

CAI TINGKAI – THE NATIONAL HERO FROM LINGNAN

by

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## Abstract

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1932, Cai Tingkai (蔡廷鍇) (1892-1968), and Jiang Guangnai (蔣光鼐) (1888-1967) led the Chinese 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army to fight the Japanese in Shanghai for 33 days and became instant household names among the Chinese. The battle was known as the 1.28 Incident.<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Eastman in 1974 pointed out that historians from then onwards would have difficulties in deciding who is the greater among the two.<sup>2</sup> In the thesis I shall argue that Cai Tingkai is a military hero comparable to Yue Fei (岳飛)(1103-1142). My thesis will explicate why, on the heel of patriotism and regionalism Cai became a national hero in the 1930s.

In China, military hero often belongs to a period of unrest and warfare, whose single-minded sincerity and faith in his cause will not allow him to escape and compromise in face of a challenge. His courage, sense of destiny and duty guide him forward, but he is tied to the losing side that will eventually doom him. In 1932 Cai took the cause so common among heroes: in practical term the struggle has been futile, and in many instances, even counter-productive.

Cai lived in a period when the old social order had disintegrated. It was a good opportunity for regionalism to manifest itself: the North was China's traditional political center of authority and orthodoxy, but in the 1930s the South generated a current to challenge it. Unknown to Cai, he was a participant as well as a creator of that historical current.

Cai discarded his Guomindang (GMD) (國民黨) identity in November 1933, but he never was a Communist. Because he was a non-conformist in the GMD, his historical position as a national hero has been undeservedly played down by the Nanjing regime. Also, because of his former GMD identity, for political reasons, he is unlikely to be remembered as a national hero in Mainland China. The purpose of this thesis is to put Cai back to the right place in the annals of history.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	..ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
A Note on Romanization.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Chapter One: The Battle of Shanghai .....	1
Chapter Two: Military Heroes.....	5
Chapter Three: China From Late Qing to Early Republic.....	9
Chapter Four: Cai Tingkai's Life and Military Career.....	14
Chapter Five: Regionalism in Guangdong.....	24
Chapter Six: The Center Verses Regions in the Nanjing Decade.....	30
Chapter Seven: Conclusion .....	34
Notes.....	39
Bibliography.....	48
A Brief Chronology of Cai Tingcai.....	52
Map and Photograph.....	57

### **A Note on Romanization**

As a general rule I romanize Chinese names, terms, book titles ...etc in standard *pinyin*. However, for well-known figures and well known places the familiar usage will be used: Sun Yat-sen (rather than Sun Zhongshan), Chiang Kai-shek (rather than Jiang Jieshi), and Mukden (rather than Shen Yang).

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## Chapter One – The Battle of Shanghai

Shanghai in early 1932 was a place of opportunity, foreign communities were making good profits inside the International Settlement and managing their affairs through the Settlement Council.<sup>1</sup> After 1928, the Guomindang (國民黨) (GMD) transformed anti-imperialism into anti-foreign diplomacy; anti-Japanese boycotts surfaced in July 1931.<sup>2</sup> From August 1931 on, there were confrontations between boycotters and Japanese sailors.

In national politics, the Cantonese inside the GMD often opposed whatever Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and his supporters favored. They banned anti-Japanese boycott organizations in Guangdong. These Cantonese included Hu Hanmin (胡漢民), Sun Ke (孫科) and Wang Jingwei (汪精衛).<sup>3</sup> Chiang's appeasement policy towards Japan generated conflicts between leaders in the north and in the south, in particular when Chiang put Hu under house arrest in early 1931. But when Japan occupied Manchuria on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1931 (the 9.18 Incident), it created pressure on both parties to reach a compromise. This came in December 1931 when Chiang resigned from the leadership. Shanghai's protection was turned over to Chen Mingshu (陳銘樞), a Cantonese militarist and the founder of the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army (RA). The Cantonese sun shone briefly in Shanghai and Nanjing. The 19<sup>th</sup> RA was from Guangdong and had three divisions, all under the command of Cai Tingkai (蔡廷鍇). They were stationed in and around Shanghai in late 1931 to guarantee the safety of the Cantonese leaders in the north.<sup>4</sup>

After the 9.18 Incident, some Japanese militarists thought that an intervention by their navy in Shanghai would distract the world's attention from the Kwantung Army that had occupied Manchuria since September 1931.<sup>5</sup> Also, the Japanese navy had become jealous of the praise that the army had gained at home because of its success. Some Japanese leaders thought that Shanghai's anti-Japanese activities could only be solved by force.<sup>6</sup>

In Shanghai skirmishes between anti-Japanese boycotters and Japanese marines intensified after the 9.18 Incident.<sup>7</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1932, Admiral Shiozawa, the highest ranking Japanese official in Shanghai, handed Shanghai Mayor Wu Tiecheng (吳鐵城), a Cantonese, a demand for the suppression of organized anti-Japanese activities and the

disbandment of anti-Japanese organizations.<sup>8</sup> Japanese Consul Murai was under considerable pressure from Admiral Shiozawa to make other harsh demands on Shanghai government.<sup>9</sup>

Mayor Wu and Consul Murai seemed to be nearing accord in the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup> January. Wu had received approval from Nanjing to do whatever was necessary to prevent war at Shanghai and just before 2 pm he officially accepted the Japanese demands to close down all anti-Japanese organizations.<sup>10</sup> Murai at 4 pm accepted Chinese assurances as satisfactory, but Shiozawa thought otherwise and argued that Murai's acceptance was premature.<sup>11</sup> Ignoring the seemingly successful negotiations, at this time Japanese marines inside the International Settlement were ready for battle.<sup>12</sup> The situation suddenly deteriorated when Shiozawa made his own unexpected request to Wu at 11.00 pm to request the Chinese soldiers to withdraw from Zhabei (閘北) so that Japanese marines could move in to protect Japanese residing there.<sup>13</sup> Shiozawa's written ultimatum reached the mayor's office shortly after 11.00 pm when shooting had already started in Zhabei.<sup>14</sup>

