the Battle of Dongkou, a Wu general Jin Zong (晉宗) defected to Wei and moved north of the Yangtze River to the new Wei outpost at Qichun. In response, Sun Quan sent He Qi to supervise Mi Fang (麋芳), Xianyu Dan (鮮于丹), Liu Shao (劉邵) and Hu Zong (胡綜)<sup>[1][2]</sup> to attack Qichun by advancing up the river. However, the weather was extremely hot and most of the Wu forces began to withdraw. Jin Zong, in response, let down his guard. This allowed He Qi to penetrate the Wei army and capture the rebel. Thus, the rebellion was quashed. This occurred at the southern slopes of the Dabie Shan.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Notes

- [1] (初，晉宗為戲口將，以衆叛如魏，還為蘄春太守，圖襲安樂，取其保質。權以為恥忿，因軍初罷，六月盛夏、出其不意，詔齊督麋芳、鮮于丹等襲蘄春，遂生虜宗。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 60, Biography of He Qi.
- [2] (吳將晉宗叛歸魏，魏以宗為蘄春太守，去江數百里，數為寇害。權使綜與賀齊輕行掩襲，生虜得宗，加建武中郎將。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 62, Biography of Hu Zong.
- [3] De Crespigny, Rafe. Online Publications. (In the summer of 223, Sun Quan's general He Qi attacked and eliminated an outpost of Wei in the new commandery territory of Qichun, on the southern slopes of the Dabie Shan)

## References

- Chen Shou, *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
  - Volume 60, Biography of He Qi*
- Rafe de Crespigny, *Online publications*. ([http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos\\_ch7.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/gos_ch7.pdf))
  - Generals of the South*. Chapter 7, A Claim To The Mandate (222-229).

# Invasion of Wu - Incident at Guangling

Incident at Guangling	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	late 224-early 225
<b>Location</b>	Guangling, on the northern bank of the estuary opposite Jianye, present-day Nanjing.
<b>Result</b>	Wei retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Pi	Sun Quan Xu Sheng
Strength	
100,000+	

The **Incident at Guangling** was a military confrontation that took place in late 224-early 225 between the states of Eastern Wu and Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Although the conflict was considered a naval battle, no fighting officially occurred.

## Background

Following the sour results of demanding the Wu lord Sun Quan's son, Sun Deng as a hostage, Cao Pi attacked Sun Quan. Though, after many battles before, each strike Cao Pi initiated ended in failure. Cao Pi himself was shocked with the Wu resistance. One last movement he would make during his reign of Wei was to move a navy of over 100,000 onto Guangling in preparation for total invasion onto Wu.

## The advance

Cao Pi knew that he would continue to fail by launching attacks into Wu upstream of the Yangtze, where the river was narrow. However, he knew that Guangling was much wider and would be pressure onto Sun Quan's forces. Though, in 224, Wu general Xu Sheng built a whole stash of dummy defence walls and turrets along the southern bank of the Yangtze from Jianye downstream to Jiangcheng, in aware preparation of a naval attack.

In response, in early 225 (still in winter), Cao Pi had arranged the destruction of the blockading walls, so he took his 100,000 strong fleet and sailed onto the river again. Sun Quan also reacted to this advance, and moved a naval fleet to blockade the impending invasion force led by Wei. However, despite the size of the Wu fleet, Cao Pi's true worries were set on the weather. It was a harsh winter, so the navy would be face to face with a difficult advance. Seeing the Wu defense and his own conditions, Cao Pi sighed "Alas. It is truly the will of Heaven which divides the south from the north." He then gave the orders to retreat from the position at Guangling. When Wu officer Sun Shao magistrate of Guangling learned Cao Pi's withdrawal, he sent his general Gao Shou (高寿) to lead 500 warriors to raid Cao, which led to the latter's surprise. Gao Shou got Cao Pi's bonnet and returned.

## Aftermath

After the retreat, Cao Pi died in 226. His successor Cao Rui sent Cao Xiu to launch the last invasion of Wu during this campaign at Shiting. Though, Zhou Fang of Wu defeated Cao Xiu after falsely defecting; thus the Wei forces failed once again. In fact, the Wei forces did not ultimately invade Wu again until 24 years later in 252, when they invaded Dongxing. Wei also lost that battle, making the idea of Wei capturing territory below the Yangtze River nonexistent, as after the last Wei emperor Cao Huan abdicated to Sima Yan, who established the Jin Dynasty to replace Wei, only then did territory of Wu below the Yangtze become captured by another enemy force, ultimately unifying the Three Kingdoms under the Jin Dynasty.

## In fiction

The incident is included in the *eighth instalment* of the *Dynasty Warriors* franchise. However, the incident is foretold as a battle, which defies the fact no violence occurred during the historical incident.

## References

# Pacification of Nanzhong

Zhuge Liang's Southern Campaign	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	Spring – Autumn 225 CE
<b>Location</b>	Nanzhong (covering present-day Yunnan, Guizhou and southern Sichuan), China
<b>Result</b>	Shu Han victory
Belligerents	
Shu Han	Shu rebels, Nanman
Commanders and leaders	
Zhugue Liang	Yong Kai, Zhu Bao, Gao Ding †, Meng Huo 𠂆

Zhuge Liang's Southern Campaign	
Simplified Chinese	诸葛亮南征
Traditional Chinese	諸葛亮南征
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Zhūgě Liàng Nán Zhēng
War of Pacification in Nanzhong	
Simplified Chinese	南中平定战
Traditional Chinese	南中平定戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
Hanyu Pinyin	Nánzhōng Píngdìng Zhàn

**Zhuge Liang's Southern Campaign**, also known as the **War of Pacification in Nanzhong**, was a military campaign led by Shu Han chancellor Zhuge Liang to suppress opposing forces in the south in 225 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The campaign was a response to rebellions started by local governors in the southern region of Nanzhong and intrusions by the Nanman (literally: "southern barbarians").

## Background

In 222, the Shu Han emperor Liu Bei was defeated in the Battle of Xiaoting against the state of Eastern Wu. He died in Baidicheng the following year. When Yong Kai of southern Yi Province (covering the Sichuan Basin) received news of Liu Bei's death in the summer of 223, he planned to revolt. Although Li Yan tried to dissuade him from it, Yong Kai only sent an arrogant reply, "I heard that the sky does not have two suns, and the land does not have two rulers. Now the lands are split into three with each claiming to be the absolute, the distant [Yong Kai] rests uneasy, not knowing who to follow."

Soon, Yong Kai killed Zheng Ang (正昂), the Administrator of Jianning (建寧), and kidnapped Zhang Yi to Eastern Wu. Yong Kai was given the post of Administrator of Yongchang (永昌) by Eastern Wu, but Yongchang belonged to Shu Han. Lü Kai and Wang Kang defended Yongchang from Yong Kai, who sought his position. Although Yong Kai spread many rumours outside the city walls, Lü Kai refused to open the gates to let Yong Kai in. Gao Ding (高定), a leader of the local Sou people (叟族), also revolted in coordination with Yong Kai, killing general Jiao Huang (焦璜) and declaring himself king. He marched his army north to attack Xindao (新道), but he was repelled by reinforcements led by Li Yan from Jianwei (犍為).

Shu Han's chancellor Zhuge Liang decided not to launch an offensive so soon because Shu had just recently lost their leader, and instead only sent Qi Xing (禎行) to investigate the problems in the south while he busied himself with domestic affairs. However, as soon as Qi Xing arrived in Zangke (牂柯), he was killed by the Administrator Zhu Bao, who had also rebelled.

Yong Kai then called upon Meng Huo, a local aristocrat, to lure the southern tribes into revolting because the tribes did not trust Yong Kai. Meng Huo made up stories about Shu Han giving the tribes impossible demands, thus the tribes became angry at Shu and joined the rebellion as well.

## Suppressing the rebellion

In the spring of 225, after reaffirming Shu Han's alliance with Eastern Wu, Zhuge Liang personally led the Shu generals south from Chengdu to suppress the rebellion with full preparations. Wang Lian (王連) advised Zhuge Liang against personally participating in the campaign, but Zhuge was worried that his generals were not competent enough to deal with the rebels by themselves. Ma Su suggested to Zhuge Liang that the campaign should focus on psychological warfare rather than conventional warfare in order to ensure that the defeated rebels would not rebel again, a suggestion which Zhuge readily accepted.

Zhuce Liang's army entered Nanzhong via Yuesui (越巂). Along the way, Yong Kai was murdered by one of Gao Ding's subordinates, and Gao Ding himself was killed in battle against Zhuge Liang's main army. Meanwhile, Ma Zhong was sent to attack Zangke by marching southeast from Bodao (犍道), and Li Hui to attack Jianning from Pingyi (平夷) by marching southwest. Li Hui's army, however, became surrounded in Kunming by rebel forces twice his numbers, and he did not know of Zhuge Liang's whereabouts to ask for reinforcements. Hence, Li Hui pretended to join the rebels, saying his supplies had run out and could not return north, and therefore had no choice but to rebel. The Nanman believed him and lowered their guard, whereupon Li Hui struck and defeated the encirclement. He then led his men south to Panjiang (槃江) and joined Ma Zhong to the east, who had defeated Zhu Bao in Qielan (且蘭). Finally, the two divergent forces rejoined Zhuge Liang's main army.

Meng Huo incorporated the remnants of Yong Kai's forces and continued to resist the Shu attackers. Zhuge Liang, knowing Meng Huo was respected by the populace, wanted to capture and subdue him according to Ma Su's strategy. When Meng Huo was captured, Zhuge Liang showed him around the Shu camp, asking how he felt about the army. Meng Huo replied: "Before, we did not know the conditions of your army, so we were defeated. Now you have so graciously shown me your pavilions, I know your army is only as thus, we can win easily." Zhuge Liang smiled, and released him to fight again. After seven captures and releases, Meng Huo finally said, "You must be the valour of the heavens, the south will not rebel again." Zhuge Liang then marched towards Dian Lake in triumph.

## Aftermath

Once Nanzhong had settled, Zhuge Liang split the four existing commanderies (Yi Province, Yongchang, Zangke, Yuesui) into six commanderies, adding Yunnan and Xinggu (興古) to better administer the region. He left the commanderies to be governed by the locals instead of Han Chinese officials, citing three difficulties if Han Chinese officials were installed:

- If Han officials were installed, then soldiers must be stationed and food must be provided to them. (The Nanzhong terrain is difficult for transporting goods.)
- The locals were recently defeated with their fathers and brothers killed, if foreigners were installed and no soldiers are stationed with them, chaos would follow. (The locals would seek revenge.)
- The locals were guilty of their recent crimes and would not trust the Han Chinese to forgive them so easily. (There would be misunderstandings.)

Zhuce Liang then returned north, not stationing any soldiers, only requiring the locals to pay tribute. Wang Kang, Lü Kai and Li Hui were among those appointed as the administrators of the new governing regions. However, these new administrators were considerably different than other governors at the time in that they only act representatives of Shu Han, and the local populace were generally reigned by their chieftains who pay tribute to Shu Han. The tributes from Nanzhong included, but not limited to, gold, silver, oxen, and warhorses, which helped Shu Han prosper, preparing it for Zhuge Liang's upcoming Northern Expeditions.

Although rebellions in the south still broke out after the Southern Campaign, they were comparatively minor, and Ma Zhong and Li Hui were quick to suppress them again and again. The Nanzhong region enjoyed relative stability under the reign of Shu Han afterwards, in contrast to during the Eastern Han Dynasty.

## In fiction

Although historical records seem to show that Zhuge Liang actually did capture and release Meng Huo a total of seven times, the details of each capture were not recorded. Luo Guanzhong, the author of the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, fleshed out the stories for each capture, inventing many fictional people such as Meng You, Lady Zhurong, and King Mulu. Besides, Zhao Yun, Wei Yan, and Ma Dai were described to have made great contributions to this campaign in the novel, but historically they were not involved with the campaign at all.

In the first encounter between Zhuge Liang and Meng Huo, Zhao Yun led a charge and tore through his forces like a gale, after which Meng Huo himself was captured by Wei Yan. Meng Huo refused to yield to Zhuge Liang, whereupon the strategist released him, giving him another chance to attack.

Meng Huo warily created fortifications along a river for the second battle, daring the Shu forces to cross. Ma Dai cut off the supply routes and killed Jinhuan Sanjie, a Nanman general protecting the river fortifications. Seeing that Shu Han was much stronger than the Meng Huo's forces, Nanman generals Ahuinan and Dongtuna betrayed Meng Huo and handed him over to the Shu army. But still, he did not yield. As part of a ploy, Zhuge Liang gave Meng Huo a tour of his encampment before releasing him a second time.

Meng Huo, now overconfident in his newfound knowledge of the enemy camp, sent his brother, Meng You, on a false defection ploy, but it was easily discovered and both brothers were captured.

Released yet again and eager for revenge, Meng Huo gathered a force of 100,000 and attacked the Shu camp, whereupon Zhuge Liang evacuated his entire force. Of course, this was all part of Zhuge Liang's plan, and Meng Huo's army fell into numerous pit traps that had been dug within the camp. Meng Huo was captured once again.

With caution, and learning from his previous failures, Meng Huo now opted to wait for an attack by the enemy. The plan was to lure the Shu forces into poisonous marshes around the caves of King Duosi, but Zhuge Liang was forewarned of the dangers by Meng Huo's older brother, Meng Jie, and managed to avoid the marshes all together. Once again, Meng Huo was defeated and captured, and King Duosi was killed. In folklore, Zhuge Liang became ill from the marshes but then recovered.

After Meng Huo's fifth defeat, his wife, Lady Zhurong, now took to the battlefield, complaining that her husband was incompetent. She captured Ma Zhong and Zhang Ni, and Zhuge Liang sent Zhao Yun, Wei Yan, and Ma Dai after her. Eventually Ma Dai dismounted her and captured her. Zhuge Liang returned her to Meng Huo in exchange for the captured Shu generals. Meng Huo now attempted to gather wild animals such as elephants and tigers from King Mulu to combat the enemy, but they were chased away by Zhuge Liang's fire-breathing contraptions, also known as juggernauts. King Mulu was killed, and Meng Huo was captured again. In all contemporary sources, no woman was said to have fought during the Three Kingdoms period.

Finally, Meng Huo enlisted the aid of Wutugu, whose troops wore armor made of rattan that was said to deflect swords and arrows alike. However, Zhuge Liang conjured a trap in which Wei Yan lured Wutugu into a valley with mines set beneath the ground. Wutugu's troops took the bait and chased Wei Yan into the valley. When inside the valley, Zhao Yun blocked the escape routes off and the mines were detonated, lighting the inflammable armour and destroying Wutugu and his troops. Although a great victory, Zhuge Liang is said to have wept at the destruction when he viewed the valley. Meng Huo was now captured for the seventh and final time.

Meng Huo had to admit defeat at this point and he vowed to surrender and serve Shu Han from the bottom of his heart. The southern threat was neutralized and the Shu army returned home victorious.

## Folklore

A popular story in China tells of the invention of the mantou, a kind of steamed bun, by Zhuge Liang during this campaign. It probably rose from the fact that the name mantou (simplified Chinese: 馒头; traditional Chinese: 饅頭; pinyin: *mántóu*) is homonymous to *mantou* (simplified Chinese: 蛮头; traditional Chinese: 蠻頭; pinyin: *mántóu*; literally "barbarian's head").

The story tells that, after subduing Meng Huo, Zhuge Liang led the army back to Shu, but met a swift-flowing river which defied all attempts to cross it. Locals informed him that the barbarians would sacrifice 50 men and throw their heads into the river to appease the river spirit and allow them to cross; Zhuge Liang, however, did not want to cause any more bloodshed, and instead ordered buns shaped roughly like human heads — round with a flat base — to be made and then thrown into the river. After a successful crossing he named the bun "barbarian's head", which evolved into the present day mantou.


## Modern references

The southern campaign has been reenacted in a number of video games, including Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* series and *Sangokushi Koumeiden*. Both follow the events described in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and the player can defeat Meng Huo up to seven times. A whole chapter (out of 5) is dedicated to this campaign in *Sangokushi Koumeiden*.

## References

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  - Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
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# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions

Northern Expeditions	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
 <p>Illustration from a Qing dynasty print of the <i>Romance of the Three Kingdoms</i></p>	
<b>Date</b>	Spring 228-August 234
<b>Location</b>	Gansu and Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei strategic victory, Shu Han tactical victory, overall expedition failure
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han Qiang people Xianbei
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Zhen Sima Yi	Zhuge Liang Kebineng

Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	诸葛亮北伐
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	諸葛亮北伐
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Zhūgě Liàng Běifá
Six campaigns from Mount Qi	
<b>Chinese</b>	六出祁山
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	liù chū Qíshān



**Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions** were a series of five military campaigns launched by the state of Shu Han against the rival state of Cao Wei from 228 to 234 during the Three Kingdoms period. All five expeditions were led by Shu's chancellor-regent Zhuge Liang. Although they proved unsuccessful and indecisive, the expeditions have become some of the most well-known conflicts of the Three Kingdoms period. In popular history, they overlap with the "six campaigns from Mount Qi", which is inaccurate, since Zhuge Liang only launched his campaigns from Mount Qi twice.

## Background



In 227, China was divided into three competing regimes - Cao Wei, Shu Han and Eastern Wu - each with the purpose of reunifying the empire of the fallen Han Dynasty. In the state of Shu, the strategic thinking behind the Northern Expeditions can be traced back as early as 207, when the 27-year-old Zhuge Liang outlined his Longzhong Plan to his lord Liu Bei. In it, he explained in very general terms the need to gain a viable geographical base, and then went on to detail a two-pronged strike north for mastery of the north. One advance would be from Yi Province in the west (covering the Sichuan Basin), north through the Qin Mountains, debouching into the Wei River valley and achieving a strategic position at the great metropolis Chang'an from which to dominate the great bend of the Yellow River. The second advance would be from Jing Province (covering present-day Hubei and Hunan) north toward the political center of Luoyang.

After Liu Bei established himself in Yi Province in 215, the essential prerequisites of the plan had been completed. The geopolitical arrangement envisaged by Zhuge Liang proved, however, to be a militarily unstable one. The alliance with the state of Wu in the east broke down over the issue of the occupation of Jing Province. By 223, the province had been lost and Liu Bei, as well as some of his top generals, were dead. Even after Zhuge Liang re-established friendly relations with Wu, his original plan had been markedly altered since only the left prong could be executed.

In Zhuge Liang's much quoted memorial *Chu Shi Biao* of 227, he explained to Liu Bei's son and successor Liu Shan in highly ideological terms the reasoning for his departure from the capital Chengdu: "We should lead the three armies to secure the Central Plain in the north. Contributing my utmost, we shall exterminate the wicked, restore the house of Han and return to the old capital. Such is this subject's duty in repaying the Former Emperor and affirming allegiance to Your Majesty."

## Geography

Zhuge Liang's plan called for a march north from Hanzhong, the main population center in northern Yi Province. In the third century, the region of Hanzhong was a sparsely populated area surrounded by wild virgin forest. Its importance lay in its strategic placement in a long and fertile plain along the Han River, between two massive mountain ranges, the Qin in the north and the Micang in the south. It was the major administrative center of the mountainous frontier district between the rich Red Basin (Sichuan Plain) in the south and the Wei River valley in the north. The area also afforded access to the dry northwest, and the Gansu panhandle.

Geographically, the rugged barrier of the Qin Mountains provided the greatest obstacle to Chang'an. The mountain range consists of a series of parallel ridges, all running slightly south of east, separated by a maze of ramifying valleys whose canyon walls often rise sheer above the valley streams. As a result of local dislocations from earthquakes, the topographical features are extremely complicated. Access from the south was limited to a few

mountain routes called the gallery roads. These crossed major passes and were remarkable for their engineering skill and ingenuity. The oldest of these was to the northwest of Hanzhong, and which crossed the San Pass. The Lianyun "Linked Cloud" Road was constructed there to take carriage traffic during the Qin Dynasty in the third century BCE. Following the Jialing Valley, the route emerges in the north where the Wei River widens considerably, near the city of Chencang. Another important route was the Baoye route, which transverses the Yegu Pass and ends south of Mei. A few more minor and difficult routes lay to the east, notably the Ziwu, which leads directly to the south of Chang'an.

## First expedition

At Hanzhong, Zhuge Liang held a war council on the method of realization of the tactical objective of capturing Chang'an. He proposed a wide left hook to seize the upper Wei River valley as a necessity to the capture of the city itself. General Wei Yan, however, objected to the plan and suggested a bold strike through a pass in the Qin Mountains with 10,000 elite troops to take Chang'an by surprise. He was confident that he could hold the city against Cao Wei until the main forces of Zhuge Liang arrived. Wei Yan's plan was rejected by Zhuge as being too ambitious; he preferred a more cautious approach.

In the spring of 228, two small forces were sent through Ji Gorge, one of which was commanded by the veteran general Zhao Yun, as decoys to give the appearance of threatening Mei. The real objective, however, was to seize the Longyou area far west of Chang'an: Tianshui, An Ding, Nan'an commanderies and most of all of Mount Qi, the defensive bastion that screened the upper Wei valley.

Cao Rui, the Emperor of Cao Wei, himself moved to Chang'an to oversee the defense. General-in-chief Cao Zhen secured Mei against Zhao Yun whilst a combined cavalry-infantry force of 50,000 under Zhang He were sent west to oppose Zhuge's main army.

Sima Yi put down Meng Da's rebellion, which was co-ordinated with Zhuge Liang. Meng Da was taken by surprise as he had not expected Sima Yi to attack without seeking court approval.

At Jieting, the strategic outpost crucial to future Shu supplies, Wei general Zhang He found a weakness of Shu's arrangement—the larger part of the advance guard of Shu was entrenched on a nearby mountain top. Thus, Zhang He forfeited access to water supplies, and Shu vanguard was easily defeated. The minor part of the vanguard stationed on the mountain road broke through Wei ranks and the remnants fled south, only escaping total annihilation due to Zhang He's fear of ambush. Meanwhile Zhao Yun's small intrusion against Mei met with stiff resistance and Zhuge Liang ordered a general withdrawal to Hanzhong at the prospect of an outflanking motion by Wei army. Following his defeat, Zhuge Liang had the vanguard leader, Ma Su, executed for the tactical blunder at Jieting, and a memorial published to Liu Shan, in which he chastised himself for the failure and requested demotion from Chancellor (宰相) to General of the Right (右将军), but Zhuge Liang would wield the same power even after demotion.

## Second expedition

Not long after the end of the first expedition, Eastern Wu inflicted a defeat on Cao Wei at the Battle of Shiting, on the Hefei battlegrounds. Fearing a breakthrough in the Huai River valley, the Wei court decided to reinforce the east by transferring troops from the west. Sensing an opportunity, Zhuge Liang struck in December 228 through Qinling with the aim of capturing Chencang (陳倉), communication thoroughfare of the Wei River.

The walled city was held by Hao Zhao with an estimated 1000 or so soldiers who was warned by Cao Zhen after Zhuge Liang's first campaign to make defensive preparations.

Although hugely outnumbered by the 20,000 to 100,000 Shu troops, Hao Zhao refused requests to surrender. Soon Zhuge Liang brought to bear an array of siege equipment, including scaling ladders, battering rams and archery towers. Nevertheless, Chencang could not be broken and the Wei soldiers provided stubborn resistance with various incendiary devices.

After three weeks, Zhang He arrived with relief troops and food supplies. Zhuge Liang, himself short of grain, ordered a retreat to Hanzhong once more. One of Zhang He's subordinates, Wang Shuang, decided to pursue through the Qin Mountains and was killed by an ambush arranged by Zhuge Liang. This incident, with the victim as one of the champions personally accredited by the Wei emperor, was a shock reminder of the skills of Zhuge Liang as a master of ambushes.

### Third expedition

The spring of 229 saw Zhuge Liang make his third expedition. Setting the immediate goal as the capture of the commanderies of Wudu and Yinping, Zhuge Liang sent Chen Shi to storm the enemy territory before he ventured out. The area Chen Shi was asked to take seated on the western foothills of the Qin Mountains, and could potentially be used as a launch-pad for a further strike toward Tianshui Commandery.

The defending general, Guo Huai, had readied his troops to attack Chen Shui, but drew back as he received intelligence that Zhuge Liang was marching toward Jiawei, a northern county of Wudu Commandery. Although Guo Huai retreated, he secured a defense line to prevent any hostile advance to Tianshui. The Shu regent, in the mean time, was arriving Jianwei, where he would halt his army. After surveying the situation, Zhuge Liang chose to station his army at the relatively remote county, in anticipation of probable Wei reinforcement, which never came to rescue the two commanderies.

The victory, however, did not reap significant strategic benefits for Shu despite the regent's personal political gain; the livestock and tribesmen had already been transported out from the area by Cao Wei, and to station there would be a drain on manpower and rations. Zhuge Liang retreated back to Hanzhong, but in response to the acquisition of two commanderies, the Shu emperor Liu Shan issued an imperial edict and had Zhuge Liang reinstated as Chancellor.

Beginning in the winter of 229 and into the spring of 230, Hanzhong was again involved in new military developments; on knowledge of a Wei offensive, Zhuge Liang initiated extensive preparations, including two defensive barriers on the Hanzhong plain, running 200 kilometers with nearly 100,000 troops. The Wei court had decided to alter its defensive strategy and launched a three-pronged attack with the objective of seizing Hanzhong led by Sima Yi, Cao Zhen and Zhang He.

The Wei offensive began in the fall of 230 with over 400,000 troops; in response Wei Yan and Wu Yi (吳懿) were sent north with a mixed cavalry-infantry force behind enemy lines to incite dissension amongst the various non-Han Chinese ethnic groups within the domain of Wei, while at the same time sell the famous Chengdu silk brocades in return for horses and weapons. Aiding Shu was the fact that Wei attack ran into problems from the beginning: heavy rain continued for more than thirty days and made narrow valleys impassable, while Zhang He in the west had to deal with the threat from rear. After nearly one and a half month of little progress, Wei terminated the disastrous campaign. Zhuge Liang made a daring march northwest in an attempt to relieve Wei Yan, who had been intercepted by Guo Huai on his return; but before Zhuge Liang's reinforcement reached its destination, Wei Yan had already managed to defeat Guo Huai. Thus Shu force was able to make a proud return to Hanzhong.

In many Chinese historical writings and novels, these two battles are classified as separate expeditions although the latter was actually a defensive maneuver and Zhuge Liang never left Shu.

### Fourth expedition

Zhuce Liang's fourth Northern Expedition was launched in early 231. Envoys were sent out to rouse the Xianbei and Qiang people, urging them to create a disturbance within Wei's domain. In early summer Cao Zhen took ill and was replaced by Sima Yi, who at once ordered Dai Ling and Fei Yao to protect Shanggui with 4,000 troops, and set out with the main army at Chang'an to relieve Mount Qi.<sup>[1]</sup> In response to Sima Yi's advance, Zhuge Liang left part of his army besieging Mount Qi and rushed to Shanggui before his nemesis could arrive.

Without a coordinated strategic effort, Zhuge's opponents played into his hands. Guo Huai had been ordered to join Sima Yi at Mount Qi but he took the initiative and together with Fei Yao, tried to catch Zhuge Liang in a front-rear pincer attack. Having left the defensive position, they were routed by the Shu forces. The Shu regent then went about harvesting the early spring wheat in the vicinity. Receiving the news Guo Huai was defeated, Sima Yi altered his destination and went to reinforce the loser. The Wei marshal occupied the hills east of Shanggui, but restrained from attacking. Zhuge Liang withdrew upon completion of harvest, but was caught up by Sima Yi at Hanyang, where the latter challenged Shu forces. After the vanguards briefly engaged, however, Zhuge Liang ordered a general retreat to Lucheng (鹵城), where he could set up a better defense. The Prime Minister sent his generals to station atop two mountains both north and south to his fortress, and set up "covering camps" near the riverbanks.<sup>[2]</sup> Generals under Sima Yi requested the marshal for a showdown, which Sima was hesitant to do so. Faced with intensive criticism and incessant ridicule, the careful marshal eventually relented. In May, Sima Yi sent Zhang He to attack the southern mountain guarded by Wang Ping, while the Wei marshal marched Lucheng from the main road.<sup>[3]</sup> Zhuge Liang ordered Wei Yan, Wu Ban, and Gao Xiang to stop Sima Yi outside the city wall, where the two forces clashed. Sima Yi suffered a heavy defeat and Zhang He could make no progress.<sup>[4]</sup> Nevertheless, Sima Yi still possessed of a sizable army after such a defeat, and he would continue the war.

After the victory, Zhuge Liang did not capitalize with a major offensive due to a lack of food supply, while Sima Yi, having good rejuvenation, again mounted attacks on Shu, and conquered Zhuge Liang's outer camps. According to the Book of Jin, having lost his outer camps, Zhuge Liang retreated under the cover of night, but was caught up and dealt a serious blow.<sup>[5]</sup> However the Book of Jin has been widely criticised for inaccuracies. In the Records of the Three Kingdoms, reports instead that Li Yan, who was responsible for maintaining ration supplies to the front, realizing rain had caused the breakdown of transport, lied to Zhuge Liang that Liu Shan had ordered a withdrawal.

Sima Yi, letting go of his usual cautiousness after his prior success, ordered Zhang He's cavalry to further pursue the enemy in an attempt to capitalize on their recent victory. Zhang He argued with his superior that additional risks should not be taken when they had already won, but Sima threw out his title on Zhang and forced the latter to carry out his will.<sup>[6]</sup> Indeed, Zhang He was ambushed at Mumen, where Zhuge Liang ordered massed crossbowmen to hide at high grounds and fire at the approaching enemies when they entered a narrow defile. Zhang He was hit by a stray arrow on his right leg and died, and Sima Yi became the single most valued military authority of Cao Wei.

## Fifth expedition

In the following two years both sides developed agriculture and prepared for another inevitable campaign in Longyou. Sima Yi, for his part rehabilitated the Zhengguo Canal in 234, increasing the potential to withstand a protracted war in Longyou.

In the spring of 234, 100,000 Shu soldiers advanced through the Qin Mountains by way of Baoye toward the broad plain of Wuzhang Plains, in what would become Zhuge Liang's fifth and last Northern Expedition. Sima Yi, well prepared for such a move with a 200,000-strong army, built a fortified position on the southern bank of the Wei River. The veteran of the Zhuge Liang's incursions, Guo Huai, suggested that the Shu forces were not planning an immediate attack on Chang'an itself but were planning to consolidate their position on the Wuzhang Plains for a takeover of Longyou, which had always been Zhuge Liang's immediate goal. Already, he pointed out, there were reports of Shu forces crossing the Wei River upstream and constructing lines of communications. Concerned about the threat of being cut off on the south bank, Sima Yi asked for an additional planned reinforcement of several hundred thousand troops for the communication center of Beiyuan. Such a move was none too soon, for Zhuge Liang was already on the verge of wiping out the Wei garrison after encroaching on the Wei positions in the north. After two months of maneuvering north of the Wei River, the additional Wei reinforcement successfully foiled Zhuge Liang's attempt and he settled down to a stalemate on the Wuzhang Plain. The Shu army anticipated a long protracted struggle and used the tuntian system pioneered by Cao Cao, as they awaited an agreed offensive by Eastern Wu.

Sun Quan's armies in the Huai River region, however, was defeated and his offensive broke down due to the spread of endemic disease. The frustration of this last hope to break the stalemate no doubt increased the rapid deterioration of Zhuge Liang's health and depressed mental condition. By late summer, he started giving instructions to his close subordinate officers on the future of Shu. In the early autumn of 234, Zhuge Liang died at the age of 54.

Sima Yi, convinced that Zhuge Liang had died despite the fact that Zhuge's death was kept a secret by Shu, gave chase to the retreating Shu forces. Zhuge Liang's successor, Yang Yi, then turned around, pretending to strike in full scale by devastating the vanguard of Wei. Learning the news of the defeat, Sima Yi feared that Zhuge Liang only pretended he was dead to lure him out for a full scale war that favored Shu force, and immediately ordered a general retreat. Common folklore tells of a double, or a wooden statue, that was dressed as Zhuge Liang, driving Sima Yi away in this incident. In any case, word that Sima Yi fled from the already dead Zhuge Liang spread, spawning a popular saying, "A dead Zhuge scares away a living Zhongda (Sima Yi's courtesy name)" (死諸葛嚇走活仲達). Sima Yi's answered such ridicule by claiming that he, like most of the time, could predict the intention of living Zhuge Liang, but not a ghost.

News of Zhuge Liang's death was withheld until the army had reached the safety of the Baoye valley to return to Hanzhong. Sima Yi, still fearful that the announcement was false and merely another opportunity for Zhuge to demonstrate his talent for ambush, hesitated to pursue. Only after his inspection of the empty Shu encampment did he resolve that pursuit was appropriate, but after reaching Baoye and deciding the advance could not be supported with supplies, the Wei army returned to the Wei River. The death of Zhuge Liang ended a huge strategic threat to Wei and the Wei court soon began development of ambitious public works.

## Analysis

It is surprising that although, of the three states, Shu was the weakest in terms of land size and resources, in its early years it carried out a vigorous offensive military policy. If Zhuge Liang had not died in 234, he may well have continued this policy. However, the constant expeditions took a heavy toll on Shu's limited resources and this was worsened by Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions after the death of Zhuge Liang. Resources wise, Shu was far inferior to the vast state of Wei, as reflected in the obvious numerical difference: with the exception of the second expedition, Shu force committed never exceeded 50% of the Wei force it faced during each campaign, and it was only Zhuge Liang's ingenuity that forced Wei to be on the defensive all the time.

Sima Yi was arguably one of the best tacticians that Wei had at that period. Even so, after initial defeats against Zhuge Liang, he was forced to change his tactics in the later expeditions. He was on the defensive for long periods of time with strong fortifications to deter Shu. His aim was to create a deadlock in which was to wait for Shu's supplies to run out and to force them to retreat without a fight. In the last expedition's deadlock on the Wuzhang Plains, Sima Yi's reluctance to engage in battle prompted Zhuge Liang to send him a woman's dress in one occasion to mock his tactics. Even so, Sima Yi refused to rise to the bait, much to the displeasure of his officers.

The diplomatic success in restoring the alliance with Sun Quan prior to the Northern Expeditions has been dismissed as useless because it brought little strategic dividend: each side had different political agendas which precluded close military coordination. Once the first Northern Expedition was turned back, the Wei state was capable of handling the two-front threat without much difficulty.

Arguments revolving around Wei Yan's plan for a surprise assault on Chang'an have never been stopped. Whether his plan could have succeeded, Zhuge Liang had rejected it, believing the plan was far too ambitious. In Zhuge's view, Chang'an, being one of Wei's most prosperous cities, would probably have been well fortified, in contrast to the intelligence from Wei Yan. Furthermore, there is little chance that the people of the city, who enjoyed peace and prosperity under the rule of Wei, would side with the Shu-Han forces. However, it may be more possible that Zhuge's military objective was to cut the connection between Longyou and Luoyang to force the surrender of the western wing of Wei, instead of attacking the heartland of Wei to "restore the Han Dynasty".

## In fiction

The Northern Expeditions were featured prominently in the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong, covering chapters 91-105 out of the 120 chapters in the novel. Many actual events were largely romanticised or highly exaggerated, while some fictitious stories were also included, for dramatic effect. See the following for some fictitious stories in the novel that are related to the Northern Expeditions:

- Xincheng Rebellion#In fiction
- Empty Fort Strategy#Zhuge Liang

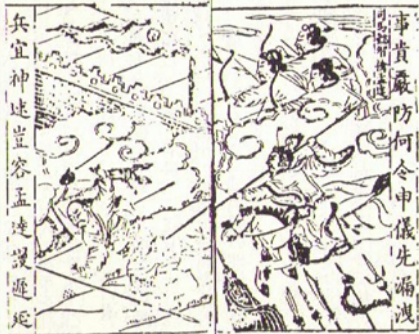
## Modern references

The Northern Expeditions are featured as playable stages in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. As of the sixth instalment in the franchise, all of the five expeditions are playable stages in some form.

## References

- [1] (漢晉春秋曰：「宣王使曜、陵留精兵四千守上邽，餘衆悉出，西救祁山。」) See the *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*.
  - [2] (漢晉春秋曰：「亮屯鹵城，據南北二山，斷水為重圍。」) See the *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*.
  - [3] (漢晉春秋曰：「使張郃攻無當監何平於南圍，自寨中道向亮。」) See the *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*.
  - [4] *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty* claims 3,000 elite Wei soldiers were killed, and 5,000 sets of armor and 3,100 crossbows were seized by Shu; Original quote: 漢晉春秋曰：「亮使魏延、高翔、吳班赴拒，大破之，獲甲首三千級，玄鎧五千領，角弩三千一百張，宣王還保營。」
  - [5] Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1, claims Zhuge Liang retreated under the cover of night after he lost his camps, and was caught up and dealt a casualty of roughly 10,000. Original quote: 帝攻拔其圍，亮宵遁。追擊，破之，俘斬萬計。
  - [6] (《魏略》曰：亮軍退，司馬宣王使郃追之，郃曰：「軍法，圍城必開出路，歸軍勿追。」宣王不聽。郃不得已，遂進。) *The Brief History of Wei* states Zhang He opposed the retreat by pointing out "military norms dictates that a retreat route be given to those who were surrounded or returning."
- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*.
  - Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 1st Expedition: Battle of Xincheng

Xincheng Rebellion	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
 <p>An illustration of Meng Da being slain by Sima Yi's men</p>	
<b>Date</b>	12th lunar month of 227 <sup>[1]</sup> – 1st lunar month of 228 CE <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Location</b>	Xincheng commandery (covering present-day Fang County, Zhuxi County and Zhushan County in Shiyan, and Baokang County and Nanzhang County in Xiangyang, all located in northwestern Hubei province)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei victory; rebellion suppressed
<b>Territorial changes</b>	Xincheng retaken by Cao Wei
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Meng Da (with some support from Shu Han and Eastern Wu)
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Yi	<span>☠</span> Meng Da

Xincheng Rebellion	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	新城之乱
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	新城之亂
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xīnchéng zhī luàn

The **Xincheng Rebellion** was a revolt that took place in the state of Cao Wei between late 227 and early 228 CE during the Three Kingdoms period. The rebellion was initiated by Meng Da, a former Shu Han general who defected to Wei and was placed in charge of Xincheng commandery (located in the vicinity of present-day northwestern Hubei) in Jing Province. The revolt was swiftly suppressed within a month by the Wei general Sima Yi. Meng Da was captured and executed.

## Background

In 220, Meng Da, a general who formerly served the warlord Liu Bei, defected over to Liu's rival Cao Pi, who had inherited the title of a vassal king – "King of Wei" – from his recently deceased father Cao Cao.<sup>[3]</sup> Meng Da brought along his subordinates and their families, numbering over 4,000 in total. Cao Pi was pleased when he heard that Meng Da had come to join him, and he gave Meng a warm welcome. Cao Pi appointed Meng Da as the Administrator (太守) of Xincheng (新城) commandery, which is located along the southwestern border of Wei.<sup>[4]</sup>

At the time, many officials felt that Meng Da was untrustworthy and should not be given important responsibilities.<sup>[5]</sup> The Wei general Sima Yi, who was stationed at Wan (宛; present-day Wancheng District, Nanyang, Henan) and oversaw the military affairs of Jing and Yu provinces at the time,<sup>[6]</sup> also cautioned Cao Pi against putting too much faith in Meng Da, but Cao did not heed Sima's advice.<sup>[7]</sup>

Meng Da was deeply favoured by Cao Pi, and he was also close friends with the Wei officials Huan Jie and Xiahou Shang. When Cao Pi died in 226, Huan Jie and Xiahou Shang had also died. Meng Da started feeling uneasy because he had been on the frontline for a long time.<sup>[8]</sup> Throughout Meng Da's service in Xincheng, he had been friendly with Eastern Wu (a state founded by Sun Quan) and had established strong defences against possible attacks from Wei's rival state Shu Han (founded by Liu Bei). Shu's chancellor Zhuge Liang hated Meng Da for being capricious,<sup>[9]</sup> and was also worried that Meng would become a threat to Shu.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Rebellion

There are two accounts of Meng Da's motive for rebelling, both of which are generally similar but there are some slight differences. The first account is from the *Weilue* while the second is from the *Book of Jin* (*Jin Shu*).

