

Battle of Longtan

by Ah Xiang

[Excerpts from "Campaigns: 1927-1937"]

Sun Chuanfang came back toward Tuzhou in the south on Aug 15th. Northern armies returned via the Jin-Pu Railway and the Canal, and blasted the southern Yangtze bank for days. On Aug 21st, Zhang Zongchang went to Peking for briefing Zhang Zuolin as to Sun Chuanfang's actions. Zhang Zuolin dispatched Bo-hai Sea Fleet to Wusongkou the Yangtze River mouth. Sun Chuanfang then moved his command center to Liuhe. On the night of 25th, Sun Chuanfang mounted a "Crossing Yangtze" campaign against Nanking. On the southern bank, Nationalist Army had disbursed the first route army to Wulongshan-Longtan-Qixiashan, the second route army to the upperstream Yangtze, and the third route army to the middle segment. Li Zongren, after his return, had ordered that Liao Lei dispatch an extra 8 regiments to Mt Wulongshan.

Under the cover of mist, Sun Chuanfang army, led by Zheng Junyan, Liu Shilin & Ma Yuren, crossed the river at three different places of Pukou, Dahekou & Yangzhou, and took over Qixiashan and Longtan. At dawn, on 26th, Duan Chengze's 9th Division under Liu Shilin crossed the Yangtze, defeated Chen Jicheng's 22nd Division of KMT 1st Corps at Mt Qixiashan, and took over four out of seven batteries on Mt Wulongshan. Liao Lei led a counter-charge at the northern armies and recovered part of Mt Qixiashan positions. The second day, 1st Division Chief Li Mingrui of Guangxi Province Army 7th Corps took over the peak of Qixiashan under the cover of British warship bombardment which was intended for lending support to the northern army. Meanwhile, the northern army took over Longtan, hence cutting off the communication between Nanking and Zhenjiang/Shanghai. Bai Chongxi, from Zhenjiang, ordered that Wei Lihuang's 14th Division of KMT 1st Corps counter-attack Longtan. Additionally, Bai Chongxi recalled Liu Zhi's 2nd Division of KMT 1st Corps, and invoked Chiang Kai-shek's divisions of 1st, 3rd and 21st for a relocation away from Shanghai-Hangzhou Railway. At least 5 corps, including Hu Zongnan's 1st division which rerouted from Hangzhou, plus navy, participated in the 6 day and 6 night fightings with Sun Chuanfang. At Longtan's China Cement Factory, Sun Chuanfang supervised the attacks at Wei Lihuang/Liu Zhi divisions. Among Whampoa generals, Division chief Liu Zhi was wounded in the head, and Division chief Wei Lihuang once fell into a river. Longtan, the gateway to Nanking, changed hands twice and endured fightings for six days and six nights. Under Sun Chuanfang's direction, the northern army took over Mt Qixiashan for a third time. Nanking city was shaken.

Li Zongren memoirs pointed out he had difficulty controlling Chiang Kai-shek's nepotism army [i.e., 1st Corps]. At one time, Heh Yingqin was preparing for an escape at his army headquarter. Li Zongren accidentally walked by at Heh Yingqin's office and persuaded

him into a stay. Heh Yingqin subsequently went to the front to command the auxiliary troops of 1st Corps. At this time, 1st Division [Wang Jun], 3rd Division [Gu Zhutong], and 21st Division [Chen Cheng] had arrived at Longtan. 1st & 3rd Divisions of 7th Corps, and 1st & 2nd Divisions of 19th Corps, commanded by Xia Wei & Hu Zongtuo, respectively, had begun to march against Longtan Town from Mt Qixiashan. At the early morning of 30th, Nationalist troops attacked the northern army which guarded multiple cliffs of Longtan, including Huanglongshan, Qinglongshan, Hutoushan, Dashishan and Leitaishan. By 5:00 pm, Nationalist troops recovered Longtan and drove the northern army to the bank. The next morning, the northern army mounted a counter-attack. Li Zongren, Heh Yingqin & Bai Chongxi personally commanded the fight at Longtan. After a defeat, Sun Chuanfang fled across the Yangtze on a small boat. Nationalist Army defeated Sun Chuanfang's 60,000-70,000 strong army with a casualty of 8000. About 40000 Northern Army soldiers were taken as prisoners of war.