The Japanese marines led by plain-clothes Japanese marched out of the Settlement shortly before 11 pm and entered Zhabei. Shots were fired.<sup>15</sup> Having earlier decided to resist any Japanese incursion, the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA held their ground and fired at the intruders. Waves of fighting broke out. This was the 1.28 Incident.<sup>16</sup>

On the Chinese side only the 78<sup>th</sup> Division was in Shanghai, defending Zhabei with a strength of about 1,700. Japan estimated that at the start of the hostilities some 3,000 19<sup>th</sup> RA had concentrated around Shanghai. When days later the other two divisions of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA, the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions left the railway station for Zhabei to reinforce the 78<sup>th</sup> Division, people shouted, "Fight for the glory of the nation". People finally felt satisfied after the occupation of Manchuria by Japan four months earlier.<sup>17</sup>

Western military observers witnessed the bravery of the Chinese army fighting in Zhabei. Without the support of modern weaponry, the Chinese were as if using arrows to fight machine guns. Chinese soldiers emerged from the ruins caused by Japanese bombardment and shot at the marines who advanced after shelling the area mercilessly.<sup>18</sup>

The stubborn resistance came from those who had dug in and survived the bombing.<sup>19</sup> They were defending the country with flesh and blood.

During the battle, Cai Tingkai frequently met foreign visitors and reporters at his headquarters.<sup>20</sup> Shenpao(申報), a local newspaper gave Cai the spotlight in its coverage. Although under pressure from Chiang Kai-shek to stop the fighting several days after the battle began, Cai affirmed his earlier vow of January 23 that China would not yield an inch to the Japanese.<sup>21</sup> The Wing On Company (永安公司) was a visible symbol of the large Cantonese community in Shanghai.<sup>22</sup> Civilian support continued to flow in from people in Shanghai and Guangdong, and even from the overseas Chinese (*huaqiao* 華僑) in the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and North America.<sup>23</sup>

On 7<sup>th</sup> February, Shiozawa was replaced by Vice Admiral Nomura Kichisaburo.<sup>24</sup> The latter mounted several offensives but also failed to break Cai's defense line. By mid-February, General Ueda arrived in Shanghai with fresh troops to take charge of the operation from Nomura.<sup>25</sup> On 13<sup>th</sup> February, the Chinese 5<sup>th</sup> Army, Chiang's own trusted force, arrived at the outskirts of Shanghai.<sup>26</sup> Ueda sent an ultimatum to Cai to demand the withdrawal of his troops about 16 miles from the front line. Cai rejected it.<sup>27</sup>

Between 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February Ueda mounted several major offensives but could not make any advance. The fighting now had spread north from Zhabei to Wusong (吳淞), forming a twenty-five mile long battlefield. Japan's confidence in a quick victory faded.<sup>28</sup> In order to win the battle, War Minister Aki escalated the manpower input by sending two additional divisions from Japan under the command of a more senior army general Shirakawa Yoshinori.<sup>29</sup> The total strength of Japanese troops was close to 100,000. Western analysts estimated that at that stage there were around 200 Japanese naval and army planes in action, representing almost half of Japan's air force.<sup>30</sup>

Japan's 14<sup>th</sup> Division arrived at Wusong on 28<sup>th</sup> February. Separately, over ten thousand Japanese troops were landed at Liu Ho (瀏河), about thirty miles northwest of Wusong Fort (吳淞炮台), aiming to overwhelm the left flank of the Chinese line.<sup>31</sup> Because of this new development, the 19<sup>th</sup> RA and the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, having only about half the strength of the enemy and without air or artillery support, had to retreat to their second defense line beginning late February. After the Chinese had retreated, Shirakawa



ordered all the Japanese forces to cease firing and to halt their advance at 2 pm on 3rd March.<sup>32</sup>

The Chinese casualties for this thirty-three-day fight were staggering: about 4,000 killed and 7,700 wounded. If the total Chinese troop strength was 63,000, then the loss of 11,700 would represent an over 18% loss rate.<sup>33</sup> For the Japanese, the estimated casualties were 769 dead and 8,622 wounded.<sup>34</sup>

The 1.28 Incident was a heroic battle. Cai Tingkai became an instant national hero because of the battle and a cigarette company even used him as the brand name.<sup>35</sup> Militarily, Chinese soldiers were out-numbered and they fought with inferior weapons, but they could hold on because of Cai's skill in trench warfare. Psychologically Cai's army had prepared to die for their cause, many battlegrounds changed hands several times in one single day. Shanghai people were eager to support the 19<sup>th</sup> RA. In 1932, Cai showed the world that Chinese could bear sacrifice to defend their territory and the good name of the nation, even in face of a much larger enemy. China was financially bankrupt before the battle broke out. Yet they fought on with non-government sources, including remittance from overseas Chinese. Cai was also fighting against the pressure from the government: one week into the war, Cai was queried by Chiang Kai-shek's subordinate He Yingqin (何應欽) about whose instructions he was following.<sup>36</sup>

There were many reasons for the mass media to focus on the 19<sup>th</sup> RA rather than the Fifth Army that joined the fighting halfway through. One reason was that the defense sector of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA was most accessible to correspondents; the 19<sup>th</sup> RA was the first on the scene and fought the battle alone for over two weeks. Also, the overall campaign was the responsibility of 19<sup>th</sup> RA Headquarters under Commander-in-Chief Jiang Guangnai (蔣光鼐). But because Jiang was sick at the time, Cai had to make military decisions on the ground, including meeting reporters and visiting the front lines, his presence was visible everywhere. Cai motivated his men by his dedication and impressed visitors by his simple honesty and sincerity.<sup>37</sup>