The *Weilue* account mentioned that Zhuge Liang planned to induce Meng Da to defect to Shu when he heard that Meng was feeling uneasy in Xincheng. Zhuge Liang wrote several letters to Meng Da and the latter replied. Shen Yi (申儀), the Administrator of Weixing (魏興; around present-day Shiquan County in Shaanxi and Yunxi County in Hubei), who had disagreements with Meng Da, secretly reported to the Wei imperial court that Meng was having dealings with Shu, but the Wei emperor Cao Rui refused to believe. Sima Yi, who was stationed at Wan at that time, sent an advisor Liang Ji (梁幾) to investigate and also urged him to travel to the capital Luoyang. Meng Da became suspicious and feared for his life, so he rebelled.<sup>[11]</sup>

The *Jin Shu* account confirmed that Meng Da did have a feud with Shen Yi. Zhuge Liang planned to make use of this incident to lure Meng Da to defect to Shu sooner, so he sent Guo Mo (郭模) to feign surrender to Wei and divulge Meng's plan to Shen Yi. When Meng Da heard that the plot had been leaked out, he immediately made plans for a rebellion. Sima Yi, who was at Wan at that time, became worried that Meng Da would proceed with the revolt quickly, so he wrote a letter to Meng to calm him down. Meng Da was pleased when he received Sima Yi's letter, and he entered a dilemma on whether to rebel or not. During this time, Sima Yi secretly led his forces from Wan towards Xincheng. Sima Yi's subordinates suggested that they observe Meng Da's actions first before advancing, but Sima replied, "(Meng) Da is not a trustworthy person. Now that he is hesitating due to suspicions, we should seize this opportunity to get rid of him." Sima Yi's army then advanced quickly and reached Xincheng within eight days.<sup>[12]</sup>

Shu Han and Eastern Wu also sent their forces to support Meng Da, which arrived at An Bridge (安橋) at Xicheng (西城) and Mulan Fort (木蘭塞) respectively. Sima Yi despatched his subordinates to deal with Meng Da's reinforcements.<sup>[13]</sup>

Before the battle, Meng Da wrote a letter to Zhuge Liang, agreeing to help Shu and predicting that Sima Yi would not come. However, eight days later when Sima Yi's army had arrived, Meng Da wrote to Zhuge Liang again, expressing shock and disbelief that Sima had reached Xincheng in just eight days. Meng Da was based in Shangyong (上庸), a city in Xincheng which was surrounded on three sides by water, so he set up wooden barriers to defend himself. Sima Yi's forces crossed the waters, destroyed the barriers, and arrived just outside Shangyong. Sima Yi



then split up his army to attack Meng Da from eight directions. Sima Yi tempted Meng Da's nephew Deng Xian (鄧賢) and subordinate Li Fu (李輔) into surrendering, which they did so by opening Shangyong's gates after sixteen days of siege. Meng Da was captured and executed, and his head was sent to the Wei capital Luoyang.<sup>[14][15][16]</sup>

## Aftermath

Sima Yi and his army captured over 10,000 prisoners-of-war and they returned to Wan.<sup>[17]</sup>

Shen Yi (申儀) had been in Weixing for a long time and had been behaving arrogantly. He had several official seals carved and distributed without proper authorisation. When he heard of Meng Da's fate, he became apprehensive. Many other officials in the region presented Sima Yi with gifts and congratulated him on his victory. Sima Yi sent a messenger to taunt Shen Yi, so Shen came to meet Sima Yi, who questioned him about the distribution of unauthorised official seals but released him later.<sup>[18]</sup>

Sima Yi also relocated the 7,000 households from Meng Da's territory to You Province in northern China. The Shu generals Yao Jing (姚靜), Zheng Ta (鄭他) and others led their men, numbering over 7,000, and surrendered to Wei.<sup>[19]</sup>

Sima Yi travelled to the capital Luoyang to meet the Wei emperor Cao Rui, who consulted him on how to counter invasions from Eastern Wu, and then ordered him to return to the garrison at Wan.<sup>[20]</sup>

## In fiction

The rebellion was mentioned in Chapter 94 of the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, in which some fictitious elements were introduced for dramatic effect.

### The novel's account

Meng Da invited Shen Yi (申儀), the Administrator of Jincheng (金城), and Shen Dan (申耽), the Administrator of Shangyong (上庸), to join him in the rebellion. Shen Yi and Shen Dan pretended to agree as they were secretly planning to help the Wei army when it arrived to suppress the revolt. They lied to Meng Da that the preparations were insufficient, and Meng believed them.

Sima Yi's messenger Liang Ji (梁畿) arrived at Xincheng and lied to Meng Da that Sima had led an army towards Chang'an to deal with an invasion by Shu Han. Meng Da was pleased and he threw a feast for Liang Ji and then saw Liang out of the city. He then gave orders to Shen Yi and Shen Dan to rebel on the following day. However, just then, he received reports that an army had arrived outside the city. Meng Da rushed to the city wall and saw that the army was commanded by Xu Huang, a veteran Wei general. Xu Huang called for Meng Da to surrender, but Meng fired an arrow which hit Xu in the forehead. Meng Da's archers then rained arrows on Xu Huang's men, forcing them to retreat. Xu Huang died from his arrow wound that night at the age of 59 (by East Asian age reckoning) and his body was placed in a coffin and sent to Luoyang for burial.

By then, Sima Yi's main army had showed up outside Xincheng and completely surrounded the city. The following day, Meng Da saw Shen Yi and Shen Dan's forces arriving and he thought that they had come to help him. He opened the gates and led his men out to attack Sima Yi, but Shen Yi and Shen Dan shouted at him, "You rebel, don't try to escape! Quickly accept your death!" Meng Da sensed trouble and attempted to retreat back into the city, but his subordinates Li Fu (李輔) and Deng Xian (鄧賢) had betrayed him and denied him entry. Shen Dan approached the exhausted Meng Da and killed him, and Meng's men surrendered.

Sima Yi entered Xincheng and restored peace and order to the city. He reported his victory to the Wei emperor Cao Rui, who asked for Meng Da's head to be sent to Luoyang. Shen Yi and Shen Dan were promoted and ordered to accompany Sima Yi to deal with the Shu invasion, while Li Fu and Deng Xian were tasked with guarding Xincheng and Shangyong.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Historicity

Historically, Shen Yi (申儀) and Shen Dan (申耽) were not involved in the rebellion. There is also no evidence that Xu Huang participated in suppressing the revolt. The *Sanguozhi* did not provide much details on his death. It simply stated that he died in the first year of the Taihe era (227–233) in the reign of Cao Rui.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Modern references

The rebellion is featured as a playable stage in the Koei video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends*, in which it is known as the "Battle of Xin Castle". The player can only play on the Wei side as Cao Pi, Sima Yi or Xu Huang, and must defeat Meng Da to win the stage. If the player is fast enough, the stage can be completed before Shu reinforcements arrive to help Meng Da.

## Notes

- [1] Quote from *Sanguozhi* vol. 3: (太和元年 ... 十二月, ... 新城太守孟達反, 詔驃騎將軍司馬宣王討之。)
- [2] Quote from *Sanguozhi* vol. 3: ([太和]二年春正月, 宣王攻破新城, 斬達, 傳其首。)
- [3] In late 220, some months after the death of his father Cao Cao, Cao Pi forced Emperor Xian (the last ruler of the Eastern Han Dynasty) to abdicate the throne to him. He then proclaimed himself 'Emperor' and established the state of Cao Wei, marking the start of the Three Kingdoms period.
- [4] (魏略曰: 達以延康元年率部曲四千餘家歸魏。文帝時初即王位, 既宿知有達, 聞其來, 甚悅, 令貴臣有識察者往觀之, 還曰「將帥之才也」, 或曰「卿相之器也」, 王益欽達。 ... 又加拜散騎常侍, 領新城太守, 委以西南之任。) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [5] (時衆臣或以為待之太狠, 又不宜委以方任。 ...) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [6] (太和元年六月, 天子詔帝屯于宛, 加督荊、豫二州諸軍事。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [7] (初, 蜀將孟達之降也, 魏朝遇之甚厚。帝以達言行傾巧不可任, 驟諫不見聽, 乃以達領新城太守, 封侯, 假節。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [8] (達既為文帝所寵, 又與桓階、夏侯尚親善, 及文帝崩, 時桓、尚皆卒, 達自以羈旅久在疆場, 心不自安。) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [9] Meng Da initially served Liu Zhang, a warlord in Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing). He surrendered to Liu Bei in 215 after the latter seized control of Yi Province from Liu Zhang, and served under Liu Bei for about five years before defecting to Cao Pi. Zhuge Liang perceived Meng Da as an untrustworthy person who would switch his allegiances easily.
- [10] (達於是連吳固蜀, 潛圖中國。蜀相諸葛亮惡其反覆, 又慮其為患。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [11] (諸葛亮聞之, 陰欲誘達, 數書招之, 達與相報答。魏興太守申儀與達有隙, 密表達與蜀潛通, 帝未之信也。司馬宣王遣參軍梁幾察之, 又勸其入朝。達驚懼, 遂反。) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [12] (達與魏興太守申儀有隙, 亮欲促其事, 乃遣郭模詐降, 過儀, 因漏泄其謀。達聞其謀漏泄, 將舉兵。帝恐達速發, 以書喻之曰: 「將軍昔棄劉備, 託身國家, 國家委將軍以疆場之任, 任將軍以圖蜀之事, 可謂心貫白日。蜀人愚智, 莫不切齒於將軍。諸葛亮欲相破, 惟苦無路耳。模之所言, 非小事也, 亮豈輕之而令宣露, 此殆易知耳。」達得書大喜, 猶與不決。帝乃潛軍進討。諸將言達與二賊交構, 宜觀望而後動。帝曰: 「達無信義, 此其相疑之時也, 當及其未定促決之。」乃倍道兼行, 八日到其城下。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [13] (吳蜀各遣其將向西城安橋、木蘭塞以救達, 帝分諸將以距之。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [14] (初, 達與亮書曰: 「宛去洛八百里, 去吾一千二百里, 聞吾舉事, 當表上天子, 比相反覆, 一月間也, 則吾城已固, 諸軍足辦。則吾所在深險, 司馬公必不自來; 諸將來, 吾無患矣。」及兵到, 達又告亮曰: 「吾舉事八日, 而兵至城下, 何其神速也!」上庸城三面阻水, 達於城外為木柵以自固。帝渡水, 破其柵, 直造城下。八道攻之, 旬有六日, 達甥鄧賢、將李輔等開門出降。斬達, 傳首京師。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [15] (二年春正月, 宣王攻破新城, 斬達, 傳其首。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [16] (魏略曰: 宣王誘達將李輔及達甥鄧賢, 賢等開門納軍。達被圍旬有六日而敗, 焚其首於洛陽四達之衢。) *Weilue* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 3.
- [17] (俘獲萬餘人, 振旅還于宛。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [18] (初, 申儀久在魏興, 專威疆場, 輒承制刻印, 多所假授。達既誅, 有自疑心。時諸郡守以帝新克捷, 奉禮求賀, 皆聽之。帝使人諷儀, 儀至, 問承制狀, 執之, ...) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [19] (又徙孟達餘衆七千餘家于幽州。蜀將姚靜、鄭他等帥其屬七千餘人來降。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.
- [20] (... 歸于京師。 ... 屬帝朝于京師, 天子訪之於帝。 ... 天子並然之, 復命帝屯于宛。) *Jin Shu* vol. 1.


[21] (卻說孟達在新城，約下金城太守申儀、上庸太守申耽，剋日舉事。... 達奪路而走，申耽趕來。達人困馬乏，措手不及，被申耽一鎗刺於馬下，梟其首級。餘軍皆降。李輔、鄧賢大開城門，迎接司馬懿入城。撫民勞軍已畢，遂遣人奏知魏主曹叡。叡大喜，教將孟達首級去洛陽城市示衆；加申耽、申儀官職，就隨司馬懿征進；命李輔、鄧賢守新城、上庸。) *Sanguo Yanyi* ch. 94.

[22] (太和元年薨，諡曰壯侯。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 17.

## References

- Chen, Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
- Fang, Xuanling. *Book of Jin (Jin Shu)*.
- Luo, Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo Yanyi)*.
- Pei, Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi zhu)*.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 1st Expedition: Revolt of Tianshui

Revolt of Tianshui	
Part of the first of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
	
Jiang Wei surrenders to Zhuge Liang. Portrait in the Long Corridor of the Summer Palace, Beijing	
<b>Date</b>	Spring of 228 CE
<b>Location</b>	Southern Liang Province, China
<b>Result</b>	Territorial losses to Shu were retaken by Wei later; Overall stalemate
Belligerents	
Shu Han	Cao Wei
Commanders and leaders	
Zhuge Liang, Zhao Yun, Deng Zhi	Cao Zhen, Zhang He
Strength	
>60,000	>50,000
Casualties and losses	
Unknown	Unknown, but estimated to be around 55,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Revolt of Tianshui	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	天水之乱
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	天水之亂
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Tiānshuǐ Zhī Luàn

The **Revolt of Tianshui** refers to the fictional rebellions that broke out in northwest China in the spring of 228 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Military forces from the state of Shu Han, led by chancellor Zhuge Liang, planned to seize control of Chang'an, a strategic city in the rival state of Cao Wei. The three commanderies of Nan'an, Tianshui, and Anding, were captured by Shu forces, but these territorial gains were later lost after the Battle of Jieting. As mentioned in the biography of Wei general Zhang He in *Records of Three Kingdoms*, "The commanderies of Nan'an, Tianshui and Anding rebelled and defected to (Zhuge) Liang, (Zhang) He pacified all of them."<sup>[1]</sup>

## Background

At Hanzhong, during a war council meeting, Zhuge Liang proposed a wide left flanking maneuver to seize the upper Wei River valley to capture the city itself. Wei Yan objected to the plan and proposed a strike through a pass in the Qinling Mountains with 10,000 elite troops to take Chang'an by surprise. Zhuge Liang rejected the plan because it was too ambitious and went for a more cautious approach. The objective was to seize Chang'an: Tianshui, Anding, Nan'an, and Mount Qi.

## The revolt

In 228, Zhuge Liang declared that he would march through the Xie Gorge to take Mei. He sent Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi as decoys to give the appearance of threatening Mei and to occupy Ji. Cao Zhen led his armies to oppose them. Zhuge Liang personally led the armies to besiege Mount Qi; the ranks were ordered, discipline severe and authority apparent. The three commanderies of Nan'an, Tianshui and Anding all revolted and defected from the Cao Wei side to Zhuge Liang, sending shock waves through Guanzhong. Cao Rui moved to Chang'an to oversee the defense. Cao Zhen secured Mei against Zhao Yun, while a combined cavalry-infantry force of 50,000 under Zhang He went west to oppose Zhuge's main army.

At that moment, Jiang Wei was patrolling the outskirts with his governor Ma Zun. Afraid that Jiang Wei might be colluding with the Shu army, Ma fled secretly at night to Shanggui. When Jiang Wei discovered about that, it was already too late and on returning to Shanggui, his own city refused to open the city gates. As such, Jiang Wei proceeded to meet Zhuge Liang.

There was in fact no battle at Tianshui, only revolt. The area surrounding the city submitted quickly to Shu Han, enabling the army to advance steadily but the Shu army had suffered a setback at Jieting, when Zhang He defeated Ma Su who was sent by Zhuge Liang to handle him. Zhuge Liang gave the order for a retreat back to Shu territory. Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi were also ordered to counter Cao Zhen, but their troop strength were inadequate to that of the enemy. Hence they were defeated at Ji Gorge, but their centre held firm and thus avoided a great defeat. Zhao Yun and his army withdrew. The commanderies that rose in revolt to join Shu were later pacified by Zhang He and returned to Wei control.

## In fiction

In chapters 92 and 93 of Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Jiang Wei was one of the reasons Zhuge Liang went on this expedition, and getting Jiang to defect to Shu became a goal after his quick battle with Zhao Yun. Zhuge Liang sent Zhao Yun ahead first, and after a skirmish and some scheming he comes onto the battlefield. During the battle, Jiang Wei's commanding officer Ma Zun suspected him of plotting with the enemy. When Jiang Wei was outside Tianshui, Ma Zun closed the city gates and denied Jiang entry. Jiang Wei had no choice but to defect to Zhuge Liang's side.

## Modern references

Starting from the fourth installment in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*, there is a playable stage called "Battle of Tian Shui" that is based on the fictional account of the revolt in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. If the player is playing as Jiang Wei, Wei forces will win the battle, but Jiang himself would later join Shu. If the player is playing on the Shu side, he must defeat Jiang Wei to make him defect to Shu.

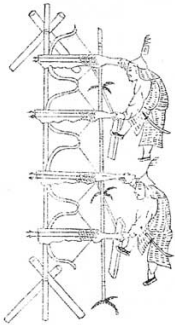
## Notes

[1] (南安、天水、安定郡反應亮，郤皆破平之。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang He.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 35, Biography of Zhuge Liang.
- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 44, Biography of Jiang Wei.
- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang He.
- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 36, Biography of Zhao Yun.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapters 91-96.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 1st Expedition: Battle of Jieting

Battle of Jieting	
Part of the first of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
	
<b>Date</b>	228
<b>Location</b>	Jieting (present-day Qin'an County, Gansu, China)
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Wei victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang He	Ma Su Wang Ping
Strength	
50,000 men	ca. more than 25,000 <sup>[<i>citation needed</i>]</sup>

Battle of Jieting	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	街亭之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	街亭之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jiētíng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Jieting** was fought between the states of Cao Wei and Shu Han in 228 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle was part of the first Northern Expedition led by Shu's chancellor Zhuge Liang to attack Wei. The battle concluded with a decisive victory for Wei.

## Opening moves

Zhuce Liang first sent generals Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi to attack Wei, while he personally led a force towards Mount Qi. Cao Rui, the emperor of Wei, moved to Chang'an and sent Zhang He to attack Zhuge Liang while Cao Zhen would oppose Zhao Yun. Zhuge Liang chose generals Ma Su and Wang Ping to intercept Zhang He.

## The battle

Jieting was a crucial region for the securing of supplies, and Zhuge Liang sent Ma Su and Wang Ping to guard the region. Ma Su went accompanied by Wang Ping but did not listen to his sound military advice. Relying purely on books of military tactics, Ma Su chose to "take the high ground" and set his base on the mountains instead of in a city, ignoring Wang Ping's advice to make camp in a valley well supplied with water. Wang Ping, however, managed to persuade Ma Su to give him command of a portion of the troops, and later Wang set up his base camp near Ma's camp, in order to offer assistance when Ma was in danger. Due to this tactical mistake, the Wei army led by Zhang He encircled the hill and cut off the water supply to the Shu troops and attacked; later, Wei forces set fire to the hill. Wang Ping led his troops in an attempt to help Ma Su but the Shu army suffered a great defeat in which both the army and the fort were lost. Though he survived the battle, Ma Su feared punishment and attempted to flee. However, he was soon captured by Shu forces.

## Aftermath

Ma Su was sentenced to death by Zhuge Liang, along with his deputy commanders Zhang Xiu (張休) and Li Sheng (李盛), but Ma eventually died of illness in prison before the execution could be carried out, while the other two were executed.

Because of the loss of Jieting, the supply situation became dire for Zhuge Liang's army and he had to retreat to his main base at Hanzhong. In addition, the defeat at Jieting had caused the First Northern Expedition to result in failure.

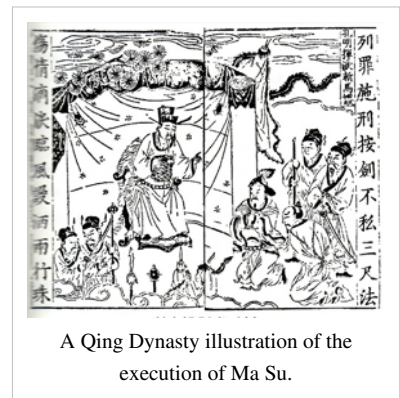
## In fiction

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, Ma Su was executed on the order of a tearful Zhuge Liang, whose continued high appraisal for Ma's intelligence made that a very reluctant decision. The scene has also been reenacted in Chinese opera. A Japanese proverb, "executing Ma Su with tears" (泣いて馬謖を斬る *Naite Bashoku wo kiru*), refers specifically to this incident, meaning "punishing a person for his wrongdoings regardless of relations or his abilities." The equivalent in Chinese is *hui lei zhan Ma Su* (simplified Chinese: 挥泪斩马谡; traditional Chinese: 揮淚斬馬謖; pinyin: *Huī Lèi Zhān Mǎ Sù*; literally "wiping away tears and executing Ma Su").

In the novel, the loss of Jieting exposed Zhuge Liang's current location, the defenseless Xicheng (西城). Zhuge Liang used the Empty Fort Strategy to ward off the enemy before retreating.

In many stories, including the novel, the battle includes Sima Yi on the Wei side, but this event is impossible according to his biography in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. Moss Roberts comments on this in his fourth volume of his English translation of Luo Guanzhong's novel on (page 2179 under Chapter 95 Notes, fourth and last paragraph of the chapter notes):

*The historical Sima Yi was not at the western front for the "vacant city ruse" but at the more important southern front with the Southland [Wu]. Sima Yi did not come to the western front until Kongming's [Zhuge Liang] fourth offensive [Battle of Mount Qi]. The fictional tradition tends to attach more*



A Qing Dynasty illustration of the execution of Ma Su.

*importance to the Wei-Shu conflict than the Wei-Wu conflict, and Three Kingdoms accordingly builds up the Kongming-Sima Yi rivalry and the events of A.D.228.*

In the abstract above from Moss Roberts's novel, Roberts explains and compares historic history with fictional tales and the most likely reason Sima Yi was included before the Battle of Mount Qi. Some notable texts in the abstract include the western front; the area where Kongming targeted in his expeditions, the "vacant city ruse"; referring to the tale of Zhuge Liang's "Empty Fort Strategy, and the southern front, being the areas of Wei including Fancheng, Hefei, Xiapi, and Shouchun. This means that the Empty Fort Strategy could not have occurred because Sima Yi was never there to fall for it and the southern front was where Sima Yi was stationed during the expeditions before Kongming targeted Mount Qi and the Wuzhang Plains.

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors* for the PlayStation 2. If the player is playing on the Wei side, he has the option of following history to win the stage easily. On the other hand, if the player is playing on the Shu side, he will encounter a higher level of difficulty since one of his major objectives is to ensure the survival of Ma Su.

In the collectible card game *Magic: The Gathering* there is a card named Empty City Ruse in reference to the Empty Fort Strategy described in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 17, Biography of Zhang He.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapters 95-96.

# Battle of Shiting

Battle of Shiting	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<p>A Qing Dynasty illustration of Cao Xiu's defeat.</p>	
<b>Date</b>	228 CE
<b>Location</b>	Shiting (present-day Qianshan County, Anhui), Yang Province, China
<b>Result</b>	Eastern Wu victory
Belligerents	
Eastern Wu	Cao Wei
Commanders and leaders	



Lu Xun Zhou Fang Quan Cong Zhu Huan	Cao Xiu Zhou Fang (defected) Jia Kui
Strength	
30,000	100,000
Casualties and losses	
Minimal	Heavy

Battle of Shiting	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	石亭之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	石亭之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Shítíng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Shiting** was fought between the contending states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu in 228 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle concluded with victory of Wu over Wei.

## Battle

Sun Quan ordered Zhou Fang to lay a trap for Cao Xiu, the commander-in-chief of Wei, by pretending to defect. Cao Xiu was deceived into leading his troops straight into Wan. Then, Sun Quan appointed Lu Xun as Grand Chief Commander, commanding him to lead an attack against Cao Xiu. On the way to the camping area, Cao Xiu was ambushed as planned. Cao Xiu was unable to gain the upper hand in battle, and thus retreated to make camp at Shiting. However, the camp was disturbed in the middle of night, and the soldiers ran away in disarray. Many sets of armor and carts of supplies were abandoned. Cao Xiu sent in a memorial acknowledging his fault. Many of his men were killed. When he looked around for Zhou Fang, Zhou was nowhere to be found. He then knew he had been duped. When Cao Xiu realized that he was tricked, he was too ashamed to turn back; so, thinking that he had more troops and supplies, he chose to engage Lu Xun's army. Lu Xun personally led the central force and ordered Zhu Huan (朱桓) and Quan Cong to take the left and right flanks. The three armies advanced simultaneously, and decisively took on Cao Xiu's ambushing troops. Following that, the Wu troops pursued hard on the fleeing Cao army until they reached Jiashi, where they annihilated some 10,000 men and won over 10,000 spoils of war; in addition, All of the Wei army's equipment and weaponry were looted. Lu Xun regrouped his men; and when he passed by Wuchang, Sun Quan instructed his attendants to shield Lu Xun with his own canopy when entering and leaving the palace doors.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

Sun Quan bestowed upon Lu Xun as reward were imperial items, precious items of the finest grade. The honor Lu Xun received was matched by no one in that era.

Cao Xiu barely escaped the battlefield with his life. Indeed, he died a few months later of an ulcer on his back, even after having been pardoned by the Emperor of Wei, Cao Rui.

According to legend, Cao Xiu did not believe Zhou Fang at first. Zhou Fang cut off his famous locks of hair to prove his "loyalty". In any case, Zhou Fang knew the territory, so he started to lead Cao Xiu into a clearing, where Cao could set up camp. However, before they left, Cao Xiu was advised not to trust Zhou Fang by one of his advisers, Jia Kui. Cao Xiu did not heed his words; however, and not only went on with Zhou Fang's ploy, but removed Jia Kui

from the campaign and decided to march with 70,000 troops.

Jia Kui, who had come along with Cao Xiu, helped Cao retreat from the ambush. For this, Jia Kui was highly praised by the emperor Cao Rui himself, and given many promotions. He lived the last years of his life in happiness.<sup>[3]</sup>

## References

- [1] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 58, Biography of Lu Xun.  
 [2] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biography of Cao Xiu.  
 [3] Luo Guanzhong; tr. C.H. Brewitt-Taylor (2002). *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Tuttle Publishing.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 2nd Expedition: Siege of Chencang

Siege of Chencang	
Part of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Date</b>	December 228 – Spring of 229 CE
<b>Location</b>	Chencang District, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Wei victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Hao Zhao	Zhuge Liang
Strength	
~1,000	~100,000 <sup>[1]</sup>

Siege of Chencang	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	陈仓之围
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	陳倉之圍
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Chéncāng Zhī Wéi

The **Siege of Chencang** was the second Northern Expedition led by Shu-Han's chancellor, Zhuge Liang, to invade rival state Cao-Wei. The campaign became a siege on a fastness at Chencang from December 228 to early 229 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The expedition concluded with Shu-Han retreat.

## Background

In 228, after Eastern Wu defeated Cao Wei at the Battle of Shiting, Wei reinforced the east by mobilizing its troops in the west. Shu Chancellor and regent, Zhuge Liang, hoped to use this opportunity to launch an incursion into Wei territory. Before the Chancellor finalized an operation plan, Cao Zhen of Wei had distinctly anticipated Zhuge's route of advancement and recommended Hao Zhao to build fortifications for Chencang. The Supreme General, Cao Zhen, assured the young emperor Cao Rui of the defence against probable invasions from Shu. However, Hao Zhao was only assigned 1,000 men for his task. The prognosis was made after Zhuge Liang had lost the first expedition earlier that year.<sup>[2]</sup>

## The battle

### Prelude

After his failure on Mount Qi and Jieting, Zhuge Liang indeed changed his target to Chencang as Cao Zhen reckoned. Thoroughly prepared, the Shu Chancellor brought with him a selection of siege weapons and an expedition force of one hundred thousand men. Although a few officers including Wei Yan recommended an alternate route, Zhuge Liang was determined to follow Jialing Valley, which emerges in the north where the Wei River widens considerably near the city of Chencang. Zhuge Liang planned to capture Chencang as a midpoint for further military actions against the great metropolis Chang'an.

The Shu army reached the fortress-city of Chencang during December 228, wherein the defense was apparently not completed as Cao Zhen had not sent additional forces to move in. Having completed the encirclement, Zhuge Liang sent Jin Xiang, a personal friend of Hao Zhao, to convince the latter to defect. The first time the two friends spoke, Hao Zhao would hear none of it, saying "The law of Wei is what you practiced; the nature of me is what you know. I have received so much from my country and I can't let down on my family. You ought to say no more, I'll only die defending this city."<sup>[3]</sup> The lobbyist told Zhuge Liang what Hao Zhao had said, and again Zhuge sent Jin Xiang to soften the steadfast defender. "Our armies are enormous while you only have a tiny force, what good is it to perish for a futile effort?" said Jin Xiang outside of the city-gate. This time, however, Hao Zhao fitted an arrow and replied, "what I said earlier remains solid. As I know you, my arrow doesn't."<sup>[4]</sup> Upon hearing this, Zhuge commenced the offensive.

### Siege

The odds were drastically against Hao Zhao—he only had 1,000 men at the time, while the Shu army, numbering 100,000, had established three layers of siege. Therefore, the Shu Chancellor aimed to take the fortress directly; he carried out an escalate tactic through the use of siege ladders, but Hao Zhao countered with fire arrows, burning the platforms and parching the men upon them. While the ladders were still aflame, Zhuge's battering rams designed to breach the city-gate had arrived, and Hao Zhao hurriedly chained some great stones and rolled them down, smashing the rams. The quick response and leadership of Hao Zhao shocked Zhuge Liang, as the latter never forejudged such a determined resistance.

Zhuce Liang then drew back and rethought on his tactic. Since moats made access to the walls difficult for siege weapons, which needed to be brought up against a wall to be effective, the Chancellor decided to remove the trenches to create more possible attack points. Following Zhuge's order, the besiegers started to fill the chasms and prepared their siege towers. With the ditches removed, the siege engines moved upon the castle while foot-soldiers climbed the walls like ants. However, Zhuge Liang was outwitted by Hao Zhao that when the former laid his hand on the entrenchment, the latter had already seen through his intention and started building interior walls within the boundaries of the original walls.<sup>[5]</sup> As long as the siege towers could not pass the first walls, the soldiers on top of the towers who managed to overcome the outer walls could not climb the second inner walls. Trapped inside the two gates of walls, those soldiers who descended from the towers became easy target for archery practice.

Suffering another defeat, Zhuge Liang adopted an architectural approach by asking his soldiers to dig tunnels that led to the substructure of the fortress. However, his method was actually different to the more common mining tactic, which is to excavate beneath the foundations of the walls, and then deliberately collapsing or exploding the tunnel—it is recorded that the Chancellor wanted to create some underground passages for his armies to enter the city directly in order to catch his opponent off guard.<sup>[6]</sup> Zhuge Liang's tactic is a much perilous approach, because defenders can counter-tunnel to cut into the attackers' works and topple them prematurely, killing anyone affected by the collapse, and that is just what Hao Zhao did.

The struggle had been continuing non-stop for 20-odd days and nights, with Zhuge Liang straining his tactics to no avail.<sup>[7]</sup>

News came of Wei reinforcements being led by Zhang He was a serious threat to Zhuge Liang, especially when the latter started to face logistic difficulty, so the Shu army retreated. Seeking glory, a Wei general, Wang Shuang, led his cavalry in pursuit of the enemy to the Qinling Mountains, where he fell into an ambush planted by Zhuge Liang and was killed. On the other hand, Zhang He precisely predicted Zhuge Liang would retreat before he even arrived Chencang, so Zhang He headed Nanzheng, but was not able to catch up with Zhuge Liang.

## Aftermath

Scoring such a victory, Hao Zhao instantly became a celebrity, and an imperial decree was passed down to grant the victor a title of marquis. Cao Rui also summoned Hao Zhao to the capital of Luoyang, where the young emperor praised his general highly. However, Hao Zhao soon died of illness during his stay in the capital.

In the same year of 229, Zhuge Liang launched his third expedition. This time, he again changed his target, sending Chen Shi to besiege Wudu and Yinping commanderies. The Wei general, Guo Huai, ceded the two commanderies to Shu Han, in fear he would be sandwiched by Chen Shi and Zhuge Liang.

## Modern references

The Siege of Chencang is featured as a playable stage in the fifth installment of Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors 5*.

## References

- [1] (贼众十万，顿兵郭下，围城三匝，于是不逞作愚). *Records of Shanxi* 山西省地方志编纂委员会. 《山西通志》.
- [2] Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 35, Biography of Zhuge Liang.
- [3] (“魏家科法，卿所练也；我之为人，卿所知也。我受国恩多而门户重，卿无可言者，但有必死耳。”). *Brief History of Wei*.
- [4] (亮又使详重说昭，言人兵不敌，无为空自破灭。昭谓详曰：“前言已定矣。我识卿耳，箭不识也。”详乃去。). *Brief History of Wei*.
- [5] (亮乃更为井阑百尺以射城中，以土丸填堑，欲直攀城，昭又于内筑重墙。). *Brief History of Wei*.
- [6] (亮又为地突，欲踊出于城里，昭又于城内穿地横截之。). *Brief History of Wei*.
- [7] (昼夜相攻拒二十余日，亮无计) *Brief History of Wei*.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 3rd Expedition: Battle of Jianwei

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Battle of Jianwei	
Part of the third of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Date</b>	Spring 229
<b>Location</b>	Modern-day Gansu, China
<b>Result</b>	Shu victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Guo Huai	Zhuge Liang Chen Shi
Strength	
Unknown	Unknown

The **Battle of Jianwei** was a military conflict over the control of the commanderies of Wudu and Yinping between the states of Shu Han and Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms period of China. These commanderies were poor and depopulated due to the relocation of resources ordered by Cao Cao years ago. Nevertheless, it was believed that Wudu Commandery still had strategic interest as a foothold for striking into further Cao Wei territory.

## The Battle

In 229 AD, Chen Shi, a veteran general of Shu Han, was chosen by Zhuge Liang to lead an army to take Wudu and Yinping commanderies, while the regent himself stayed in the staging area of Yangpingguan as a backup. As soon as Wei military mobilized, Zhuge Liang maneuvered his unit toward Jianwei County, the northwest corner of Wudu commandery. A Wei general, Guo Huai, initially had desired to attack Chen Shi's force, preventing the fall of Wudu and Yinping commanderies, but changed mind when he knew Zhuge Liang had headed toward Jianwei. Avoiding the possibility of being cut off from behind, Guo Huai evacuated the area and drew back, setting up a defensive line behind, preparing for Shu Han's further advance. The Shu regent, on the other hand, chose not to proceed farther after he reached Jianwei. There, Zhuge Liang stationed his troops and anticipated probable Wei reinforcement, which was never sent out; hence the two commanderies soon fell. Deemed as unimportant, the lost of Wudu and Yinping did not incite Cao Wei to reclaim the forfeited lands.

Since Cao Wei had relocated the local tribesmen and livestock away from Wudu and Yinping, continuing to guarding the two commanderies with troops proved to be a futile and strategically useless option - especially in light of the expedition's already-diminished manpower and rations. As a result, Zhuge Liang withdrew the Shu forces from the area, retreating to Hanzhong to construct defenses.

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## Aftermath

The victory at Jianwei was short-lived, and the manpower and resources invested in it drained the third expedition too greatly; for the rest of 229 and for the first part of 230, the Shu forces could do nothing more than construct a defensive line in Hanzhong in preparation for a Wei offensive towards Hanzhong in the autumn. The diminished Shu forces would launch no further offensives until the fourth expedition in 231.

Despite the strategic unimportance of the two commanderies, the Shu emperor Liu Shan reinstated Zhuge Liang as Chancellor as recognition for the capture of Wudu and Yinping, a title which he had relinquished in the aftermath of the Battle of Jieting.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.
- de Crespigny, Rafe. *The Three Kingdoms and Western Jin; a history of China in the Third Century AD* (2003).  
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## 231-240

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### Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 4th Expedition: Battle of Mount Qi

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Battle of Mount Qi	
Part of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Date</b>	Spring 231–Summer 231 AD
<b>Location</b>	Longnan and Gansu, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han Xianbei
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Yi	Zhuge Liang Kebineng
Strength	
unknown	unknown
Casualties and losses	
3,000+	~10,000

The **Battle of Mount Qi** refers to a military conflict which happened around Mount Qi between the states of Cao Wei and Shu Han in 231 AD during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. It is also the most vigorous campaign of the five expeditions Shu launched against Wei, resulting in thousands of death on both sides. After this campaign ended with Wei as the victor, Shu regent, Zhuge Liang, spent 3 years to recuperate before he launched a final assault on Wei in 234 AD.

#### Background

In 217 AD, Liu Bei's strategist, Fa Zheng, proposed that Hanzhong could be used as an operational base to either attack the heartland of Cao Wei or ingest the far-left-hook of Wei's Liang and Yong Provinces.<sup>[1]</sup> Since then, Fa Zheng's plan became a blueprint for Zhuge Liang's expedition against Wei. Zhuge Liang had attempted to invade the northwestern lands via Mount Qi in his first expedition but to no avail; he then changed target to Chenchang, a bridgehead fortress guarding the metropolis city of Chang'an. However, staunch defense of the fortress proved to be formidable, swinging Zhuge Liang back to the western attack route. In early 231, Zhuge assembled a force to conquer Longyou, setting Mount Qi as his immediate target. Before Zhuge Liang marched towards Mount Qi, he had envoys sent to rouse the Xianbei and Qiang people, urging them to create a disturbance in the Wei rear, and had invented and produced the "wooden ox", which was said to have had greatly improved the logistics.

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## Battle

Nevertheless, the goal of seizing Longyou was not an easy target, because Wei's defensive posture in the region was gestured for a probably Shu Han invasion - Mount Qi was garrisoned by Jia Ji and Wei Ping, forming an initial defense for Tianshui commandery, while Dai Ling (戴陵) and Fei Yao stationed their crack troops at the heartland of Tianshui. Despite the Xianbei leader, Kebineng, had arrived Fuping County to echo the Shu forces, the offensive began with a minor clash at Mount Qi, giving the Wei commander-in-chief, Cao Zhen, an impression that the attack was a diversion to mask a major offensive through the Qinling passes against the prosperous Chang'an. Therefore, the stricken Cao Zhen gathered the majority of the defense forces inside Chang'an before he was absolved and replaced by Sima Yi. The new commander then ordered Dai Ling and Fei Yao to protect Shanggui with 4,000 elite troops and set out with the rest of his men westward to relieve the mountainous battlefield.<sup>[2]</sup> Zhang He, an veteran general whose military experience towered above that of Sima's, challenged the marshal by claiming the army should be split to also protect the districts of Yong and Mei, but Sima Yi disagreed, saying the vanguard alone could not resist the enemy.

On hearing of Sima Yi's advance, Zhuge Liang left part of his army besieging Mount Qi and set out with the remainder to seize Shanggui. Without good coordination, the eager vanguard of Wei defied Sima's simple order to defend—a detachment left the defensive position and stroke the newly arrived Zhuge Liang, but the squad was instead badly defeated. After ridding of the nuisance, Zhuge Liang foraged for the early spring wheat that was available in the vicinity. Sima Yi, after surveying the situation at Mount Qi and Guo Huai's defeat, decided to reinforce the loser and speedily marched to the wheat-field. The two armies met at the east of Shanggui, each held firmly a strategic location and refused to give battle sloppily. Originally, Wei emperor, Cao Rui, wanted to supply Sima's army with the wheat in Shanggui, and turned down the proposal to transport grain from Guanzhong; however, Zhuge Liang's movement was quicker than the young leader anticipated, and only a portion of the wheat produce was retained. To supply the defensive forces, Wei's Yong Province Governor, Guo Huai, asserted his influence upon local nomadic tribes and received plenty of food from them.<sup>[3]</sup> Thus, the Wei army was able to supply itself without the aid from central government.

Upon completing the harvest the Shu forces retreated, but they were trailed and caught up by Sima Yi at Hanyang (漢陽), where the follower sent out his general, Niu Jin, to noose Shu forces into a trap the hunter meticulously prepared. However, after the Shu vanguard, Ma Dai, had briefly fought Niu Jin, Zhuge Liang signaled a general retreat toward the eastern end of Qishan ridges, sojourning Shu army at Lucheng (鹵城, Lu Fortress), an ideal site for a showdown. There, the Shu-Han Chancellor sent his generals to station on two mountains north and south to the lone fortress, and had soldiers pitched "covering camps" near the riverbanks to take complete rein of the water route.<sup>[4]</sup> Generals under Sima Yi urged the latter to attack on numerous occasions, but the careworn marshal was hesitant to do so upon seeing his arch-rival's arrangement. Nevertheless, faced with intensive criticism and ridicule from both enemy and subordinates, a disgraced Sima Yi eventually relented. In May, Sima Yi sent an earnest Zhang He to attack Shu southern camp guarded by Wang Ping, while he personally led a frontal assault against Lucheng from the central avenue.<sup>[5]</sup> Pressed by clouds of black-clad guards under the banners of Sima, Zhuge Liang ordered Wei Yan, Wu Ban, and Gao Xiang to resist the raven horde outside the city wall, where the dark knights suffered an unexpected and tremendous defeat: 3,000 elite soldiers were killed, and 5,000 suits of ebony armor and 3,100 sets of hornbeam-made crossbows were seized by Shu.<sup>[6]</sup> Even the loss was heavy, Sima Yi still retained a sizable army, which he led back to its encampment.