Li Zongren gave high compliments for Bai Chongxi for the final victory: Bai Chongxi, who was dispatched to Shanghai for seeking financial support from financiers, returned towards Nanking empty-handed; the train prior to Bai Chongxi's scheduled train flipped over as a result of sabotage by Sun Chuanfang's spies on the Nanking-Shanghai Railway; and Bai Chongxi subsequently stayed to the east and commanded Chiang Kai-shek's nepotism armies by ordering the relocation of those divisions towards Nanking from Hangzhou-Shanghai Railway line. (Chiang Kai-shek, before and after the Battle Of Longtan, had jealousy about Bai Chongxi for the abilities to command generals of any faction, including Whampoa lineage. Throughout the wars, Bai Chongxi had exhibited his talents as shown in the nickname "Junior Zhuge Liang" [i.e., prime minister of Shu-Han Dynasty during Three Kingdom time period.]

On Sept 8th, Mao Tse-tung conducted Autumn Harvest Uprising in Hunan-Hubei provinces, and in Oct, Mao Tse-tung fled to Mt Jinggangshan area for asylum.

On Sept 11th, representatives from Nanking, Shanghai [Western Hill] and Wuhan factions, including Whang Jingwei [Whang Zhaoming], Li Zongren & Zou Lu, held a meeting in Shanghai as to party affairs. The next day, a KMT "special commissar commission" was formed. Decentralization stipulations were made for setting up four branches of "special commissar commission" in Wuhan, Canton [Guangzhou], Taiyuan & Kaifeng cities. Whang Zhaoming's proposal to convene the 4th Plenary being declined by the "special committee", Whang Zhaoming left for Jiujiang, Gu Mengyu left for Wuhan, and Chen Gongbo left for Canton. On Sept 16th, National Commissar Meeting, on basis of Aug 22nd Jiujiang Meeting, was held in Nanking for expanding the 47 person military commission to 96 members. The meeting, attended by the National Government commissars elected by the "special committee" and the KMT military committee, would proclaim the formation of the National Government and KMT Military Committee in Nanking on Sept 20th, with a call for Whang Zhaoming's return to Nanking to assume the post of standing committee member. Nanking and Wuhan governments hence merged together. However, Hu Qiuyuan pointed out that Whang Jingwei & Tang Shengzhi had maintained KMT Wuhan Politics Sub-committee for preserving his independence.

On Sept 19th 1927, in San Francisco, Chen Jieru first read about Chiang Kai-shek's

denial of existing marriage with her, and on Sept 24th, in New York, Chen Jieru read about Chiang Kai-shek's plan to go to Japan for obtaining the approval from Soong Mei-ling's mother so that he could marry with Soong Mei-ling. ROC consulate officials in New York refused to relay letters to Chen Jieru, and Chen Jieru once contemplated suicide at a river bank. On Sept 28th [? should be 27th], Chiang Kai-shek left for Japan in the name of obtaining the approval of Soong Mei-ling's mother for a marriage. On Nov 10th, Chiang Kai-shek returned to Shanghai. Later, on Dec 1st 1927, priest Yu Rizhang held the matrimony for Chiang & Soong at "Mu-er-tang" church in Shanghai, for which Huang Renlin [i.e., Yu Rizhang's son-in-law] would become the couple's lifetime "Western-educated housekeeper" in addition to "domestic-born housekeeper" Chen Xizeng. (Other than courtship, it was widely believed that Chiang Kai-shek, in exchange for Japan's neutrality & support in China's civil war, had held secret talks and reached clandestine agreement with Japanese politicians in regards to Japan's "special spheres of influence" in Manchuria.)