## Chapter Two – Military Heroes

Hero in Chinese is *yingxiong* (英雄), literally it means someone who is exceptionally clever, smart and bold, or someone who is exceptional in vision, ability and performance.<sup>1</sup> National hero (*minzu yingxiong* 民族英雄) is someone respected because he is prepared to die for a national cause, often the defense of the country (*jugong jincui* 鞠躬盡瘁). Respect was also given to soldiers who died in carrying out their responsibilities i.e. *cheng ren* (成仁).<sup>2</sup> Many heroes in China were generals who became national heroes because they fought to stop foreign invasion. For example Yue Fei (岳飛) (1103-1142) Qi Jiguang (戚繼光)(1528-1588), and Liu Yongfu (劉永福) (1837-1917).<sup>3</sup>

In imperial time Chinese defined themselves spatially, culturally and ethnically. Those who defended China from barbarian aggression were regarded as patriotic. Heroes were those who won battles on the battle field, but their effort to save the country were often obstructed because of the government's policies and actions, e.g. Yue Fei, who was recalled even when he was winning the battles.

While Chinese heroes were honored for their efforts in defending the country, in Japan military heroes were honored because they had 'Sincerity' (まこと makoto)<sup>4</sup>. A hero often belonged to a period of unrest and warfare; his single-minded sincerity and faith in his own country would not allow him to maneuver, compromise, or shirk his responsibility. His courage, faith, sense of his destiny and duty to the country guided him forward, but he was bound to be on the losing side that would eventually doom him. A much larger opposing political force could frustrate his efforts by imposing a new order on the situation.<sup>5</sup>

Sincerity is the cardinal quality of the Japanese hero. Sincerity spells readiness to discard everything that might hinder impulses inside oneself.<sup>6</sup> It is equivalent to the belief of the Chinese that the prime duty of a soldier is to defend the country and die for it when the moment comes.<sup>7</sup> In his struggle against corrupt political power the hero's main weapon is sincerity. Although his effort is doomed to fail, his cause would make him a hero. A faithful man is undaunted by personal risk and sacrifice.<sup>8</sup> Japan was a conformist society, emotionally honest men like Saigo Takamori (1827-77) was a popular

hero.<sup>9</sup> Saigo was a samurai of the Satsuma estate. In 1877 when the government wanted to dismantle the arsenal in Kogoshima, he joined the samurai in a rebellion, believing that it was a just and noble cause because government policy was wrong. Saigo's forces were finally defeated by the emperor and he committed suicide.<sup>10</sup> Saigo became the leader of a major rebellion, a cause that was forced upon him.<sup>11</sup> Instead of regarding himself as a rebel against the Emperor Meiji, he saw himself as a loyal subject trying to save his master from 'evil counselors' who were around the Court.<sup>12</sup>

#### **a) Yue Fei**

National heroes in China were often generals who could stop foreign invasion because of their superb military skill. Yue Fei was in the army in 1126 when the Song (宋)(960-1279) Dynasty was weak and facing foreign invasion. He wanted to restore his country through military campaigns by expelling the invaders who were from the barbarian state of Jin (金)(1115-1234), and its puppet Qi (齊).<sup>13</sup> What Yue Fei wanted to restore was not only the original frontiers of Song, but all Chinese territories lost to the hands of the barbarians. But Yue Fei's perception was different from that of the Song court; the latter wanted no war but a peace settlement. There were differences in perception between Yue Fei and the Court on how to save the country.<sup>14</sup> The situation was similar to Cai's in 1932 when he wanted to fight the Japanese, he went against the policies of the government. Yue Fei's responses to imperial orders frequently came close to insubordination. It was of little wonder that the Court had little appreciation for Yue Fei's patriotism.<sup>15</sup>

In 1134, Yue Fei was having success in fighting Jin and Qi, the latter being established by the former as a buffer between itself and Song.<sup>16</sup> The last major successful campaign of Yue coincided with the endeavors of the Court to reach a peace agreement. This agreement meant that Song would give up its claim to all lost territories. Furthermore, Song had to withdraw the armies, including the retreat of Yue Fei's unit. Yue complied reluctantly because it was the end of his dream: he had no chance to reclaim China's lost rivers and mountains.<sup>17</sup>

After the peace agreement, military authority had to be returned to civilian hands. Many Song generals, including Yue Fei, were stripped of their commands and given high civilian titles that carried no real power.<sup>18</sup> Under the appeasement policy, Yue Fei's fame became a threat to the Court. Probably out of political needs, one of Yue Fei's former

commanders was arrested for plotting a revolt and Yue Fei was also implicated in the matter. Yue Fei was imprisoned and later condemned to death.<sup>19</sup>

#### **b) Qi Jiguang**

Japanese pirates began invading China's eastern seaboard in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and became a chronic problem.<sup>20</sup> The Court called in Qi Jiguang to deal with the situation. He solved the problem by reinstalling combat effectiveness of the soldiers by shaking up their discipline. In a battle of 1562, Qi personally executed a retreating platoon leader in order to sustain the attacking momentum.<sup>21</sup> After suffering a defeat in a crucial battle in 1564, the Japanese pirates realized that their armed raids on the coast were no longer viable and they gradually withdrew.<sup>22</sup>