After such a resplendent victory, however, Zhuge Liang could not capitalize on it with a major offensive due to dwindling food supply. Adverse weather prevented Shu's logistics from delivering matériel on schedule, and Li Yan, the Shu official responsible for maintaining ration supplies to the front, fabricated that the emperor Liu Shan had ordered a withdrawal. In the Book of Jin, it is claimed that Sima Yi again launched an attack on Shu garrisons at this juncture, succeeding in capturing Zhuge Liang's outer camps. The Prime Minister abandoned Lucheng and retreated under the cover of night, but was caught up by Sima Yi, who dealt Zhuge Liang a casualty of roughly 10,000.<sup>[7]</sup>



There was a dramatic turn during Shu retreat, though. Sima Yi, letting go of his usual cautiousness after his prior success over Zhuge Liang, ordered Zhang He to further pursue the enemy in an attempt to capitalize on their momentum. Weillue reports that Zhang He refused Sima Yi's order and argued with his superior that an army returning home should not be chased, in accordance with classical military doctrine. The Grand Marshal, however, refused to listen and forced the general to carry out his fiat.<sup>[8]</sup> Indeed, Zhang He fell into a choreographed meat grinder laid at Mumen, where Zhuge Liang had ordered massed crossbowmen to hide at high grounds and fire at approaching enemies when the prey entered a narrow defile. Hemmed by heavy cross-fire, even Zhang He was hit by a fatal shaft on his right leg, ending the old general's long journey of military career and leaving Sima Yi being the single most valued military authority of Cao Wei.

## Aftermath

When Zhuge Liang returned to Hanzhong, he received a letter from Li Yan informing him that the food supply was ready and questioning why he had retreated. At the same time, Li Yan sent Liu Shan a memo which says "the army feigned retreat in order to lure the enemy to do battle" in hope that Zhuge Liang would resume the war so his failure to transport ration would go unnoticed. However, Zhuge Liang decided to return to Chengdu and show Liu Shan the handwritten letters of Li Yan, so the latter could not deny the fault. At Shu capital, Zhuge Liang asked the emperor to strip Li Yan off all of his prestige titles and official posts and exile the guilty Li Yan to Zitong commandery.

## References

- [1] Chen Shou. Biography of Pang Tong and Fa Zhen, Volume 37, *Records of the Three Kingdoms*; Original quote: 〔克漢中〕之日，廣農積谷，觀釁伺隙，上可以傾覆寇敵，尊獎王室，中可以蠶食雍、涼，廣拓境土...
  - [2] (漢晉春秋曰：“宣王使曜、陵留精兵四千守上邽，餘衆悉出，西救祁山。”) *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*, cited in Biography of Zhuge Liang, Volume 35, Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms.
  - [3] Chen Shou. Biography of Guo Huai, Records of the Three Kingdoms. Original quote: 是時，隴右無谷，議欲關中大運，淮以威恩抚循羌、胡，家使出谷，平其輸調，軍食用足，转扬武将军。
  - [4] (漢晉春秋曰：“亮屯鹵城，據南北二山，斷水為重圍。”) *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*, cited in Biography of Zhuge Liang, Volume 35, Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms.
  - [5] (漢晉春秋曰：“使張郃攻無當監何平於南圍，自案中道向亮。”) *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*, cited in Biography of Zhuge Liang, Volume 35, Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms.
  - [6] (漢晉春秋曰：“亮使魏延、高翔、吳班赴拒，大破之，獲甲首三千級，玄鐵五千領，角弩三千一百張，宣王還保營。”) *Spring and Autumn Annal of Han and Jin Dynasty*, cited in Biography of Zhuge Liang, Volume 35, Annotated Records of the Three Kingdoms.
  - [7] (帝攻拔其圍，亮宵遁。追擊，破之，俘斬萬計。) Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1.
  - [8] (《魏略》曰：亮軍退，司馬宣王使郃追之，郃曰：“軍法，圍城必開出路，歸軍勿追。”宣王不聽。郃不得已，遂進。) *The Brief History of Wei* states Zhang He opposed the retreat by pointing out "military norms dictates that a retreat route be given to those who were surrounded or returning."
- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*.
  - Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*.
  - Yu Huan. *Weillue*.

# 2nd Battle of Hefei

Battle of Hefei	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	233 CE
<b>Location</b>	Hefei, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Eastern Wu retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Man Chong	Sun Quan

Battle of Hefei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Hefei** was fought between the contending states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu in 233 during the Three Kingdoms period.

## Background

In 230, the state of Wei constructed a new fortress at Hefei to defend against its rival state of Wu. The fortress is referred to as "Xincheng" (新城; literally: "new city") in historical sources.


## The battle

In the 12th lunar month of 233, the Wu emperor Sun Quan led an army across the Yangtze River to attack Xincheng, Hefei. However, as the fortress was located very inland, Sun Quan's forces remained on their ships for more than 20 days. Man Chong, the Wei general defending Xincheng, secretly sent 6,000 infantry and cavalry to wait in ambush near the river. When Sun Quan's forces set foot on land, they were suddenly attacked by the Wei army lying in ambush. Hundreds of Wu soldiers were killed while others drowned in the river as they attempted to flee. Sun Quan ordered a retreat after his defeat. He later sent Quan Cong to attack Lu'an, but Quan was unsuccessful and withdrew as well.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*.

# Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions - 5th Expedition: Battle of Wuzhang Plains

Battle of Wuzhang Plains	
Part of the fifth of Zhuge Liang's Northern Expeditions	
	
"A dead Zhuge scares away a living Zhongda"	
<b>Date</b>	April 234 – autumn of 234 CE
<b>Location</b>	Wuzhang Plains, Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Shu Han retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Yi	Zhuge Liang
Strength	
200,000	100,000

Battle of Wuzhang Plains	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	五丈原之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	五丈原之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Wǔzhàng Yuán Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Wuzhang Plains** was a stand-off between the contending states of Cao Wei and Shu Han in 234 CE during the Three Kingdoms period. The battle was the fifth and last of the northern expeditions led by Shu Han's chancellor, Zhuge Liang, who fell ill and died during the standoff.

## Background

In the spring of 234, Zhuge Liang led 100,000 troops through Xiagu Pass (斜谷口) after three years of preparation since his last Northern Expedition. At the same time, Zhuge Liang sent an emissary to Shu Han's ally state, Eastern Wu, hoping that Wu would attack Cao Wei concurrently. In April, Shu forces reached the Wuzhang Plains near the Wei River and made camp there. The Cao Wei commander, Sima Yi, was well-prepared with a 200,000 strong army, which held a fortified position on the southern bank of the Wei River.

## The battle

### Initial clashes

Guo Huai suggested that Sima Yi form a position in the northern part of the Plains, since Zhuge Liang would likely strike there. Sima Yi agreed, and sent Guo Huai to set camp there. Shu forces attacked the Wei camp there while it was being built, but Guo Huai was able to hold them off.

### Stalemate

Sima Yi would not engage the Shu forces, instead trying to make the enemy retreat through attrition. Zhuge Liang understood the problem, and implemented the *tuntian* system to sustain his troops.

The Shu army awaited an agreed offensive by Wu for the moment to strike. However, Sun Quan's armies in the Huai River region were defeated by forces led by the Wei emperor, Cao Rui, and succumbed to an endemic disease. Thus the stalemate remained in place and continued for hundreds of days. Shu forces tried to engage the Wei forces several times, but Sima Yi remained firmly in camp and refused to engage the enemy.

In an attempt to provoke Sima Yi to attack him, Zhuge Liang sent women's clothing to Sima, suggesting that Sima should be a woman since he did not dare to attack him. Sima Yi's subordinates were enraged by the insult, but Sima himself remained calm. To appease his men, Sima Yi asked Cao Rui for permission to engage the enemy. Cao Rui understood the situation and sent minister Xin Pi to persuade the Wei army to be patient.

### Death of Zhuge Liang

In another attempt to force Sima Yi to go to battle, Zhuge Liang sent an emissary to urge Sima to fight him. However, Sima Yi refused to discuss military issues with the messenger, and instead inquired about Zhuge Liang's daily tasks. The emissary replied that Zhuge Liang had been personally overseeing all affairs in the army, ranging from strategic planning to his men's daily meals, and that Zhuge himself had not been eating and sleeping well. Sima Yi later told an aide that Zhuge Liang would not last long.

In August, Zhuge Liang fell ill due to exhaustion, and his condition worsened day by day. News reached the Shu emperor, Liu Shan, who sent minister Li Fu (李福) to ask Zhuge Liang about future plans for Shu. Zhuge Liang replied that Jiang Wan could succeed him, and Fei Yi could succeed Jiang. When Li Fu asked again about Fei Yi's successor, Zhuge Liang fell silent. Li Fu then returned to the capital Chengdu.

Zhuce Liang also gave instructions on how the Shu forces should withdraw back to Hanzhong: Yang Yi and Fei Yi would lead the army while Jiang Wei and Wei Yan would lead a force to defend the rear; if Wei Yan disobeyed orders, the army would proceed on without him. Zhuge Liang eventually died at the age of 54 in the early autumn of 234.



A Qing Dynasty illustration of Zhuge Liang's wooden oxen and flowing horses being constructed

## The Shu retreat

Following Zhuge Liang's death, the Shu forces quietly withdrew from their camps while not revealing news of Zhuge's death. Sima Yi was convinced by the locals that Zhuge Liang had died, so he gave chase to the retreating enemy. Jiang Wei then had Yang Yi turn around and pretend to strike. Seeing this, Sima Yi feared that Zhuge Liang had faked his death to lure him out, and immediately retreated. Common folklore tells of a double, or a wooden statue, disguised as Zhuge Liang, driving Sima Yi away in this incident. Another folktale tells that Jiang Wei dressed up as Zhuge Liang. In any case, word that Sima Yi fled from the already dead Zhuge Liang spread, spawning a popular saying, "A dead Zhuge scares away a living Zhongda (Sima Yi's courtesy name)" (死諸葛嚇走活仲達). When Sima Yi heard of such ridicule, he laughingly responded, "I can predict the living, but not the dead."

News of Zhuge Liang's death were kept secret until the Shu army had reached the safety of the Baoye valley to return to Hanzhong. Sima Yi, fearful that the announcement was false and merely another opportunity for Zhuge Liang to demonstrate his talent for ambush, hesitated to pursue. Only after his inspection of the empty Shu encampment did he resolve that pursuit was appropriate. However, upon reaching Baoye, Sima Yi decided that they had insufficient supplies to support the advance, so he ordered a retreat back to the Wei River.

## Aftermath

### Conflict between Wei Yan and Yang Yi

Wei Yan, dismayed that the Shu forces are retreating "over the death of one man", gathered his men and rode ahead of the main army and razed the gallery road behind them to prevent the main army from returning home. Yang Yi, who held a personal grudge against Wei Yan, sent the emperor Liu Shan a letter accusing Wei Yan of treason; Wei Yan did likewise against Yang Yi. Liu Shan asked Dong Yun and Jiang Wan for their opinions, and both were suspicious of Wei Yan. Liu Shan then sent Jiang Wan to lead a force of imperial guards north to cope with the disorders.

Later, Yang Yi led the main army through the mountains despite the loss of the gallery roads and confronted Wei Yan's detachment at Southern Valley Pass (南谷口). There, Wei Yan sent troops to attack Yang Yi while Yang ordered Wang Ping to resist Wei Yan. Upon meeting, Wang Ping scolded Wei Yan, "His Excellency (Zhuge Liang) has died recently and his body has yet to turn cold; how dare you act this way!" Hearing this, Wei Yan's forces scattered, knowing their commander was in the wrong. Wei Yan, along with his sons and a few followers, fled to Hanzhong. Yang Yi sent Ma Dai to give chase, and soon Ma chopped off Wei Yan's head and sent it to Yang Yi. Yang Yi stepped on Wei Yan's head and issued orders for the extermination of Wei's clan.

Jiang Wan was about ten *li* away from the capital Chengdu when he heard news of Wei Yan's death, so he returned.

### Long-term influences

After Zhuge Liang's death, Jiang Wan took his post, but Jiang was more interested in domestic affairs than military expansion. Thus the death of Zhuge Liang ended a huge strategic threat to Cao Wei and the Wei court soon began development of ambitious public works.

Sima Yi's success and subsequent rise in prominence paved the way for his grandson Sima Yan's founding of the Jin Dynasty, which would eventually bring an end to the Three Kingdoms period.

## Modern references

The battle is featured as one of the final playable stages in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. The earlier installments of the game changed the original account of the battle: certain characters such as Cao Cao and Liu Bei, who had historically died more than a decade before the battle, survived until then to participate in the battle. However, the most recent installment has made the battle more accurate than it was in the earlier installments.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.
- Sima Guang. *Zizhi Tongjian*, Volume 72.
- Luo Guanzhong. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Chapters 103-104.

# 3rd Battle of Hefei

Battle of Hefei	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	234 CE
<b>Location</b>	Hefei, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Eastern Wu retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Man Chong, Zhang Ying	Sun Quan

Battle of Hefei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Hefei New City	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥新城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥新城之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Xīnchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Hefei**, also known as the **Battle of Hefei New City**, was fought between the contending states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu in 234 during the Three Kingdoms period.

## Background

In the second lunar month of 234, Shu Han's chancellor Zhuge Liang launched a Northern Expedition against Wei for the fifth time. Shu requested assistance from its ally, Wu, to attack Wei together, and the Wu emperor Sun Quan agreed.

## The battle

In the fifth lunar month, Sun Quan's army, claimed to be 100,000 strong, garrisoned near Chao Lake. Sun Quan personally led his troops to attack Wei's fortress at Xincheng (新城; literally: "new city"), Hefei. On the other hand, he also sent his generals Lu Xun and Zhuge Jin to garrison at Jiangxia (江夏) and Miankou (沔口), and they would attack Xiangyang from there. A third Wu army, led by Sun Shao and Zhang Cheng advanced towards Guangling (廣陵) and Huaiyin (淮陰). In summary, Wu was attacking Wei from three directions.

The following month, the Wei general Man Chong wanted to lead reinforcements to support Zhang Ying (張穎), who was in charge of defending Xincheng. However, Tian Yu opposed Man Chong's idea, as he thought that Xincheng's defences were adequate, and was worried that the Wu army might turn around to attack the Wei relief force. At that time, many Wei military personnel were on leave, so Man Chong requested for them to be recalled back, and gather them to resist the enemy. Liu Shao felt that Man Chong should focus on defending instead of attacking, because the enemy was high on morale; the Wei court would first send 5,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry to relief Xincheng, and the troops should be spaced further apart, with more flags, banners, and war drums added, so as to create an impression of a large army. The enemy would retreat upon seeing the arrival of this "large army". The Wei emperor Cao Rui approved Liu Shao's strategy and despatched the suggested relief force.

Cao Rui disagreed with Man Chong's view, as he felt that Hefei, Xiangyang, and Mount Qi (祁山) were the three most important positions on Wei's eastern, southern and western borders respectively, so they already had sufficient defences. In the seventh lunar month, Cao Rui personally led a naval fleet east to lift the siege on Xincheng. Man Chong recruited several men to set fire to the Wu army's siege engines, and Sun Quan's nephew Sun Tai (孫泰) was killed in the battle. At that time, many Wu soldiers were ill and Sun Quan decided to withdraw his troops when he learnt that Cao Rui's army was approaching. Sun Shao and Zhang Cheng also pulled back their forces when they heard that Sun Quan had withdrawn, while Lu Xun pressed on the attack at Xiangyang for some time but also retreated later.

## Order of battle

Cao Wei forces	Eastern Wu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cao Rui</b></li> <li>• <b>Man Chong</b></li> <li>• <b>Tian Yu</b></li> <li>• <b>Zhang Ying</b> (張穎)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sun Quan</b></li> <li>• † <b>Sun Tai</b> (孫泰)</li> <li>• <b>Quan Cong</b></li> </ul>

## Modern references

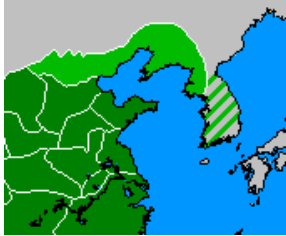
The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. In the games, the battle is known as the "Battle of He Fei Castle", and is not to be confused with another stage (Battle of He Fei), which refers to the Battle of Xiaoyao Ford. There is also a version where Wu wins this battle.

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- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*.



# Invasion of Liaodong

<b>Sima Yi's Liaodong Campaign</b>	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
 <p>The territories of the Gongsun clan, shown in light green</p>	
<b>Date</b>	June - September 29, 238
<b>Location</b>	Liao River basin, Liaoning, China
<b>Result</b>	Decisive Cao Wei victory, destruction of the Gongsun clan
<b>Belligerents</b>	
Cao Wei, Goguryeo	Gongsun clan of Liaodong
<b>Commanders and leaders</b>	
Sima Yi, Guanqiu Jian, Hu Zun, Liu Xin, Xianyu Si, Goguryeo officials	Gongsun Yuan †, Bei Yan, Yang Zuo 𠄎
<b>Strength</b>	
Wei: 40,000 <sup>[1]</sup> Goguryeo: Thousands <sup>[2]</sup>	Some tens of thousands, more than Wei's <sup>[3]</sup>

**Sima Yi's Liaodong campaign** occurred in 238 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Sima Yi, a general of the state of Cao Wei, led a force of 40,000 troops to attack the warlord Gongsun Yuan, whose clan had ruled independently from the central government for three generations in the northeastern territory of Liaodong (遼東; present-day eastern Liaoning). After a siege that lasted three months, Gongsun Yuan's headquarters fell to Sima Yi with assistance from Goguryeo (one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea), and many who served the Gongsun clan were massacred. In addition to eliminating Wei's rival in the northeast, the acquisition of Liaodong as a result of the successful campaign allowed Wei contact with the non-Chinese peoples of Manchuria, the Korean Peninsula, and the Japanese archipelago. On the other hand, the war and the subsequent centralization policies lessened the Chinese grip on the territory, which permitted a number of non-Chinese states to form in the area in later centuries.

## Background

Liaodong commandery of You Province, part of present-day Manchuria, was situated at the northeastern fringe of Later Han China, surrounded by the Wuhuan and Xianbei nomads in the north and Goguryeo and Buyeo peoples in the east. In the autumn of 189, Gongsun Du, a native of Liaodong, was appointed as the Grand Administrator of Liaodong (遼東太守), and thus began the Gongsun family's rule in the region. Taking advantage of his distance from central China, Gongsun Du stayed away from the chaos which accompanied the effective end of Han Dynasty rule, expanded his territories to include the commanderies of Lelang and Xuantu, and eventually proclaimed himself as Marquis of Liaodong (遼東侯).<sup>[4]</sup> His son Gongsun Kang, who succeeded him in 204, created the Daifang Commandery and maintained the autonomy of Liaodong by aligning himself with the warlord Cao Cao.<sup>[5]</sup> Gongsun Kang died some time around the abdication of Emperor Xian of Han to Cao Pi, son of Cao Cao, and Gongsun Kang's brother Gongsun Gong became the new ruler of Liaodong. Gongsun Gong was described as incompetent and inept, and he was soon overthrown and imprisoned by Gongsun Kang's second son Gongsun Yuan in 228.<sup>[6]</sup>

Soon after Gongsun Yuan came to power in Liaodong, China was, for the most part, split into three: Cao Wei in the north, Shu Han in the southwest, and Eastern Wu in the southeast. Of these, Liaodong's chief concern was its immediate neighbour Cao Wei, who had once contemplated an invasion of Liaodong in response to Gongsun Yuan's coup. In this situation, the Eastern Wu lord Sun Quan attempted to win Gongsun Yuan's allegiance in order to establish two fronts of attack against Cao Wei, and several embassies made their way from Wu to Liaodong by taking the difficult journey across the Yellow Sea. Cao Wei eventually got wind of the embassies and made one successful interception in Chengshan (成山), at the tip of the Shandong peninsula, but Gongsun Yuan had already sided with Sun Quan.<sup>[7]</sup> Upon the confirmation of Gongsun Yuan's goodwill, an elated Sun Quan sent another embassy in 233 to bestow Gongsun Yuan the title of King of Yan (燕王) and various insignia to trade for warhorses. By then, however, Gongsun Yuan had changed his mind about allying himself with a distant state over the sea and making himself an enemy of a powerful neighbour. When the Wu embassy arrived, Gongsun Yuan seized the treasures, killed the leading ambassadors, and sent their heads and a portion of their goods to the Wei court to buy himself back to favour.<sup>[8]</sup> Some of the envoys from Wu somehow escaped the carnage and found a potential ally to the east of Liaodong — the state of Goguryeo.

Goguryeo had been an enemy of the Gongsun since the time of Gongsun Du, especially after Gongsun Kang meddled with the succession after King Gogukcheon died. Thus when the Wu ambassadors came to Goguryeo for refuge, the reigning King Dongcheon was happy to assist these new enemies of Liaodong. The king sent 25 men to escort the envoys back to Wu along with a tribute of sable and falcon skins, which encouraged Sun Quan to send an official mission to Goguryeo to further the two states' relations. Cao Wei did not want to see Wu regain a diplomatic foothold in the north, and established its own connections with Goguryeo through the Inspector of You Province (幽州刺史) Wang Xiong (王雄).<sup>[9]</sup> King Dongcheon presumably arrived at the same conclusion as Gongsun Yuan and switched his alignment from Wu to Wei — the Wu envoys to Goguryeo in 236 were executed and their heads sent to the new Inspector of You Province, Guanqiu Jian. For the moment, both Liaodong and Goguryeo were aligned with Wei while Wu's influence diminished.

## Prelude

Although Gongsun Yuan was nominally a vassal of Cao Wei, his brief flirtation with Wu and brazen derogatory comments about Wei earned him a reputation as unreliable. From Wei's point of view, although the Xianbei insurrection by Kebineng had been put down recently, Liaodong's position as a buffer zone against barbarian invasions needed to be clarified.<sup>[10]</sup> Therefore, it was clearly unacceptable that its leader, Gongsun Yuan, was of questionable loyalty. In 237, Guanqiu Jian presented a plan to invade Liaodong to the Wei court and put his plan into action. With troops of You Province as well as Wuhuan and Xianbei auxiliaries, Guanqiu Jian crossed the Liao River east into Gongsun Yuan's territory and clashed with his enemy in Liaosui (遼隧; near present-day Haicheng, Liaoning). There the Wei forces suffered a defeat, and were forced to retreat due to the floods caused by the summer

monsoon season.<sup>[11]</sup>

Having inflicted a disgrace on the imperial armies, Gongsun Yuan had gone too far to turn back. In a series of contradictory actions that bear the hallmark of panic, Gongsun Yuan memorialised the Wei court in hope of getting a pardon on one hand, while formally declaring independence on the other by assuming the title King of Yan. He also assigned an era name for his reign, "Succeeding Han" (紹漢). This was problematic for his peace efforts for two reasons: first, proclaiming era names was a practice usually reserved for emperors, showing his intention to claim the imperial position; secondly, the era name itself implied that Wei's succession of the Han Dynasty was somehow illegitimate. As king, he tried to entice the Xianbei into attacking Cao Wei by conferring the rank of chanyu to one of its chiefs, but the Xianbei had not recovered from the death of Kebineng: the chieftains were too preoccupied with internal disputes to launch a large-scale attack on Wei.<sup>[12]</sup>

In 238, the Wei court summoned the Grand Commandant (太尉) Sima Yi for another campaign against Gongsun Yuan. Previously, Sima Yi had been tasked with defending Wei's western borders from Shu Han's Northern Expeditions led by the Shu chancellor Zhuge Liang, so when the latter died in 234, the government of Wei became able to afford sending Sima Yi elsewhere. In a court debate prior to the campaign, the Wei emperor Cao Rui decided that Sima Yi should lead 40,000 men for the invasion of Liaodong. Some counsellors thought the number was too many, but Cao Rui overruled them, saying: "In this expedition of 4,000 *li*, mobile troops must be employed, and we must exert our utmost. We should not mind the expense at all."<sup>[13]</sup> The emperor then asked Sima Yi for his assessment on Gongsun Yuan's possible reactions and how long the campaign should take, Sima Yi responded as thus:

To leave his walls behind and take to flight would be the best plan for Gongsun Yuan. To take his position in Liaodong and resist our large forces would be the next best. But if he stays in [the Liaodong capital] Xiangping (襄平; present-day Liaoyang) and defends it, he will be captured...Only a man of insight and wisdom is able to weigh his own and the enemy's relative strength, and so give up something beforehand. But this is not something Gongsun Yuan can do. On the contrary, he will think that our army, alone and on a long-distance expedition, cannot long keep it up. He is certain to offer resistance on the Liao River first and defend Xiangping afterwards....A hundred days for going, another hundred days for the attack, still another hundred days for coming back, and sixty days for rest; thus one year is sufficient.<sup>[14]</sup>

When Sima Yi set out from the Wei capital Luoyang, Cao Rui went to the city gates in person to bid him farewell. Sima Yi, leading 40,000 infantry and cavalry, was accompanied by sub-commanders such as Niu Jin and Hu Zun (胡遵).<sup>[15]</sup> He would later be joined by Guanqiu Jian's forces in You Province,<sup>[16]</sup> which included the Xianbei auxiliary led by Mohuba (莫護跋), ancestor of the Murong clan.<sup>[17]</sup>

Having heard of the new preparations made against him, Gongsun Yuan desperately dispatched an envoy to the Wu court to apologize for his betrayal in 233 and begged for help from Sun Quan. At first, Sun Quan was ready to kill the messenger, but he was persuaded by Yang Dao (羊𠄎) to make a display of force and possibly gain advantages if Sima Yi and Gongsun Yuan became deadlocked in war. Cao Rui became concerned about the Wu reinforcements, but the advisor Jiang Ji read through Sun Quan's intentions and cautioned Cao Rui that while Sun Quan would not risk a deep invasion, the Wu fleet would make a shallow incursion into Liaodong if Sima Yi does not defeat Gongsun Yuan quickly enough.<sup>[18]</sup>

## The campaign

The Wei army led by Sima Yi reached the banks of the Liao River by June 238. and Gongsun Yuan responded by sending Bei Yan and Yang Zuo with the main Liaodong force to set camp at Liaosui, the site of Guanqiu Jian's defeat. There, the Liaodong encampment stretched some 20 *li* walled from north to south.<sup>[19]</sup> The Wei generals wanted to attack Liaosui, but Sima Yi reasoned that attacking the encampment would only wear themselves out; on the other hand, since the bulk of the Liaodong army was at Liaosui, Gongsun Yuan's headquarters at Xiangping

would be comparatively empty and the Wei armies could take it with ease. Thus Sima Yi sent Hu Zun to make a sortie to the southeast, planting flags and banners as if the main thrust of the Wei army was in that direction.<sup>[20]</sup> Bei Yan and his men hastened to the south, where Hu Zun, having lured his enemy out, crossed the river and broke through Bei Yan's line.<sup>[21]</sup> Meanwhile, Sima Yi secretly led the main Wei army across the Liao River to the north. After he made the crossing, he burned the bridges and boats, made a long barricade along the river, then headed toward Xiangping.<sup>[22]</sup> Realizing the feint, Bei Yan and his men hastily withdrew their troops during the night and headed north to intercept Sima Yi's army. Bei Yan caught up with Sima Yi in Mount Shou (首山), a mountain west of Xiangping, where he was ordered to fight to the death by Gongsun Yuan. Sima Yi achieved a great victory there, and proceeded to lay siege to Xiangping.

Along with the month of July came the summer monsoons, which impeded Guanqiu Jian's campaign a year ago. Rain poured constantly for more than a month so that ships could sail the length of the flooded Liao River from its mouth at the Liaodong Bay up to the walls of Xiangping. With the water several feet high on level ground, Sima Yi was determined to maintain the siege despite the clamours of his officers who proposed to change camp. Sima Yi executed Zhang Jing (張靜), an officer who kept bringing up the issue, and the rest of the officers became silent. Because of the floods, the encirclement of Xiangping was by no means complete, and the defenders used the flood to their advantage to sail out to forage and pasture their animals. Sima Yi forbade his generals from pursuing the foragers and herders from Xiangping, saying:

Now, the rebels are numerous and we are few; the rebels are hungry and we are full. With flood and rain like this, we cannot employ our effort. Even if we take them, what is the use? Since I left the capital, I have not worried about the rebels attacking us, but have been afraid they might flee. Now, the rebels are almost at their extremity as regards supplies, and our encirclement of them is not yet complete. By plundering their cattle and horses or capturing their fuel-gatherers, we will be only compelling them to flee. War is an art of deception; we must be good at adapting ourselves to changing situations. Relying on their numerical superiority and helped by the rain, the rebels, hungry and distressed as they are, are not willing to give up. We must make a show of inability to put them at ease; to alarm them by taking petty advantages is not the plan at all.<sup>[23]</sup>

The officials back in the Wei court in Luoyang were also concerned about the floods and proposed to recall Sima Yi. The Wei emperor Cao Rui, being completely certain in Sima Yi's abilities, turned the proposal down. About this time, the Goguryeo king sent a noble (大加, *taeka*) and the Keeper of Records (主簿, *jubu*) of the Goguryeo court with several thousand men to aid Sima Yi.<sup>[24]</sup>

When the rain stopped and the floodwater got drained away, Sima Yi hastened to complete the encirclement of Xiangping. The siege of Xiangping carried on night and day, which utilized mining, hooked ladders, battering rams, and artificial mounds for siege towers and catapults to get higher vantage points.<sup>[25]</sup> The speed at which the siege was tightened caught the defenders off guard: since they had been obtaining supplies with such ease during the flood there apparently was not any real attempt to stockpile the goods inside Xiangping, and as a result famine and cannibalism broke out in the city. Many Liaodong generals, such as Yang Zuo, surrendered to Sima Yi during the siege.

On September 3, a comet was seen in the skies of Xiangping and was interpreted as an omen of destruction by those in the Liaodong camp. A frightened Gongsun Yuan sent his high ministers Wang Jian (王建) and Liu Fu (柳甫) to negotiate the terms of surrender, where he promised to present himself bound to Sima Yi once the siege was lifted. Sima Yi, wary of Gongsun Yuan's double-crossing past, executed the two, explaining his actions in a message to Gongsun Yuan that he desired nothing less than an unconditional surrender and "these two men were dotards who must have failed to convey your intentions; I have already put them to death on your behalf. If you still have anything to say, then send a younger man of intelligence and precision."<sup>[26]</sup> When Gongsun Yuan sent Wei Yan (衛演) for another round of talks, this time requesting he be allowed to send a hostage to the Wei court, Sima Yi dismissed the final messenger as a waste of time: "Now that you are not willing to come bound, you are determined

to have death; there is no need of sending any hostage."<sup>[27]</sup> Apparently, Sima Yi's previous suggestion of further negotiations was nothing more than an act of malice that gave false hope to Gongsun Yuan while prolonging the siege and placing further strain on the supplies within the city.<sup>[28]</sup>

On September 29, the famished Xiangping fell to the Wei army. Gongsun Yuan and his son Gongsun Xiu (公孫脩), leading a few hundred horsemen, broke out of the encirclement and fled to the southeast. The main Wei army gave pursuit and killed both father and son on the Liang River (梁水; present-day Taizi River 太子河). Gongsun Yuan's head was cut off and sent to Luoyang for public exposure. A separate fleet, led by future Grand Administrators Liu Xin (劉昕) and Xianyu Si (鮮于嗣), had been sent to attack the Korean commanderies of Lelang and Daifang by sea, and in time, all of Gongsun Yuan's state of Liaodong were subjugated.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Aftermath

Entering the city, Sima Yi assembled all who had served in Gongsun Yuan's military and government under two banners. Everyone who had held office in Gongsun Yuan's rebel regime, over 1,000 to 2,000 in number, were executed in a systematic purge. In addition, 7,000 people of age 15 and above who had served in Liaodong's army were put to death, their corpses heaped up to form a great mound meant to terrorize.<sup>[30]</sup> After the massacre, he pardoned the survivors, posthumously rehabilitated Lun Zhi and Jia Fan — two Liaodong ministers against making war with Wei — and freed the overthrown Gongsun Gong from jail.<sup>[31]</sup> Finally, he dismissed the soldiers over sixty years of age from the Wei army on grounds of compassion, numbering over a thousand men, and marched back with the army.<sup>[32]</sup>

Although he had gained 40,000 households and some 300,000 people for the state of Wei from this expedition,<sup>[33]</sup> Sima Yi did not encourage these frontier settlers to continue their livelihoods in the Chinese northeast and instead ordered that those families who wished to return to central China be allowed to do so. In April or May 239, a Wu fleet commanded by Sun Yi (孫怡) and Yang Dao defeated the Wei defenders in southern Liaodong, prompting the Wei court to evacuate the coastal population to Shandong, further accelerating the trend of depopulation in Liaodong. This happened around the same time as the Xianbei chieftain Mohuba was awarded merit for his participation in the campaign against Gongsun Yuan, and his people were allowed to settle and thrive in northern Liaodong. By the beginning of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), the number of Chinese households fell to just 5,400.<sup>[34]</sup> After the fall of Western Jin, control over Liaodong was passed onto Former Yan (337-370), which was founded by Mohuba's descendents, and then to Goguryeo. For several centuries Liaodong would be out of Chinese hands, partly due to the lack of Chinese presence there as a result of the policies that Sima Yi and the Wei court adopted for Liaodong after the fall of the Gongsun.<sup>[35]</sup>

In the meantime, the removal of the Gongsun regime cleared a barrier between central China and the peoples of the further east. As early as 239, a mission from the Wa people of Japan under Queen Himiko reached the Wei court for the first time.<sup>[36]</sup> Goguryeo soon found itself rid of a nuisance that was only to be replaced by a stronger neighbour, and provoked Wei's wrath when it raided Chinese settlements in Liaodong and Xuantu commanderies. The Goguryeo–Wei Wars of 244 followed, devastating Goguryeo, and from it the Chinese re-established friendly contact with the Buyeo.<sup>[37]</sup> These developments could only have happened after Sima Yi's conquest of Liaodong, which, in some sense, represented the first step in recovering Chinese influence in the further east at the time.

## Modern references

The Liaodong campaign is featured as a playable stage in the seventh installment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series in the newly introduced Jin Dynasty story line.

## Notes

- [1] Gardiner (1972B), p. 168
- [2] Gardiner (1972B), p. 165
- [3] Fang, pp. 573, 591 note 12.2
- [4] Gardiner (1972A), pp. 64-77
- [5] Gardiner (1972A), p. 91
- [6] Gardiner (1972B), p. 147
- [7] Gardiner (1972B), pp. 151-152
- [8] Gardiner (1972B), p. 154
- [9] Gardiner (1972B), p. 162
- [10] Gardiner (1972B), p. 149
- [11] Gardiner (1972B), p. 166
- [12] Gardiner (1972B), p. 167
- [13] Fang, p. 569
- [14] Fang, pp. 569-570
- [15] Fang, p. 585 note 1
- [16] Chen, 28.5
- [17] Gardiner (1972B), p. 169
- [18] Fang, pp. 570-571
- [19] Fang, pp. 572, 591 note 12.2. Although the *Book of Jin* described the encampment as stretching 60 to 70 *li*, Sima Guang followed the *Records of Three Kingdoms* description since he considered 70 *li* too long for an encampment.
- [20] Fang, p. 572
- [21] Gardiner (1972B), p. 168
- [22] Fang, p. 592 note 13.4
- [23] Fang, p. 573
- [24] Gardiner (1972B), pp. 165, 169. The names of these leaders of the Goguryeo expeditionary force were not recorded.
- [25] Fang, p. 574
- [26] Gardiner (1972B), p. 171
- [27] Fang, p. 577
- [28] Gardiner (1972B), pp. 172, 195 note 94.
- [29] Ikeuchi, pp. 87-88
- [30] Gardiner (1972B), pp. 172, 195-196 note 97
- [31] Fang, p. 575
- [32] Fang, p. 598 note 22
- [33] Fang, p. 597
- [34] Gardiner (1972B), p. 173
- [35] Gardiner (1972B), p. 174
- [36] Gardiner (1972B), p. 175-176
- [37] Gardiner (1972B), p. 175

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# 241-250

## Battle of Xingshi

Battle of Xingshi	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	244 CE
<b>Location</b>	Mount Xingshi (situated north of present-day Yang County, Shaanxi), China
<b>Result</b>	Shu Han victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Cao Shuang Guo Huai	Fei Yi Wang Ping
Strength	
60,000+ <sup>[1]</sup>	30,000 under Wang Ping and Liu Min Unknown number of troops under Fei Yi
Casualties and losses	
unknown	minimal

Battle of Xingshi	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	兴势之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	興勢之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Xīngshì Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Xingshi** was a failed invasion on the state of Shu Han by its rival Cao Wei in 244 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle took place at Mount Xingshi, which is situated north of present-day Yang County, Shaanxi, and is now part of the Changqing National Nature Reserve.

### Background

Despite facing strong opposition in the Wei court, Cao Shuang believed that the campaign was viable, especially when the Shu commander, Jiang Wan, withdrew his main force from Hanzhong to Fu County (涪縣) in October 243. Cao Shuang and his protégés concluded that with numerical superiority, their army could easily conquer Hanzhong before Shu reinforcements arrive. Even if they failed to completely eliminate Shu, the fall of Hanzhong was sufficient to increase Cao Shuang's fame and influence in the Wei court.



## Geography

The three traditional passages from Hanzhong to Guanzhong were all valleys in the Qinling Mountains. Meridian Trail in the east is the longest, totalling more than 330 km, with its northern end located to the south of Chang'an. The southern half of the valley was called Zi Valley (子谷) and the northern half was called Wu Valley (午谷). The rugged local terrain provided numerous spots that were perfect for ambushes, and whoever sets up ambushes could easily completely annihilate the opposing side travelling in the valley, and thus this longest route was also the most dangerous. However, if Shu was on the offensive, it could easily threaten Chang'an by taking this route, and that was the exact suggestion Wei Yan proposed to Zhuge Liang before the first Northern Expedition. The 235 km long Baoxie Trail (褒斜道) located in the west had the best road condition among all three traditional passages, with the northern half called Xie Valley (斜谷) and the south half Bao Valley (褒谷). The southern end of the Baoxie Trail was located around 25 km north of Hanzhong, while its northern end was located 15 km to the south of present-day Mei County, Shaanxi. In the center of Baoxie Trail, another valley called Ji Valley (箕谷) branched out westward, and then turned northward, eventually ending near Chencang (陳倉), a strategic stronghold that would be threatened if Shu was on the offensive. If Wei was on the offensive and took the initiative by going out actively engaging the enemy, the good road condition would mean that Shu could deploy their defensive force quicker and stop the attack before Wei force could get out of the valley.

The 210 km long Tangluo Trail (傥駱道) in the center was the shortest among all three, and it got its name from the geographical locations at its ends. The southern end was located next to the Tangshui River (傥水河) in present-day Yang County, Shaanxi, and the northern end was located in the Luo Ravine (駱峪) to the west of present-day Zhouzhi County, Shaanxi. Hence, the southern half was called Tang Valley (傥谷) and the northern half was called Luo Valley (駱谷). Cao Shuang had committed a grave strategic blunder when he selected this central route to attack Shu because despite being the shortest, the road condition was the poorest among all three routes. More importantly, among the three traditional passages, Tangluo Trail had the longest section without any water source. As a result, the logistic problem crippled the invasion force, with many if not most of the packing animals of the Wei force died of thirst before even get out of the valley. Cao Shuang was forced to mobilize tens of thousands of draftees as coolies to carry supplies, and many of them met the same fate of the packing animals. Consequently, morale plummeted and resentment of Cao Shuang's rule not only drastically increased among the troops he commanded, but also back home in Wei.

## The battle

In March 244, Cao Shuang promoted Xiahou Xuan to General Who Subdues the West, and the Inspector of Yong Province, Guo Huai, was appointed as the vanguard force commander. Together, they began the march toward Hanzhong via Tangluo Trail. Cao Shuang's protégés Deng Yang and Li Sheng participated in the invasion as his staff. The primary target of the Wei invasion force was Yangping Pass (陽平關; located west of present-day Wuhou Town (武侯鎮), Mian County, Shaanxi).

Shu's Senior General Who Guards the North, Wang Ping, was in charge of defending Hanzhong, but his force totaled less than 30,000. Facing absolute numerical inferiority, some Shu commanders suggested to concentrate on defending Hancheng (漢城; east of present-day Mian County, Shaanxi) and Yuecheng (樂城; east of present-day Chenggu County, Shaanxi). Wang Ping rejected the idea because the reinforcements was too far away and it would take time to arrive, and it would cause disaster for Shu if the enemy was allowed to passed through Yangping Pass unopposed. Therefore, the enemy could only be stopped by taking geographical advantage of local rugged terrain. General Who Protects the Army, Liu Min (劉敏), was ordered to take up position in Mount Xingshi (興勢山) and plant an array of flags over a hundred miles to create an illusion that the Shu defense force was larger than it actually was. Wang Ping would personally lead an army behind to prevent possible separate assaults by Wei forces from Huangjin Valley (黃金谷; located east of Mount Xingshi). As Wang Ping had correctly predicted, by April 244, the enemy advance was successfully checked at Mount Xingshi and the enemy's supplies were depleting as their

supply lines were over extended and nearly all their transport animals were dead. Shu's General-in-Chief, Fei Yi, was on his way to Hanzhong with reinforcements from Chengdu. The counteroffensive of Shu Han was about to be launched against the overstretched Wei invasion army.