Whang Zhaoming visited Wuhan to encourage Tang Shengzhi in a continuous eastern campaign against the Nanking government. On Oct 6th, Zhang Fakui gave a public wire against the KMT "special commissar commission", and On Oct 21st, Tang Shengzhi declared that his Wuhan branch of politics committee separate from Nanking's National Government. Whang Zhaoming also visited Guangdong Province on Oct 28th for an alliance with Tang Shengzhi against the Nanking government. Whang Zhaoming, together with Gan Naiguang & Chen Gongbo, issued a public wire for convening KMT 4th Plenary inside of Guangdong Province. Nanking government countered with the meeting location of Nanking.

On Sept 26th, Heh Yingqin was upgraded to leader of First Route Army in charge of three corps headed by Liu Zhi, Gu Zhutong and Qian Dajun. On Nov 1st, Jiang Dingwen assumed the post of 1st Division Chief and departed for north of Yangtze from Hangzhou. On Nov 4th, military committee ordered that Fourth Route and Fifth Route, headed by Cheng Qian and Zhu Peide, campaign against Tang Shengzhi in the west. Li Zongren's Guangxi Province army, i.e., 3rd Route Army, joined the campaign. Tang Shengzhi's army suffered defeat in the hands of three routes of Nanking government armies. Li Jishen in Guangdong and Huang Shaohong in Guangxi echoed National Government in campaigns against Tang Shengzhi. When Tang Shengzhi's two generals, Heh Jian and Li Pingxian, refused to follow order, Tang Shengzhi declared a stepdown on Nov 12th and fled to Japan thereafter. KMT's Western Expedition army took over Wuchang of Hubei Province. In Canton, Zhang Fakui, who had relocated there with communist-infiltrated forces, would disarm Huang Shaohong's Guangxi Province army on Nov 17th. Zhang Fakui's Huang Qixiang army rebelled by adopting a slogan of 'Fighting neo-Gui-xi Warlord'. Li Jishen and Whang Jingwei disagreed over the cause of Zhang Fakui action. Guangxi Province army and partial of Guangdong Province army counter-attacked Zhang Fakui. Taking advantage of Zhang Fakui's relocating forces out of Canton for fighting Huang Shaohong's army, Chinese communists, on Dec 11th 1927, staged the "Canton Commune" uprising under leadership of Zhang Tailei and Soviet Consulate. After quelling the communist rebellion, Zhang Fakui finally succumbed to the Purge policy, declared loyalty to the Nanking government, and requested for severance of diplomacy with the Soviet Union. Whang Zhaoming, seeing that both Tang Shengzhi and

Zhang Fakui had both failed to topple the Nanking government, would board a ship for France on Dec 17th.

On Nov 14th, 1st Division, while attacking Xuehuashan Mountain, to the north of Fengyang, encountered White Russian mercenary armored vehicles. Hu Zongnan defeated the armored vehicles by dispatching over 100 brave soldiers to the rail tracks, sabotaging the tracks after armored vehicles charged forth, and destroying the vehicles while they retreated and fell into the pits. On Nov 16th, Bengbu of Anhui Province was taken, and Hu Zongnan was upgraded to division chief at age 32.

Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek obtained the support of Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan in restoring his post as commander-in-chief. On Dec 10th, KMT preparatory meeting for 4th Plenary was held in Shanghai, with passage of severance of diplomacy with the Soviet Union as well as the restoration of Chiang Kai-shek's post as commander-in-chief, a post that Chiang Kai-shek accepted on Jan 9th 1928. (Per ZLA, 4th Plenary of 2nd Congress was held in Feb 1928. Chiang Kai-shek, who got his minister post of KMT Organization Department restored, would assign it to Chen Guofu as in the case of 1926's 2nd Plenary of 2nd Congress. By the time of March 1929's 3rd Congress, Chen Guofu would collude with Hu Hanmin's faction in kicking out from KMT executory committee and supervisory committee both Whang Jingwei faction and the Western Hill Meeting Participants faction.)