In 1568 Qi was commander-in-chief at Jizhou (薊州), the principal garrison city in North Zhili that was under threat from barbarians.<sup>23</sup> After Qi took over the command of Jizhou, the Mongolian leader pledged his submission to the Ming court in exchange for annual subsidies and trading rights. The Court thought that the reconciliation was already a great success for the dynasty and therefore shelved its plans to mount further military campaigns against the barbarians.<sup>24</sup> Qi resigned when he felt he had lost the favor of the Court.<sup>25</sup> After retirement, Qi had a difficult life because of destitution. He could not even afford medical care and his wife left him. His miserable final ending represents the tragic fate of many Chinese folk heroes.<sup>26</sup>

#### **c) Liu Yongfu**

Liu Yongfu was born in 1837 in Guangdong and at the age of thirteen he worked as a boatman and laborer.<sup>27</sup> His parents passed away when he was sixteen.<sup>28</sup> As a teen Liu met a friend who taught him to write and told him about folk stories of peasant uprisings. In 1866, Liu led more than twenty people to join some local bandits against the government. He was brave and often took the lead in attacking Qing troops.<sup>29</sup> Liu's force expanded gradually after many military successes. In 1873 when the French colonial authorities in Indo-China sent a force to northern Vietnam, the Vietnamese king requested Liu to fight the intruders.<sup>30</sup> In May 1883 Liu again engaged the French forces near Hanoi and Nan Ding with some success. The news of Liu's victories in Indo-China was spread by local newspaper and Liu's story became folklore in Guangdong.<sup>31</sup>

In April 1885, the Qing court reached a peace agreement with the French and announced a cease-fire that included the withdrawal of Liu's army from Indo-China. Between April and June, the Court issued nine orders to Liu to withdraw his troops. Liu finally complied in late June.<sup>32</sup> When he returned to China, Liu was given a military title in recognition of his military efforts.<sup>33</sup>

In August 1894 Liu's army was deployed by the Court to defend Taiwan.<sup>34</sup> In April 1895 China signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki after being defeated by Japan earlier. One condition of the treaty was the secession of Taiwan to Japan. Many Chinese were upset by the treaty, in particular local residents in Taiwan, they rose up against the Japanese occupation.<sup>35</sup> In June, 1895 when Japanese occupied Jilong, Qing troops returned to Xiamen on the mainland.<sup>36</sup> However, Liu stayed behind to continue with the resistance and was joined by local resistance groups formed spontaneously.<sup>37</sup> The resistance came to an end in November when Liu, after failing to defend Tainan, retreated to the mainland.<sup>38</sup>

### Chapter Three – China From Late Qing to Early Republic

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan was modernized and had acquired new military might, becoming an imperialist empire. It saw itself as the new master in Asia and looked for regional expansion. Japan advanced westwards into Korea in the 1890s, then a protectorate of China, and followed by moving into Manchuria to confront the Russians for supremacy. During the same period, China under the Qing Empire was on the edge of being carved up by the western powers and Japan.

After the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, the political and social climate in China underwent rapid changes that shook the position of Beijing as the political center of orthodoxy and legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> The reluctance of the Qing court to speed up reforms had two effects: it disappointed the constitutional reformers on the one hand, and proved the need for a national revolution on the other.<sup>2</sup> The abolition of the Confucian-based examination in 1905 induced young men to enter the New Army. They were more literate and more active politically, and increasingly they committed themselves to the revolutionary cause that was important for the success of the 1911 Wuchang Uprising.<sup>3</sup> The age of militarism had begun, politics from then on was militarized: military men would rule directly or indirectly.<sup>4</sup>

The Wuchang Uprising of 10<sup>th</sup> October 1911 was the turning point for the downfall of the Manchu regime.<sup>5</sup> Later Yuan Shikai (袁世凱) was elected provisional president of the Republic. With the capital in Beijing Yuan was now the leader of a new political center of the nation. From his viewpoint, the domination of the national assembly by the revolutionaries was an obstacle to reunifying China. Yuan believed that the country should be ruled by a strong central government, he believed in statism.<sup>6</sup>

The military, led by Yuan's New Army, played an important role in the demise of a centralized national political structure inherited from the Qing regime.<sup>7</sup> Military commanders, who were ignorant of democracy, viewed the newly created local institutions with resentment. They dealt with members of the legislative assemblies and reporters of newspapers high-handedly.<sup>8</sup> Provinces were no longer run by civilian officials appointed by the central government. Instead, they became the domain of local autocrats, often militarists; the central government in Beijing had no choice but to recognize them once they had established their own ruling machine in their region.<sup>9</sup>

In 1912, Yuan's control over the provinces was limited. Guangdong and the southwestern provinces – Guangxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan were not yet in his hands. In July 1913 the Second Revolution broke out after the Center tried to dismiss some provincial governors who were sympathetic to the GMD. It was a challenge to the central authorities from the southern provinces. But this uprising failed within months because Yuan had the support of many regional militarists. After the uprising, Yuan outlawed the revolutionary party and dissolved the assembly.<sup>10</sup>

The Second Revolution was also the beginning of a dispute among Yuan's own generals who controlled different provinces. Dividing the fruits of victory was not easy for these militarists.<sup>11</sup> The tension between the Center and the provinces continued to prevail because the Center was unable to eliminate the regional powers.<sup>12</sup> As an alternative, Yuan hoped to reduce the power of provinces by reviving the monarchy through changing the rule of the political game. With the monarchy, Yuan hoped the new system could reduce regional military governors and generals to vassals, turning regionalism into statism.<sup>13</sup> The first step was taken in May 1914 when Yuan declared a new constitution to replace the Provisional Constitution of 1912, hoping that it could remove all the checks on presidential powers. By late 1915, Yuan was ready for the imperial restoration.<sup>14</sup> In December 1915 Li Liejun (李烈鈞) and some GMD sympathizers challenged Yuan from Yunnan.<sup>15</sup> An anti-Monarchical movement was formed and the National Protection Army was established. It was led by militarists in Yunnan and consisted of three armies, respectively under the leadership of Cai E (蔡鄂), Li Liejun, and Tang Jiyao (唐繼堯).<sup>16</sup> They won the battle against the monarchist army in Sichuan that heralded the downfall of Yuan.<sup>17</sup>