Cao Shuang's staff officer Yang Wei (楊偉) realized the danger and begged Cao to abandon the campaign and retreat immediately, but Deng Yang objected and argued with Yang despite his lack of any military knowledge. Yang Wei could not convince either and furiously claimed that Deng Yang and Li Sheng were disregarding the lives of hundreds of thousands, as well as the fate of their state, and they should be executed. Cao Shuang was unhappy with such suggestions and rejected both of them. Grand Tutor Sima Yi, who opposed the campaign from the very beginning, could no longer ignore the dangerous situation and wrote to Xiahou Xuan to inform him about the impending disaster, and warned him that he was personally aware that years ago, Cao Cao almost suffered a total defeat in the struggle against Liu Bei for Hanzhong. The Shu army was in firm control of Mount Xingshi, which prevented Wei forces from continuing pushing forward, and if another Shu force cut off the Wei retreat route, Cao Shuang and Xiahou Xuan would not even be able to live to regret their decisions. Xiahou Xuan finally realized the dangerous situation they were in after reading Sima Yi's letter, and finally managed to convince Cao Shuang to give the order to retreat, albeit the latter did so reluctantly. Guo Huai, also had realized their situation, withdrew his troops to avoid the presumable rout.

Fei Yi, however, would not let Cao Shuang retreat easily, and led his army to flank the Wei troops and block their retreat. Shu forces set up defensive positions in the places where they enjoyed absolute geographical advantage over the Wei army: the three ridges in the Luo Valley: Shen Ridge (沈嶺), Ya Ridge (衙嶺), and Fenshui Ridge (分水嶺). Cao Shuang and his officers were barely able to escape back to Guanzhong after their forces suffered a devastating casualties resulting from thirst, hunger and illness in the process.

## Aftermath

For his victory, Fei Yi was awarded the title of "Marquis of Chengxiang" (成鄉侯), and stayed in Hanzhong until his return to the capital Chengdu in September 244. In contrast, the prestige and popularity of Cao Shuang dropped sharply, which helped to lead his eventual downfall in the power struggle against Sima Yi.

## Analysis

The Battle of Xingshi was one of the most important yet most understated battles of the Three Kingdoms period. The lack of participation of the principal figures of the time such as Zhuge Liang and Jiang Wei caused many writers to put much less emphasis or even ignore the battle in their works in comparison to other battles occurred in that era. In reality, the battle had profound impact in the history in that it postponed the unification of China for decades due to the heavy loss Wei had suffered: because soldiers drafted from the peasantry, the heavy loss meant that no labors were available to tend the farmland. In order to tend farmlands and help the widows and orphans resulted from the defeated campaign, at least 100,000 soldiers from the *tuntian* army was reassigned back to their agricultural roles. These troops never returned to the active service again as they were needed to remain as farmers and as a consequence, the size of Wei's army decreased by a quarter, dropping from 800,000 at its peak to 600,000, a number that was not exceeded until the time of the War of the Eight Princes during the Jin Dynasty, over half a century later.

The drastic loss of troops also caused to another important severe consequence: Wei was no longer able to suppress the rebellions of minorities in the north like it used to (though the impact was not devastating in that era yet, it would be felt in the Jin Dynasty). From that point on, the smaller rebellions of minorities in the north cumulated into a formidable force that would eventually overthrow Chinese rule in northern China seven decades later during the Jin Dynasty. Despite being relatively unnoticed in literature, later militarists gave high credit to the battle: For example, Ming Dynasty military strategist Liu Ji, in his work titled *The Unexpected Strategies of a Hundred Battles* (百戰奇略), classified this battle as the classical example of a "retreating war" (退戰). This meant that if the enemy held an absolute geographical advantage and you were already having trouble to carry on the fight, a rapid retreat was the

only viable option.

## Order of battle

Wei forces	Shu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General-in-Chief (大將軍) Cao Shuang, commander-in-chief</li> <li>General Who Subdues the West (征西將軍) Xiahou Xuan, deputy commander-in-chief</li> <li>Inspector of Yong Province (雍州刺史) Guo Huai, commander of the vanguard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General-in-Chief (大將軍) Fei Yi, commander-in-chief</li> <li>Senior General Who Guards the North (鎮北大將軍) Wang Ping</li> <li>General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) Liu Min (劉敏)</li> </ul>

## Notes

- [1] (正始五年，爽乃西至長安，大發卒六七萬人，從駱谷入。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 9, Biographies of the Xiahous and Caos.

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# Invasion of Goguryeo

Goguryeo–Wei Wars	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	244-245
<b>Location</b>	Manchuria and the Korean peninsula
<b>Result</b>	Devastation of Goguryeo
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Goguryeo Okjeo Ye
Commanders and leaders	
Guanqiu Jian Wang Qi Liu Mao Gong Zun	King Dongcheon Marquis of Bunai
Strength	
1st: 10,000 2nd: Unknown	1st: 20,000 2nd: Unknown
Casualties and losses	
6,000?	8,000~18,000

Goguryeo–Wei War	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	曹魏与高句丽的战争
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	曹魏與高句麗的戰爭
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Cáo wèi Yǔ Gāo jù lì Dè Zhàn zhēng

The **Goguryeo–Wei War** were a series of invasions of the Chinese state of Cao Wei against the proto-Korean kingdom of Goguryeo from 244 to 245. The invasions, a retaliation of a Goguryeo raid in 242, destroyed the Goguryeo capital of Hwando, sent its king fleeing, and broke the tributary relationships between Goguryeo and the other tribes of Korea that formed much of Goguryeo's economy.<sup>[1]</sup> Although the king evaded capture and eventually settled in a new capital, Goguryeo was reduced to such insignificance that for half a century there was no mention of the state in Chinese historical texts.<sup>[2]</sup> By the time Goguryeo reappeared in Chinese annals, the state had evolved into a much more powerful political entity, thus the Wei invasion was identified by historians as a watershed moment in Goguryeo history that divided the different stages of Goguryeo's growth.<sup>[3]</sup> In addition, the second campaign of the war included the furthest expedition into Manchuria by a Chinese army up to that time and was instrumental in providing the earliest descriptions of the peoples who lived there.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Background



The Korean peninsula after Gongsun Kang's exploitation of the succession feud, 204. The red star in Goguryeo represents the location of the new capital, Hwando.

The polity of Goguryeo developed among the peoples of Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula during the 1st and 2nd century BC as the Chinese Han Dynasty extended its control to Northeast Asia, creating the Four Commanderies of Han.<sup>[5]</sup> As it grew and centralized, Goguryeo increasingly contacted and conflicted with China. As Goguryeo consolidated its power, it proceeded to act to conquer the territories on the northern Korean peninsula which were under Chinese rule.<sup>[6]</sup> When the power of the Han Dynasty declined to internal turmoils in the 2nd century AD, the warlord Gongsun Du came to control the commanderies of Liaodong (遼東) and Xuantu, directly adjacent to Goguryeo. Gongsun Du's faction often quarreled with Goguryeo despite initial cooperation,<sup>[7]</sup> and the conflict culminated in the Goguryeo succession feud of 204, which Gongsun Du's successor Gongsun Kang exploited. Though the candidate supported by Gongsun Kang was eventually defeated, the victor Sansang of Goguryeo was compelled

to move his capital southeast from Jolbon (present-day Huanren Town, Liaoning) on the Hun River to Hwando (present-day Ji'an, Jilin) on the Yalu River, which offered better protection.<sup>[8]</sup> Gongsun Kang moved in and restored order to the Lelang Commandery and established the new Daifang Commandery by splitting the southern part of Lelang.<sup>[9]</sup>

Compared to the agriculturally rich Jolbon area, Hwando was situated in a mountainous region with little arable land. To sustain the economy after the move, Hwando had to constantly extract resources from the peoples in the countryside, which included the tribal communities of Okjeo and Ye.<sup>[10]</sup> The Okjeo were said to have worked as virtual slaves to the Goguryeo king, hauling provisions (such as cloth, fish, salt and other sea products) from the peninsula's northeast to the Yalu basin, reflecting the arrangement that Goguryeo had to adopt after the entry of Gongsun Kang. By the 230s, Goguryeo had regathered their strength from these tributary relations and regained their presence in the Jolbon region.<sup>[11]</sup> In 234, the Han Dynasty's successor state Cao Wei established friendly contact with Goguryeo,<sup>[12]</sup> and in 238 an alliance between Wei and Goguryeo destroyed their common enemy Gongsun Yuan, the last of the Gongsun warlords (See Sima Yi's Liaodong campaign). Wei took over all of Gongsun Yuan's territories, including Lelang and Daifang — now Wei's influence was extended into the Korean Peninsula, adjacent to Goguryeo.

The alliance broke down in 242, when King Dongcheon of Goguryeo plundered the Liaodong district of Xi'anping (西安平; near present-day Dandong, Liaoning) at the mouth of the Yalu River.<sup>[13]</sup> The motive for the raid, though not exactly clear, was suggested to be either a search for new agricultural land<sup>[14]</sup> or competition for the control of the "Small River Maek" (小水貊) people nearby, a branch of the Goguryeo people known for their excellent

bows.<sup>[15]</sup> In any case, since a Goguryeo presence there would cut off the land routes between the Chinese heartland and the peninsular commanderies, the Wei court reacted most strongly to this apparent threat to their control of Lelang and Daifang.<sup>[2]</sup>

## First campaign

### The Battle of Liangkou

In response to Goguryeo's aggression, the Inspector of You Province (幽州刺史), Guanqiu Jian, set out from Xuantu Commandery into Goguryeo with seven legions — amounting to 10,000 infantry and cavalry in total — in 244.<sup>[16]</sup> From the seat of government in Xuantu (near present-day Shenyang, Liaoning), Guanqiu Jian's army went up the valley of the Suzi River (蘇子河), a tributary of the Hun River, to present-day Xinbin County, and from there crossed the watershed to the east and entered the Tongjia River (佟家江) valley. King Dongcheon marched with 20,000 infantry and cavalry out from his capital Hwando to meet the advancing army. The king's army traveled through several river valleys and met Guanqiu Jian's army at the junction of the Fu'er River (富爾江) and the Tongjia River, a place known as Liangkou (梁口; present-day Fu'erjiangkou 富尔江口). Liangkou was to become the site of the first battles between Guanqiu Jian and King Dongcheon.<sup>[17]</sup>

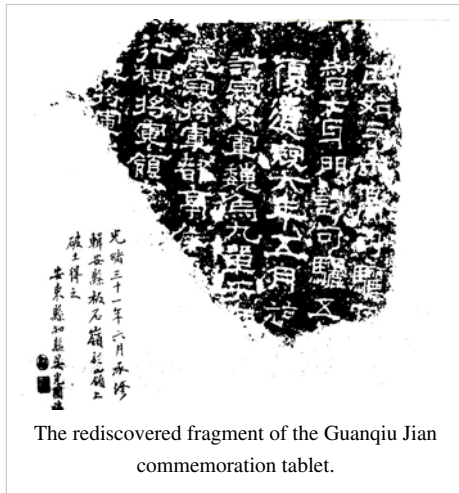
Sources differ on how the battles played out. The later Korean source *Samguk Sagi* state that Guanqiu Jian's army invaded in the eighth lunar month of the year, but was twice defeated before winning the crucial battle that sent the king back to the capital. The first battle, according to *Samguk Sagi*, pitted King Dongcheon's 20,000 foot and horse soldiers against Guanqiu Jian's 10,000-man-strong army on the Tongjia River (also known as the Biryu River 沸流水), which Goguryeo won and beheaded 3,000 Wei soldiers. The second engagement was described to have happened in a "Dale of Liangmo" (梁貊之谷), where Goguryeo again bested and captured and killed 3,000 more soldiers. The two victories seemed to have got into the king's head as he remarked to his generals: "The Wei army, so enormous, cannot match a small force of ours, Guanqiu Jian is a great general of Wei, and today his life is in my hands!"<sup>[18]</sup> He then led 5,000 ironclad horsemen to lead the charge against Guanqiu Jian, who put his troops in square formation and fought desperately. In the end, 18,000 Goguryeo men were killed in this last battle, and the defeated king fled to the Plain of Yalu (鴨綠原) with a little more than a thousand horsemen.

In contrast, the near-contemporary "Biography of Guanqiu Jian" in volume 28 of *Records of Three Kingdoms*, containing the Chinese account of this battle, state that King Dongcheon was repeatedly defeated in the tremendous fight at Liangkou and was forced to flee. Japanese researcher Hiroshi Ikeuchi points out that the Korean account was transformed from Guanqiu Jian's biography, reversing the results of the battles before Liangkou in order to save Goguryeo's "face".<sup>[19]</sup> The same researcher also suggests that the aforementioned "Dale of Liangmo" place was fabricated by the biased historian sympathetic to Goguryeo.<sup>[20]</sup> Nonetheless, both Chinese and Korean sources agree on the fact that King Dongcheon ultimately lost the battle of Liangkou and headed back to Hwando.

### The capture of Hwando

The Wei army gave chase to the routed Goguryeo army after the battle of Liangkou. According to the Chinese source *History of Northern Dynasties*, Guanqiu Jian reached Chengxian (赧峴), determined to be the present-day mountain pass Xiaobancha Ridge (小板岔嶺), also called Banshi Ridge (板石嶺).<sup>[21]</sup> Since the mountainous region rendered the cavalry ineffective, the Wei army fastened the horses and chariots there and climbed up to mountain city of Hwando. Guanqiu Jian first struck the stronghold guarding the main city and then descended upon the capital,<sup>[22]</sup> where the Wei army wrought much destruction, slaughtering and capturing over thousands of people.<sup>[23]</sup> Guanqiu Jian specifically spared the tomb and family of Deukrae (得來), a Goguryeo minister who frequently remonstrated against aggression toward Wei and starved himself to death in protest when his advices went unheeded. The king and his family fled the capital.

With the Goguryeo capital subjugated, Guanqiu Jian returned to You Province with his army in around June 245. On the way back, he had a tablet erected in Chengxian commemorating his victory, explaining the course of events, and listing the generals who participated in the campaign. A fragment of the monument was discovered in 1905, near the end of the Qing Dynasty, bearing the following mutilated inscription:<sup>[24]</sup>



The rediscovered fragment of the Guanqiu Jian commemoration tablet.

In the 3rd year of Zhengshi<sup>a</sup> the Goguryeo [?invaded]...

正始三年高句驪[?寇]

...commanded the seven legions, and attacked the Goguryeo. In the 5th [?year]<sup>b</sup>...

督七牙門討句驪五[?年]

...again the remaining enemies. In the 6th year, the 5th month<sup>c</sup>, he led back [?his army]...

復遣寇六年五月旋[?師]

General Who Exterminates Invaders, Wuwan Chanyu of Wei<sup>d</sup>...

討寇將軍魏烏丸單于

General Who Intimidates Invaders, Chief Village Marquis...

威寇將軍都亭侯

Expeditionary Major-General possessing...

行裨將軍領

...Major-General...

裨將軍

a. ^ Corresponds to year 242.

b. ^ Corresponds to year 244.

c. ^ Corresponds to around June 245.

d. ^ Identified as Kouloudun 寇婁敦, Wuhuan Chanyu of Youbeiping

## Second campaign

### Wang Qi's pursuit of King Dongcheon

King Dongcheon had returned to the abandoned capital of Hwando after the Wei army retreated homeward, but in the same year Guanqiu Jian sent the Grand Administrator of Xuantu, Wang Qi (王頎), in pursuit of the king.<sup>[25]</sup> Since the capital had been so ravaged and rendered defenseless by the previous campaign, the king had to flee again with his nobles of several ranks to South Okjeo (also known as Dongokjeo, "East Okjeo").<sup>[26]</sup> According to the *Samguk Sagi*, the king's escape was aided by Mil U (密友), a man of the Eastern Department (東部), when the king's troops had all but scattered to the last handful at Jukryeong Pass (竹嶺). Mil U said to the king, "I will go back and hold the enemy at bay while you make good your escape," and held the narrow pass with three or four soldiers while the king made his way to regroup with a band of friendly troops.<sup>[27]</sup> The king offered a reward to anyone who could bring Mil U back to safety, and a Yu Ok-gu (劉屋句) found Mil U lying on the ground with grievous injuries. The king was so delighted to recover his faithful retainer that he personally nursed Mil U back to life.

The chase from Hwando to South Okjeo took the two parties across the Yalu River into North Korea. The precise route of the chase may have passed by present-day Kanggye, from where there are two possibilities: one heading east through the Rangrim Mountains then south to present-day Changjin; the other following the Changja River south then turning east to reach Changjin. From Changjin, the pursuer and the pursued followed the Changjin River (長津江) south until they reached the vast and fertile Hamhung plains, where the river flowed into the East Korea Bay.<sup>[28]</sup> It was here in Hamhung that the South Okjeo people thrived, and thus King Dongcheon came here for refuge. When Wang Qi's army arrived, however, the Okjeo tribes were all defeated, with 3,000 tribesmen killed or captured. The king fled again, and the Wei army turned toward North Okjeo.<sup>[29]</sup>

The *Samguk Sagi* relates to an event that purported to have happened in South Okjeo: Yu Yu (紐由), another man of the Eastern Department, feigned the surrender of King Dongcheon to stop the Wei pursuit. Bearing food and gifts, Yu Yu was allowed into the camp of an unnamed Wei general. When the general received him, Yu Yu pulled out a hidden dagger from under the plates and fatally stabbed the Wei general. He was likewise killed by the attendants at the next moment, but the damage had been done — the Wei army, having lost their commander, was thrown into confusion.<sup>[30]</sup> King Dongcheon took this opportunity to gather his forces and struck his enemy in three columns. The Wei armies, unable to recover from the confusion, "at last retired from Lelang". This passage was not paralleled in Chinese records, and Hiroshi Ikeuchi points out its errors: the author of this passage in *Samguk Sagi* regarded the region of South Okjeo and Lelang as identical, while in fact they are on opposite sides of the peninsula;<sup>[31]</sup> also, the references to the "Eastern Department" for Yu Yu and Mil U are anachronistic, since Goguryeo did not divide the country into departments until the middle of the Goguryeo dynasty — that is, after Dongcheon's reign.<sup>[32]</sup> As such, Ikeuchi considered the *Samguk Sagi* stories of the Wei invasion unreliable.<sup>[33]</sup>

Traveling along the coast of the Sea of Japan, Wang Qi's army made its way to the lands of the North Okjeo, assumed to be around the Jiandao area today. Despite records suggesting that the king came to the North Okjeo settlement of Maegu (買溝, also named Chiguru 置溝婁; in present-day Yanji), there is no telling what became of the king in North Okjeo, and Wang Qi's army continued further north inland.<sup>[34]</sup> Turning northwest at the border of Okjeo and the Sushen, they traversed the Mudan River basin (either by way of Ning'an or Dunhua), home of the Yilou (挹婁) people, and crossed the Zhangguangcai Mountains (張廣才嶺) into the plains on the other side. Finally, their trek northwest brought them to the Buyeo kingdom on the Ashi River (阿什河), near present-day Harbin. Buyeo's regent Wigeo (位居), acting on behalf of the nominal King Maryeo (麻余王), formally received the Wei army outside their capital in present-day Acheng District and replenished their supplies.<sup>[35]</sup> Having overextended their reach and lost sight of their target, Wang Qi's army turned southwest from Buyeo to return to Xuantu Commandery, passing by the present-day areas of Nong'an County and Kaiyuan.<sup>[36]</sup> Upon their return, they had completed a circular trip traversing Liaodong, North Korea, and Manchuria.<sup>[37]</sup>

### The subjugation of the Ye by Gong Zun and Liu Mao

Concurrently, Wang Qi sent a detached force to attack the Ye of eastern Korea since they were allied with Goguryeo. The force, led by the grand administrators of Lelang and Daifang, Liu Mao (劉茂) and Gong Zun (弓遵) respectively, started from South Okjeo and went south through the whole length of the region known as the Seven Counties of Lingdong (嶺東七縣). Six out of the seven counties — Dongyi (東曠), Bunai (不耐; also named Bu'er 不而), Chantai (蠶台), Huali (華麗), Yatoumei (邪頭昧), Qianmo (前莫) — submitted to Liu Mao and Gong Zun, while the remaining Wozu county (禾租縣), being identical with Okjeo, had already been subjugated by Wang Qi.<sup>[38]</sup> In particular, the Marquis of Bunai, the preeminent county of the seven, was specified to have come surrendering with all his tribesmen.<sup>[39]</sup> Liu Mao and Gong Zun's march along the eastern coast of Korea may have brought them as far south as Uljin, where the local elders informed them of an inhabited island to the east, an island which could possibly be Ulleungdo.<sup>[40]</sup> Another inscription was erected at Bunai, supposedly to commemorate the feats of Wang Qi, Liu Mao, and Gong Zun during the second campaign; however, unlike the tablet attributable to Guanqiu Jian, this inscription has not been found.<sup>[41]</sup>



## Aftermath and legacy

Although the king evaded capture, the Wei campaigns accomplished much to weaken the Goguryeo kingdom. Firstly, several thousands of the Goguryeo people were deported and resettled in China. Secondly, and more importantly, the intrusions into Okjeo and Ye separated these Goguryeo tributaries from its central ruling structure and brought them back under the influence of the commanderies of Lelang and Daifang. In doing so, Wang Qi and his generals removed a substantial part of the Goguryeo economy and dealt Goguryeo a blow more severe than Gongsun Kang did forty years ago. The Ye under the Marquis of Bunai became expected to provide provisions and transportation whenever Lelang and Daifang went off to war, and the marquis himself was elevated to Ye King of Bunai (不耐濊王) by the Wei court in 247.<sup>[42]</sup> In addition, Wang Qi's incursion into Buyeo's territory and the subsequent welcome by the hosts reconfirmed the friendly relations between Wei and Buyeo,<sup>[43]</sup> and tributes from Buyeo to Wei would continue annually.<sup>[44]</sup>

When King Dongcheon returned to Hwando, he found the city to be too ravaged by war and too close to the border to be a suitable capital, and thus relocated his capital to a "walled town in the plain" (平壤城, *Pyeongyangseong*) in 247,<sup>[45]</sup> moving his people and sacred shrines while leaving Hwando to ruin.<sup>[46]</sup> From this new capital, Goguryeo underwent significant reorganization, particularly in regards to its economic base, to recover from the devastation by the hands of Wei. Since the resources of Okjeo and Ye were deprived, Goguryeo had to rely on the production of the old capital region of Jolbon while looking for new agricultural lands in other directions.<sup>[47]</sup> The history of Goguryeo in the latter half of the 3rd century was characterized by Goguryeo's attempts to consolidate nearby regions and restore stability as it dealt with rebellions and foreign invaders,<sup>[48]</sup> purportedly including Wei again in 259<sup>[49]</sup> and the Sushen in 280 (although Ikeuchi would question the authenticity of the Wei invasion record: The Wei commander was recorded in *Samguk Sagi* as Yuchi Kai (尉遲楷), but the Yuchi surname did not come into being until after the year 386, hence making the record anachronistic).<sup>[50]</sup> Goguryeo's fortunes rose again during King Micheon's rule (300-331), when the king took advantage of the weakness in Wei's successor Jin Dynasty and wrestled the commanderies of Lelang and Daifang from central Chinese control.<sup>[51]</sup> By this time, Goguryeo completed seventy years of recovery and was transformed "from a Chinese border state, existing mainly by the plunder of the Chinese outposts in the north-east, to a kingdom centred in Korea proper, in which the formerly independent tribal communities of the Okjeo and others had been merged."<sup>[52]</sup>

In terms of historiography, the expeditions of the second campaign are significant for providing detailed information on the various peoples of the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria, such as Goguryeo, Buyeo, Okjeo, Ye, and Yilou. The expedition, unprecedented in scale in those regions, brought first-hand knowledge about the topography, climate, population, language, manners, and customs of these areas to Chinese cognizance, and was duly recorded into the *Weilüe* by the contemporary historian Yu Huan.<sup>[53]</sup> Though the original *Weilüe* is now lost, its contents were preserved in the *Records of Three Kingdoms*, where the reports from the Goguryeo expedition are included in the "Chapter on Eastern Barbarians" (東夷傳, *Dongyi Zhuan*) — considered the most important single source of information for the culture and society of early Korean states and peoples.

## Notes

[1] Gardiner (1969), p.34

[2] Byington, p. 93

[3] Barnes, p. 23

[4] Byington, pp. 93-94

[5] Barnes, p. 20

[6] Tennant, p. 22. Original quote: "... capital on the middle reaches of the Yalu near the modern Chinese town of Ji'an, calling it 'Hwando'. By developing both their iron weapons and their political organization, they had reached a stage where in the turmoil that accompanied the break-up of the Han empire they were able to threaten the Chinese colonies now under the nominal control ..."

[7] Gardiner (1972A), pp. 69-70

[8] Byington, pp. 91-92

[9] Gardiner (1972A), p. 90

- [10] Gardiner (1972A), p. 89
- [11] Byington, p. 92
- [12] Gardiner (1972B), p. 162
- [13] Tennant, p. 22. Original quote: "Wei. In 242, under King Tongch'ŏn, they attacked a Chinese fortress near the mouth of the Yalu in an attempt to cut the land route across Liao, in return for which the Wei invaded them in 244 and sacked Hwando."
- [14] Barnes, p. 25
- [15] Gardiner (1972B), pp. 189-90 note 66
- [16] Ikeuchi, p. 75, 77
- [17] Ikeuchi, p. 80
- [18] Ikeuchi, p. 111
- [19] Ikeuchi, p. 113
- [20] Ikeuchi, p. 115
- [21] Ikeuchi, p. 81
- [22] Ikeuchi, p. 85
- [23] Ikeuchi, p. 75
- [24] Translation taken from Ikeuchi, pp. 77, 78 with minor differences on rank title translations and romanizations.
- [25] Ikeuchi, p. 78
- [26] Ikeuchi, p. 87, 94
- [27] Hubert & Weems, p. 58
- [28] Ikeuchi, p. 87
- [29] Ikeuchi, p. 88
- [30] Hubert & Weems, p. 59
- [31] Ikeuchi, p. 116
- [32] Ikeuchi, p. 117
- [33] Ikeuchi, p. 118
- [34] Ikeuchi, p. 90
- [35] Ikeuchi, pp. 97-98
- [36] Ikeuchi, p. 105
- [37] Ikeuchi, p. 106
- [38] Ikeuchi, pp. 92-94
- [39] Ikeuchi, p. 95
- [40] Ikeuchi, pp. 91, 95
- [41] Ikeuchi, pp. 96-97
- [42] Ikeuchi, pp. 95-96
- [43] Gardiner (1972B), p. 175
- [44] Ikeuchi, p. 98 note 1
- [45] The precise location of this new capital, thus described by *Samguk Sagi*, is under debate. Hubert quite literally took the place to be Pyongyang (Hubert & Weems, p. 59). Byington deduced that Pyongyang was still in Wei-administered Lelang and thus ruled out as a candidate, arguing that the capital should be the Gungnae Fortress — though he admits this view is not popularly accepted in current scholarship (Byington, p. 94). Ikeuchi deemed the whole passage about the relocation to be fabricated by the historian (Ikeuchi, p. 119).
- [46] Byington, p. 94
- [47] Byington, p. 93 note 21
- [48] Byington, p. 95
- [49] Henthorn, p. 29
- [50] Ikeuchi, p. 114
- [51] Byington, p. 96
- [52] Barnes, pp. 24-25 citing Gardiner, K.H.J. *The Origin and Rise of the Korean Kingdom of Koguryŏ from the First Century BC to 313 AD*. Ph.D. thesis, University of London (1964). p. 428
- [53] Ikeuchi, p. 101

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# Incident at Gaoping Tombs

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The **Incident at Gaoping Tombs** (高平陵之變) in 249 was a coup d'etat that occurred in the state of Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The parties involved were Cao Shuang and Sima Yi. Sima Yi seized power during the coup and had Cao Shuang killed. The coup increased the Sima clan's power and influence in Wei, thus providing the foundation of the Jin Dynasty.

## Background

In 239, Wei emperor Cao Rui died and was succeeded by the eight-year old Cao Fang. In his final edict, Cao Rui named General-in-Chief Cao Shuang and Grand Commandant Sima Yi as the regents to assist Cao Fang in ruling Wei. Cao Shuang ostracised Sima Yi and placed his close associates such as He Yan, Deng Yang, Li Sheng (李勝), Bi Gui and Ding Mi (丁謐) in high positions in the Wei imperial court. Cao Shuang promoted Sima Yi to the rank of Grand Tutor, which was actually a move by Cao Shuang to place Sima Yi in a powerless position. Cao Shuang also appointed his brothers Cao Xi and Cao Xun (曹訓) in high military ranks. The imperial guards were also under Cao Shuang's command. Cao Shuang and his associates thus controlled the Wei court. Cao Shuang abused his power by indulging in personal entertainment while neglecting state affairs.

Sima Yi was in a powerless position and was thus unable to participate in discussions on state affairs. In 247, he feigned illness to avoid Cao Shuang and ostensibly retired from public life. The next year, when Li Sheng was sent to Jing Province to assume office as the new Inspector, he paid a visit to Sima Yi before his departure. Sima Yi put up a show in front of Li Sheng and pretended that his health had worsened. Sima Yi pretended to have poor hearing and misheard "Jing Province" as "Bing Province". Later, when a servant came to feed him porridge, Sima Yi pretended to cough so badly that the porridge spilt on his clothes.<sup>[1]</sup> Li Sheng reported Sima Yi's condition to Cao Shuang and Cao Shuang thought that Sima Yi was going to die soon so he lowered his guard. In the meantime, Sima Yi and his sons Sima Shi and Sima Zhao were secretly preparing for a coup to seize power.

## Course of events

In 249, Wei emperor Cao Fang visited the Gaoping Tombs to pay his respects to the late emperor Cao Rui. Cao Shuang, together with his brothers and close associates, followed Cao Fang on the trip. While they were away, Sima Yi seized the opportunity to launch the military coup. He had all the city gates in Luoyang shut on the orders of the empress dowager and he took over the floating bridge at the Luo River as well. He appointed Gao Rou as the acting General-in-Chief and Gao took over command of Cao Shuang's army, while Minister Coachman (太僕) Wang Guan (王觀) was placed in charge of Cao Xi's army. He wrote a report to Cao Fang, asking Cao Fang to remove Cao Shuang and his brothers from power, in the name of the Empress Dowager Guo. Cao Shuang was shocked when he saw the report and was unsure of how to react.

The Minister of Finance Huan Fan managed to flee from Luoyang and went to see Cao Shuang. Huan Fan advised Cao Shuang to move to Xuchang and call for a punitive war against Sima Yi in the name of the emperor. On the other hand, Palace Attendant Xu Yun (許允), Imperial Secretariat Chen Tai and Palace Guard Yin Damu (尹大目) advised Cao Shuang to surrender as soon as possible. Cao Shuang pondered over the issue for a night and finally decided to surrender. He hoped to lead a luxurious life even though he had lost his power. He requested for Cao Fang to strip him off his military post and then he sent Xu Yun and Chen Tai to apologize to Sima Yi on his behalf. Cao Shuang and his brothers returned to their residences after losing their powers.

## Aftermath

After the incident, Zhang Dang (張當) was arrested and he produced a full confession on a plot to overthrow the emperor. Cao Shuang and his associates were accused of treason and arrested and thrown into prison. Huan Fan had earlier met Si Fan (司蕃) during his escape from Luoyang and he told Si Fan, "The Imperial Tutor is planning to rebel, you should come with me!"<sup>[2]</sup> Si Fan surrendered himself to Sima Yi after that. Sima Yi had Huan Fan arrested and thrown into prison on charges of falsely accusing him of treason instead. Subsequently, Cao Shuang and his associates were executed for treason along with their clans.

Sima Yi successfully seized power during the coup and eliminated the royal faction led by Cao Shuang in the imperial court. He was appointed as chancellor and received the Nine Bestowments from the emperor Cao Fang. Sima Yi's sons Sima Shi and Sima Zhao were placed in high ranking positions in the Wei court as well.<sup>[3]</sup>

In 251, Wang Ling and Linghu Yu (令狐愚) felt that Cao Fang was too young and weak to rule and that state power was actually in the hands of Sima Yi. They started a rebellion in Shouchun to overthrow Cao Fang and Sima Yi. They intended to install prince Cao Biao (曹彪) on the throne. Eventually, the rebellion was crushed by Sima Yi and the rebel leaders were killed.

After Sima Yi's death, his sons continued to control Wei and they eliminated almost all their political opponents. Eventually, the royal Cao family's influence in Wei weakened and in 265 Sima Zhao's son Sima Yan forced the last Wei ruler Cao Huan to abdicate and took over the throne, founding the Jin Dynasty.

## Modern references

In the seventh installment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series, a stage is dedicated to the initial coup d'etat against Cao Shuang, while the other two are mentioned in the narration. Cao Fang's visit to Gaoping Tombs wasn't mentioned in the game and was mentioned to be on a hunting trip with Cao Shuang.

## Notes

[1] (宣王令两婢侍边，持衣，衣落；复上指口，言渴求饮，婢进粥，宣王持杯饮粥，粥皆流出沾胸。) Annotations to Chen Shou's *Records of Three Kingdoms*.

[2] (太傅图逆，卿从我去!) Annotations to Chen Shou's *Records of Three Kingdoms* from Yu Huan's *Weilüe*

[3] The Three Kingdoms and Western Jin A history of China in the Third Century AD Part 2: Rival Empires (220-265): Wei and the Sima family (<http://www.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/decrepigny/3KWJin.html#part2>)

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# Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions

Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	247 – 262 CE
<b>Location</b>	Northwest China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Shu Han retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han Di Qiang people
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Zhao Guo Huai Chen Tai Deng Ai Xu Zhi † Deng Zhong Wang Jing Sima Wang	Jiang Wei Xiahou Ba Liao Hua Zhang Ni † Zhang Yi Hu Ji

Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	姜维北伐
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	姜維北伐
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jiāng Wéi Běifá
Jiang Wei's nine campaigns on the Central Plains	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	姜维九伐中原
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	姜維九伐中原
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jiāng Wéi Jiufá Zhōngyuán

**Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions** refer to a series of nine military campaigns launched by Shu Han general Jiang Wei against the rival state of Cao Wei from 247 to 262 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Each expedition was aborted eventually due to inadequate food supplies or battlefield losses. Jiang Wei's campaigns drained Shu's already limited resources, and led to the eventual downfall of Shu in 263.

## First expedition: Battle of Tao River

In 247, Jiang Wei led some troops to quell a minor uprising by local tribes in Pingkang (平康), Wenshan (汶山). After which, he invaded Longxi (隴西), Nan'an (南安) and Jincheng (金城) where he fought Guo Huai and Xiahou Ba west of the Tao River. Xiahou Ba fled and the army scattered.

Guo Huai dispatched Deng Ai to guard the northern coast of Baishui. Three days later, Jiang Wei dispatched Liao Hua to camp at the southern coast of Baishui as a ruse while he intended to launch a sneak attack at Taocheng. However, Deng Ai saw through his plans and proceeded to occupy Taocheng before Jiang Wei. He attacked and defeated Liao Hua. Deng Ai later, attempted to shield his defence and injured Liao Hua, thus forcing him to flee.

In anger, Jiang Wei attacked Taocheng with almost everything he had. He used his rams and towers to destroy Taocheng so he could destroy Deng Ai. Suddenly, Sima Zhao sent his ambush team to rescue Deng Ai. Gao Cheng taken Jiang Wei's main camp at Baishui, forcing Jiang to retreat. Jiang Wei re-assembled his units and launched a second siege at Qucheng.

## Second expedition: Battle of Qucheng

In 249, Jiang Wei constructed two forts at the Qu mountains and dispatched troops to defend them. In addition, Jiang Wei took the native people (from the Di and Qiang tribes) as hostages and forced them to obey his orders. Seeing this, Chen Tai advised his superior, Guo Huai, that it would be a good opportunity for them to launch an attack on the forts given that the distance between the forts and Shu's track was far, and the natives were resentful of forced labor under Shu. Guo Huai agreed with Chen Tai and sent him to attack the Shu defending army under Xu Zhi. At the same time, the governor of Nan'an, Deng Ai, was dispatched to lay siege to the forts. As they were speaking, Jiang Wei stole enemy supplies for aid.

Chen Tai managed to cut the food and water supply chains to the forts but was surrounded by Shu soldiers who came out for a counteroffensive. Subsequently, Jiang Wei led his main forces to break the siege and met up with Chen Tai at the rear of Bull Head Mountain. Instead of engaging Jiang Wei's troops, Chen Tai stalled Jiang Wei for time to let Guo Huai cut off Jiang Wei's supply and retreat route at Yao River. Guo Huai agreed and proceed as planned. Jiang Wei found out the maneuvers of the Wei armies and realized that there was a competent commander in the Wei's ranks. Despite the unfavorable situation, Jiang Wei refused to retreat and on seeing that, the soldiers at the two forts pretended to surrender to Wei.

Meanwhile, Chen Tai saw through the fake surrender and battled the enemy troops. Jiang Wei met Chen Tai again and this time they dueled. Chen Tai forced Jiang Wei to retreat back to Hanzhong.

## Third, fourth, and fifth expedition

In 249, Jiang Wei launched his third invasion and was defeated.

In 253, Jiang Wei set up a coordinated attack with Zhuge Ke to attack Wei on two fronts: Shu on the west in Nan'an and Shu's ally Eastern Wu on the east at Hefei. Jiang Wei attacked the key border city of Didao as Zhuge Ke launched a massive attack on Hefei. The Wei regent Sima Shi knew the Wu army to be the more serious threat and led the main Wei force to the eastern front, while sending a smaller unit to relieve Didao. The first sign of what would eventually recur, Jiang Wei, while besieging Didao, ran out of food supplies and had to withdraw. Eventually, Sima Shi's forces dealt a crippling defeat to Zhuge Ke.

However, Jiang Wei resumed his attack very soon, and led tens of thousands of Shu soldiers to venture into Wei territory again. He bypassed Shiying (石營) and Dongting (董亭), and laid siege on Nan'an. Chen Tai reinforced Nan'an in time, and Jiang Wei lifted the siege due to logistical consideration. Guo Huai then drove back Jiang Wei's forces out of Wei's domain.

## Sixth expedition: Long (隴) Campaign

In 254, after Li Jian (李簡), the county magistrate of Didao, secretly declared that he would defect, Jiang Wei again attacked Longxi, and took the city of Didao. However, a local force led by Xu Zhi managed to deal considerable damage to the enemy and slew Shu general Zhang Ni (張疑, sometimes transliterated as Zhang Yi).<sup>[1]</sup> However, Zhang Ni's desperate fight also inflicted a devastating damage to Xu Zhi's army, forcing the latter to retreat and await reinforcements. Shu forces thus gained some footholds on the Long region and battles went on and off for some time, and Jiang Wei forced the residents in Didao, Hejian (河間) and Lintao (臨洮) to retreat with him to Longxi upon the arrival of Guo Huai.<sup>[2]</sup> At this juncture, Zhang Yi (張翼) attempted to convince Jiang Wei to declare victory and return to Hanzhong as he witnessed the death of his colleague, Zhang Ni, and feared the sacrifice would go in vain if the campaign was to be continued. Jiang Wei refused, and deemed the defeat of Xu Zhi (who actually was just a low ranking military officer) as a major success, not realizing such a deed was accomplished by Zhang Ni's sacrifice.

In the summer of 255, Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba (who had defected to Shu) attacked Didao again in three different directions aiming for Mount Qi, Jincheng and Shiyang. Jiang Wei was successful in his initial battles against the Wei Inspector of Yong Province, Wang Jing (王經), west of the Tao River, nearly annihilating Wang's troops, leaving around 10,000 troops to defend Didao. Wang Jing requested Chen Tai to dispatch troops to defend in all three directions Jiang might attack. However, Chen Tai did not think that Jiang Wei would split his forces into three, so he ordered Wang Jing to defend Didao and only launched an attack when Shu armies arrived and an opportunity arose. Then, Chen Tai personally led some troops to defend Chencang. However, Wang Jing disobeyed Chen Tai's order and proceeded to attack the enemy on his own. On hearing that, Chen Tai knew that something disastrous would happen and hastily led his armies to reinforce Wang Jing.

Chen Tai reorganized the defeated troops in preparation for a counteroffensive. Chen Tai mentioned although Jiang Wei was victorious, he did not seize the opportunity to attack eastward in order to capture Wei's food supplies at Liyang. Zhang Yi again tried to persuade Jiang Wei to stop his campaign at this point; unfortunately, Jiang refused. Rather, Jiang Wei besieged Didao again and Shu morale was affected due to continuous campaign and fatigue. Jiang Wei and Chen Tai's forces stayed in a stalemate throughout the winter. One night, Chen Tai led his troops to a mountain south of Didao, and instructed his troops to raise torches. The Wei troops defending at Didao saw that and their morale increased tremendously. Shu's troops besieging Didao were badly affected by the display put up by Chen Tai and a portion of the Shu forces was dispatched to attack Chen's army and they were badly defeated by Chen due to his capitalization of strategic points for defense. As a result, the Shu armies were forced to lift the siege and retreat; thus Didao was saved. However, Jiang, who unwilling to abort the campaign, camped at Zhongti.