Yuan died in 1916. After his death the respect for central authority disappeared.<sup>18</sup> Beijing political developments after 1916 showed how Duan Qirui (段祺瑞), the new premier at the Center, unsuccessfully struggled to impose his will from the North. Duan never extended his power over the southern provinces.<sup>19</sup> The Center's attempt to draft the national constitution was interrupted by political crises and civil wars. China was concurrently having a unitary and a federated state.<sup>20</sup> In the south, after 1916 there were a series of attempts at local consolidation. There were two main military forces in Guangdong, the Old Guangxi Clique (舊桂系) of Lu Rongting (陸榮廷) who entered

Guangdong during the anti-Monarchical movement, and the Yunnan Army that had a branch occupying Sichuan at the same time.<sup>21</sup> When Sun Yat-sen went south in 1917 together with the members of the old national assembly to set up the Grand Marshal's Office (大元帥府) in Guangzhou, he depended on the Yunnanese for military support.<sup>22</sup> In May 1918, a Directorate of Seven was organized controlled by the Old Guangxi Clique.<sup>23</sup> Sun was disappointed and he left Guangdong. The Old Guangxi Clique continued to dominate Guangdong until 1920 when the Guangdong Army returned from Fujian and Chen Jiongming (陳炯明) took over the control of the province.<sup>24</sup>

The intention of Chen was to look for the unity among the southern regions by forming a regional coalition.<sup>25</sup> In April-May 1922 Chen in Guangdong drafted a national constitution which he sent for the endorsement of Wu Peifu (吳佩孚) in Beijing. This proposal emphasized the need for a "shared authority" system of government. Chen pointed out that the Chinese Republic had been created out of liberated provinces of the Qing dynasty and thus established a natural way to share authority between the central and local governments.<sup>26</sup> Wu rejected the idea of shared authority.

In the early 1920s, apart from Guangdong, many provinces were also under local militarists control because of the weak Center and confusing political situation in the North. Militarists in Hunan, Zhejiang, and Sichuan took concrete steps to organize a new form of local self-government. Local authorities in Yunnan, Guangxi, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hubei, and Fujian had announced their intention to prepare for self rule.<sup>27</sup>

The provincial army in Yunnan was a classic case on the transformation of regional military forces into warlord forces. The story revealed tensions and conflicts between national and regional ideologies.<sup>28</sup> After the 1911 Revolution, Cai E, together with his followers thought that they were entitled to rule Yunnan because their army had made the Revolution a success, their legitimacy was based on the provincialism, nationalism and republicanism which they believed could be found in the army.<sup>29</sup>

The military expansion of the Yunnan Army was one of the remarkable features of the 1911 Revolution in south China. By February 1912, Yunnan forces controlled much of southern Sichuan, and by the year-end they controlled most of Guizhou. Yunnan's territorial expansion in the southwest was an unprecedented incidence of provincial assertiveness and it showed how regional forces could extend outside one



province when the Center was weak. After 1911, because there was no generally recognized authority at the Center, armed forces became the arbiter of politics in many regions.<sup>30</sup>

In 1925 the GMD in Guangdong tried to establish a centralized political force for the purpose of bringing back civil administration to the country, using the GMD Party Army.<sup>31</sup> After the successful conclusion of the Northern Expedition in 1928, Nanjing was the new capital and the new Centre. Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui were brought back to direct Nanjing control; Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hubei were linked up to the capital and kept loyal through military means; Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Shanxi, Shenxi and Shandong could still maintain semi-independent existence for a while. At the northern frontier in Manchuria, the force of separation from the Center was fanned up by foreign powers, particularly the Japanese.<sup>32</sup>

The period from 1916 to 1928 was often known to historians as the warlord period.<sup>33</sup> Warlordism was by no means a new phenomenon in Chinese history.<sup>34</sup> When dynasties changed hands, the change was often marked by wars and chaos due to political fragmentation and fighting among regions.<sup>35</sup> The military fragmentation in the late Qing was inductive to generating warlords.<sup>36</sup> One factor that led to regional militarism after the 1911 Revolution was the admission of military men into the leadership of the new administration in provinces.<sup>37</sup> Many warlords were Yuan Shikai's protégé and Yuan was called 'father of warlordism'. The anti-Monarchical Movement was the zenith of warlordism.<sup>38</sup>

Although warlords sought hegemony, they seemed to have accepted unification of the country as inevitable, even desirable and logical.<sup>39</sup> The temporary and short-range character of different regionalists and their goals was a chief reason for the instability of the period. The confusion of warlordism, together with the weakness of the Center in the north made China susceptible to foreign aggression.<sup>40</sup> But on the other side of the coin, foreign powers were forced to deal with local or regional military leaders because the Center was weak. Some foreign powers even sponsor selected warlords. Japan, for example, was conspicuously connected to Chinese militarists in Manchuria throughout the warlord period.<sup>41</sup> The national government in Beijing was unstable during the 12 years between 1916 and 1928. In this period, Beijing saw seven individuals being

appointed as president or head of state.<sup>42</sup> The personnel and policies of the Beijing government merely reflected the thinking of the militarists behind it, not the state they represented.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Chapter Four – Cai Tingkai's Life and Military Career**