## Seventh expedition: Battle of Duan Valley

In 256, Jiang Wei had arranged for Hu Ji to assist his expedition aiming for Mount Qi. However, Hu Ji broke his promise and did not arrive as planned. When Jiang Wei heard that Deng Ai was fully prepared, he decided to attack Nan'an and left his Qishan camp with patrol decoys carrying his insignia. Deng Ai, who saw through the deception, left Chen Tai to attack Jiang's Qishan camp and made forced marches to Nan'an. Deng positioned his army at the peak of Mount Wucheng, an advantageous position to the city of Nan'an. Jiang Wei launched failed three sorties to take it. Later that evening, he consulted Xiahou Ba. Xiahou Ba told him to take Shanggui, Nan'an's grain depot, cutting Nan'an from supplies and let the city starve to death. Taking the Xiahou's advice, Jiang Wei led crack generals and troops to Shanggui via Duan Valley. However, Deng Ai was a step ahead of him. He sent his son, Deng Zhong with his company of troops, lying in ambush at the same valley. As a result, Jiang Wei was badly defeated and suffered heavy casualties at Duan Valley. Xiahou Ba rescued Jiang Wei from the trap and reported to him that the Qishan camp has been overrun by Chen Tai and his troops. Due the destruction of the Qishan camp, Jiang Wei ordered his army to retreat to Hanzhong. Chen Tai ambushed and encircled Jiang Wei's fleeing army. Zhang Ni came to Jiang's aid to break the encirclement with cost of his own life. Jiang Wei petitioned to the Shu court to demote him to Rear



General for his defeat. It dealt him a major loss that would cause the Shu citizens resent his regency.

## **Eighth expedition: Battle of Mang River and ninth expedition: Battle of Taoyang**

In 257, when Zhuge Dan rebelled against Wei, Jiang Wei attacked Chenling, advancing all the way to Mangshui, and a stalemate resulted at Weishui, but Jiang could not induce Wei forces, commanded by Deng Ai and Sima Wang. In 258, Jiang Wei withdrew after Zhuge Dan was defeated.

In 262, despite Liao Hua's opposition, Jiang Wei, attacked Wei again, targeting Taoyang, but was defeated by Deng Ai, and withdrew to Tazhong. In *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Xiahou Ba was killed here by Wei forces who ambushed him in a narrow mountain pass.

## **Aftermath**

After Jiang Wei's continued failures in his invasions, the people of Shu resented him. Shu resources were almost drained and this gave Wei an opportunity to attack and eliminate Shu. Zhong Hui and Deng Ai invaded Shu at two points. Jiang Wei resisted Zhong Hui's attack, but Liao Hua was defeated by Deng Ai, and after the defeat of Zhuge Zhan at Mianzhu Pass, Shu was lost. In 263, the Shu emperor Liu Shan surrendered to Deng Ai, and Jiang Wei was ordered to surrender his troops to Zhong Hui.

## **Modern references**

Some of the expeditions are featured as playable stages in the seventh installment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series. A notable difference is the battles of the expeditions are out of order (e.g. Battle of Tao River served as the third invasion), and only four of the invasions are depicted.

## **Notes**


[1] (軍前與魏將徐質交鋒, 疑臨陣隕身, 然其所殺傷亦過倍). Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 43, Biography of Zhang Ni.

[2] (汉晋春秋曰: 是时姜维亦出围狄道[...]姜维闻淮进兵, 军食少, 乃退屯陇西界。) *Spring and Autumn Annual of Han and Jin Dynasty*.

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- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Deng Ai.

# Uprising in Vietnam

Lady Trieu	
	
Folk art depiction of Lady Trieu	
<b>Native name</b>	Triệu Ẩu
<b>Born</b>	225
<b>Died</b>	248 (aged 22–23)

**Lady Trieu** (Vietnamese: *Bà Triệu*, Sino-Vietnamese: 趙姬 *Triệu Ẩu*; 225–248) was a female warrior in 3rd century Vietnam who managed, for a time, to successfully resist the Chinese state of Eastern Wu during its occupation of Vietnam. She is also called **Triệu Thị Trinh**, although her actual given name is unknown. She is quoted as saying, "I'd like to ride storms, kill sharks in the open sea, drive out the aggressors, reconquer the country, undo the ties of serfdom, and never bend my back to be the concubine of whatever man."<sup>[1][2]</sup>

## Names

Lady Trieu	
Vietnamese name	
<b>Vietnamese</b>	Bà Triệu
<b>Hán-Nôm</b>	趙姬 (Triệu Ẩu)

In Vietnam, Lady Trieu is most commonly called Bà Triệu, but also Triệu Ẩu (趙姬), Triệu Trinh Nương (趙貞娘), and Triệu Thị Trinh (趙氏貞). Chinese records do not mention Lady Trieu, the only mention comes in Vietnamese sources.<sup>[3]</sup> There are two late Vietnamese compilations that mention her by name. One is the official Lê dynasty history, *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (1479), and other is the official Nguyen dynasty history, *Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục* (1871). Both sources give her name as *Triệu Ẩu* (趙姬).<sup>[4]</sup> This translates to *Bà Triệu* in modern Vietnamese, and to "Lady Trieu" in English. The given name "Thị Trinh" first appears only in *Việt Nam sử lược* (Outline History of Vietnam) (1920) by Trần Trọng Kim. Many cities in Vietnam have a street named *Bà Triệu* in her honor.<sup>[5]</sup>

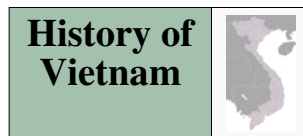
## Vietnamese account

### Traditional

*Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (大越史記全書 *Complete annals of Great Viet*), written during the Lê Dynasty,<sup>[6]</sup> said the following about Lady Trieu:

*The Mậu Thìn year, [248], (11th year of Hán Diên Hy (Han Yanxi (延熙)); 11th year of Xích Ô (Chiwu (赤烏))). The people of Cửu Chân (Jiuzhen (九真)) again attacked citadels, the prefecture was in rebellion. The Wu king appointed the “Hành Dư ờng” Imperial Secretist Lục Dận [Lu Yin] (some books say Lục Thử ờng) to Inspector of Jiaozhou. Dận arrived, used the people's respect for him to call them to lay down arms, people surrendered, numbering more than 30,000 households, and the prefecture was once again peaceful. Afterwards, a woman from the Cửu Chân commandery named Triệu Ẩu assembled people and attacked several commanderies (Ẩu has breasts 3 thước [1.2 m] long, tied them behind her back, often rides elephants to fight). Dận was able to subdue [her]. (Giao Chỉ records only write: In the mountains of Cửu Chân commandery there is a woman with the surname Triệu, with breasts 3 thước long, unmarried, assembled people and robbed the commanderies, usually wearing yellow tunics, feet wearing shoes with curved fronts, and fights while sitting on an elephant's head, becoming an immortal after she dies).*

### Modern



2879–0258	<b>Hồng Bàng Dynasty</b>
2879–1913	• Early Hồng Bàng
1912–1055	• Mid-Hồng Bàng
1054–258	• Late Hồng Bàng
257–207	<b>Thục Dynasty</b>
207–111	<b>Triệu Dynasty</b>
111–40	<sup>1</sup> st Chinese domination
40–43	<b>Trưng Sisters</b>
43–544	<sup>2</sup> nd Chinese domination
544–602	<b>Early Lý Dynasty</b>
602–938	<sup>3</sup> rd Chinese domination
939–967	<b>Ngô Dynasty</b>
968–980	<b>Đinh Dynasty</b>
980–1009	<b>Early Lê Dynasty</b>
1009–1225	<b>Later Lý Dynasty</b>
1225–1400	<b>Trần Dynasty</b>
1400–1407	<b>Hồ Dynasty</b>
1407–1427	<sup>4</sup> th Chinese domination

1428–1788	Later Lê Dynasty
1527–1592	• Mạc Dynasty
1545–1787	• Trịnh lords
1558–1777	• Nguyễn lords
1778–1802	Tây Sơn Dynasty
1802–1945	Nguyễn Dynasty
1858–1945	• French imperialism
from 1945	Republic

#### Further subjects

Champa Dynasties 192–1832

Historical capitals

Prehistoric cultures

List of monarchs

Country's names

Economic history

Military history

- v
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- e <sup>[7]</sup>

*Viet Nam sử lược* (A Brief history of Vietnam), a history book that was written in the early 20th century by Vietnamese historian Tran Trong Kim,<sup>[8]</sup> said the following about Lady Trieu:

*In this year on Cửu Chân prefecture, there was a woman named Triệu Thị Chinh<sup>[9]</sup> who organized a revolt against the Ngô [Wu].*

*Our [Vietnamese] history recorded that lady Trieu was a people of Nông Cống district. Her parents were dead all when she was a child, she lived with her older brother Trieu Quoc Dat. At the age of 20, while she was living with her sister-in-law who was a cruel woman, she [Trieu Thi Trinh] killed her [sister-in-law] and went to the mountain. She was a strong, brave and smart person. On the mountain, she gathered a band of 1.000 followers. Her brother tried to persuade her from rebelling, she told him: "I only want to ride the wind and walk the waves, slay the big whales of the Eastern sea, clean up frontiers, and save the people from drowning. Why should I imitate others, bow my head, stoop over and be a slave? Why resign myself to menial housework?"*

*The Mậu Thìn year, [248], because of the cruelty of Ngô [Wu] mandarins and misery of people, Trieu Quoc Dang revolted in Cửu Chân prefecture. Lady Trieu led her troops joined her brother's rebellion, soldiers of Trieu Quoc Dat made her leader because of her braveness. When she went to battles, she usually wore yellow tunics and rode a war-elephant. She proclaimed herself Nhụy Kiều Tư ướng quân (The Lady General clad in Golden Robe).*

*Giao Châu Inspector Lục Dận sent troops to fight [her], she [Trieu Thi Trinh] had managed to fight back the Ngô [Wu] forces for 5 or 6 months. Because of the lack of troops and fighting alone, she [Trieu Thi Trinh] could not manage to fight a long war and was defeated. She fled to Bồ Điền commune (present-day Phú Điền commune, Mỹ Hóa district) and then committed suicide.*

*Later, the Nam Đế (Southern Emperor) of Early Lý Dynasty praised her as a brave and loyal person and ordered [his followers] build her a temple, and gave her the title of "Bật chính anh hùng tài trinh nhất phu nhân" (Most Noble, Heroic and Virgin Lady). Present day in Phú Điền commune, in the Thanh Hóa province*

*there is a temple [for her].*

## Other accounts

In the book *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920-1945* written by David G. Marr, an American Professor, told the story of Trieu Thi Trinh as follow: Trieu Thi Trinh was a 9-foot-tall (2.7 m) woman who had 3-foot-long (0.91 m) breasts. She also had a voice which sounded like a temple bell, and she could eat many rice pecks and walk 500 leagues per day. Moreover, Trinh had a beauty that could shake any man's soul. Because of repeated altercations, she killed her sister and went to a forest in which she gathered a small army and attacked the Chinese. When her brother tried to persuade her from rebelling, she told him:

I only want to ride the wind and walk the waves, slay the big whales of the Eastern sea, clean up frontiers, and save the people from drowning. Why should I imitate others, bow my head, stoop over and be a slave? Why resign myself to menial housework?

After hearing Trinh's words, her brother decided to join her. At first the Chinese underestimated Trinh for her being a female leader but after some encounters, they feared her because of her gaze. On a battle where Trieu Thi Trinh surrounded a Chinese port, Chinese general made his troops kick up lots of dust while they fought naked making her flee in disgust so her small army lost upon which she committed suicide.

After death, Trinh continued haunting the Chinese general and forced him to defend by drawing one hundred penises and hanging them over the door. Three centuries later, she still offered spiritual support for male Vietnamese opponent of the Chinese. In the Ly Dynasty she was honored by the court with a lot of posthumous titles. During the Le Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism became Vietnam's national ideology and many scholars aggressively tried to bring the practices of Trieu Thi Trinh into conformity with Neo-Confucianism. Nevertheless, she survived all their manipulations.

## Historical differences

There are some historical differences between the Chinese and Vietnamese accounts, however. Chinese records makes no mention of Trieu Thi Trinh. All available information in regards to Trieu Thi Trinh come from solely from Vietnamese sources that were written during or after the late Ming Dynasty. For example the *Sanguozhi* (Records of the Three Kingdoms), a classical Chinese historical account, does mention about a rebellion at this time in the commanderies of Jiaozhi (交趾; Vietnamese: Giao Chỉ) and Jiuzhen (九真, Vietnamese: Cửu Chân) as following:

*"In the 11th year of Chiwu (赤烏) [248] in Jiaozhi (交趾), Jiuzhen (九真) rebels attacked walled cities which caused a great uproar. Lu Yin (陸胤) [of Hengyang (衡陽)] was given rank of the Inspector of Jiaozhou by the Sovereign of Wu. He took his troops and entered the southern border and sent word to the rebels. He used his craftiness to convince them to accept his terms. [In] Gao Liang (高涼), the commander Huang Wu (黃吳) with 3,000 households came out to surrender. Lu Yin now led the army south to that region. He announced his sincerity [to the aborigines] and distributed gifts. The [remaining] 100 rebel leaders and 50,000 households, who had been unruly and unapproachable, kowtowed [to Lu Yin]. Thus the territory was handed over peacefully. At once Lu Yin was given the rank of General who Tranquilizes the South. Again he was sent on a punitive expedition against the rebels in Cang Wu (蒼梧). He defeated them quickly. From start to finish Lu Yin's military troops totaled 8,000. (Later commentaries also cited that Lu Yin then helped to plant crops and kept the people fed.)"*

Keith W. Taylor, an American professor, explained these differences as following:

*"Chinese records do not mention Lady Trieu; our knowledge of her comes only from Vietnamese sources. From this it is evident that the events of 248 were remembered differently by the two sides. The Chinese only recorded their success in buying off certain rebel leaders with bribes and promises. The resistance led by Lady Trieu was for them simply a kind of stubborn barbarism that was wiped out as a*

*matter of course and was of no historical interest. On the other hand, the Vietnamese remembered Lady Trieu's uprising as the most important event of the time. Her leadership appealed to strong popular instincts. The traditional image of her as a remarkable yet human leader, throwing her yard-long breasts over her shoulders when going into battle astride an elephant, has been handed down from generation to generation. After Lady Trieu's death, her spirit was worshipped by the Vietnamese. We owe our knowledge of her to the fact that she was remembered by the people."*

## Impact

Lady Trieu's rebellion was not only the last Vietnamese rebellion to be led by a woman but also the end of a late political ideals inherited from Lac lord.<sup>[10]</sup> Triệu Thị Trinh is a greatly celebrated Vietnamese heroine and many streets are named after her in Vietnamese cities (there are Đường Bà Triệu Streets in Huế, Hanoi, Saigon, and several other cities).

## Notes

### footnotes

- [1] vi:Nguyễn Khắc Viện (1913-1997), *Vietnam, a long history*, The Gioi Publishers, reprinted 2002, p. 22.
- [2] Helle Rydstrom -Embodying Morality: Growing Up in Rural Northern Vietnam - Page 179 2003 "Among the Chinese, Trieu Thi Trinh was portrayed as a monster with three-meter long breasts and riding an elephant .."
- [3] Keith Weller Taylor -The Birth of Vietnam 1983 - Page 90 "Chinese records do not mention Lady Trieu; our knowledge of her comes only from Vietnamese sources."
- [4] *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* (<http://www.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/~duc/sach/dvsktt/dvsktt04.html>)  
*Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục* (<http://www.sugia.vn/upload/fckeditor/kdvstgcm.pdf>)
- [5] Phạm Quỳnh Phương *Hero and deity: Tran Hung Dao and the resurgence of popular Religion in Vietnam* Page 23 2009 "Lady Trieu is not recorded in Chinese chronicles of the era, and only exists today because of "the cult of her spirit formed after her death" (K. Taylor 1983, 90)."
- [6] *Complete annals of Great Viet*, ed. KỶ, vol. 3 (<http://www.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/~duc/sach/dvsktt/dvsktt03.html>), see also original Chinese text version, page 7 (<http://www.nomna.org/DVSKTT/dvsktt.php?IDcat=8>)
- [7] [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:History\\_of\\_Vietnam&action=edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:History_of_Vietnam&action=edit)
- [8] ( online equal source, look for the word "Triệu Ẩu" (<http://www.quehuongonline.vn/VietNam/Home/Dat-nuoc-Con-nguoi/Viet-Nam-su-luoc/2005/03/1DFB445D/>)). Please note that this online source is a bit different on naming style because it was converted from a different edition of the book "*Việt Nam sử lược*". In older editions, real name of Lady Trieu was Triệu Ẩu but in newer editions Trần Trọng Kim changed Triệu Ẩu to Triệu Thị Chinh (Trinh) [Trần Trọng Kim, op. cit., p.44])
- [9] The use of the name "Triệu Thị Chinh" is in this book. This is not a spelling mistake and is used to be faithful in translating the Vietnamese text. In addition, the word "Chinh" was pronounced like "Trinh" in Vietnamese language.
- [10] Taylor, op. cit, p. 91

### citations

- The Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms (220-265) (<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2346927>). Chapters 69-78 from the Tzu chih t'ung chien of Ssu-ma Kuang / Translated and Annotated by Achilles Fang ; Edited by Glen W. Baxter.



View from outside of the gate of Bà Triệu Temple in Hậu Lộc District, Thanh Hóa Province

## External links

- Chen Shou. *Sanguo Zhi*.
  - The Birth of Vietnam (<http://books.google.com/books?q=birth+of+vietnam+lady+trieu&btnG=Search+Books>) by Keith Taylor
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# 251-260

## Three Rebellions in Shouchun

Three Rebellions in Shouchun	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	<b>First rebellion:</b> 4th lunar month of 251, <sup>[1]</sup> <b>Second rebellion:</b> 1st lunar month of 255, <b>Third rebellion:</b> 5th lunar month of 257 - 2nd lunar month of 258
<b>Location</b>	Shouchun (present-day Shou County, Anhui, China)
<b>Result</b>	Rebellions suppressed; Sima clan strengthened control over imperial authority of Cao Wei
Belligerents	
<b>First rebellion:</b> Wang Ling <b>Second rebellion:</b> Guanqiu Jian, Wen Qin <b>Third rebellion:</b> Zhuge Dan, Eastern Wu	Cao Wei
Commanders and leaders	
<b>First rebellion:</b> Wang Ling 王 <b>Second rebellion:</b> Guanqiu Jian 管,† Wen Qin <b>Third rebellion:</b> Zhuge Dan 諸,† Sun Chen	<b>First rebellion:</b> Sima Yi <b>Second rebellion:</b> Sima Shi <b>Third rebellion:</b> Sima Zhao

Three Rebellions in Shouchun	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	寿春三叛
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	壽春三叛
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Shòuchūn Sān Pàn
Three Rebellions in Huainan	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	淮南三叛
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	淮南三叛



Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Huáinán Sān Pàn

The **Three Rebellions in Shouchun**, also known as **Three Rebellions in Huainan**, were a series of revolts that occurred in the state of Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms period. The rebellions broke out in the later years of Wei when the Sima clan, headed by Sima Yi, usurped state power. The military governors of Shouchun (present-day Shou County, Anhui) rose in revolt thrice in the name of a punitive campaign to oust the Sima clan from power. The respective leaders of the three rebellions were Wang Ling, Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin, and Zhuge Dan. All the revolts were eventually suppressed.

## Background

In 249, during the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, Sima Yi seized power from Cao Shuang in a coup d'etat and had Cao's entire clan executed. Since then, the Wei government was effectively controlled by the Simas. After Sima Yi's death, the power was inherited by his eldest son Sima Shi, and was later passed on to his second son Sima Zhao when Sima Shi died.

## The rebellions

### Wang Ling Rebellion

After the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, Sima Yi promoted Wang Ling, the general in charge of Shouchun, to the rank of Grand Commandant (太尉). Wang Ling and his nephew Linghu Yu (令狐愚) felt that the emperor Cao Fang was too young to rule, and saw that Sima Yi was actually the one in control of state power. They planned to depose Cao Fang and replace him with Cao Biao (曹彪), the Prince of Chu. Linghu Yu sent his subordinate Zhang Shi (張式) to contact Cao Biao.

In the spring of 251, Wang Ling seized the opportunity to send a petition to the Wei court, asking for permission to attack Eastern Wu forces in Tushui (塗水). The campaign against Wu was actually a mask for Wang Ling's intention to rebel. Wang Ling did not receive any reply so he sent Yang Hong (楊弘) to inform Huang Hua (黃華), the Inspector of Yan Province, of their plans, in the hope that Huang would support him. However, Yang Hong and Huang Hua reported Wang Ling to Sima Yi instead. News of the revolt reached the Wei emperor Cao Fang in the fourth lunar month of 251. Sima Yi then personally led an army to suppress the revolt. Wang Ling was aware that he was outmatched so he agreed to surrender after Sima Yi promised to pardon him for treason. Wang Ling knew that he would be sentenced to death anyway, so he committed suicide in the fifth lunar month while being escorted to the capital Luoyang. Wang Ling's clan was also exterminated and Cao Biao was ordered to take his own life.

### Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin Rebellion

Sima Yi died in 251 and his eldest son Sima Shi inherited his position in the Wei imperial court. In 254, Li Feng, Xiahou Xuan and Zhang Ji (張緝) planned to overthrow Sima Shi, but their plan was leaked out and they were all executed. The emperor Cao Fang was unhappy with Sima Shi's authoritarian attitude and incurred the latter's displeasure. Months later, Sima Shi deposed Cao Fang and replaced him with Cao Mao. Guanqiu Jian, who was stationed in Shouchun, and Wen Qin, the Inspector of Yang Province, heard news about the deaths of Li Feng, Xiahou Xuan and Zhang Ji, and became afraid of being implicated. Guanqiu Jian's son Guanqiu Xun kept urging his father to stage an uprising to defend their state's sovereignty from Sima Shi.

The following year, Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin rose in revolt in Shouchun in the name of starting a punitive war against Sima Shi and attacked Xiangcheng (present-day Xiangcheng City, Henan). News of the revolt reached Eastern Wu, and the Wu emperor Sun Liang sent troops to support Guanqiu Jian. The Wu forces were led by their chancellor Sun Jun, Lü Ju and Liu Zan (留贊). Sima Shi personally led an army to suppress the revolt. He sent Wang Ji, the Inspector of Jing Province, to capture Nandun (南頓) before the rebels did. The armies led by Zhuge Dan, Hu Zun (胡遵) and Deng Ai arrived and merged with Sima Shi's main force. Sima Shi ordered his troops not to advance any further. Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin were unable to engage the enemy and were worried that they might be ambushed if they retreated back to Shouchun. As most of the rebels' families were in the region north of the Huai River, their morale gradually plunged and they deserted. Only newly recruited civilians remained in the rebel army.

At the same time, Deng Ai led his troops to garrison at Yuejia (樂嘉). Guanqiu Jian saw that Deng Ai's army was quite weak so he sent Wen Qin to attack. When Wen Qin reached there he saw that Sima Shi's main army had arrived so he ordered a retreat. Sima Shi sent his Chief Clerk Sima Ban (司馬班) to give chase. Wen Qin's army was routed and he managed to escape barely as his son Wen Yang fought bravely to protect him. The palace guard Yin Damu (尹大目) caught up with Wen Qin and attempted to persuade him to surrender but Wen refused. When Guanqiu Jian heard of Wen Qin's defeat, he escaped at night and his army was disbanded. Guanqiu Jian was later killed by a civilian called Zhang Shu (張屬) in Shen County (慎縣) and his head sent to the capital Luoyang. When Wen Qin returned to Xiang County (項縣) he saw that Shouchun had fallen to Zhuge Dan and the rebel army had disbanded. He fled to Eastern Wu. When the Wu forces led by Sun Jun arrived at Dongxing (present-day Dongxing, Guangxi), they heard that Shouchun had been overtaken by Zhuge Dan so they retreated as well. Zhuge Dan sent Jiang Ban (蔣班) to pursue and attack the retreating Wu forces. The Wu general Liu Zan was killed in the ensuing battle.

### Zhuge Dan Rebellion

Not long after the revolt by Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin was suppressed, Sima Shi died of illness and his second brother Sima Zhao inherited his place in the Wei court. Shouchun was guarded by Zhuge Dan after the second rebellion was suppressed. Zhuge Dan had witnessed the deaths of Wang Ling and Guanqiu Jian after their failed rebellions and he felt uneasy. He tried to increase his popularity amongst the people in the Huai River region and gain their support. At the same time, he hired a group of bodyguards to protect himself.

Sima Zhao wanted to eliminate the remaining loyalists to the state, so he heeded Jia Chong's advice to force Zhuge Dan to rebel. Zhuge Dan received an imperial decree to report to the Wei court and assume the post of Excellency of Works. However, Zhuge Dan became afraid after receiving the decree, so he killed Yue Lin, the Inspector of Yang Province, and rebelled against Sima Zhao. He sent his Chief Clerk Wu Gang (吳綱) to Eastern Wu with his son Zhuge Jing (諸葛靚) as a hostage, asking for reinforcements from Wu.

Sima Zhao personally led 260,000 troops to suppress the rebellion and stationed his army in Qiutou (丘頭). He sent Wang Ji and Chen Qian (陳騫) to lead an army to besiege Shouchun. He sent Shi Bao (石苞), Hu Zhi (胡質) and Zhou Tai (州泰) to hold off the Wu forces. The Wu forces led by Wen Qin, Tang Zi and Quan Yi (全懌) managed to enter Shouchun before the encirclement by the Wei forces was completed. Subsequently, Wen Qin led his men to break out of the siege several times but failed. The Wu general Zhu Yi garrisoned at Anfeng (安豐), southwest of Shouchun, as backup, but was defeated by Zhou Tai. Sun Chen moved his army to Chao Lake. He sent Zhu Yi, along with Ding Feng and Li Fei (黎斐) to break the siege on Shouchun, but were defeated by Shi Bao and Zhou Tai. The Wei general Hu Lie (胡烈) led a surprise attack on the Wu forces and succeeded in destroying the enemy's supplies.

Zhu Yi's army was unable to advance any further as they had lost their supplies. Sun Chen was furious and had Zhu Yi executed. Sun Chen then ordered a retreat to the Wu capital Jianye (present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu). Zhuge Dan's forces were besieged in Shouchun for a long time without any reinforcements arriving. Zhuge Dan's deputies Jiang

Ban (蔣班) and Jiao Yi (焦彝) advised him to concentrate on attacking a single flank of the encirclement to break the siege. Wen Qin opposed the suggestion and insisted that Wu reinforcements will arrive soon. Zhuge Dan did not heed Jiang Ban and Jiao Yi's advice and wanted to kill them instead. Jiang Ban and Jiao Yi escaped from Shouchun and defected over to Sima Zhao's side. Sima Zhao followed Zhong Hui's strategy, by faking letters from Quan Hui (全輝) and Quan Yi (全儀) to trick Quan Yi (全禕) and Quan Duan (全端) to surrender. When Quan Yi received the letters, he thought that they were real and surrendered to Sima Zhao. Zhuge Dan's forces were taken by surprise.

In the first lunar month of the second year, Zhuge Dan, Wen Qin and Tang Zi attempted to break out of the siege again but failed and suffered heavy casualties. By then, supplies in the city were running out soon and several troops had surrendered. Wen Qin suggested releasing the northerners and Wu forces in the city to conserve supplies. Zhuge Dan ignored Wen Qin's suggestion and had him killed in anger. Wen Qin's sons, Wen Yang and Wen Hu, heard of their father's death and escaped from Shouchun and surrendered to Sima Zhao. The surrender of Wen Yang and Wen Hu caused the rebel army's morale to further plummet. In the second lunar month, Sima Zhao's forces succeeded in penetrating Shouchun. Zhuge Dan fled from the city and was killed by Hu Fen (胡奮)'s men during his escape. The Wu general Yu Quan was killed in battle while Tang Zi and Wang Zuo (王祚) of Wu surrendered to Sima Zhao.

## Aftermath

The failure of the three rebellions strengthened the influence of the Sima clan in Wei as several loyalists to the state were eliminated. After the rebellions, most officials in Wei turned to support Sima Zhao. In 260, the emperor Cao Mao led a coup to oust Sima Zhao from power but failed and was killed by Sima's men. In 263, Wei invaded Shu and annexed it within a year. Not long after Sima Zhao's death in 265, his son Sima Yan forced the last Wei ruler Cao Huan to abdicate in his favour, thus ending Wei's existence and founding the Western Jin Dynasty, which united the land after Wu, the last of the Three Kingdoms, surrendered in 280.

## Order of battle

### Wang Ling Rebellion

Wang Ling forces	Wei forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 王 Wang Ling</li> <li>• 王 Wang Huo (王曷)</li> <li>• Cao Biao (曹彪), Prince of Chu (楚王)</li> <li>• Linghu Yu (令狐愚)</li> <li>• Zhang Shi (張式)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sima Yi</li> </ul>

### Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin Rebellion

**Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin forces**

- † Guanqiu Jian
  - Guanqiu Xiu, escaped to Wu
  - Guanqiu Zhong (毌丘重), escaped to Wu
- Wen Qin, escaped to Wu
  - Wen Yang, escaped to Wu

**Wu forces**



- Sun Jun
  - Lü Ju
  - † Liu Zan (留贊)

**Wei forces**

- Sima Shi
  - Sima Ban (司馬班)
  - Yin Damu (尹大目)
  - Deng Ai
  - Wang Ji
  - Zhuge Dan
    - Jiang Ban (蔣班)
    - Hu Zun (胡遵)

## Zhuge Dan Rebellion

**Zhuge Dan forces**

- † Zhuge Dan
  -  Jiang Ban (蔣班)
  -  Jiao Yi (焦彝)

**Wu forces**

- Sun Chen
  - Zhu Yi, executed by Sun Chen
  - Ding Feng
  - Li Fei (黎斐)
  - Wen Qin, executed by Zhuge Dan
    -  Wen Yang
    -  Wen Hu
    -  Quan Yi (全懌)
    -  Quan Duan (全端)
    -  Tang Zi
    -  Wang Zuo (王祚)
    - † Yu Quan

**Wei forces**

- Sima Zhao
  - Zhong Hui
  - Wang Ji
  - Chen Qian (陳騫)
  - Shi Bao (石苞)
  - Hu Zhi (胡質)
  - Zhou Tai (州泰)
  - Hu Lie (胡烈)
  - Hu Fen (胡奮)

## Modern references

All the three rebellions were featured as playable stages in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series.

## References

[1] Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 4, Biography of Cao Fang.

- Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, volumes 4, 28.
- Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, volumes 1, 2.

# Three Rebellions in Shouchun - Wang Ling's Rebellion

First Rebellion in Shouchun	
Part of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun	
<b>Date</b>	4th lunar month of 251 <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Location</b>	Shouchun (present-day Shou County, Anhui), China
<b>Result</b>	Wang Ling surrender
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Wang Ling
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Yi	Wang Ling 王

The **First Rebellion in Shouchun**, also known as **Wang Ling's Rebellion** or the **Wang Ling Rebellion**, was a punitive uprising in 251 led by Wang Ling against Sima Yi and his clan in the state of Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms era. This was the first of a series of three rebellions that all took place in Shouchun (壽春; present-day Shou County, Anhui) in the 250s.

## Background

Like each of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun, the revolt was caused by the usurpation of state power in Wei by Sima Yi and his clan following the Incident at Gaoping Tombs in 249. Around 240, Wang Ling, an influential governor and general of Wei, was appointed General Who Attacks the East (征東將軍) and placed in charge of military affairs in Yang Province. In 241, the Eastern Wu general Quan Cong led thousands of troops to attack a Wei embankment at Quepi (芍陂). Wang Ling led an army to counter the invaders and drove them away after several days of fighting. For his efforts, Wang Ling was granted the title of "Marquis of Nan" (南鄉侯), promoted to General of Chariots and Cavalry (車騎將軍) and the number of households under his control increased to 1,350.

## Trigger

Around that time, Wang Ling's nephew Linghu Yu (令狐愚) was appointed Inspector of Yan Province (兗州刺史) for his contributions and garrisoned at Ping'e (平阿). Both of them wielded significant power in the Huainan region. Wang Ling was subsequently promoted to Excellency of Works (司空). After Sima Yi eliminated Cao Shuang and his clan in the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, Wang Ling was appointed Grand Commandant (太尉) and given a ceremonial axe (節鉞). Wang Ling and Linghu Yu had a discussion and felt that the Wei emperor Cao Fang was not worthy to sit on the throne, and that Cao Biao (曹彪), the Prince of Chu (楚王), was more capable, so they plotted to install Cao Biao on the throne with the capital in Xuchang.

In the ninth lunar month of 249, Linghu Yu sent his subordinate Zhang Shi (張式) to Boma (白馬) to make contact with Cao Biao. Wang Ling also sent someone to Luoyang to inform his son Wang Guang (王廣) about the plot, but Wang Guang advised his father against the idea, saying, "The act of changing the ruler is a cause for disaster."<sup>[2]</sup> The unofficial historical text *Hanjin Chunqiu* (漢晉春秋) written by Xi Zuochi (習鑿齒) during the Eastern Jin Dynasty provided an account of Wang Guang writing a long reply to his father, stating that Cao Shuang and his associates fell from power because they lost the people's support, and Sima Yi's policies were more

popular, and it was difficult to unseat the Sima clan because they wielded strong military power.<sup>[3]</sup> Pei Songzhi, in his annotations to *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, claimed that Xi Zuochi fabricated this account, on the grounds that the tone and writing style of Wang Guang's reply differed from earlier records.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Rebellion

In the 11th lunar month, Linghu Yu sent Zhang Shi to contact Cao Biao again but he died of illness before Zhang Shi returned. In 250, a glitter was observed in the South Dipper constellation, and Wang Ling said, "When there's a star in the Dipper, someone will make a sudden big fortune."<sup>[5]</sup> Pei Songzhi's annotations to *Records of the Three Kingdoms* from the *Weilue* mentioned that Wang Ling questioned people in the area about the meaning of the stars, and those people, wanting to please Wang, lied to him that the stars show that a ruler will rise. Wang Ling then affirmed his plan to rebel.<sup>[6]</sup>

In the spring of 251, Wu forces garrisoned at Tushui (塗水), and Wang Ling requested permission from the Wei court to attack the enemy, hoping to use that to mask his revolt. Sima Yi roughly sensed Wang Ling's intention and ignored the latter's petition. Wang Ling then sent Yang Hong (楊弘) to inform Huang Hua (黃華), the Inspector of Yan Province (兗州刺史), but Yang and Huang reported Wang to Sima Yi instead. News of the rebellion reached the Wei emperor Cao Fang in the fourth lunar month of 251.

Sima Yi immediately mobilised troops to attack Wang Ling, travelling on water. He first issued a pardon to Wang Ling and sent a secretary to call for Wang's surrender, while his army advanced to within 100 *chi* of Wang's base to pressure the latter. Wang Ling knew that his forces were too weak so he gave up, and sent his subordinate Wang Yu (王彧) to apologize and hand over his official seal and ceremonial axe on his behalf. Pei Songzhi's annotations in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* from the *Weilue* contained detailed records of two apology letters written by Wang Ling to Sima Yi.<sup>[7]</sup>

When Sima Yi's army reached Qiutou (丘頭), Wang Ling tied himself up (to show his repentance). Acting on imperial order, Sima Yi sent a Registrar (主簿) to unbind Wang and reassure him, while returning his official seal and ceremonial axe. Wang Ling later had a conversation with Sima Yi<sup>[8]</sup> at a distance of more than ten *zhang* between them. Wang Ling knew that he had committed a serious crime, so he requested for a coffin from Sima Yi to test the latter's intention, and the latter obliged.<sup>[9]</sup> Sima Yi then sent 600 men to escort Wang Ling back to the capital Luoyang, but before reaching his destination, in the fifth lunar month of 251, Wang committed at Xiang (項) by consuming poison. Pei Songzhi's annotation from *Weilue* wrote that before his suicide Wang exclaimed, "After living up to the age of 80, my reputation is now destroyed!"<sup>[10]</sup> An additional annotation from Gan Bao's *Jin Ji* (晉紀) stated that before his suicide at Xiang, Wang Ling passed a shrine honouring Jia Kui, and he said, "Jia Liangdao (referring to Jia Kui by his courtesy name), only God knows that Wang Ling is truly loyal to Wei."<sup>[11][12]</sup>

Cao Biao was ordered by the Wei court to commit suicide and his subordinates who conspired with him were executed along with their families. Wang Ling and Linghu Yu's bodies were exhumed from their graves and exposed to the public for three days in a nearby city, while their official seals and court dresses were burned and buried.

## Aftermath

As a result of this uprising, it occurred to many Wei officials that Sima Yi and his clan were serious about affairs, most likely because the Wei court was seen as being divided into those supported the Simas and those who still had their allegiances to the Cao imperial family. The revolt also had a strong influence on the subsequent second and third rebellions in Shouchun, as they were all inspired by the same cause, which was to unseat the Simas and restore the monarchy.

During the revolt, Sima Yi, who was pretending to be sick before the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, became drastically ill and died in September 251. The regency was passed on to his eldest son Sima Shi, who immediately faced an assassination attempt and the second rebellion in Shouchun.

The revolt is often also considered a turning point in the decline of Wei and marked the beginning of the rise of the Sima clan, for Sima Yi's grandson Sima Yan would eventually unify the Three Kingdoms under the Jin Dynasty in 280.

## Order of battle

Wang Ling forces	Wei forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 𠄎 Wang Ling</li> <li>• 𠄎 Wang Yu (王彧)</li> <li>• Cao Biao (曹彪), Prince of Chu (楚王)</li> <li>• Linghu Yu (令狐愚)</li> <li>• Zhang Shi (張式)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sima Yi</li> </ul>

## Modern references

The rebellion, along with the other two uprisings, are all featured as playable stages in the Jin Story Mode in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series. During the stage, the player plays as Sima Yi, and has to plot with Wang Ling's son Wang Guang, who chose to remain in Wei to convince his father Wang Ling to "clear his mind from the chaos". During the stage, Eastern Wu's Zhuge Ke also makes it to the battle to support Wang Ling, even though in history he never did.

## References

- [1] Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 4, Biography of Cao Fang.
- [2] (廢立大事，勿為禍先。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [3] Xi Zuochi. *Hanjin Chunqiu*.
- [4] (臣松之以為如此言之類，皆前史所不載，而猶出習氏。且制言法體不似於昔，疑悉鑿齒所自造者也。) Pei Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [5] (斗中有星，當有暴貴者。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [6] (魏略曰：凌聞東平民浩詳知星，呼問詳。詳疑凌有所挾，欲悅其意，不言吳當有死喪，而言淮南楚分也，今吳、楚同占，當有王者興。故凌計遂定。) Pei Songzhi. *Annotations to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [7] (魏略載凌與太傅書曰：「卒聞神軍密發，已在百尺，雖知命窮盡，遲於相見，身首分離，不以為恨，前後遣使，有書未得還報，企踵西望，無物以譬。昨遣書之後，便乘船來相迎宿丘頭，旦發於浦口，奉被露布赦書，又得二十三日況，累紙誨示，聞命驚愕，五內失守，不知何地可以自處？仆久忝朝恩，歷試無效，統御戎馬，董齊東夏，事有闕廢，中心犯義，罪在三百，妻子同懸，無所禱矣。不圖聖恩天覆地載，橫蒙視息，復睹日月。亡甥令狐愚攜惑群小之言，仆即時呵抑，使不得竟其語。既人已知，神明所鑒，夫非事無陰，卒至發露，知此臬夷之罪也。生我者父母，活我者子也。」又重曰：「身陷刑罪，謬蒙赦宥。今遣掾送印綬，頃至，當如詔書自縛歸命。雖足下私之，官法有分。」) Pei Songzhi. *Annotations from Weilue to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [8] (凌計無所出，乃迎於武丘，面縛水次，曰：「凌若有罪，公當折簡召凌，何苦自來邪！」帝曰：「以君非折簡之客故耳。」) Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1, Biography of Sima Yi.
- [9] (太傅使人解其縛。凌既蒙赦，加怙舊好，不復自疑，徑乘小船自趣太傅。太傅使人逆止之，住船淮中，相去十餘丈。凌知見外，乃遙謂太傅曰：「卿直以折簡召我，我當敢不至邪？而乃引軍來乎！」太傅曰：「以卿非肯逐折簡者故也。」凌曰：「卿負我！」太傅曰：「我寧負卿，不負國家。」遂使人送來西。凌自知罪重，試索棺釘，以觀太傅意，太傅給之。) Pei Songzhi. *Annotations from Weilue to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [10] (行年八十，身名並滅邪！) Pei Songzhi. *Annotations from Weilue to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [11] Pei Songzhi. *Annotations from Jin Ji to Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Wang Ling.
- [12] (賈梁道！王淩是大魏之忠臣，惟爾有神知之。) Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1, Biography of Sima Yi.

- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, volumes 4, 28.
- Fang Xuanling et al. *Book of Jin*, Volume 1.