Cai Tingkai hailed from Luoding (羅定), Guangdong province. Luoding is quite hilly and has few natural resource, many local people joined the army for a living during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Cai was one of them. Prior to 1949 most of the county's inhabitants were farmers who supplemented their income by making bamboo mats and utensils for sale in local markets. A small number engaged in minor trading, traveling overland in groups to nearby provinces such as Guangxi, Yunnan and Guizhou. Some Luoding people even traveled to Southeast Asia to work on rubber plantations or in tin mines and remitted money back home.<sup>2</sup>

Cai was born to a peasant family in 1892. Besides working in the field, his father supplemented family income by working as both a tailor and a Chinese herbalist.<sup>3</sup> Cai started his education at the age of nine at a local village school.<sup>4</sup> In order to cut back family expenses, Cai had to cease schooling in 1904 at the age of twelve.<sup>5</sup> At the age of thirteen, he was competent enough to work as a tailor to contribute to family income.<sup>6</sup> Cai matured earlier than other teens of the same age, he was not interested in their games and was often laughed at by peers for such pre-mature behavior.<sup>7</sup> At the age of fourteen Cai worked as a tailor and visited his neighborhood to solicit business. Sometimes he also visited the market town Luoqing (羅鏡). During these visits he always heard stories about Liu Yongfu, a Cantonese who fought the French colonists in mid-1880s in Indo-China. He also heard stories about the defeat of the Qing army in the Korean peninsula by the Japanese in 1894 and the subsequent Japanese occupation of Taiwan in 1895. He felt upset for the failure of the Qing government to defend China from foreign aggression.<sup>8</sup>

In 1908 in Luoqing he saw a soldier recruitment poster and wanted to join the army out of his family's financial need and patriotism.<sup>9</sup> He signed up secretly but later dropped out because of his father's objection. To make Cai more family bound, his father arranged for Cai a marriage. His wife was Peng Huifang (彭惠芳). In 1909, Cai heard that a battalion of the Qing New Army was visiting Luoding, he signed up again and was successful in hiding his enrolment from his wife for a while.<sup>10</sup> In the army he earned more than double what he could make as a tailor. He stayed in the army for ten months.

In October 1911 after the downfall of the Qing, Cai re-joined the army as a private.<sup>11</sup> In 1913 he was promoted to squad leader (ban zhang 班長) because of his bravery in taking the lead in a bandit suppression operation.<sup>12</sup> Cai resigned from the army again in 1914 because the pay was not enough to support the family.<sup>13</sup> In 1916 Cai joined the army again. During this tour of duty Cai, at the age of twenty-four and with the encouragement from his supervisor, began the habit of reading the newspaper to broaden his general knowledge.<sup>14</sup> In 1919, Cai joined Ou Zonglin (區宗麟) as the deputy of the local militia to protect the shop owners in Luoqing. Later in the same year this militia was absorbed into the regular army, the Zhao Army (肇軍). Cai was appointed a lieutenant (pai zhang 排長). The battalion commander (ying zhang 營長) was Chen Mingshu.<sup>15</sup> In one of the bandit suppression missions, Cai was praised by Chen for his bravery and was given Ch.\$30 as bonus.<sup>16</sup>

In 1920, for the first time in his career Cai received a gunshot wound: he was hit in the lower right leg during bandit suppression.<sup>17</sup> This was one of the many wounds he would receive in his long military career.<sup>18</sup> In mid-1920, the Zhao Army was absorbed into the Guangdong Army (粵軍). At the battalion headquarters Chen proposed to Cai that he further his study and recommended him to enter the military academy in Guangzhou.<sup>19</sup> Cai graduated in September 1921 and returned to the army. At this time, the Guangdong Army was undergoing further reorganization and Chen was now one of the battalion commanders of the newly established Guangdong 6th Army.<sup>20</sup> In 1922 Cai was appointed as a captain (上尉) and he joined the GMD with the recommendation from Chen.<sup>21</sup> In April 1923, Cai was promoted to major (少校) for his bravery. In 1924 Cai was promoted to battalion commander. Later in that year Chen was promoted to brigadier (lu zhang 旅長) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, overseeing Jiang Guangnai (蔣光鼐), commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> regiment, who in turn oversaw Cai, the battalion commander.<sup>22</sup>

In 1925, Guangdong army underwent further re-organization: the Guangdong 1<sup>st</sup> Division was upgraded to the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps that had three divisions; Chen Mingshu and Chen Jitang (陳濟棠) were divisional commanders (shi zhang 師長).<sup>23</sup> Cai was in the 10<sup>th</sup> Division under Chen Mingshu. In July 1926 Cai was promoted to regimental

commander (tian zhang 團長) of the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army.<sup>24</sup> During the Northern Expedition (1926-8) Cai was under Chen Mingshu in the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. In late 1927 Chen was promoted to the Army Corps commander (jun zhang 軍長) of the 11<sup>th</sup> Army that had two divisions, respectively headed by Jiang Guangnai and Dai Ji (戴戟), the latter would be the future police chief of Shanghai during the 1.28 Incident. Cai now was the deputy to Dai.<sup>25</sup>

In April 1927, the left and right factions inside the GMD split. The left wing under Wang Jingwei (汪精衛) and others established a government at Wuhan. They had the military support of Zhang Fakui (張發奎) and they were pitted against the right wing under Chiang Kai-shek who had his base at Nanchang. Many army leaders were caught in the middle and some chose to leave the army, including Chen Mingshu. During this confusing period, Zhang Fakui took over the 11<sup>th</sup> Army and promoted Cai as the divisional commander.<sup>26</sup> The Wuhan government ordered Zhang to go east to engage Chiang Kai-shek. Part of this army was under Ye Ting (葉挺) and He Long (賀龍), both were Communists, they mounted a mutiny at Nanchang on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1927. Their uprising failed. Ye and He then hoped to lead their army, including Cai's division, back to Guangdong.<sup>27</sup>