## Battle of Dongxing

Battle of Dongxing	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	12th lunar month of 252
<b>Location</b>	Dongxing (東興; southeast of present-day Chaohu City, Anhui)
<b>Result</b>	Wu tactical victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Zhao Zhuge Dan Guanqiu Jian Wang Chang	Zhuge Ke Ding Feng
Strength	
70,000 <sup>[1]</sup>	40,000 <sup>[2]</sup>

The **Battle of Dongxing** was fought in the 12th lunar month of 252 between the states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle concluded with a tactical victory for Wu.

### Background

As early as 211, Sun Quan (later emperor of Wu) had already ordered the construction of defensive structures made at Ruxu (濡須; north of Wuwei County, Anhui) for defensive preparations against possible attacks from his rival Cao Cao.<sup>[3]</sup> In 230 Sun Quan had a dam built at Dongxing to contain the nearby Lake Chao.<sup>[4]</sup> Sun Quan died in 252 and was succeeded by his son Sun Liang as emperor of Wu. In the 10th lunar month of that year, Wu's Grand Tutor (太傅) Zhuge Ke started construction works at the Dongxing dam, increasing its length such that it joined the hills at either side of the dam, and two castles were built in the middle. Zhuge Ke stationed 1,000 troops in each castle and put Quan Duan (全端) and Liu Lue in charge of them, while he led the rest of the men back.<sup>[5][6]</sup>

### Prelude

Wei felt humiliated when Wu began infringing on its territory by doing construction works on the Dongxing dam. Wei general Zhuge Dan proposed to Wei regent Sima Shi a plan to counter Wu, and Sima accepted his idea.<sup>[7]</sup> In the 11th lunar month, the Wei imperial court commissioned Wang Chang, Guanqiu Jian, Zhuge Dan and Hu Zun (胡遵) to attack Wu from three directions: Wang Chang would attack Jiangling (江陵; present-day Jiangling County, Hubei); Guanqiu Jian would attack Wuchang (武昌; present-day Ezhou, Hubei);<sup>[8]</sup> Zhuge Dan and Hu Zun would lead 70,000 troops to Dongxing to attack the two castles and damage the dam.<sup>[9]</sup>

When news of the Wei attack reached Wu, Zhuge Ke led 40,000 troops to resist the enemy. Hu Zun (胡遵) ordered his men to build pontoon bridges to get to the dam and divided them into two groups to attack the two castles. However the castles were situated on high ground and difficult to access.<sup>[10]</sup>



The Wu generals said, "When the enemy learns that the Grand Tutor (Zhuge Ke) is coming here personally, they'll surely retreat when we reach the shore."<sup>[11]</sup> However only Ding Feng had a different view, "No. They're making large movements in their territory. They're prepared, as they've mobilised large numbers of troops from Xu and Luo, so why would they go back empty-handed? Don't think that the enemy won't come, we should ready ourselves for battle."<sup>[12]</sup> When Zhuge Ke reached Dongxing, he placed Ding Feng, Liu Zan (留贊), Lü Ju and Tang Zi in charge of the vanguard<sup>[13]</sup> and they moved west along mountainous terrain.<sup>[14]</sup> Ding Feng warned, "We're moving too slow. If the enemy seizes favourable ground, it'll be harder to deal with them." He then led 3,000 soldiers with him, travelling on a different route from the main bulk of Wu forces.<sup>[15]</sup>

## The battle

Strong north winds were blowing at that time. Ding Feng and his 3,000 men reached the frontline within two days and seized control of Xu embankment (徐塘). It was in winter and there was snowfall. The Wei officers were off guard and having a drinking session, so, despite the feeble size of his army, Ding Feng rallied his men, "Today is the day we claim titles and rewards!" He then ordered his troops to remove their armour and helmets, discard their *jis* and spears, and arm themselves with only shields and short weapons such as swords.<sup>[16][17]</sup> The Wei soldiers laughed when they saw this event, and instead refused to ready themselves for combat. Ding Feng and his men fought bravely and destroyed the enemy camp at the front. Just then, another Wu force led by Lü Ju and a few others arrived, therefore joining Ding Feng in attacking the enemy camp.<sup>[18]</sup> The Wei forces were shocked by the sudden fierce assault and were thrown into chaos. Many Wei soldiers scrambled to cross the pontoon bridges but the bridges collapsed. They fell into the water and started trampling on each other while desperately trying to get onto land.<sup>[19]</sup> Wei's Administrator of Yue'an (樂安), Huan Jia (桓嘉; Huan Jie's son), was killed in action.<sup>[20][21]</sup> Han Zong, a Wu general who defected to Wei and led the Wei vanguard in this battle, was also killed. Zhuge Ke decapitated Han Zong's body and sent the head to Sun Quan's temple.<sup>[22][23]</sup>

## Aftermath

When Wang Chang and Guanqiu Jian heard of the Wei defeat at Dongxing, they burnt their camps and withdrew as well. Back in the Wei imperial court, many officials heeded for the Wei commanders to be either demoted or dismissed on their failure in the invasion. However Sima Shi said, "I did not listen to Gongxiu (Zhuge Dan) and that resulted in this situation. It's my fault. What have the generals done wrong?" Sima Shi's younger brother Sima Zhao, who was supervising the campaign, was stripped off his title of nobility.<sup>[24][25]</sup>

On the other hand, Wu forces captured large quantities of equipment and livestock left behind by Wei forces and marched back in triumph. Zhuge Ke received the title of Marquis of Yangdu (陽都侯) and the appointment of Governor (牧) of Jing and Yang provinces, as well as 1,000 *jin* of gold, 200 fine horses and 10,000 rolls each of silk and cloth.<sup>[26]</sup> Ding Feng was promoted to "General Who Eliminates Bandits" (滅寇將軍) and received the title of a village marquis (都亭侯).<sup>[27]</sup>

## Order of battle

Cao Wei forces	Eastern Wu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Who Pacifies the East (安東將軍) <b>Sima Zhao</b> supervised the campaign.</li> <li>Senior General Who Attacks the South (征南大將軍) <b>Wang Chang</b> attacked Jiangling (江陵; present-day Jiangling County, Hubei).</li> <li>General Who Guards the South (鎮南將軍) <b>Guanqiu Jian</b> attacked Wuchang (武昌; present-day Ezhou, Hubei).</li> <li>General Who Attacks the East (征東將軍) <b>Hu Zun</b> (胡遵) led 70,000 troops to attack Dongxing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Who Guards the East (鎮東將軍) <b>Zhuge Dan</b></li> <li>† Administrator of Yue'an (樂安太守) <b>Huan Jia</b> (桓嘉)</li> <li>† <b>Han Zong</b> (韓綜) was the vanguard.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Tutor (太傅) <b>Zhuge Ke</b> led 40,000 troops to Dongxing to resist the Wei army.</li> <li>Champion General (冠軍將軍) <b>Ding Feng</b> led 3,000 troops to attack the Wei camp.</li> <li>General of the Right (右將軍) <b>Lü Ju</b></li> <li>Cavalry Colonel (屯騎校尉) <b>Liu Zan</b> (留贊)</li> <li><b>Tang Zi</b></li> </ul>

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in the seventh installment of Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. The battle consists of two halves in *Dynasty Warriors 7*. The first half is played from Zhuge Dan's point of view and the second features Wang Yuanji saving Zhuge Dan after crossing a bridge and being ambushed by Ding Feng. The game also states that Zhuge Dan successfully captured the two strongholds at Dongxing. In the Xtreme Legends expansion, the battle is playable from Ding Feng's point of view. His aim is to ambush Wei forces from the mountain.

## References

- [1] (魏以吳軍入其疆土，恥於受侮，命大將胡遵、諸葛誕等率衆七萬，欲攻圍兩塢，圖壞堤遏。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [2] (恪興軍四萬，晨夜赴救。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [3] (十六年，權徙治秣陵。明年，城石頭，改秣陵為建業。聞曹公將來侵，作濡須塢。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 47.
- [4] (初，權黃龍元年遷都建業。二年築東興堤遏湖水。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [5] (恪以建興元年十月會衆於東興，更作大堤，左右結山俠築兩城，各留千人，使全端、留略守之，引軍而還。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [6] (漢晉春秋曰：初，孫權築東興堤以遏巢湖。後征淮南，壞不復修。是歲諸葛恪帥軍更於堤左右結山，挾築兩城，使全端、留略守之，引軍而還。) *Han Jin Chunqiu* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 4.
- [7] (諸葛誕言於司馬景王曰：「致人而不致於人者，此之謂也。今因其內侵，使文舒逼江陵，仲恭向武昌，以羈吳之上流，然後簡精卒攻兩城，比救至，可大獲也。」景王從之。) *Han Jin Chunqiu* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 4.
- [8] (冬十一月，詔征南大將軍王昶、征東將軍胡遵、鎮南將軍毋丘儉等征吳。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 4.
- [9] (魏遣諸葛誕、胡遵等攻東興，諸葛恪率軍拒之。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [10] (遵等敕其諸軍作浮橋度，陳於堤上，分兵攻兩城。城在高峻，不可卒拔。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [11] (諸將皆曰："敵聞太傅自來，上岸必遁走。") *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [12] (奉獨曰："不然。彼動其境內，悉許、洛兵大舉而來，必有成規，豈虛還哉?無恃敵之不至，恃吾有以勝之。") *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [13] (恪遣將軍留贊、呂據、唐咨、丁奉為前部。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [14] (及恪上岸，奉與將軍唐咨、呂據、留贊等，俱從山西上。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [15] (奉曰："今諸軍行遲，若敵據便地，則難與爭鋒矣。"乃辟諸軍使下道，帥麾下三千人徑進。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [16] (時北風，奉舉帆二日至，遂據徐塘。天寒雪，敵諸將置酒高會，奉見其前部兵少，相謂曰："取封侯爵賞，正在今日!"乃使兵解鎧著冑，持短兵。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [17] (時天寒雪，魏諸將會飲，見贊等兵少，而解置鎧甲，不持矛戟。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [18] (敵人從而笑焉，不為設備。奉縱兵斫之，大破敵前屯。會據等至，魏軍遂潰。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.

- [19] (但兜鍪刀楯，夥身緣邊，大笑之，不即嚴兵。兵得上，便鼓噪亂斫。魏軍驚擾散走，爭渡浮橋，橋壞絕，自投於水，更相蹈藉。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [20] (嘉尚升遷亭公主，會嘉平中，以樂安太守與吳戰於東關，軍敗，沒，謚曰壯侯。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 22.
- [21] (樂安太守桓嘉等同時並沒，死者數萬。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [22] (東興之役。綜為前鋒，軍敗身死，諸葛恪斬送其首，以白權廟。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- [23] (故叛將韓綜為魏前軍督，亦斬之。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [24] (尋進號都督，統征東將軍胡遵、鎮東將軍諸葛誕伐吳，戰於東關。二軍敗績，坐失侯。) *Jin Shu* vol. 2.
- [25] (漢晉春秋曰：毋丘儉、王昶聞東軍敗，各燒屯走。朝議欲貶黜諸將，景王曰：「我不聽公休，以至於此。此我過也，諸將何罪？」悉原之。時司馬文王為監軍，統諸軍，唯削文王爵而已。) *Han Jin Chunqiu* annotation in *Sanguozhi* vol. 4.
- [26] (獲車乘牛馬驢騾各數千，資器山積，振旅而歸。進封格陽都侯，加荊揚州牧，督中外諸軍事，賜金一百斤，馬二百匹，縵布各萬匹。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 64.
- [27] (遷滅寇將軍，進封都亭侯。) *Sanguozhi* vol. 55.
- Chen, Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms (Sanguozhi)*.
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## 4th Battle of Hefei

Battle of Hefei	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	253 CE
<b>Location</b>	Hefei, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Inconclusive; Eastern Wu retreat
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Zhang Te, Sima Fu	Zhuge Ke

Battle of Hefei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Hefei New City	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	合肥新城之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	合肥新城之戰

Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Héféi Xīnchéng Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Hefei**, also known as the **Battle of Hefei New City**, was fought between the contending states of Cao Wei and Eastern Wu in 253 during the Three Kingdoms period.

## The battle

In the spring of 253, Wu's Grand Tutor, Zhuge Ke, returned from Dongxing (東興) to the capital Jianye (建業; present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu). Ignoring the advice of several court officials, in the third lunar month, Zhuge Ke led a 200,000 strong army to attack the state of Wei in the north. By the fourth month, Zhuge Ke's force had reached south of the Huai River, and started attacking Wei's fortress Xincheng (新城; literally: "new city"), Hefei in the following month. Zhuge Ke's forces besieged Xincheng and launched fierce attacks on the fortress. Zhang Te, the Wei general defending Xincheng, managed to hold off the enemy with his 3,000 men for more than a month. The Wu forces sustained heavy casualties but were still unable to take Xincheng.

Zhang Te said to the Wu army, "I've no intention of fighting now. However, according to the law of Wei, when I'm under attack for more than 100 days and reinforcements do not arrive, even if I surrender, my family will be spared from punishment. Since I first started resisting the enemy, it has been more than 90 days. This city originally had a population of more than 4,000, and now more than half of them have died in battle. Even when the city falls, if someone does not wish to surrender, I'll speak to him and explain the possible implications of his choice. Tomorrow morning I'll send a list of names, you can first take my official seal as a token of trust."<sup>[1]</sup> Having said that, Zhang Te tossed his official seal to the enemy. Zhuge Ke believed Zhang Te and did not take the seal.

That night, Zhang Te ordered his men to tear down houses and fences, and use the wood to reinforce damaged parts of the fortress' walls. The next morning, Zhang Te announced to the enemy, "I'll only die in battle!",<sup>[2]</sup> and firmly refused to surrender. The Wu soldiers were furious and attacked the fortress but were unable to breach the walls.

At that time, the weather was extremely hot and the Wu troops were growing weary. A plague broke out and killed many Wu soldiers and caused more than half of the Wu army to fall ill. Zhuge Ke grew impatient and vented his frustration on his subordinates, causing much unhappiness among his men. Later, Wei's Grand Commandant, Sima Fu, led 200,000 relief troops to Xincheng, and attacked and defeated the exhausted Wu army. In the seventh month, Zhuge Ke had no choice but to order a withdrawal and the siege on Xincheng was lifted.

## Order of battle

Cao Wei forces	Eastern Wu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Zhang Te</b></li> <li>Grand Commandant (太尉) <b>Sima Fu</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grand Tutor (太傅) <b>Zhugé Ke</b></li> </ul>

## Modern references

The battle is featured as a playable stage in Koei's video game series *Dynasty Warriors*. In *Dynasty Warriors 7*, playable under the new Jin dynasty story, the battle is known as the "Battle of New Hefei Castle", and is not to be confused with another stage (Battle of Hefei Castle), which refers to the Battle of Hefei (234) and does not appear in the game. In the game, however, Sima Shi, Sima Zhao, and Zhuge Dan also appear on the Wei side.


## Notes

- [1] (今我無心復戰也。然魏法，被攻過百日而救不至者，雖降，家不坐也。自受敵以來，已九十餘日矣。此城中本有四千餘人，而戰死者已過半，城雖陷，尚有半人不欲降，我當還為相語之，條名別善惡，明日早送名，且持我印綬去以為信。) Annotation from Yu Huan's *Weilüe* to Chen Shou's *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 4, Biographies of the three young emperors.
- [2] (我但有斗死耳!) Annotation from Yu Huan's *Weilüe* to Chen Shou's *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 4, Biographies of the three young emperors.

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# Three Rebellions in Shouchun - Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin's Rebellion

Second Rebellion in Shouchun	
Part of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun	
	
<b>Date</b>	1st lunar month of 255
<b>Location</b>	Shouchun, Anhui, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei victory, Guanqiu Jian slain, Wen Qin and family fled to Wu.
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Guanqiu Jian Wen Qin Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Shi Deng Ai Zhuge Dan	Guanqiu Jian † Wen Qin Sun Jun

The **Second Rebellion in Shouchun**, also known as **Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin's Rebellion** or the **Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin Rebellion**, was a punitive uprising against the Sima clan of the state of Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms era. This was the second of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun in the 250s.

## Background

Following the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, the Sima clan obtained complete control of the authority of Wei. Sima Shi deposed the Wei emperor Cao Fang in 254 and replaced him with Cao Mao, inciting Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin to rebel.

## Planning

When Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin rebelled, they decided to secretly obtain masses of troops without giving away that their intentions were to revolt. They sent a messenger to Zhuge Dan to recruit and levy heavy quantities from Yu Province. (They did not reveal that they were going to rebel.) Finding that this was an unreasonable request, Zhuge Dan knew that they were plotting a revolt and had the messenger executed.

## Rebellion

News of the uprising quickly reached Eastern Wu, which has long desired Shouchun. The Wu emperor Sun Liang sent troops to aid Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin to weaken the Wei forces. Sun Jun led the support forces with Liu Zan and Lu Ju. Sima Shi, Hu Zun, Deng Ai, and Zhuge Dan merged forces and marched upon the rebels. Wang Ji, the Inspector of Jing Province, was told to capture Nandun before Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin could do so. The Wei army then halted and mobilised, successfully instilling fear in movements in the rebel army, which would ultimately end their uprising. The Huai River northern region was where the rebels' families were, which brought down the rebels' morale. Troops abandoned Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin. When Sima Shi saw this, Deng Ai was ordered to take his forces into Yuejia garrison, with a mere number of troops. Wen Qin rushed for the attack and was intercepted by the main force. Wen Qin ordered a retreat but was ultimately routed by Sima Ban. This caused a massive amount of Shouchun's population to flee to Wu in fear that they would be massacred. The rest of the rebels disbanded, and Guanqiu Jian was murdered in Shen County by Zhang Shu. Wen Qin immediately fled to Wu. By the time Wen Qin had reached Xiang County, Shouchun, and the rest of Huai River was captured by Zhuge Dan. The Wu forces by this time had not yet arrived, so they quickly ordered retreat from Dongxing. Zhuge Dan sent troops to attack the Wu forces, killing Liu Zan and many of their troops.

## Aftermath

Wen Qin and his family successfully retreated to Wu, but Wen Qin was killed by Zhuge Dan when the latter rebelled a few years later. Sima Shi was young and had no heirs, so the regency was given to his younger brother Sima Zhao. Sima Zhao quelled a third rebellion in Shouchun led by Zhuge Dan a few years later, and later launched the conquest of Shu a few years later. Then Sima Zhao died and the regency was given to his son Sima Yan. Sima Yan then quickly had Cao Huan abdicate the Wei throne to him, establishing the Jin Dynasty. In 280, Wu fell to Jin and the Three Kingdoms period ended.

## Order of battle

### Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin forces

- † Guanqiu Jian
  - Guanqiu Xiu, escaped to Wu
  - Guanqiu Zhong (毋丘重), escaped to Wu
- Wen Qin, escaped to Wu
  - Wen Yang, escaped to Wu

### Wu forces

- Sun Jun
  - Lü Ju
  - † Liu Zan (留贊)

### Wei forces

- Sima Shi
  - Sima Ban (司馬班)
  - Yin Damu (尹大目)
  - Deng Ai
  - Wang Ji
  - Zhuge Dan
    - Jiang Ban (蔣班)
    - Hu Zun (胡遵)

## Modern references

This stage, along with the other two rebellions, are all featured as playable stages during the Jin Story Mode in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series. In the stage, the player plays as Sima Shi.

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# Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions - 6th Expedition: Battle of Didao

Battle of Didao	
Part of the sixth of Jiang Wei's Northern Expeditions	
<b>Date</b>	July – September 25, 255 CE
<b>Location</b>	In the vicinity of present-day Gansu, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei Pyrrhic victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Chen Tai Deng Ai Hu Fen	Jiang Wei Xiahou Ba Zhang Yi
Strength	
Up to 100,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>	At least 30,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>
Casualties and losses	
At least 30,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>	Minimal

Battle of Didao	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	狄道之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	狄道之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Dídào Zhī Zhàn
Battle of Taoxi	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	洮西之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	洮西之戰



<b>Literal meaning</b>	Battle at the west of the Tao River
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Táoxī Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Didao**, also known as the **Battle of Taoxi**, was fought between the states of Shu Han and Cao Wei in 255 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The battle concluded with a Wei Pyrrhic victory.

## Prelude

In July 255, Shu general Jiang Wei decided to take advantage of the death of Wei regent Sima Shi by launching another campaign against Wei. The invasion force was one of the largest Jiang Wei had gathered in his Northern Expeditions, totalling at least 30,000 men, and including commanders such as Xiahou Ba and Zhang Yi. It is worth nothing that both Xiahou Ba and Zhang Yi held higher appointments than Jiang Wei in administrating civil affairs, but Jiang Wei was in command instead because it was a military campaign. Xiahou Ba was a blood relative of the Shu imperial family (he was an uncle of Shu emperor Liu Shan and both of his nieces were married to Liu Shan). Zhang Yi was considered more senior than Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba as he served Shu's founding emperor Liu Bei, while Jiang and Xiahou only joined Shu after Liu Bei's death. By August 255, Jiang Wei's army took Baohan (枹罕; located northeast of present-day Linxia County, Gansu), and advanced toward Didao (狄道; present-day Lintao County, Gansu).

The newly appointed Wei Inspector of Yong Province, Wang Jing (王經), immediately notified his direct superior, General Who Subdues the West, Chen Tai, claiming that the enemy appeared to attack simultaneously on three fronts, targeting Mount Qi (祁山), Shiyang (石营), and Jincheng (金城; present-day Lanzhou, Gansu), and suggesting that they should engage the enemy on those fronts. Wang Jing volunteered to lead an army to face the enemy at Shiyang, and proposed having another force to defend Mount Qi. Meanwhile, Wei armies in Liang Province should be deployed to Baohan to check the enemy's advance towards Jincheng. Chen Tai was dubious about this initial intelligence since it was highly unlikely that Shu could rally such a huge army for the campaign Wang Jing perceived. Nonetheless, the Shu invasion force was one of the largest so far, and the Wei defenders could not afford to split forces. Furthermore, Wei armies in Liang Province would not be fully utilized if they were deployed elsewhere, since they would be fighting on unfamiliar terrain. Hence, Chen Tai replied to Wang Jing that they must further carefully analyze Jiang Wei's move because it was unlikely that the enemy could afford to split their forces on different fronts, and Wei must concentrate its forces to achieve absolute numerical superiority over the enemy. Wang Jing was ordered to focus on defending Didao and refrain from engaging the enemy, while waiting for the arrival of reinforcements. Chen Tai asked the Wei imperial court for reinforcements, while he led a relief army towards Chencang (陳倉; located east of present-day Baoji, Shaanxi).

## The battle

### Wei defeat at Gu Pass

Wang Jing, with virtually no military experience, had gravely underestimated the enemy and erroneously believed that the enemy would be tired after the prolonged march, and it would be better not to provide the enemy any chance to rest and regroup, but to defeat them early in a preemptive strike. Wang Jing was confident that he would have a decisive victory because he enjoyed the numerical superiority over the enemy, and unlike his enemy whose supply line was overstretched, his own force on the defensive had no logistic problems. Therefore, Wang Jing ignored Chen Tai's order to remain in Didao, and instead led his force ventured out to Gu Pass (故關) on the upstream of the Tao

River. Gu Pass was located to the north of present-day Lintao County, Gansu, and it was on the western bank of the Tao River, and this was the place Wang Jing had selected to annihilate the invading enemy who were supposed to be tired and short on supplies, and thus had lower morale. In August, 255, both sides clashed on the western bank of the Tao River, and Wei suffered a disastrous defeat: the number of soldiers drowned in the Tao River in their attempts to escape alone totalled more than 10,000, and most of Wang Jing's troops were lost. Wang Jing was forced to lead his remaining 10,000 troops to retreat back to Didao in the south after crossing the Tao River, and regroup behind the safety of the city walls. The battle on the western bank of Tao River (also known as the Battle of Taoxi), also known as the Battle of Gu Pass, was the greatest victory Jiang Wei had achieved in his northern expeditions, and it was also his last.

After the initial victory, Zhang Yi accurately realized the supply problems Shu faced, and suggested to Jiang Wei to withdraw. Jiang Wei, wanting to ride his initial victory to take Didao, angrily turned down the suggestion and besieged Didao. As the news of Wang Jing going out to engage Jiang Wei reached Chen Tai, he immediately and accurately predicted that Wei would suffer a defeat and thus ordered his cavalry to the rescue, and he would lead the infantry himself to follow. Chen Tai also wrote an urgent message to the Wei imperial court for additional reinforcements. When the news of disaster reached the Wei capital, Luoyang, the imperial court was worried that Chen Tai alone would not be able to salvage the situation. Chang River Regiment Colonel Deng Ai, who had just arrived in Luoyang, was appointed Acting General Who Pacifies the West, and was sent to assist Chen Tai. As soon as Deng Ai had left Luoyang, Wei regent Sima Zhao also put his uncle, Grand Commandant Sima Fu, in charge of Guanzhong to help coordinate logistics for Wei forces for the war efforts.

### **Wei strategies to counter Shu**

When the news of the siege of Didao reached Chen Tai initially, he believed that the city would not fall that easily, but the reinforcement he sent was definitely not enough, thus he asked the Wei imperial court for more. Most officials in the court, however, was worried that after the disastrous defeat Wang Jing would not last until the reinforcement arrived, and the enemy would have the absolute geographical advantage after taking the walled city. They further predicted the four commanderies in western Gansu would be lost for sure, and concluded it would be better to take more time to gather a much greater army to fight a prolonged war to regain the control of the region instead of wasting resources on a seemingly impossible task that would be destined to fail. Sima Zhao brushed such concerns aside, pointing out that if even Zhuge Liang could not achieve the goal of taking four commanderies in western Gansu in his Northern Expeditions when he was alive, Jiang Wei would be certainly not able to achieve the same. It would not be easy to immediately take Didao and the invading enemy would soon run out supplies, and thus Chen Tai's request for immediate reinforcements was absolutely correct. As Chen Tai led his force to Shanggui (上邽; present-day Tianshui, Gansu), other reinforcements included those led by Deng Ai, Hu Fen (胡奮), and Wang Mi (王秘) also arrived. During a military counsel, Deng Ai claimed that after the devastating defeat of Wang Jing that caused most of their crack troops in the region to be annihilated, the morale of the enemy was extremely high and the that of their own troops was low, and that reinforcement was gathered in haste after the defeat, so it was difficult to achieve victory over the enemy at this time. It would be wise to sacrifice some local interests in order to save the overall interest - it might be better to leave Wang Jing to fend for himself, and wait until the enemy became tired and less alert, and then launch a counteroffensive.

Chen Tai opposed Deng Ai's proposal that was agreed by everyone else. Chen Tai reasoned that Jiang Wei's advantage was to fight a quick battle because he did not enough supply for a prolonged struggle due to logistic problem. Wang Jing was supposed to avoid readily combating the invading enemy in the first place and wait until the enemy exhausted its supplies, and then counterattack only when he joined forces with the reinforcements. Instead, Wang Jing did exactly what Jiang Wei had hoped and rushed to battle and faced a devastating defeat. Had Jiang Wei rode on his initial victory and continue eastward to take important grain production region of Wei, he would have a chance to disrupt Guanzhong, which was truly the real threat. In fact, Jiang Wei might even had a chance to take both Yong and Liang provinces if he had gone for them, and gathered support of minorities in the

north and northwest. Instead, Jiang Wei had made a grave military blunder in besieging Didao, which would risk running out the limited supply he had. Attempting to take the city was the worst choice because it would take time to make the preparation, while at the mean time, the defenders had their backs against the wall and would fight to the death to defend the city. This would provide the excellent opportunity to repel the invading Shu army because Wei reinforcement enjoyed the geographical advantage for being stationed in the high grounds in the mountains, while it was difficult for Shu forces in the plains at the lower level to attack upward. Finally, Chen Tai reminded his subordinates that the morale of the enemy would not last long once their supply begun to run out, and everyone concurred with Chen Tai's ideas. Chen Tai subsequently divided his force into three fronts and pushed toward western Gansu, bypassing Jiang Wei's force, and reached the mountains to the southeast of Didao.

### Arrival of reinforcements at Didao

As the siege of Didao continued, the supply problem begun to take its toll on the overstretched Shu force, and there were more bad news for Jiang Wei. The news of Wei reinforcements arrived from Jincheng on the upstream of the Tao River, while at the same time, Chen Tai's reinforcements bypassed Gaocheng Ridge (高城嶺; located northwest of present-day Weiyuan County, Gansu), and took position in the mountains to the southeast of the besieged Didao. After several failed attempts of attacking the mountain ridge, it was obvious to Shu commanders that their hungry soldiers could not dislodge the Wei reinforcements. The reinforcements in the mountains just outside the city wall established the link with the city by means of smoke and drums, and the defenders' morale was greatly boosted. Chen Tai was well aware that despite the numerical advantage and newly boosted morale, the Wei force was not in a position to counterattack. Instead, Chen Tai deployed a clever tactic by releasing the news of a planned counteroffensive in which the Wei force would attack the Shu force from both sides. With supplies running out, Jiang Wei was forced to concede defeat by retreating on September 25, 255 to Zhongti (鐘堤; located south of present-day Lintao County, Gansu) at the downstream of the Tao River, to the south of Didao. The battle therefore was concluded with a Wei victory. As Wang Jing opened the city gate to welcome Chen Tai, he cordially thanked the latter, revealing that the food left was not enough to last for ten days, and the city would definitely fall if the reinforcements failed to arrive in time. After re-supplying the city and reorganize the defense, Chen Tai and his force returned to Shanggui.

### Aftermath

Although successfully repelling the invading Shu army led by Jiang Wei, Wei had suffered a terrible loss. In October 255, the Wei emperor Cao Mao issued an imperial decree in which he ordered the local civilian officials and military officers to devote their sources fully to the relief effort. The military draft and tax levied on the local populace were waived for a year. Cao Mao soon issued another imperial decree in November 255 to further boost the morale and the support of the local populace by granting amnesty to the local family members left behind by those defected to Shu. Merely half a month after his second decree, Cao Mao issued a third decree, in which he ordered Chen Tai and Deng Ai to commit all of their forces to fish out all of the remaining cadavers of Wei soldiers in the Tao River, and bury them with other killed in the battle. It was more than hundred days after the end of the battle, and the devastation was so great that many of the battle dead had yet to be properly buried.

For his brilliant achievement, Chen Tai was recalled to Luoyang to be promoted to Imperial Secretariat, and the position of General Who Subdues the West was succeeded by Sima Wang. Deng Ai was no longer in an acting appointment, but now officially General Who Pacifies the West (安西将军), and he was put in charge of both Yong and Liang provinces. Wang Jing, who was the cause of the initial Wei defeat and subsequent devastation, was reassigned to another position in the capital and the vacant position of Inspector of Yong he left behind was filled by Deng Ai's subordinate Zhuge Xu (諸葛緒).

## Order of battle

Wei forces	Shu forces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Who Subdues the West (征西將軍) <b>Chen Tai</b></li> <li>• Acting General Who Pacifies the West (代安西將軍) <b>Deng Ai</b></li> <li>• Inspector of Yong State (雍州刺史) <b>Wang Jing</b> (王經)</li> <li>• General <b>Hu Fen</b> (胡奮)</li> <li>• General <b>Wang Mi</b> (王秘)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General of the Guards (衛將軍) <b>Jiang Wei</b></li> <li>• General of Chariots and Cavalry (車騎將軍) <b>Xiahou Ba</b></li> <li>• Senior General Who Subdues the West (征西大將軍) <b>Zhang Yi</b></li> </ul>

## Analysis

Although forced to retreat, this battle was actually one of the greatest success Jiang Wei had achieved in his Northern Expeditions. Unfortunately, the weak Shu could not support the large scale logistic needed to sustain the long term siege and consequently, Jiang Wei was forced to admit defeat by retreating as in the previous expeditions. For Wei, despite suffering heavy losses, the enemy was nonetheless beaten back, and it would be a matter of time before Wei could fully recover, albeit it would take longer than usual. The battle clearly revealed the strength of the opposing states and it would be Wei and its successor that would eventually unify China once again.

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# Three Rebellions in Shouchun - Zhuge Dan's Rebellion

Third Rebellion in Shouchun	
Part of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun	
<b>Date</b>	5th lunar month of 257 - 2nd lunar month of 258
<b>Location</b>	Shouchun (present-day Shou County, Anhui, China)
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei victory
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Zhuge Dan Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Zhao Zhong Hui Hu Fen Wang Ji	Zhuge Dan † Sun Chen Wen Qin ☠ Ding Feng
Strength	
260,000 <sup>[1]</sup>	140,000-150,000 (Zhuge Dan), <sup>[2]</sup> 30,000 (Eastern Wu) <sup>[3]</sup>

The **Third Rebellion in Shouchun**, also known as *Zhuge Dan's Rebellion* or the *Zhuge Dan Rebellion*, was the third and last rebellion of the Three Rebellions in Shouchun in the 250s. The revolt, like the previous two, was a punitive uprising against the Sima clan of the state of Cao Wei during the Three Kingdoms era.

## Background

Following the events of the previous rebellions in Shouchun and the Incident at Gaoping Tombs, the regency and almost complete control of Wei was in the hands of the Sima clan. After the second uprising, Sima Shi died, giving control to his younger brother Sima Zhao. The Wei emperor was Cao Mao, and since Wen Qin fled to Eastern Wu, Shouchun's affairs were given to the Wei general Zhuge Dan. Zhuge Dan had witnessed the rise and fall of both Wang Ling, and Guanqiu Jian, and also playing an enormous role in the second revolt. However, as Xiahou Xuan and Deng Yang, both been executed by the Sima clan, were his close friends, and having witnessed the endings of Wang and Guanqiu, Zhuge Dan felt uneasy. Zhuge Dan began increasing his popularity and favor in the Huai River southern region, and also hired many bodyguards.

## Trigger

In winter 256, Eastern Wu sent troops to attack Xuye (徐偃). While Zhuge Dan was able to handle it, he requested 100,000 more troops from the imperial court, and planned to build castles to defend Huainan. Having realized Zhuge Dan's suspicion and considering Zhuge Dan as an old minister, Sima Zhao ordered his Chief Clerk Jia Chong to send Zhuge Dan an imperial decree ordering him to report to the Wei court and assume the post of Excellency of Works. Zhuge Dan became afraid after receiving the order, so he murdered Yue Lin, the Inspector of Yang Province and took the garrison there which numbered 40,000 to 50,000 and declared rebellion against Sima Zhao. He sent his

Chief Clerk Wu Gang (吳綱) to Eastern Wu with his son Zhuge Jing (諸葛靚) as a hostage, asking for reinforcements from Wu. In response, Wu sent more reinforcements as compared to during the second rebellion, giving Zhuge Dan huge numbers. Sima Zhao also immediately marched upon Zhuge Dan.

## Rebellion

### Wu efforts

Sima Zhao's first intentional moves were to station a vast size of 260,000 men at Qiutou, a key location near Shouchun. He ordered Wang Ji and Chen Qian to lead a siege unit to Shouchun in an early effort to deal massive casualties in the early part of the uprising. Knowing that Wu was sending massive amounts of soldiers towards the south of Shouchun, Sima Zhao sent a massive amount of his troops under Shi Bao and two other generals in an attempt to halt the advance of Wu support forces. The Wu forces led by Wen Qin, who rebelled previously, Quan Yi and Tang Zi predicted this move, and rushed to successfully enter Shouchun before the Wei siege forces could encircle Zhuge Dan. In a counterattack effort, Wen Qin led his men to break out of the siege several times but failed. When this happened, the Wu forces under Zhu Yi also failed in an effort to deal damage to the Wei forces, when he led backup troops from the southwest position of Shouchun at Anfeng garrison, but he was quickly driven off by Wei forces. He managed to escape back to Sun Chen. Sun Chen then had his forces led by Ding Feng, Li Fei, and Zhu Yi to move their forces closer to the direction of Lake Chao, where they would strike the Wei forces at Shouchun to stop the siege. Wei forces quickly moved to intercept their forces on the way upwards towards Shouchun, successfully routing the large chunk of Wu forces Sun Chen sent with them. Morale plummeted on the side of Zhuge Dan and Wu. With back to back futile efforts and defeat, Sun Chen executed Zhu Yi. When they were routed, ironically, the Wu supplies were destroyed in a Wei surprise attack led by Hu Lie. Many troops either surrendered to Sima Zhao's forces or abandoned Wu's ranks. With despair, Sun Chen ordered a departure from Shouchun to return to Jianye, in determination that Zhuge Dan had no chance against Wei.

### Defections

Zhuce Dan's forces, still besieged at Shouchun, succeeded in dealing more than minimal casualties towards the Wei forces, but they still were low in morale and suffered heavy casualties. Zhuge Dan's deputies Jiang Ban (蔣班) and Jiao Yi (焦彝) advised him to focus on piercing a single flank of the encirclement to break the siege in an attempt to turn the tide. Wen Qin, who led the Wu forces that were separated from the main force and still remained in combat at Shouchun, strongly disagreed to this plan. He stated that the rest of the Wu troops will soon merge with Zhuge Dan, but he did not realise that Sun Chen had the forces retreat back to the Wu capital of Jianye. Zhuge Dan mocked the weak advice of Jiao Yi and Jiang Ban and agreed with Wen Qin. He stated that he was tempted to murder them instead. Jiao Yi and Jiang Ban fearfully managed to defect with large numbers of Zhuge Dan's forces, which brought down almost all hope in Zhuge Dan's remaining ranks. Zhong Hui suggested to Sima Zhao to cause more defections in Zhuge Dan's forces by faking letters from Quan Hui (全輝) and Quan Yi (全儀) to have Quan Yi (全禕) and Quan Duan (全端) surrender. Quan Yi soon obtained the letters, and as planned, was tricked into believing the letters were real and immediately surrendered to Sima Zhao the moment he could. Zhuge Dan's forces were taken by surprise and suffered more casualties.

### Suppression

In the first lunar month of 258, the remaining forces under Zhuge Dan, Tang Zi, Wen Qin, and Wen Yang (Wen Qin's son) decided to try for breaking out of the siege. They saw, once again, a quick failure and suffered again, heavy casualties. By then, Zhuge Dan's forces were made up of very small numbers and the supplies in the city were quickly being deprived. Even more troops then surrendered to Sima Zhao. Wen Qin intelligently suggested to suspend the northerners under his control and the rest of the Wu forces in the city to conserve supplies. Zhuge Dan

ignored Wen Qin's suggestion, accusing him of being a coward and attempting to trick him into getting Wen Qin out of the situation. He then decided to kill Wen Qin. Wen Qin's sons, Wen Yang, and Wen Hu, heard of their father's execution and quickly made an escape from Shouchun and surrendered to Sima Zhao, who accepted them back into the ranks of Wei despite their father's actions. The defection of Wen Qin's sons caused the rebel army's morale to become entirely demoralised. In the second lunar month, Wei forces finally gave the push to penetrate Zhuge Dan's position in Shouchun. Zhuge Dan, with all hope lost, fled from the city, but he was murdered by Hu Fen (胡奮)'s men during his desperate attempt to escape his destined fate. The Wu general Yu Quan was felled in battle by Wei troops, while Tang Zi and Wang Zuo (王祚) of Wu put aside their weapons to Sima Zhao along with the rest of Zhuge Dan's remaining few numbers.

## Aftermath

After the rebellion was quashed, Sima Zhao was seen as a hero in the state of Wei and finally regained the trust and companionship of most of the Wei personages. Although Cao Mao soon attempted to murder Sima Zhao, but Cao Mao instead met manslaughter during his massacre at Sima Zhao's quarters in the Wei capital of Luoyang.

Further more, the uprisings incited in Shouchun ceased, giving the opportunity for the rest of the Wei forces to assist general Deng Ai along with other Wei generals who were fending off Jiang Wei's consistent attacks towards Wei during the time of the rebellions. Though the invasions launched by Shu forces led by Jiang Wei were consistently resulted in stalemate, while they slowly deprived their state of valuable resources. This was arguably the greatest reason for the Shu army's final losses launched by Sima Zhao in 263 during the Conquest of Shu by Wei. Although Sima Zhao soon died after the collapse of Shu, and his son Sima Yan forced the last Wei emperor Cao Huan to abdicate the throne to him, establishing the Jin Dynasty. By 280, Sima Yan launched a campaign against Wu, conquering the last of the Three Kingdoms.

## Order of battle

### Wei forces

- Sima Zhao
  - Wang Ji
  - Chen Qian (陳騫)
  - Zhong Hui
  - Shi Bao (石苞)
  - Hu Zhi (胡質)
  - Zhou Tai (州泰)
  - Hu Fen (胡奮)

### Zhugé Dan's and Eastern Wu's forces

- † Zhuge Dan
  - 𠂆 Jiang Ban (蔣班)
  - 𠂆 Jiao Yi (焦彝)
- Sun Chen
  - Zhu Yi, executed by Sun Chen
  - Ding Feng
  - Li Fei (黎斐)
  - 殤 Wen Qin, executed by Zhuge Dan
    - 𠂆 Wen Yang
    - 𠂆 Wen Hu
  - 𠂆 Quan Yi (全懌)

- 𠂇 Quan Duan (全端)
- 𠂇 Tang Zi
- 𠂇 Wang Zuo

## Modern references

This stage, along with the previous two rebellions, are all featured as playable stages during the Jin Story Mode in the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series. During the stage, the player plays as Sima Zhao. The rebellion is also split into two parts.