Arriving at Chun Yin (進賢) in Jiangxi Cai decided to break with the Communists and ordered those in his army to leave. Thereafter Cai went pass GeYang (戈陽) and stayed at the region for over a month to wait for financial support that would eventually come from Jiang Guangnai. Later Cai entered Fujian and there he welcomed the return of Chen Mingshu who would lead them back to Guangdong. Meanwhile Zhang Fakui's army went south and arrived in Guangdong.<sup>28</sup>

On 11<sup>th</sup> December 1927, Communists in Guangdong under the leadership of Ye Jianying (葉劍英) revolted against Zhang Fakui who was now controlling the province. Zhang also had to face simultaneously Cai's returning army from Fujian. In the subsequent battles, Cai defeated Zhang and assisted Li Jishen (李濟深) to resume control in Guangdong.<sup>29</sup> Li reorganized the Guangdong army: Chen Jitang headed the new 4<sup>th</sup> Army while Chen Mingshu headed the 11<sup>th</sup> Army, supervising Cai.<sup>30</sup>

In 1929, Nanjing government under Chiang Kai-shek proposed army reduction because the Northern Expedition was over, but quarrels broke out amongst the regional military leaders. Chiang arrested Li Jishen and appointed Chen Jitang to carry on with the army reduction in Guangdong. In the summer 1929 the Guangdong Army was reorganized with Chen Jitang as the head commanding five divisions. Cai was head of the 60<sup>th</sup> Division and Jiang Guangnai the 61<sup>st</sup> Division.<sup>31</sup>

In the summer of 1930 during the Battle of the Central Plain (中原大戰), Yan Xishan (閻錫山) and Feng Yuxiang (馮玉祥) teamed up to rebel against Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang deployed Cai's army in some of the battles. Under the command of Jiang Guangnai, Cai reported to Pukou and marched to Taian. They defeated Yan's Jin Army (晉軍) easily and occupied Changcheng Ling and Jinan.<sup>32</sup> Chiang Kai-shek was the victor in the Battle. When the fighting was over Chiang created the 19<sup>th</sup> RA that comprised of the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions, Jiang Guangnai was made Commander-in-Chief (zong zhi hui 總指揮) while Cai was appointed as Army Corps commander.<sup>33</sup> Their new duty was to help suppress the Red Army at Jiangxi.<sup>34</sup>

In early 1931 Chiang Kai-shek arrested Hu Hanmin after they had a row over political reforms. Such an arrest heightened the suspicion from the South. In Guangdong Chen Jitang rebelled against Chiang and forced Chen Mingshu to resign as Chairman of Guangdong.<sup>35</sup> Chen Mingshu left the province but was later appointed by Chiang Kai-shek as the Right Wing Red Army Suppression Commander. One of the forces that he commanded was Cai's newly expanded 19<sup>th</sup> RA: a 78<sup>th</sup> Division was added to the original 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions.<sup>36</sup>

With the support of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA, a new round of the Red Army Suppression Campaign was started on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1931. In August, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Cai had a close encounter with the Red Army at Gaoxingxu (高興墟) and was almost killed by the Communists.<sup>37</sup> In September when Cai's army was fighting in Jiangxi, they learned about the 9.18 Incident.<sup>38</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> October Cai received orders to move the 60<sup>th</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Divisions to Nanjing and Shanghai.<sup>39</sup> It was part of a peace settlement between the North and the South caused by the arrest of Hu Hanmin by Chiang. Also, Chiang Kai-

shek had to step down from his leadership. Chan Mingshu was appointed to act as the head of the Executive Yuan until being taken over by Sun Ke in late December 1931.<sup>40</sup>

The re-organized Nanjing government under Sun Ke could not function because of financial difficulties. The government was bankrupt,<sup>41</sup> it even had no money to pay the 19<sup>th</sup> RA. Cai worried about the situation and went to see Chen Mingshu but to no avail.<sup>42</sup> During this period Cai planned to form a voluntary army to fight the Japanese in Manchuria. He continued with organizing such an army even without the approval of Chiang Kai-shek. The volunteers were scheduled to set out for Manchuria in late January 1932.<sup>43</sup>

In Shanghai in mid-January 1932, in view of the tense situation Dai Ji the local police chief suggested Cai hold a meeting among military leaders, after sensing that the Japanese were looking for trouble and that fighting might break out at any moment. Meetings were held on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of January.<sup>44</sup> A war plan for the 19<sup>th</sup> RA was worked out. One decision was that the 78<sup>th</sup> Division, now in Shanghai, had to hold out for five days if the Japanese attacked their positions, thus allowing enough time for the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions now stationed outside Shanghai to come to help.<sup>45</sup>

On 26<sup>th</sup> Nanjing government, in order to avoid battles in Shanghai, ordered that positions of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA in Shanghai should be taken over by units of the military police that was on the way. Cai followed orders and prepared to hand over their positions, but he was not sure when its main body would arrive.<sup>46</sup> At 11.10 pm of January 28<sup>th</sup> Cai received a report from Wen Zhaoyuan (翁照垣), the brigadier of the 78<sup>th</sup> Division stationed at Zhabei that the Japanese were attacking, and that his 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment was defending its ground. Cai ordered Wen to hold the line. Cai also requested his 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Division to report to Shanghai within three days, and simultaneously he sent out a national telegram to declare his determination to defend Zhabei.<sup>47</sup> Cai's army held its ground despite sustaining heavy casualties. In mid-February, the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, consisting of the 87<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> Divisions arrived to help and was put under the overall command of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA Headquarters. On 1<sup>st</sup> March fighting ceased when Cai retreated under order to the second defense line some thirty miles back from the front line.<sup>48</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> April a cease-fire was announced, a meeting for armistice talks was arranged on 25<sup>th</sup> April. On the same day Cai met Chiang Kai-shek and was urged to follow military orders

absolutely in future. Cai felt upset.<sup>49</sup> The cease-fire agreement was signed on May 5<sup>th</sup> and within a week the Japanese withdrew from the battle field.<sup>50</sup>