## References

- [1] (大將軍司馬文王督中外諸軍二十六萬衆，臨淮討之。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Zhuge Dan.
  - [2] (斂淮南及淮北郡縣屯田口十餘萬官兵，揚州新附勝兵者四五萬人，聚穀足一年食，閉城自守。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Zhuge Dan.
  - [3] (吳人大喜，遣將全懌、全端、唐咨、王祚等，率三萬衆，密與文欽俱來應誕。) Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Zhuge Dan.
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## 261-270

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### Imperial Coup in Luoyang

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The **coup of Cao Mao** was a coup d'etat that occurred in 260 in Luoyang, the capital of the state of Cao Wei, during the Three Kingdoms period. Cao Mao, the nominal emperor of Wei, attempted to launch a coup to oust the regent Sima Zhao, who effectively controlled the Wei government. However, the coup concluded with Cao Mao's death and Sima Zhao retaining his status. Contrary to its intention, the coup actually increased the Sima clan's power and influence in Wei, thus providing a foundation for the eventual usurpation of the Wei throne in 265 by Sima Zhao's son Sima Yan, who founded the Western Jin Dynasty.

The coup is also mentioned in the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong, which dramatises the history of the late Eastern Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms period. The events of the coup described in the novel are largely similar to that described in historical sources.

#### Background

The state of Cao Wei was established in 220 by Cao Pi, which marked the start of the Three Kingdoms period in China. The authority of the Wei imperial family had been weakening since the death of the second Wei emperor, Cao Rui, and reached a nadir after the Incident at Gaoping Tombs in 249, when the Wei general Sima Yi seized power from the regent Cao Shuang. Sima Yi died in 251 and was succeeded by his sons Sima Shi and Sima Zhao, who effectively controlled the Wei government.

In 254, Sima Shi deposed the third Wei ruler Cao Fang and installed a 13-year-old Cao Mao on the throne. From the start of his reign, Cao Mao acted in defiance of the Simas, refusing to accept the imperial seal directly from Sima Shi, and, after Sima Shi's death in 255, he attempted to order Sima Zhao to remain in Xuchang to keep watch over Shouchun (present-day Shou County, Anhui), where a rebellion led by Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin had just been suppressed. However, Sima Zhao ignored Cao Mao's edict and returned to the capital Luoyang. While Sima Zhao administered state affairs, Cao Mao attempted to gain the favour of the literati in the court through unremarkable meetings to discuss literature with some officials - Sima Zhao's cousin Sima Wang, Wang Shen (王沈), Pei Xiu, and Zhong Hui. Cao Mao also provided Sima Wang with a chariot and five imperial guardsmen as escorts because the latter lived further away from the palace than the others.

In 258, Sima Zhao incited his supporters to force Cao Mao to publicly offer him the nine bestowments, which he ostensibly refused as a showcase of his "humility". A year later, Cao Mao received sightings of yellow dragons in two wells, and he wrote a poem identifying the dragons as being trapped inside wells and likened himself to the dragons. With his suspicions aroused, Sima Zhao forced Cao Mao to offer him the nine bestowments but he declined again. Cao Mao perceived this as a sign to act immediately for his clan to regain control of the Wei government.

#### The coup

In 260, when he was 19, Cao Mao gathered his associates Wang Shen, Wang Jing and Wang Ye, as well as 300 soldiers, declaring his intention to make a last-ditch attempt to overthrow Sima Zhao, even at the cost of his life. He remarked, "Every person on the street knows what is in Sima Zhao's mind" (司馬昭之心，路人皆知), and this quote later became a famous saying used to describe a situation where a person's intention or ambition is rather obvious.

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Wang Jing advised the emperor against such action, but Cao Mao ignored Wang's advice and informed Empress Dowager Guo of his plan. In his absence, Wang Shen and Wang Ye secretly deserted Cao Mao and notified Sima Zhao about the plot, leaving only Wang Jing to support the young emperor.

Cao Mao then led his forces to Sima Zhao's residence, where Sima Zhao's younger brother Sima Zhou attempted to put up resistance, but gave up when the Cao Mao's attendants scolded them for defying the emperor. Sima Zhao's aide Jia Chong showed up and intercepted Cao Mao's forces but his men did not dare to attack the emperor. When Cheng Ji (成濟), a military officer under Jia Chong, asked Jia what to do, Jia told him to defend the Sima clan regardless of the consequences. Cheng Ji then approached Cao Mao and killed the emperor with his spear.

## Aftermath

After Cao Mao's death, the public called for Jia Chong's execution on the grounds that he had committed regicide. Sima Zhao forced Empress Dowager Guo to posthumously demote Cao Mao to the status of a commoner, and then ordered Wang Jing and his clan to be executed. The following day, after pleas from his uncle Sima Fu, Sima Zhao asked Empress Dowager Guo to posthumously instate Cao Mao as the "Duke of Gaogui" (高貴鄉公) and he arranged a funeral for Cao Mao, with the ceremonies befitting that of a prince. Cao Huang (later renamed to Cao Huan), the Duke of Changdao (常道鄉公), was chosen to succeed Cao Mao and was installed on the throne. 19 days later, Sima Zhao had Cheng Ji and his family executed to appease public anger but Jia Chong was spared.

Sima Zhao successfully retained his power during the coup and eliminated his opponents in the Wei court, leaving only the young Cao Huan as a puppet emperor under his control. He did not take the Wei throne, even until his death, but was granted the title of a vassal king - "King of Jin" (晉王) - and the nine bestowments by Cao Huan in 264. Sima Zhao died in 265 and was succeeded by his son Sima Yan, who forced Cao Huan to abdicate in his favour and established the Western Jin Dynasty.

## Modern references

In the seventh instalment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series, a stage is dedicated to the initial coup d'etat against Sima Zhao, where it is called "Wei's Emperor's Last Stand"; the other two are mentioned in the narration.

## References

- Chen Shou. *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 4, Biography of Cao Mao.
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# Conquest of Shu

Conquest of Shu by Wei	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
<b>Date</b>	September – November 263 CE
<b>Location</b>	Sichuan and Shaanxi, China
<b>Result</b>	Cao Wei victory; Fall of Shu Han
Belligerents	
Cao Wei	Shu Han
Commanders and leaders	
Sima Zhao Zhong Hui Deng Ai Zhuge Xu	Liu Shan <span>𠂆</span> Jiang Wei <span>𠂆</span> Zhuge Zhan <span>†</span>
Strength	
180,000 <sup>[1]</sup>	142,000+ <sup>[2]</sup>

Conquest of Shu by Wei	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	魏灭蜀之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	魏滅蜀之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Wèi Miè Shǔ Zhī Zhàn

The **Conquest of Shu by Wei** was a military campaign launched by the state of Cao Wei against its rival Shu Han in 263 during the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The campaign culminated in the fall of Shu and the tripartite equilibrium maintained in China for over 40 years since the end of the Han Dynasty in 220. The conquest signified the beginning of a reunified China under the Jin Dynasty.

## Background

At that time, three contending states were established after the collapse of the 400-year old Han Dynasty in 220. Among the three, Cao Wei in the north was the dominant military power in terms of economic resources, manpower, and geographic size, suppressing Shu Han in the southwest and Eastern Wu in the southeast. Noting this, Shu chancellor Zhuge Liang initiated an alliance between Shu and Wu to counter Wei's supremacy, and began a series of ill-fated attempts to capture the Wei capital from 228 until Zhuge's death in 234. Zhuge Liang's protege Jiang Wei had his own Northern Expeditions from 247 to 262. Jiang Wei's attempts were even more hurtful to Shu than those of Zhuge Liang, and were criticized by both contemporaries and later historians as wastes of men and resources. These campaigns strained the already disadvantaged Shu, while its incapable emperor Liu Shan indulged in pleasures and neglected state affairs.

Meanwhile in Wei, the Sima clan, through years of political maneuvering, had ousted the imperial family from power and reduced the roles of the Wei emperors to mere figureheads. The Wei regent and de facto ruler, Sima Zhao, believed that a successful military campaign to reunify China would bolster his prestige and convince the imperial court that the Mandate of Heaven had fallen on the Sima family, which would minimize the opposition for a formal succession. Disturbed by Jiang Wei's constant harassments on the Wei border and aware of Shu's internal decay, Sima Zhao decided that the conquest of Shu would be a vital step in unifying All Under Heaven.

## The decision to conquer Shu

In 262, Sima Zhao announced his intention to conquer Shu. Most subjects in the Wei imperial court were against such a campaign, including general Deng Ai, who was at the forefront of fighting Shu in the past. Against the majority, Zhong Hui strongly supported the campaign, and was the most influential factor that turned the opinion in the imperial court to yield. Sima Zhao consequently assigned his personal secretary, Registrar Shi Cuan (师纂), as a major in Deng Ai's army to "convince" him, which Shi Cuan successfully did and turned Deng's opposition to support.

Wei's decision to launch a campaign against Shu first was the result of careful strategic analysis. Its other rival state, Wu, enjoyed the natural barrier, the Yangtze River, and a strong navy with over 5,000 ships. Wei's lack of a strong navy meant that it must take

its time to build one and train the sailors first if it was to attack Wu. If Shu was attacked, forces of Wei would be marching on land, avoiding the problem it would face in the campaign against Wu. Also, with Shu gone, Wei would concentrate its forces on Wu without worrying being attacked from the west. Shu was the smallest among the Three Kingdoms, with only 100,000-men strong force, less than half of the 230,000 troops Wu had. Despite its small size, Shu had been taking a very aggressive posture by constantly attacking Wei, which proved to be a major mistake, as Sima Zhao used it as a reason to force the Wei court into accepting his plan.



The Three Kingdoms in 262, on the eve of the conquest of Shu by Wei.

## Strategic planning

### Strategy of Wei

Sima Zhao made a detailed plan to conquer Shu by appointing Zhong Hui as the commander of the expedition force, while in a move to disguise his true objective, general Tang Zi was placed in charge of building a strong navy for the preparation of campaign against Wu. In reality, more than 200,000 troops would be grouped in Guanzhong under Zhong Hui's command, for the true objective: the campaign against Shu.

Wei would attack Shu in three fronts, with the eastern front as the main thrust, initially attacking Hanzhong from Xie Valley (斜谷; south of present-day Mei County, Shaanxi), Luo Valley (駱谷), and Ziwu Valley (子午谷, south of present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi). After that, the three forces at the eastern front would join forces and continue the push toward the heart of Shu. The western force would engage Jiang Wei at Tazhong (沓中; northwest of present-day Zhuguo County, Gansu) from four directions and then join the main force. The central front would attack Wuji Bridge (武街橋; northwest of present-day Cheng County, Gansu) from Mount Qi (祁山; in present-day Li County, Gansu), cutting off Jiang Wei's retreat route, preventing his army from reinforcing the passes along the attack route.

### Strategy of Shu

Previously, Wei Yan invented a defense mechanism to hinder and repel invading forces by setting up "covering camps" on the outskirts and exits of trails leading to Hanzhong. Even after Wei Yan's death, Shu had been following his arrangement, and succeeded in driving out Wei forces everytime. However, Jiang Wei argued Wei Yan's design "could only repel the enemy but not reaping big profit." To anticipate a Wei attack, Jiang Wei proposed to abandon the camps set up by Wei Yan and vacate all the passes in the Qinling Mountains so the Wei forces would go deep into the Hanzhong plain, where the worn-out expedition force would be vulnerable to a Shu counterattack upon retreat. Jiang Wei assured the Shu emperor Liu Shan that was how to achieve a decisive victory previously unattained when they had just defended along the Qinling Mountains.<sup>[3]</sup> This strategy, however, was erred in that Wei had mobilized its forces in a way Jiang Wei had never imagined, as the later course of events would point out.

On the eve of the Wei invasion, Jiang Wei had received intelligence that Wei would launch a major offensive and wrote to the Shu imperial court in Chengdu, urging Liu Shan to send Liao Hua to Yang'an Pass (陽安關) and Zhang Yi to Yinping (陰平). Liu Shan, however, trusted his eunuch Huang Hao, who believed in witchcraft. Huang Hao believed that Wei would not dare to attack Shu and such belief was "confirmed" by a witch doctor when asked. As a result, Jiang Wei's letter was kept a secret to avoid "unnecessary panic", and no one else knew about it. However, on second thought, Liu Shan sent out Liao Hua and Zhang Yi before the engagement started.<sup>[4]</sup>

## The campaign

### Prelude

In the autumn of 263, an order to invade Shu was formally issued by the Wei imperial court. Xu Yi (許儀), son of Xu Chu, was in charge of constructing roads for the Wei army. However, the road was poorly built and one of the bridges nearly broke when Zhong Hui was crossing. As a result, Xu Yi was executed on Zhong Hui's order, and everyone was shocked. In doing so, Zhong Hui established his authority and the road was built far more efficiently.

When Wei mobilized its troops in September 263, Jiang Wei's plan worked -- only for its first half that Wei forces advanced unopposed until they reached the fortresses of Han (漢; located in present-day Mian County, Shaanxi) and Yue (樂; located in present-day Chenggu County, Shaanxi), which served as a bait to wear the enemy out.

In addition to redeploying its troops toward Han and Yue fortresses, Shu also requested aid from Wu, which responded rapidly by attacking Wei in the east in the hope of forcing Wei to switch its focus and abandon its

campaign against Shu. The Wu General-in-Chief, Ding Feng, led the majority of the Wu army to attack Shouchun, while Wu generals Liu Ping (留平) and Shi Ji (施績) attacked Nan Commandery (南郡), while Ding Feng (younger brother of the earlier mentioned Ding Feng) and Sun Yi (孫異) attacked Mianzhong (沔中). However, as Wei was prepared, such attacks were rather ineffective and did not alter the course of the war.

### Zhong Hui's advance

The eastern front of the campaign, where the main thrust was, did not progress as Jiang Wei expected. When Zhong Hui reached the two fortresses of Han (guarded by Jiang Bin (蔣斌)) and Yue (defended by Wang Han (王含)), he did not fall into the trap to be worn out. Instead, Zhong Hui simply split out two detachments to besiege the two fortresses, and speedily continued to press on. Wei's General of the Vanguard, Li Fu (李輔) was assigned 10,000 troops to besiege Yue, while General Who Protects the Army Xun Kai (荀愷) was assigned another 10,000 troops to besiege Han. Both Shu commanders proved to be incapable as to follow Jiang Wei's dull orders to just defend the city and let the main force of the enemy go.

As mentioned earlier, Shu emperor Liu Shan had sent Liao Hua to Tazhong. That was against Jiang Wei's view to reinforce Yinping (陰平), because Liu Shan's first priority was to get Jiang Wei out from possible annihilation. Jiang Wei's force, despite suffered some defeats from Wei generals Wang Qi (王頎) and Yang Qu (楊趨), was able to avoid total destruction by his own ingenuity. When Jiang Wei was heading back, his force was once in danger of being obliterated when the pursuing Yang Qu caught up with him while another Wei force under Zhuge Xu (諸葛緒) blocked his way at Yinping bridge. To trick Zhuge Xu into opening a passage, Jiang Wei led his men from Konghan Valley (孔函谷; southwest of present-day Wudu District, Gansu) to the rear of Zhuge Xu's force, appearing to be cutting off the latter's retreat route. Fearing this may happen, Zhuge Xu ordered his force to retreat 15 km and Jiang Wei immediately turned back and crossed the bridge. Once Zhuge Xu learned that he was tricked, Jiang Wei's force was long gone and it was impossible to catch up with his force. However, when Jiang Wei safely retreated, he only perceived the imminent attack from Zhong Hui, and even took the local troops at Yinping toward Guancheng, further weakening the defense at Yinping.<sup>[5]</sup> This blunder was instrumental in Deng Ai's later operation, which brought the downfall of Shu.

Within weeks, Zhong Hui swiftly arrived at Yang'an. There, Dong Jue and Zhang Yi put up some resistance, but Shu's inferior military mobilization and human resources assisted Zhong in achieving a quick victory over them. Despite gaining large portions of land, the length of Zhong Hui's supply line grew longer as his force was deeper into the enemy territory. If a logistic problem arose, Zhong Hui might be forced to retreat, losing all the territory newly gained. Hence, Zhong Hui sent his vanguard, Hu Lie (胡烈), to take Guancheng, where Shu forces stockpiled their food supply. Earlier on, the Shu commander of Wuxing, Jiang Shu, had born a furtive grudge against Shu's management when he was demoted and put under Fu Qian. Once Hu Lie arrived at Guankou, Fu Qian and Jiang Shu disagreed in the manner they should defend. Jiang Shu, using the pretext of engaging the Wei force outside the gates, led his original subordinates out of the pass and surrendered to Hu Lie. Furthermore, Jiang Shu opened the gates and let the enemy in when Fu Qian laid his guard down. Fu Qian fiercely resisted the enemy but was killed and Zhong Hui acquired the bulk of supplies stored inside Guancheng. Thus, Zhong Hui's supply problem was temporarily solved. At the time Zhong Hui beached Guankou, Jiang Wei was still lingering on his way to the battlefield. When he knew Guancheng was taken, Jiang Wei spontaneously changed his destination to Jiange (劍閣; present-day Jiange County, Sichuan), where he hoped the great pass could resist the enemies.

Taking a break from the battlefield, Zhong Hui spent some time to visit Zhuge Liang's tomb and personally wrote to Jiang Bin, who was still busy guarding Han fortress, telling the latter that he had already paid his respect to Zhuge Liang at his tomb. Zhong Hui wanted to show he could win this war with ease, so he told Jiang Bin he wanted to pay his respect to Jiang Wan, Jiang Bin's late father, and asked Jiang Bin where Jiang Wan's tomb was. Refusing to concede, Jiang Bin replied politely that his father died in Fu County (涪縣), and Zhong Hui could pay his respect to Jiang Wan on his way west. Fu County was almost 500 km to the west of Yang'an pass, deep in the heart of Shu, and

Jiang Bin's reply was a show of confidence that Wei army could not pass Jiange. Indeed, Jiang Bin successfully held out against Zhong Hui and it was only after the surrender of Liu Shan did he eventually surrender. Despite this minor setback, the glorious achievement of taking Hanzhong was enough for Sima Zhao to finally accept the title of the "Duke of Jin" (晉公) in Luoyang on October 22, 263, after rejecting the previous six offers from the Wei imperial court. However, Zhong Hui's continuous push toward Chengdu was checked at the Jiange stronghold where the defeated Shu forces regrouped, thus a stalemate was reached.

### Deng Ai's tactic

Earlier, when Deng Ai reached Yinping, he asked Zhuge Xu to join him to bypass Jiange by directly attacking Chengdu via Jiangyou. Deng Ai's plan was rejected by Zhuge Xu as being too ambitious; he preferred a more cautious approach. Stating his job was to destroy the force led by Jiang Wei, Zhuge Xu led his men eastward to join Zhong Hui. However, Zhong Hui wanted to merge the troops under the faint-hearted Zhuge Xu, so he secretly reported to the Wei imperial court about Zhuge Xu's cowardliness to cooperate with Deng Ai, and as a result, Zhuge Xu was tied up in a cage and sent back to the Wei capital Luoyang, while all of his previous troops were seized by Zhong Hui. However, the strengthened numerical superiority proved to be no help at all when against the geographical advantage held by the defenders: Mount Dajian (大劍山) and Mount Xiaojian (小劍山) at Jiange enabled Jiang Wei's 50,000 strong force to hold out against Zhong Hui's 130,000+ troops, and more importantly, the supply of such a huge army was running low and Sima Zhao once wanted to give order to retreat. Feeling Deng Ai's strategy had no chance of any success, Zhong Hui agreed to let Deng Ai venture towards Jiangyou, and even assigned his own men under Tian Zhang to join Deng Ai's operation.



A reconstruction of Jianmen Pass in Jiange County, Sichuan

The route Deng Ai chose was nearly impassible and all the enemy had to do was to starve his force by staying behind the protection of the city walls. Deng Ai's force would even be annihilated much quicker if the enemy ventured out to attack them, for that Deng Ai's force had to travel over 350 km of impassible terrain without any roads, thus leaving little or no horses and supplies. The exhausted troops would be an easy target. However, there were advantages: since the route Deng Ai chose was considered impassible, Shu did not deploy any forces along the way. Furthermore, after the stalemate was reached at Jiange and Zhong Hui's force begun to have supply problems, Shu was confident that the Wei forces would retreat. As a result, no troops were deployed to strengthen the defense of the Shu capital Chengdu, and general Huo Yi's request to lead his force to reinforce the capital was denied, as with all similar requests. To boost his men's confidence and morale, Deng Ai personally led the way.

After Deng Ai's force reached Jiangyou after safely made it through its 350 km journey in October 263, the Administrator of Jiangyou, Ma Miao, was so surprised by the sudden appearance of Deng Ai's force hundreds of miles behind the frontline and deep in the heartland of Shu, that he surrendered without a fight. This provided much needed rest and supply Deng Ai's force desperately needed and after getting both, Deng Ai led his force continued on toward Chengdu. The sudden appearance of Deng Ai's force so close to the capital and the fall of Jiangyou shocked Liu Shan. Zhuge Zhan, son of Zhuge Liang, had led an army in Fu County at the time, but he was too frightened to engage the enemy, when Huang Chong urged Zhuge Zhan to secure advantageous terrain before Deng Ai would get to a flat plain, Zhuge Zhan simply did not know what to do.<sup>[6]</sup> When Huang Chong cried, Zhuge Zhan appeased the former by sending out his vanguard to do battle, but was promptly crushed. In fear, Zhuge Zhan fled the battlefield and asked Liu Shan for help. Liu Shan sent the last available men to the heavily fortified Mianzhu Pass (綿竹關), where Zhuge Zhan calmed down and prepared to defend.

When Deng Ai tailed Zhuge Zhan to Mianzhu Pass, he gave a last chance to the latter and promised Zhuge Zhan that he would recommend him to be the "King of Langye". However, Zhuge Zhan executed Deng Ai's messenger, moved out from the fortress, and supposedly arranged the Eight Trigrams Formation improved by Zhuge Liang. Deng Ai initially attacked Zhuge Zhan's formation in a pincer movement, with his son Deng Zhong at the right and Shi Cuan at the left. However, the initial attack was beaten back and the angry Deng Ai ordered an all out attack on the enemy, and threatened to behead both commanders of his if the second attack failed. The second attack was successful, completely defeating the enemy. Shu commanders including Zhuge Zhan, his son Zhuge Shang, Imperial Secretaries Huang Chong and Zhang Zun, and Right Commander of the Feathered Forest Imperial Guards Li Qiu (李球) were all killed in action. Zhuge Zhan's defeat at Mianzhu Pass and the subsequent fall of the city meant that the gateway to Chengdu was wide open, and Deng Ai's force marched on toward Shu's capital Chengdu after taking Luo County (雒縣; north of present-day Guanghan, Sichuan) on its way.

### The fall of Shu

While other forces of Shu such as those led by Jiang Wei were hundreds of miles away, Shu was unable to gather anymore forces to defend its capital, and the subjects in the imperial court were divided on what to do in their panic. Some had suggested to flee southward to the Nanzhong (border region of present-day southern Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou) region while others suggested to flee to Eastern Wu, but the future for both were bleak and uncertain at the best. One of Liu Shan's sons, Prince of Beidi Liu Chen, advocated resistance, suggesting that they still have a chance given that Deng Ai's forces had exhausted themselves after the perilous journey. However, Liu Shan disregarded this advice, and Liu Chen, in despair, killed his wife and children before committing suicide in the ancestral temple. Finally, Liu Shan accepted Qiao Zhou's suggestion to surrender and sent Zhang Shao (張紹) Zhang Fei's second son, and Deng Liang (鄧良), Deng Zhi's son, to Luo County to inform Deng Ai that he would surrender, carrying the Imperial Seal of Shu. In November 263, Liu Shan had both his hands tied behind his back, a casket behind him, with more than five dozen subjects in waiting, formally surrendered to Deng Ai outside Chengdu, marking the end of Shu. Deng Ai accepted the surrender by untying Liu Shan and burning the casket.

Jiang Wei, meanwhile, was still holding off Zhong Hui at Jiange. He first learned the news of the disastrous defeat of Zhuge Zhan but failed to know what exactly happened to the emperor Liu Shan. He decided to withdraw from Jiange, to avoid being attacked by the enemy from both the front and rear, and successfully lost Zhong Hui's force chasing him once reaching Bazhong. Once he reached Qi County (郫縣; present-day Shehong County, Sichuan), Jiang Wei received Liu Shan's imperial decree ordering him to surrender, so he obeyed by surrendering to Zhong Hui at Fu County.

The final military engagement of Shu was not against Wei but against Wu on the eastern border of Shu. Wu general Sheng Xian, using the pretext of assistance and support, led his army toward the Shu garrison at Yong'an in hopes of enhancing the Wu defenses along the Yangtze River by capturing the region. The Administrator of Badong, Luo Xian, deciding that their Wu allies could not be trusted, put up a staunch defense against Wu and submitted to Wei, honouring Liu Shan's last decree as an emperor. Wu forces under Lu Kang besieged the garrison for six months before they had to retreat when Hu Lie of Wei threatened the line of communication of Wu.

Many refugees such as nobles and troops fled west to Sasanian Persia when Shu fell.<sup>[7]</sup>



## Order of battle

### Wei forces

The Wei offensive would be split into three prongs, each with a specific mission and answerable to Sima Zhao. The three prong would act independently, with Zhong Hui and Deng Ai having the staff of authority to intercede when necessary. This arrangement meant that the three commanders could largely kept watch on each other, preventing the possibility of one commander taking full control of the expedition force and rebel.

#### Eastern flank

- Director of Retainers (司隸校尉) **Zhong Hui**, the strongest supporter of Sima Zhao's decision to launch the campaign, was rewarded with the rank of General Who Stabilizes the West (鎮西將軍), and was named as the Area Commander (都督) of Guanzhong. Zhong Hui was in charge of the eastern front, the main thrust, commanding over 100,000 troops attacking Hanzhong.
  - General Who Stabilizes the West (鎮西將軍) **Du Yu**
  - General of the Vanguard (前將軍) **Li Fu** (李輔)
  - General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Xun Kai** (荀愷), great-grandson of Xun Yu and maternal grandson of Sima Yi
  - General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Hu Lie** (胡烈) was named as the vanguard of the eastern front
  - Administrator of Weixing (魏興太守) **Liu Qin** (劉欽) as the deputy vanguard of the eastern front

#### Western flank

- General who Subdues the West (征西將軍) **Deng Ai**, who was already an Area Commander (都督) of Longyou, was given 30,000 troops to attack Jiang Wei at Tazhong from the western front. This force was to split in two directions, with Deng Ai himself attacking Gansong (甘松, south of present-day Têwo County, Gansu) from Didao (狄道, present-day Lintao County, Gansu), while three subordinates of his would attack Tazhong directly.
  - Administrator of Tianshui (天水太守) **Wang Qi** (王頎) would attack Jiang Wei at Tazhong from the east
  - Administrator of Longxi (隴西太守) **Qian Hong** would attack Jiang Wei at Tazhong from the north
  - Administrator of Jincheng (金城太守) **Yang Qu** (楊趨) would attack Jiang Wei at Tazhong from the west
  - Deng Ai's son, **Deng Zhong**, the Marquis of Huitang (惠唐亭侯), was assigned as Deng Ai's vanguard
  - Registrar (主簿) **Shi Cuan** was assigned as a major (司馬) in Deng Ai's army.

#### Central flank

- The Inspector of Yong Province (雍州刺史) **Zhuge Xu** (諸葛緒) was given 30,000 troops, and would block Wujie Bridge (武街橋) in attempt to cut off Jiang Wei's retreating route.

### Shu forces

Of the 40,000 officers of Shu, listed are some commanders who participated in the campaign.

- 𠂆 General-in-Chief (大將軍) **Jiang Wei**
  - 𠂆 General of Chariots and Cavalry on the Right (右車騎將軍) **Liao Hua**
  - 𠂆 General of Chariots and Cavalry on the Left (左車騎將軍) **Zhang Yi**
  - 𠂆 Senior General Who Assists the Nation (輔國大將軍) **Dong Jue**
  - † Guanzhong Area Commander (關中都督) **Fu Qian**
  - 𠂆 General **Jiang Shu**, served as Fu Qian's deputy
  - 𠂆 General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Jiang Bin** (蔣斌)
  - Army Inspector (監軍) **Wang Han** (王含)
  - 𠂆 Administrator of Jiangyou (江油太守) **Ma Miao**

- † General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Zhuge Zhan**
  - † **Zhuge Shang**, Zhuge Zhan's son, served as commander of his father's vanguard
  - † Imperial Secretary (尚書) **Huang Chong**
  - † Imperial Secretary (尚書) **Zhang Zun**
  - † Right Commander of the Feathered Forest Imperial Guards (羽林右部督) **Li Qiu** (李球)

## Modern references

- *Mie Shu Ji* (滅蜀記; literally: *The Tale of the Destruction of Shu*) is a 2008 novel by Li Bo (李柏) that dramatises the events leading to the fall of Shu, with Jiang Wei, Deng Ai and Zhong Hui as the central characters.<sup>[8]</sup>
- The Conquest of Shu by Wei was featured as the final stage of the Jin Dynasty's campaign in the seventh installment of Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* video game series.

## Notes

- [1] (於是征四方之兵十八萬，使鄧艾……攻……還中，……鐘會……襲漢中。) According to the *Book of Jin* by Fang Xuanling, 180,000 troops were dispatched under the leadership of Zhong Hui and Deng Ai in two directions.
- [2] (蜀記：「又遣尚書郎李虎送士民簿，……帶甲將士十萬二千，吏四万人。」) The *Annal of Shu* by Wang Yin stated that Shu had 102,000 armoured soldiers and 40,000 officers. Thus, Shu at least had a resisting force of 142,000. (\*Lightly equipped soldiers were not counted in this entry.)
- [3] (先主留魏延鎮漢中，皆實兵諸圍以御外敵。敵若來攻，使不得入。及興勢之役，王平捍拒曹爽，皆承此制。維建議，以為錯守諸圍，雖合《周易》「重門」之義，然適可禦敵，不獲大利。不若使聞敵至，諸圍皆斂兵聚谷，退就漢、樂二城。使敵不得入平，臣重關鎮守以捍之。有事之日，令遊軍並進以伺其虛。敵攻關不克，野無散谷，千里懸糧，自然疲乏。引退之日，然後諸城並出，與遊軍並力搏之，此殄敵之術也。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 44, Biography of Jiang Wei.
- [4] (及鐘會將向駱谷，鄧艾將入沓中。然後乃遣右車騎廖化詣沓中為維援，左車騎張翼、輔國大將軍董厥等詣陽安關口以為諸圍外助。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 44, Biography of Jiang Wei.
- [5] (姜維自沓中還，至陰平，合集士眾，欲赴關城。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 28, Biography of Zhong Hui.
- [6] (到涪縣，瞻盤桓未近，崇屢勸瞻宜速行據險，無令敵得入平地。瞻猶與未納，崇至於流涕。) Chen Shou. *Records of Three Kingdoms*, Volume 43, Biography of Huang Quan.
- [7] Historical Atlas of the Classical World 500 BC - AD 600, by John Haywood, 1998 Andromeda Oxford Ltd, ISBN 0-7607-1973-X(casbound), ISBN 0-7607-1974-8(paperback), section 2.25
- [8] <http://www.books.com.tw/exep/prod/booksfile.php?item=0010422713>

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# Rebellion in Chengdu

Zhong Hui's Rebellion		
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period		
<b>Date</b>	1st lunar month of 264 CE	
<b>Location</b>	Chengdu, Sichuan, China	
<b>Result</b>	Zhong Hui and Jiang Wei killed by revolting troops. Deng Ai and his son executed. Rebellion suppressed.	
Belligerents		
Zhong Hui	Cao Wei	Revolting troops formerly under Zhong Hui
Commanders and leaders		
Zhong Hui †	Sima Zhao Deng Ai ☠	Wei Guan Hu Lie
Jiang Wei †	Deng Zhong ☠	Hu Yuan Qiu Jian

**Zhong Hui's Rebellion** was an uprising against the state of Cao Wei in 264 by the general Zhong Hui, aided by the general of the newly destroyed Shu Han state Jiang Wei. Zhong Hui considered himself capable enough of overcoming the regime of Sima Zhao to create a kingdom in the ruins of Shu, and led an army against his former colleague Deng Ai.<sup>[1]</sup> The resulting conflict saw Deng Ai killed and the rebellion fragmented under revolts against Zhong Hui.

## Background

Both Deng Ai and Zhong Hui had taken part in the Conquest of Shu in 263, having acted as foils to each other during the invasion - where Zhong Hui had demanded an advance through Jiange, Deng Ai had instead chosen to move through Yinping[2]. Jiang Wei, having been surprised from Zhong Hui's eastern offensive, moved all troops from Yinping to halt Zhong Hui's advance. As a result, Deng Ai's advance through Yinping was swift enough to allow him to quickly reach Chengdu and demand Liu Shan's surrender.

In the following occupation of the Shu territory, Zhong Hui began exhibiting signs of hubris, believing himself to no longer be capable of serving under another. Jiang Wei, by contrast, liaised with Liu Shan, outlining a plan to trick Zhong Hui into rebellion, weakening Wei troops, before killing Zhong and seizing power of the troops while redeclaring Shu's independence.

## Events

Zhong Hui's first course of action was to falsify letters proving a purported plan by Deng Ai to rebel, creating distrust between Sima Zhao and Deng Ai; this was supplemented by Deng Ai's own growing arrogance in his correspondence with Sima. In early 264, Sima Zhao issued an edict encoffing Zhong Hui as Minister of the Interior and ordering Zhong Hui to capture Deng Ai. However, at the same time, he personally led an army out of the capital of Luoyang towards Chengdu. Wei Guan was ordered to arrest Deng Ai and his son Deng Zhong on Zhong Hui's command. Zhong Hui hoped for that Wei Guan would be killed doing this, which would strongly backup the false accusations against Deng Ai. However, Wei Guan surprised Deng Ai in the night, successfully capturing him.

Upon hearing of Sima Zhao's mobilisation, Zhong Hui then openly declared his rebellion with the likes of Jiang Wei as Zhong Hui's chief general. In preparation for the revolt, Jiang Wei suggested that Zhong Hui execute the high-ranking Wei officers, letting him absorb the troops from Deng Ai into the rebel forces. This was, in fact, a ploy to weaken the Wei forces preceding a resurrection of the Shu state, and Zhong Hui, though doubtful, agreed to the plan. However, word of their plan was leaked to the generals Hu Lie, his son Hu Yuan, Qiu Jian and Wei Guan, who had been feigning illness; they promptly incited a revolt in the ranks of Zhong Hui's troops. Zhong Hui, Jiang Wei and their personal guard were surrounded and killed by a mob of revolting soldiers.

Wei Guan, having taken control of Zhong Hui's forces, ordered the execution of Deng Ai and Deng Zhong for fear that they would seek retaliation against Wei Guan for his involvement in their capture. Following these events, Wei Guan returned to service under Sima Zhao, eventually serving under his son Sima Yan and the Jin Dynasty, which he founded soon after.

## In Popular Culture

The rebellion is featured in Chapter 119 of the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong. A popular anecdote included in the novel concerning the rebellion is that when Jiang Wei was killed, his body was mutilated to expose the gall bladder (the traditional source of courage in Chinese culture,) which had swollen to a huge size, implying reckless foolishness - it is described with a phrase now used as a proverb: "膽大如斗 gallbladder as big as a *dou*".<sup>[3]</sup> His gallbladder was said to have been buried separately from his body, and a tomb stands in its purported burial place.<sup>[4]</sup>

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  - [3] A *dou* (斗) is a traditional unit of measurement.
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# 271-280

## Conquest of Wu

Conquest of Wu by Jin	
Part of the wars of the Three Kingdoms period	
 <p>A map showing the Jin conquest of Wu</p>	
<b>Date</b>	November 279 – March 15, 280 CE
<b>Location</b>	Southeastern China
<b>Result</b>	Jin victory; unification of China
Belligerents	
Jin Dynasty	Eastern Wu
Commanders and leaders	
Jia Chong Wang Jun Du Yu Hu Fen	Sun Hao <span>☐</span> Zhang Ti <span>†</span>
Strength	
200,000+ <sup>[citation needed]</sup>	230,000+ <sup>[citation needed]</sup>
Casualties and losses	
15,000 <sup>[citation needed]</sup>	

Conquest of Wu by Jin	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	晋灭吴之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	晉滅吳之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jìn Miè Wú Zhī Zhàn

The **conquest of Wu by Jin** was a military campaign launched by the Jin Dynasty against the state of Eastern Wu in 280 towards the end of the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. The campaign concluded with the fall of Wu and the reunification of China under the Jin Dynasty.

## Background

As early as 262, Cao Wei regent Sima Zhao planned the first outline for the conquest of Wei's rival states, Eastern Wu and Shu Han, by eliminating Shu first, then take on Wu three years later. However, the conquest of Shu in the following year severely strained Wei's resources and Wei desperately needed time to recover. Compounding the problem, Wei lacked an adequate naval force required for the campaign on Wu. Sima Zhao therefore postponed the planned conquest of Wu and started to consolidate power in Wei first. In 265, Sima Zhao died and was succeeded by his son, Sima Yan. In the same year, Sima Yan forced the last Wei emperor, Cao Huan, to abdicate, and proclaimed himself Emperor of the Jin Dynasty. By then, only Wu was left of the Three Kingdoms.

In comparison with Wei and the subsequent Jin Dynasty, Wu experienced greater problems of its own: the succession from the third Wu emperor, Sun Xiu, was marred with bloodshed and internal conflict. Sun Xiu's successor, Sun Hao, was a tyrant who made little effort to prepare for the imminent invasion by the Jin Dynasty. Sun Hao's rule was more harsh as compared to the later part of the reign of Sun Quan, Wu's founding emperor. This caused a continuous wave of peasant uprisings and military mutinies, which mainly took place in present-day Zhejiang and Guangdong. Not only did Sun Hao refuse to accept advice to strengthen Wu's defenses and reduce the burden on its people, he also executed around four dozen high-ranking officials who provided good counsel on governance. As a result, the Wu imperial court had already lost the popular support of the people, and many regional commanders stationed at the border defected to the Jin Dynasty.

## Prelude

To stabilize the newly conquered state of Shu, as well as showing benevolence toward the people of Wu so that they would defect or surrender to the Jin Dynasty, the surrendered Shu emperor Liu Shan was granted the rank of "Duke of Anle", and over fifty former subjects of Shu were awarded the titles of marquises. Zhuge Liang's grandson, Zhuge Jing (諸葛京), also received important appointments in the Jin imperial court. At the same time, Jin sent envoys to Wu to cease hostilities between the two states, in order to buy time for making preparations. Wu's emperor Sun Hao, in turn, viewed such actions as a sign of weakness of Jin, and further let down his guard.

## Jin preparations

Jin preparation for the conquest of Wu begun in 269, when three places were selected as bases to launch the attack. New assignments were given as follows:

- Imperial Secretary **Yang Hu** was appointed as the viceroy of Jing Province and stationed at Xiangyang.
- Senior General Who Conquers the East **Wei Guan** was appointed as the viceroy of Qing Province and stationed at Linzi (臨菑; northeast of present-day Zibo, Shandong).
- Prince of Langye and Senior General Who Stabilizes the East **Sima Zhou** was appointed as the viceroy of Xu Province and stationed at Xiapi (下邳; northwest of present-day Suining County, Jiangsu).

On Yang Hu's recommendation, Emperor Wu of Jin (Sima Yan) appointed Wang Jun as the viceroy of Yi Province, (益州; covering the Sichuan Basin) in 272, and soon after, on Du Yu's advice, Emperor Wu promoted Wang Jun to the rank of General of the Uplifting Dragon. Wang Jun was put in charge of building a strong navy for the conquest of Wu. An ambitious general who was already turned 70, Wang Jun was eager to establish fame by the conquest of Wu, and while he was only an Administrator of Yi Province, he already begun the process. The new ranks sped up the process tremendously by enabling Wang Jun to draft much more men: in comparison to the 500 to 600 workers previously available, every commandery within his control must provide him with 10,000 men. As a result, the remaining work of the naval construction project was completed in a year.

To make up for their lack of experience of naval warfare in comparison to Wu's navy, Wang Jun built many large ships with ram bows. The largest ship was in excess of 170 metres and could carry around 2,000 troops on board. The fortifications on these ships were three stories tall and was claimed to be the largest at the time. It took Wang

Jun a total of seven years to build the navy he needed to conquer Wu and the only thing left to do was to train his soldiers and sailors.

In October 276, the preparation was roughly completed and Yang Hu suggested to the emperor to launch the attack. Yang Hu's suggestion was initially accepted but then delayed due to Grand Commandant Jia Chong's opposition, because Xianbei leaders had rebelled in northwestern China. In July 277, additional assignments were given in order to prepare for the campaign against Wu:

- General who Establishes Might **Wang Hun** (王渾) was put in charge of military affairs of Yang Province
- Senior General Who Stabilizes the South **Sima Liang** was put in charge of military affairs of Yu Province
- General of the Left **Hu Fen** (胡奮) was put in charge of military affairs along the northern shore of the Yangtze River

After Yang Hu's death, Du Yu succeeded him and was awarded the rank of Senior General Who Conquers the South, taking charge of military affairs in Jing Province from November 278.

## Wu preparations

In comparison to the active preparation of its adversary, what the Wu emperor Sun Hao did was nearly nothing. During Wang Jun's naval construction, the leftover wooden pieces flowed downstream and were picked up by the Administrator of Jianping (建平, present-day Zigui County, Hubei), Wu Yan (吾彦). Wu Yan sent the wooden pieces to Sun Hao as evidence of the imminent attack and asked for reinforcements, but the request was ignored, as with similar suggestions from Lu Kang (son of Lu Xun) and others.

After Lu Kang's death, his military command was split among his five sons as follows:

- Eldest son Lu Yan (陸晏) was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the land force
- Second son Lu Jing was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the navy
- Third son Lu Xuan (陸玄) was appointed as the deputy commander-in-chief of the land force
- Fourth son Lu Ji was appointed as the deputy commander-in-chief of the navy
- Fifth son Lu Yun (陸雲) was appointed as the commander of the local garrison

The division greatly weakened Wu's defenses and three of Lu Kang's sons were killed in the battles when Jin conquered Wu.

## Strategic planning

In 279, Wang Jun thought that it was time to launch the decisive attack on Wu, and as with similar petitions submitted previously, it was strongly objected by nearly all subjects in the Jin imperial court, with the exception of two, General Who Conquers the South Du Yu and Imperial Secretary Zhang Hua, who strongly supported Wang Jun's idea. Furthermore, the two managed to convince Emperor Wu of Jin to agree with them, and the strategy of Jin was basically the one planned by Yang Hu when he was alive. 200,000 troops out of the 500,000 strong regular army of Jin were deployed for the campaign, and by this time, the Jin navy was also at least equal if not stronger than Wu's.

## Jin strategy

The Jin army did not enjoy numerical superiority because it faced the entire Wu force of 230,000 and over 5,000 ships that defended the state. However, the morale of Jin was much higher than Wu. Furthermore, the Wu forces was scattered along the several thousand miles long border, and the attacking Jin armies could concentrate their forces to attack the isolated pockets of Wu resistance. Based on this principle, Jin would attack Wu along the Yangtze River in five routes to support the main attack force led by Wang Jun from Sichuan, going downstream along the Yangtze.

Wang Hun (王渾) and Sima Zhou were tasked to tie down the main force of Wu, preventing it from reinforcing the upstream Yangtze River by threatening Wu's capital, Jianye (present-day Nanjing, Jiangsu). Wang Rong, Du Yu and

Hu Fen (胡奮) were tasked to take all strongholds of Wu located to the west of Xiakou (夏口; present-day Wuchang District, Hubei) to coordinate with the 70,000 strong main force led by Wang Jun. After the attacking forces had joined together, they would push toward east along the Yangtze River and the capture of Jianye would be the responsibility of Wang Hun, Sima Zhou and Wang Jun. To better coordinate the attack, Emperor Wu of Jin ordered that Wang Jun would be under Du Yu's command after reaching Jianping, and after reaching Jianye, he would be under Wang Hun's command.

## Wu strategy

Since the Wu emperor Sun Hao did not believe that the Jin was capable of taking Wu and the overconfidence in the Yangtze River as the natural defensive barrier, barely anything was done to prepare for the incoming campaign. However, Wu did reinforce its defense by deploying iron awls linked together by iron chains in the Three Gorges to prevent ships from passing, but Sun Hao and his followers were so overconfident about this additional measure that not a single soldier was deployed to guard the region.

## The campaign

### Battles at the upstream of the Yangtze River

Wang Jun's navy began its downstream Yangtze River attack in December 279 after being joined by his deputy, Tang Bin (唐彬) in charge of Badong commandery (巴東, present-day Fengjie County, Chongqing). The combined force totaled 70,000. A month later, in January 280, Du Yu begun his attack on Jiangling from Xiangyang and sent three of his advisors, Fan Xian (樊顯), Yin Lin (尹林), Deng Gui (鄧圭), along with Administrator of Xiangyang, Zhou Qi (周奇), westward along the Yangtze River to join Wang Jun, attacking the strongholds of Wu between them from both the east and the west. By February 280, Wang Jun's army had taken Danyang (丹楊, east of present-day Zigui County, Hubei) from Wu, and captured its Supervisor Sheng Ji (盛紀).

The Jin fleet under Wang Jun's command continued on after taking Danyang and upon reaching Xiling Gorge, they had met obstacles set up by Wu, the iron awls linked together by iron chains in water. However, Wang Jun had already captured most of Wu's agents, as well as many prisoners-of-war, and based the information obtained from the captives, the Jin forces already had a detailed knowledge of Wu's defenses, knowing exactly where the weakest spots were and where to attack. The Jin navy deployed dozens of rafts ahead of the fleet and when the iron awls struck the rafts, they were stuck. The rafts were full of dummies soaked in oil which were lit, causing the iron chains and awls to melt. After several hours, those man-made obstacles were completely cleared and the Jin fleet continued advancing.

By February 3, 280, Jin forces had taken Xiling (西陵; northwest of present-day Yichang, Hubei), and two days later, Jingmen and Yidao (夷道; present-day Yidu, Hubei) also fell under Jin control. All major Wu commanders, including Liu Xian (留憲), Cheng Ju (成據), Yu Zhong (虞忠), and Lu Yan (陸晏) were captured and then executed. The victorious Jin fleet continued its offensive against Lexiang (樂鄉; northeast of present-day Songzi, Hubei), defeating the local Wu forces who ventured out of the protection of city walls in an attempt to stop the Jin assault.

In the mean time, Du Yu had sent his subordinate Zhou Zhi to cross the Yangtze River with 800 horsemen at night to plant many flags in Mount Ba (巴山; southwest of present-day Songzi, Hubei), appearing to be a much larger force, while laying ambush just outside Lexiang. As the local Wu garrison went out earlier to engage Wang Jun's force retreated back to the city after their defeat, Zhou Zhi and his men were able to sneak into the city and capture it. The Commander of Lexiang, Sun Xin (孫歆), was captured by Zhou Zhi and sent to Du Yu. Wang Jun, in his report to the Jin imperial court, claimed that Sun Xin was killed in action. In fact, it was Wu's naval commander-in-chief, Lu Jing, who was killed when Lexiang fell to the Jin forces. Du Yu's army subsequently conquered Jiangling and killed its Commander Wu Yan (伍延).



## Redeployment of Jin forces

On February 28, 280, Emperor Wu of Jin strengthened the main force under Wang Jun's command by redeploying troops under other commanders:

- Du Yu to attack southward to take Lingling (零陵; present-day Yongzhou, Hunan), Guiyang (桂陽; present-day Chen County 郴縣, Hunan), and Hengyang (衡陽; west of present-day Xiangtan, Hunan), and 10,000 troops under Du Yu's command would be reassigned to Wang Jun, and another 7,000 troops under Du Yu's command would be reassigned to Wang Jun's deputy Tang Bin (唐彬).
- Hu Fen (胡奮) would take Xiakou (夏口; present-day Wuchang District, Hubei) together with Wang Jun's force, and after the city was taken, 7,000 troops under Hu Fen's command would be reassigned to Wang Jun.
- Wang Rong would join forces with Wang Jun to take Wuchang (武昌; present-day Ezhou, Hubei), and after the city was taken, 6,000 troops under Wang Rong's command would be reassigned to Wang Jun's deputy Tang Bin.
- After taking Baqiu (巴丘; present-day Yueyang, Hunan), Wang Jun's force would join forces with other commanders to take other cities as mentioned above, and then continue on toward Jianye, the capital of Eastern Wu.

Following Emperor Wu's orders, Wang Jun continued his offensive and Wu general Meng Tai (孟泰) surrendered with his forces guarding Qichun and Zhu (邾; present day Huanggang, Hubei). The next target was also captured without much fight: after Wang Rong's force led by Luo Shang (羅尚) and Liu Qiao (劉喬) joined Wang Jun and begun their offensive, Wu's Administrator of Wuchang, Liu Lang (劉朗), lost his will to resist and surrendered without a fight. With the exception of Jianping, which was defended by Wu Yan (吾彥), the Administrator of Jianping, all other territories of Wu on the upper Yangtze River had fallen under the Jin Dynasty's control.

By this time, Grand Commandant Jia Chong, the Jin commander-in-chief of the campaign who had opposed the campaign from the start, had found the opportunity to suggest a conclusion of the campaign. Jia Chong claimed that it was good to withdraw after the continuous victories because if the war continues, it would exhaust the resources of the state and troops remain the south would suffer from epidemics. However, the war progressed much faster and better than Jia Chong had predicted and his suggestion was ignored.

## Battles midstream and downstream of the Yangtze River

At the midstream and downstream of the Yangtze River, starting in January 280, Wang Hun (王渾) conquered Wu's territories of Xunyang (尋陽; southwest of present-day Huangmei County, Hubei), Gaowang (高望; southwest of present-day Pu County 浦縣), and Laixiang (賴鄉), capturing Wu general Zhou Xing (周興). Sima Zhou took Tuzhong (塗中), sending his subordinate, Liu Hong (劉弘), to solidify the newly captured territory on the northern shore of the Yangtze River. Meanwhile, Sima Zhou sent Wang Heng (王恆) to cross the Yangtze River to continue attacking Wu. Wang Heng's army captured Wu general Cai Ji (蔡機) and killed more than 60,000 Wu troops in the battle.

Surprised with the news of attack, Sun Hao ordered Zhang Ti, Zhuge Jing (諸葛靚), Shen Ying (沈瑩) and Sun Zhen (孫震) to lead a 30,000 strong army to engage the enemy. Zhang Ti decided the only chance for Wu was to immediate venture out to stop the enemy before the morale collapse, and if the enemy's advance could be beaten back or at least checked, his force would join the Wu forces in the upstream Yangtze River to strengthen their position. In March 280, Zhang Ti led his force across the Yangtze and besieged Wang Hun's subordinate Zhang Qiao (張喬). Zhang Qiao only had 7,000 troops and surrendered. Zhuge Jing suspected that the surrender was a trick and asked Zhang Ti to execute Zhang Qiao, but Zhang Ti refused, and instead, accepted Zhang Qiao's surrender. As a precaution measure, Zhang Ti did order Zhang Qiao to remain by his side so that Zhang Qiao would not have the chance to escape back to Jin.

As the Wu army continued on, they encountered Jin forces led by Zhang Han (張翰) and Zhou Jun (周濬). Shen Ying personally led 5,000 crack troops from Danyang to charge into the Jin army's formation thrice, but was beaten

back with heavy losses. The defeat of the elite force seriously demoralized the rest of the Wu soldiers, and the result was a disorganized retreat. Seizing on the opportunity, Jin generals Xue Sheng (薛勝) and Jiang Ban (蔣班) launched a surprise counterattack, defeating the Wu forces and killing over 5,800 enemy troops. As the surviving Wu forces fled from the battlefield, the surrendered Zhang Qiao attacked the fleeing Wu soldiers from the opposite direction at Banqiao (版橋), inflicting a further 2,000 fatalities on the already defeated Wu army. Zhang Ti, Shen Ying, and Sun Zhen were all killed in the decisive battle that shocked Wu. Only Zhuge Jing managed to escape alive back to the Wu capital Jianye. Wang Hun's subordinate urged him to press on to attack Jianye immediately, but he refused under the excuse that he was ordered by Emperor Wu of Jin to secure the northern shore of Yangtze River only and wait for Wang Jun. Wang Hun was in fact, taking a more cautious approaching by attempting to join forces with Wang Jun to ensure the final victory, but such prudence cost him the glory of capturing the enemy capital city, the highest honor in the campaign.

Wang Jun's 80,000 strong army, meanwhile, reached Niuzhu (牛渚) on March 14, 280, after leaving Wuchang (武昌, present-day Ezhou, Hubei) and the Wu emperor Sun Hao ordered Zhang Xiang (張象) to lead a 10,000 strong navy to engage the enemy. However, when both fleets met, the demoralized Wu navy surrendered en masse, including Zhang Xiang himself. Wang Hun ordered Wang Jun to see him so that they could discuss their next move, but Wang Jun answered that his fleet had already passed Wang Hun's camp and could not turn back due to the current, and continued on toward Jianye.

As Wang Jun's forces advanced on to Sanshan (三山) on March 14, 280, just southeast of Jianye, Wu general Tao Jun (陶濬) organized a 20,000 strong army to make a last stand, but nearly all the Wu troops deserted on the very same night, and Tao Jun and his few "die-hard" followers were killed subsequently in their futile struggle against the Jin invaders. Sun Hao adopted a last attempt suggested by his subjects Xue Ying and Hu Chong (胡冲) by sending letters of surrender to Sima Zhou, Wang Jun and Wang Hun, in a move to stir up internal conflict among the Jin commanders in order to buy time, but such a tactic proved useless.

On March 15, 280, Sun Hao stripped all clothing on his upper body and tied himself up (a traditional way of presenting prisoners-of-war to the victors) and walked to Wang Jun's camp to surrender. Prior to that, Sun Hao issued his last imperial decree, asking his people not to be upset with the end of Wu, but prepare themselves to serve the new dynasty. Sun Hao was then taken to the Jin capital Luoyang with his imperial chariot, but was not allowed to ride on it. Instead, he travelled on foot as he was now a prisoner-of-war. After hearing of Sun Hao's surrender, the last pocket of Wu resistance in Jianping, led by Administrator Wu Yan (吾彦), followed suit even after having successfully defended against all Jin attacks throughout the campaign.

## Aftermath

The fall of Jianye marked the end of Wu and the Three Kingdoms period, and China was unified again under the Jin Dynasty. The Jin commanders who participated in the campaign were handsomely rewarded, and ironically, Jia Chong, the overall commander who had opposed the campaign received the largest reward, the tax income of 8,000 households. Wang Hun was furious upon learning the news of Wang Jun taking Jianye, and angrily proclaimed to his subordinates that he had watched Sun Hao for nearly a hundred days, but Wang Jun took the advantage at last. Wang Hun wrote to the imperial court to complain, claiming that Wang Jun disobeyed orders and embezzled war spoils. Wang Jun also wrote to the imperial court to defend himself, claiming that what Wang Hun had said was slander. However, Wang Hun was much more powerful and influential in the Jin court, thus had gained an upper hand, with his followers suggesting that Wang Jun be jailed. In the end, Emperor Wu of Jin put an end to the conflict by rewarding Wang Jun handsomely.

## Order of battle

To boost morale, some of the Jin commanders received new ranks, while in contrast, Wu did almost nothing to reinforce its own defense.

### Jin forces

- Grand Viceroy (大都督) **Jia Chong**
  - General of Champions (冠軍將軍) **Yang Ji** (楊濟), served as Jia Chong's deputy
  - Imperial Secretary of Budgeting (度支尚書) **Zhang Hua**, was in charge of supplies and logistics
    - Prince of Langya / General Who Stabilizes the Army (瑯琊王 / 鎮軍將軍) **Sima Zhou**, would attack Tuzhong (涂中) from Xiapi (下邳)
      - Chancellor of Langya (瑯琊相) **Liu Hong** (劉弘)
      - Chief Clerk (長史) **Wang Heng** (王恆)
    - General Who Pacifies the East (安東將軍) **Wang Hun** (王渾), would attack Hezhou (和州) from Yang Province (揚州)
      - General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Zhang Han** (張翰)
      - Inspector of Yang Province (揚州刺史) **Zhou Jun** (周濬)
      - **Xue Sheng** (薛勝)
      - **Jiang Ban** (蔣班)
    - Senior General Who Conquers the South (征南大將軍) **Du Yu**, would attack Jiangling (江陵) from Xiangyang (襄陽)
      - Army Advisor (參軍) **Fan Xian** (樊顯)
      - Army Advisor **Yin Lin** (尹林)
      - Army Advisor **Deng Gui** (鄧圭)
      - Administor of Xiangyang (襄陽太守) **Zhou Qi** (周奇)
      - General of the Standard (牙門將軍) **Zhou Zhi**
    - General Who Establishes Might (建威將軍) **Wang Rong**, would attack Wuchang (武昌; present-day Ezhou, Hubei) from Yu Province (豫州)
      - Army Advisor (參軍) **Luo Shang** (羅尚)
      - Army Advisor **Liu Qiao** (劉喬)
      - Commandant of Chengyang (成陽都尉) **Zhang Qiao** (張喬)
    - General Who Subdues the South (平南將軍) **Hu Fen** (胡奮), would attack Xiakou (夏口; present-day Wuchang District, Hubei) from Jing Province (荊州)
    - General of the Uplifting Dragon (龍驤將軍) **Wang Jun**, would attack downstream from Sichuan along the Yangtze River
      - General of Vast Martial (廣武將軍) **Tang Bin** (唐彬), defended Badong (巴東; present-day Fengjie County, Chongqing)

## Wu forces

### Before February 280

- † Grand Viceroy (大都督) **Lu Yan** (陸晏)
  - **Lu Xuan** (陸玄), served as Lu Yan's deputy
    - (P.O.W.) General of Military Might (武威將軍) **Zhou Xing** (周興)
    - (P.O.W.) **Cai Ji** (蔡機)
    - (P.O.W.) Supervisor of Danyang (丹楊監) **Sheng Ji** (盛紀)
    - † General Who Stabilizes the South (鎮南將軍) **Liu Xian** (留憲)
    - † General Who Conquers the South (征南將軍) **Cheng Ju** (成據)
    - † Administrator of Yidu (宜都太守) **Yu Zhong** (虞忠)
    - Commander of Lexiang (樂鄉督) **Sun Xin** (孫歆)
    - † Commander of Jiangling (江陵督) **Wu Yan** (伍延)
    - 𠄎 General of the Standard (牙門將軍) **Meng Tai** (孟泰)
    - 𠄎 Administrator of Wuchang (武昌太守) **Liu Lang** (劉朗)
- † **Lu Jing**, served as commander of the naval force (水軍都督)
  - 𠄎 **Lu Ji**, served as deputy commander of the naval force (水軍副督)

### After February 280

- † Chancellor (丞相) **Zhang Ti**
  - Deputy Military Counselor (副軍師) **Zhuge Jing** (諸葛靚)
  - † Administrator of Danyang (丹陽太守) **Shen Ying** (沈瑩)
  - † General Who Protects the Army (護軍將軍) **Sun Zhen** (孫震)
- 𠄎 General of Guerrilla Force (游擊將軍) **Zhang Xiang** (張象)
- † Commander of Xuling (徐陵督) **Tao Jun** (陶潛)
- 𠄎 Administrator of Jianping (建平太守) **Wu Yan** (吾彥)

## In fiction

In Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of Three Kingdoms*, the task of building a navy for the Jin Dynasty was credited to Zhong Hui before the fall of Shu, when Zhong recommended to Sima Zhao that constructing a large navy to attack Wu was a diversion to trick Shu into letting down its guard, and when it was time to truly attack Wu after the conquest of Shu, the navy would be ready. In reality, however, the idea of constructing a large navy originated from Wang Jun and Emperor Wu of Jin, and the plan was set into motion only after the fall of Shu.

In the novel, the last event before the campaign ended was described to be Zhang Xiang's surrender when he led a 10,000 strong navy to engage Jin forces. Since the Wu imperial court had not received news of Zhang Xiang's surrender yet, Wang Jun ordered Zhang Xiang to return to the Wu capital Jianye to trick the Wu defenders into opening the city gates. Zhang Xiang followed as instructed and Jin forces swiftly conquered Jianye. The Wu emperor Sun Hao surrendered and that marked the end of Wu. In history, however, before Sun Hao's surrender, there was one last battle at Sanshan (三山), just southeast of Jianye, between Wang Jun's army and a smaller force led by Wu general Tao Jun (陶潛).

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# Fictional

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## Campaign against Dong Zhuo - Battle of Sishui Pass

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Battle of Sishui Pass	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	汜水关之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	汜水關之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Sìshuǐ Guān Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Sishui Pass** is a fictional battle described in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The battle was fought between the forces of Dong Zhuo and a coalition of regional warlords and officials (known as the Guandong Coalition) as part of the Campaign against Dong Zhuo in 190 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period.

### Background

In 190, Dong Zhuo entered Luoyang, the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty, and took control of the imperial court. Dong Zhuo monopolised state power and governed with cruelty and brutality. Later that year, several warlords and regional officials formed a new coalition against Dong Zhuo, with Yuan Shao as their leader. Yuan Shao ordered his cousin Yuan Shu to manage the supplies for the coalition, and appointed Sun Jian as the vanguard to take Sishui Pass, one of the mountain passes leading to Luoyang.

Dong Zhuo was deeply alarmed by this news, but his foster son Lü Bu reassured him and said that he would personally go to battle and slay the enemies. Hearing that, Hua Xiong, one of Dong Zhuo's generals, stepped out and volunteered to go and fight the coalition forces. Dong Zhuo was pleased and he appointed Hua Xiong as a Colonel of Resolute Cavalry (驍騎校尉) and sent him with 50,000 troops to guard Sishui Pass, with Li Su, Hu Zhen, and Zhao Cen serving as his deputies.

### The battle

#### First blood

Bao Xin, one of the coalition leaders, wanting to get merit before Sun Jian did, secretly sent his brother Bao Zhong with 3,000 men through a shortcut towards Sishui Pass. Hua Xiong charged out of the pass and slew Bao Zhong. He then sent Bao Zhong's head back to Dong Zhuo as a token of his victory, and Dong promoted him.

Sun Jian arrived at the pass with his generals Cheng Pu, Huang Gai, Han Dang, and Zu Mao. Hu Zhen led 5,000 men to engage Sun Jian, but Cheng Pu stabbed him in the throat with his spear soon after they clashed. Sun Jian then continued to the pass, where he was repelled by the archers. He retreated to Liangdong (梁東) and reported his victory to Yuan Shao, while pressing Yuan Shu for provisions.

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## Sun Jian defeated

Yuan Shu refused to send the supplies because he did not want Sun Jian to gain the top credit. Chaos broke out in Sun Jian's army due to the lack of supplies, and spies in his camp reported the situation to Hua Xiong. Li Su suggested to Hua Xiong to seize the opportunity to attack Sun Jian.

At midnight, Hua Xiong led an army to attack the front of Sun Jian's camp, so Sun came out and fought with him. A separate force led by Li Su sneaked into Sun Jian's camp from the rear and set fire. By then, Sun Jian had been surrounded, and he attempted to break out of the encirclement together with Zu Mao. Seeing that Sun Jian's red scarf could easily identify him, Zu Mao suggested to his lord to give him the scarf, which Sun did. Sun Jian then escaped while Zu Mao used the scarf as a bait to lure Hua Xiong into a trap. Zu Mao attempted to catch Hua Xiong off guard but failed and was killed by Hua.

Cheng Pu, Huang Gai, Han Dang eventually regrouped with Sun Jian, who mourned the death of Zu Mao and reported his defeat to Yuan Shao.

## Guan Yu slays Hua Xiong

The following day, Hua Xiong rode towards the coalition camp and taunted them to fight him one-to-one. Yu She, a general under Yuan Shu, answered Hua Xiong's challenge but was killed in a few rounds. Pan Feng, a general under Han Fu took up the challenge but lost his life as well.

Guan Yu, who was only a mounted archer under Liu Bei (who joined the coalition under Gongsun Zan's banner) then, volunteered to fight Hua Xiong but was ridiculed by Yuan Shu because of his low rank. However, Cao Cao suggested that they allow Guan Yu to go since the latter was brave enough to volunteer anyway. Guan Yu promised to take Hua Xiong's head and if he failed he would face execution. Cao Cao offered Guan Yu a cup of warm wine to encourage him but the latter declined, claiming that he would return very soon. Within moments, Guan Yu returned with Hua Xiong's head and he proceeded to gulp down the wine, which was still warm.

The coalition forces took advantage of the situation to seize Sishui Pass and advance towards Hulao Pass, the next mountain pass on the way to Luoyang.

## Historicity

There is no mention of this battle in historical records for that period, such as the *Book of the Later Han* and *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. In fact, Sishui Pass and Hulao Pass refer to the same mountain pass near Xingyang, except that there were two different names.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

However, Sun Jian's biography in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* did mention a similar incident about Sun's scarf, but it did not involve Hua Xiong. It stated that when Sun Jian garrisoned at Liangdong (梁東), he came under heavy attack by Dong Zhuo (led by Xu Rong)<sup>[1]</sup> and he brought tens of horsemen with him to break out of the encirclement. He was wearing a red scarf then, so he took it off and passed it to Zu Mao. Dong Zhuo's men recognised the scarf and pursued Zu Mao, while Sun Jian took another path and escaped. Zu Mao became tired so he dismounted, tied the scarf to a half-burnt pillar, and hid in the bushes nearby. Dong Zhuo's men approached the pillar, surrounded it, and left when they saw that it was just a pillar.<sup>[2]</sup> Zu Mao was not killed in that skirmish at Liangdong, but what happened to him after that incident was not recorded in history. Hu Zhen was not killed in that battle, and he served under Li Jue and Guo Si's government after Dong Zhuo's death.<sup>[3]</sup>

Sun Jian's biography also stated that Sun Jian defeated Dong Zhuo's army at Yangren (陽人) and beheaded its commander Hua Xiong.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

## Cultural references

In Chinese literature, this battle is known as the first battle that led Guan Yu to fame, which, over time, accumulated and promoted him to deity status.

This scene became famous in Beijing opera as "Killing Hua Xiong" (simplified Chinese: 斩华雄; traditional Chinese: 斬華雄; pinyin: *Zhǎn Huà Xióng*). The same scene is played in other types of Chinese opera as well.

More recently, this event has been reenacted in video games such as Koei's *Sangokushi Eiketsuden*, *Sangokushi Sousouden* and *Dynasty Warriors*, among others.

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# Campaign against Dong Zhuo - Battle of Hulao Pass

Battle of Hulao Pass	
Simplified Chinese	虎牢关之战
Traditional Chinese	虎牢關之戰
Transcriptions	
Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Hǔláo Guān Zhī Zhàn

The **Battle of Hulao Pass** is a fictional battle described in the historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* by Luo Guanzhong. The battle was fought between Dong Zhuo and a coalition of regional warlords and officials (known as the Guandong Coalition) as part of the Campaign against Dong Zhuo in 190 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period. Nothing about the battle is documented in *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, the authoritative source for the history of the late Eastern Han Dynasty and Three Kingdoms period.

## Background

In 190, Dong Zhuo entered Luoyang, the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty, and took control of the imperial court. Dong Zhuo monopolised state power and governed with cruelty and brutality. Later that year, several warlords and regional officials formed a new coalition against Dong Zhuo, with Yuan Shao as their leader. The coalition first attacked Sishui Pass, one of the mountain passes on the way to Luoyang. Dong Zhuo's general Hua Xiong, who was guarding Sishui Pass, was slain by Guan Yu from the coalition, and the pass was captured by the coalition. The coalition forces then marched on to Hulao Pass, situated some 50 *li* away from Luoyang.

## The battle

Dong Zhuo personally led an army of 150,000 men with Lü Bu, Li Ru, Fan Chou, and Zhang Ji east to Hulao Pass, while sending 50,000 men under Li Jue and Guo Si to reinforce Sishui Pass. Once at Hulao Pass, Dong Zhuo ordered Lü Bu to lead the vanguard with 30,000 men and set camp in front of the fortified pass.

The coalition decided to send half of their forces to engage Dong Zhuo's forces. Eight coalition warlords - Wang Kuang, Qiao Mao, Bao Xin, Yuan Yi, Kong Rong, Zhang Yang, Tao Qian, and Gongsun Zan - each led their forces towards Hulao Pass under Yuan Shao's command. The first to arrive in Hulao Pass was Wang Kuang, where one of his generals, Fang Yue, volunteered to duel Lü Bu. In less than five rounds, Fang Yue was killed, and Lü Bu charged



A Qing Dynasty illustration of the duel between Lü Bu and the three sworn brothers (Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei).

through Wang Kuang's force, killing several of the routing soldiers. Fortunately for Wang Kuang, the forces of Qiao Mao and Yuan Yi came to his rescue. They decided to withdraw 30 *li* from the pass and set camp there.

Soon, the remaining five coalition warlords arrived at the camp, where they discussed and concluded that Lü Bu cannot be defeated by anyone. Just then, Lü Bu's men arrayed outside the coalition camp, and the eight coalition warlords went to meet the enemy. Mu Shun, a general under Zhang Yang, charged towards Lü Bu, but was immediately killed. Wu Anguo, a general under Kong Rong, then proceeded to challenge Lü Bu. They fought for ten rounds, but then Lü Bu slit off Wu Anguo's wrist with his *ji*. The coalition forces charged out and rescued Wu Anguo, and each side retreated to their own camps. Cao Cao commented that all the eighteen warlords must gather together to discuss a plan to defeat Lü Bu, and that if Lü Bu is defeated, Dong Zhuo would be easy to kill.

Just then, Lü Bu came out again to taunt the coalition. This time, Gongsun Zan went to challenge Lü Bu, but had to withdraw after a few rounds. Lü Bu gave chase, but he was distracted by Zhang Fei, who called him "a slave with three surnames" (三姓家奴; the "three surnames" refer to Lü Bu's original surname and those of his two foster fathers). Lü Bu then battled Zhang Fei for 50 rounds, with neither gaining an advantage over the other. Following that, Guan Yu, brandishing his Green Dragon Crescent Blade, dashed out to assist Zhang Fei. The three fighters were engaged in another 30 bouts or so when Liu Bei, holding up a pair of swords, also joined in the fray.

The three sworn brothers encircled Lü Bu and took turns to attack him from different directions. Lü Bu was unable to defeat all three opponents so he pretended to attack Liu Bei and escaped through the gap when Liu dodged his attack. Lü Bu then fled back to Hulao Pass, with the three brothers hot on pursuit, but they could not catch up with him because of the speed of his horse, the Red Hare. They abandoned the chase after they spotted Dong Zhuo. Zhang Fei attempted to charge onto the fortification to kill Dong Zhuo, but was driven back by a rain of arrows from the pass.

The coalition warlords declared the battle won, and received Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei for a celebration of their victory.

## Aftermath

In the light of his recent defeat, Dong Zhuo consulted Li Ru, who suggested that they retreat to Chang'an in the west. Dong Zhuo was delighted at the idea, and, despite strong objections from some people, carried out the plan. He forced the imperial court and Luoyang's citizens to migrate to Chang'an together with him, with his army keeping close watch on them. Before leaving, Dong Zhuo sent his soldiers to seize valuables and riches from the wealthy households in Luoyang, and then had the city razed to the ground. Zhao Cen, Dong Zhuo's general defending Sishui Pass at the time, abandoned the pass once he knew of his lord's retreat.

## Historicity

There is no historical record of any engagement taking place at Hulao Pass during that period of time.

In the novel, Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei participated in the campaign under Gongsun Zan's banner, but *Records of the Three Kingdoms* did not mention Gongsun Zan's involvement in the campaign.

Historically, however, there were confrontations between the coalition and Dong Zhuo in which both Dong Zhuo and Lü Bu had participated in personally, with only Sun Jian's forces present on the coalition side. Dong Zhuo's biography in the *Book of the Later Han* stated that Lü Bu was defeated in battle twice by Sun Jian:

- The first time was at Yangren (陽人), when Dong Zhuo sent Lü Bu and Hu Zhen to attack Sun Jian. Lü Bu and Hu Zhen could not get along with each other, leading to disorder in their army, so Sun Jian used the opportunity to attack them and forced them to retreat.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
- The second time was in Luoyang, where Dong Zhuo personally led an army to engage Sun Jian's forces in the area where the tombs of the Han emperors were located. Dong Zhuo was defeated and he retreated. Sun Jian then entered Luoyang's Xuanyang Gate (宣陽城門), where he attacked Lü Bu and drove him back.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

## Cultural references

Although it is a work of fiction, Luo Guanzhong's compelling account of the duel between Lü Bu, the mightiest warrior in the novel, and the three sworn brothers makes it one of the most celebrated events in Chinese popular culture. Several sects of Chinese opera, such as Cantonese opera, have skits relating to this battle, which is commonly known as "Three Heroes Battle Lü Bu" (simplified Chinese: 三英战吕布; traditional Chinese: 三英戰呂布; pinyin: *sān yīng zhàn Lǚ Bù*).

This event has also been reenacted in video games such as Koei's *Dynasty Warriors* and *Sangokushi Sousouden*, among others.

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# Red Cliffs Campaign - Battle of Changsha

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The **Battle of Changsha**, also called the **Changsha Conflict** is a fictional military skirmish described in Chapter 53 of Luo Guanzhong's novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* that took place in Changsha, in Jing Province, between the warlords Liu Bei and Han Xuan. The battle introduces two major Shu Han generals, Huang Zhong and Wei Yan.

Historically, Han Xuan surrendered to Liu Bei as part of the Battle of Jiangling in 208 without conflict, and Wei Yan was one of Liu Bei's personal retainers and rose through the ranks to become a general; he had nothing to do with Han Xuan and Huang Zhong.

## Background

Han Xuan, a former subordinate of Liu Biao, controlled the city of Changsha following Liu Biao's death in 208 and Liu Cong's failed succession. Han Xuan and another warlord Jin Xuan seceded from Jing Province following Cao Cao's stalemated conquest of Jing Province.

Cao Cao, Liu Bei, and Sun Quan all desired Jing Province, and Sun Quan had little of the province except for the southern side of the Yangtze near Xiakou and Chibi. Finding an opportunity to take Jing Province and a few other important locations, Liu Bei dispatched Guan Yu to take Changsha and eliminate Han Xuan.

## The battle

When Guan Yu led his forces towards Changsha, Han Xuan sent his general Yang Ling to meet the enemy, but Yang Ling was killed. Han Xuan then sent Huang Zhong, who fought with Guan Yu. Whilst fighting, both generals developed respect for each other, and did not take opportunities to slay the other.

Han Xuan saw this, and ordered Huang Zhong to be put to death. Wei Yan rescued Huang Zhong by cutting down the executioner, then led a revolt to kill Han Xuan. Wei Yan then surrendered the city to Guan Yu.

## Aftermath

Huang Zhong, Wei Yan and Liu Pan would all become prominent people of Shu Han following their surrenders to Liu Bei. Huang Zhong would become a "Tiger general" along with Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, Zhao Yun, and Ma Chao. He would fight in the Hanzhong Campaign and kill Xiahou Yuan during a clash with Cao Cao's forces at Battle of Mt. Dingjun. Liu Pan would become the magistrate of Changsha for the Shu kingdom.

When Wei Yan surrendered, Zhuge Liang ordered him to be executed, but Liu Bei intervened. Zhuge Liang would always suspect Wei Yan, fearing he would again revolt. Indeed, later in Chapter 104, after Zhuge Liang's death in the Battle of Wuzhang Plains, Wei Yan does revolt.

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# Conquest of Yi Province - Battle of Jiameng Pass

Battle of Jiameng Pass	
<b>Simplified Chinese</b>	葭萌关之战
<b>Traditional Chinese</b>	葭萌關之戰
<b>Transcriptions</b>	
<b>Mandarin</b>	
<b>Hanyu Pinyin</b>	Jiāméng Guān Zhī Zhàn

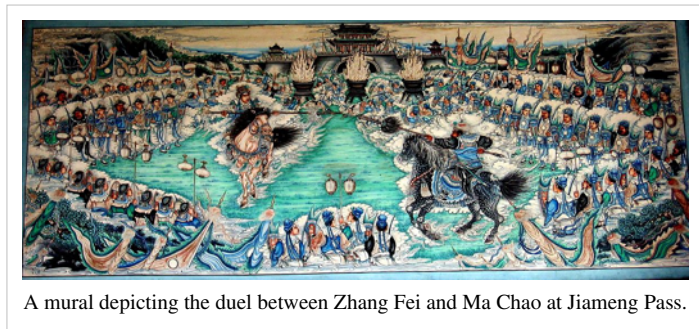
The **Battle of Jiameng Pass** is a fictional battle described in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The battle was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Zhang Lu in 214 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period.

## Background

In 211, Ma Chao attacked Cao Cao after the latter lured his father (Ma Teng) and younger brothers (Ma Xiu and Ma Tie) into a trap and killed them. This led to the Battle of Tong Pass between Ma Chao and Cao Cao. Ma Chao was defeated and he took refuge under the warlord Zhang Lu in Hanzhong.

## The battle

In 212, Liu Zhang invited Liu Bei into Yi Province (covering present-day Sichuan and Chongqing) to help him defend against Zhang Lu's forces in Hanzhong. Liu Bei proceeded to Jiameng Pass (located about 20 kilometres northeast of Jianmen Pass in present-day Jiange County, Sichuan) and stationed there. However, Liu Bei and Liu Zhang eventually turned hostile towards each other when Liu Zhang discovered that his follower Zhang Song had been plotting with Liu Bei to seize Yi Province from him.



A mural depicting the duel between Zhang Fei and Ma Chao at Jiameng Pass.

Liu Zhang formed an alliance with Zhang Lu against Liu Bei. Zhang Lu sent Ma Chao to lead an army to attack Liu Bei at Jiameng Pass. There, Ma Chao encountered Zhang Fei and duelled with him. After engaging each other in two long separate fights, neither Zhang Fei nor Ma Chao was able to gain an advantage over his opponent, and they retreated back to their respective camps. Liu Bei did not want either his sworn brother or Ma Chao to get hurt, so he consulted Zhuge Liang. Zhuge Liang suggested that Ma Chao would be of great help to them if he was willing to serve Liu Bei. Hence, Liu Bei sent Li Hui to persuade Ma Chao to switch allegiance to him. Concurrently, Liu Bei also sent people to spread negative rumours about Ma Chao in Hanzhong, causing Zhang Lu to become suspicious of Ma Chao. Ma Chao heard that Zhang Lu was starting to doubt his loyalty and planned to defect to Liu Bei, especially since Liu Bei was a rival of his sworn enemy, Cao Cao.

## Aftermath

At that time, Liu Bei was besieging Liu Zhang in Yi Province's capital Chengdu, when he received Ma Chao's request to serve him. Liu Bei was pleased and eagerly accepted Ma Chao's assistance, and sent troops and supplies to Ma's camp. Following that, Ma Chao led his army to attack Chengdu from the north. Liu Zhang was shocked because he did not expect Ma Chao to make such a move. Shortly later, Liu Bei's advisor Jian Yong managed to convince Liu Zhang to surrender, and Yi Province came under Liu Bei's control. Ma Chao became one of the Five Tiger Generals under Liu Bei after the latter defeated Cao Cao in the Hanzhong Campaign and declared himself "King of Hanzhong".

## Historicity

The Battle of Jiameng Pass was not documented in the historical text *Records of the Three Kingdoms* by Chen Shou. There is no mention of a duel between Ma Chao and Zhang Fei. Ma Chao's defection from Zhang Lu to Liu Bei's side is described in Ma's biography as follows:

Ma Chao could not get along well with Zhang Lu and they were suspicious of each other. When Ma Chao heard that Liu Bei was besieging Liu Zhang in Chengdu (Yi Province's capital), he secretly wrote a letter to Liu Bei, expressing his willingness to surrender. Liu Bei sent his men to receive Ma Chao, and Ma led his troops to outside Chengdu. This caused panic in the city and Liu Zhang surrendered. Liu Bei appointed Ma Chao as "General Who Pacifies the West" and placed him in charge of Linju (臨沮).<sup>[1]</sup>

An annotation from *Dianlue* in Ma Chao's biography stated:

When Liu Bei heard that Ma Chao had arrived he was pleased and said, "Yi Province is mine." He then sent his men to meet Ma Chao and sent reinforcements and supplies to the latter. When Ma Chao reached Chengdu, he stationed his army north of the city and Chengdu fell (to Liu Bei) within 10 days of Ma Chao's arrival.<sup>[2]</sup>

Nothing is mentioned about the roles Zhuge Liang, Yang Song and Li Hui played in Ma Chao's defection.

## Modern references

In *Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends*, Ma Chao's legend, Battle of Jia Meng Gate (Jiameng Pass) is much different from the novelisation. The backstory of this battle is that Ma Chao has defected from Liu Zhang and joined Liu Bei. However, the other four Tiger Generals (Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, Zhao Yun, and Huang Zhong) are not pleased with all the attention Ma Chao has been getting. In an effort to prove their worth, a challenge is issued where each general is to defeat as many enemy soldiers as possible. The player must defeat more soldiers than the other four generals to win.

The Battle of Jiameng Pass is reenacted in Koei's video game *Dynasty Warriors 5: Xtreme Legends*. If the player meets the necessary requirements, then Zhuge Liang forces Ma Chao to defect to Shu.

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- [2] (典略曰：備聞超至，喜曰：「我得益州矣。」乃使人止超，而潛以兵資之。超到，令引軍屯城北，超至未一旬而成都潰。) Annotations from *Dianlue* to Chen Shou's *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Volume 36, Biography of Ma Chao.
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