Cai estimated that during the incident, the Japanese forces were about 80,000 strong, and with artillery, tanks and air support. The Chinese's 19<sup>th</sup> RA and 5<sup>th</sup> Army in total was about 40,000 strong and they were poorly armed. Apart from the military skill of Cai in setting up the defense line, it was nationalism and the spirit of sacrifice that had motivated the Chinese army to engage the Japanese for such a long period.<sup>51</sup>

After the 1.28 Incident, Cai's army was deployed to Fujian to deal with the Red Army. Cai was promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA, Jiang Guangnai promoted to Fujian Peace Restoration Officer (福建綏靖公署主任).<sup>52</sup> In January 1933, Jiang was promoted to Chairman of Fujian Provincial Government (福建省主席) while Cai was promoted to Fujian Peace Restoration Officer. Together they carried out reforms in the province.<sup>53</sup> While in Fujian, Cai heard about Japanese aggression in Rehe and discussed with Jiang Guangnai about sending a volunteer army to fight the Japanese. They started out, but before long the Japanese occupied Rehe and Cai's army had to return to base, wasting over Ch.\$200,000 in related expenses.<sup>54</sup>

After the 1.28 Incident, the relationship between Chiang Kai-shek and Chen Mingshu turned sour. In the summer of 1933, Chen Mingshu arrived in Fujian and was very active in giving speeches everywhere.<sup>55</sup> His theme was about the importance of stopping the Japanese aggression and the need for a revolution.<sup>56</sup> Chen began to talk with Cai about co-operation with the Red Army. Weeks later, Jiang Guangnai told Cai that the opportunity had come for them to form their own democratic government in Fujian.<sup>57</sup> Cai held a meeting with his deputies. He felt that only a few of them supported a mutiny and he knew that an uprising was premature.<sup>58</sup> But Chen Mingshu and others insisted on going ahead with the plan. Cai, out of respect for Chen, his mentor, cast his lot with the rebels.<sup>59</sup>

In November 1933, people holding different political beliefs but eager to establish a new government to challenge Nanjing were gathering at Fuzhou to establish a new people's republican government.<sup>60</sup> After starting the rebellion, these people found that contrary to their expectations, neither Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Shangtung nor the Communists took spontaneous action to rise up against Nanjing. In January 1934, Chiang



Kai-shek sent 30 divisions to Fujian to crush Cai's army.<sup>61</sup> When the government troops reached north Fujian, the Red Army retreated and gave way without putting up any serious fighting.<sup>62</sup> Cai decided to withdraw peacefully and part of his army was absorbed by the Nanjing government. The remnant of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA was taken over by Chen Jitang who disbanded it later. Cai himself fled to Hong Kong in January 1934. For the first time in twenty-four years Cai had no military duty.<sup>63</sup>

From Hong Kong Cai started his worldwide tour that would last for one year and five days. In 1934 he departed Hong Kong on 12<sup>th</sup> April and arrived at Singapore on 17<sup>th</sup> April. In May he visited Italy and started his tour in Europe. From London he went to New York in late August. After staying in North America for six months, in early February 1935 he left America for Honolulu. Afterwards he visited Oakland, Sydney, and the Philippines before returning to Hong Kong on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1935.<sup>64</sup> In Hong Kong, Cai's wife had bought about twenty mu (畝) of farmland in the New Territories. Cai began to practice farming; he also received visitors such as Li Jishen, Chen Mingshu and Jiang Guangnai.<sup>65</sup>

After Hu Hanmin died in May 1936, Guangdong and Guangxi felt the pressure from the North. On first of June 1936 Chen Jitang rebelled against Nanjing, charging that Chiang Kai-shek had failed to stop Japanese aggression. It was unfortunate for Chen, in early July, his army, navy, and air force pledged their support to Nanjing. Chen yielded; he stepped down and left Guangdong on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1936.<sup>66</sup> Guangxi continued challenging Nanjing despite Chen's departure. Li Zongren (李宗仁) invited Cai to Guangxi in July to reinstate the 19<sup>th</sup> RA 'for the purpose of fighting the Japanese', but shortly afterwards Li also yielded to Nanjing and the rebellion was over. So was the idea of a reinstated 19<sup>th</sup> RA in Guangxi.<sup>67</sup>

In July 1937, a full-scale anti-Japanese war broke out, T.V. Soong (宋子文) representing Chiang Kai-shek invited Cai to Nanjing. On 1<sup>st</sup> September, Cai was appointed by Chiang as special staff officer (特任參議官).<sup>68</sup> Later when Cai requested to take up military jobs, Chiang ordered Cai to meet him in Hankow for duty, but on his way leaving Chiang's office, Cai had a car accident that shattered his left knee cap.<sup>69</sup> Cai had to return to Hong Kong in early November 1937 for medical treatment. The first doctor he consulted failed to achieve much and almost crippled Cai permanently. Cai

switched to another doctor in February who performed a major operation in his leg that kept him in hospital for three months. After discharging from hospital in May Cai visited Guangzhou on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1938, and returned to his hometown two days later for convalescing until October when the Guangzhou authority invited him to plan for the protection of the province. On his way to Guangzhou, he was shot and wounded by attacking Japanese fighter planes.<sup>70</sup>

In January 1939, Chiang Kai-shek summoned Cai to Chongqing.<sup>71</sup> Cai was appointed as deputy commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Army and he returned to Guilin on 1st February 1939.<sup>72</sup> Later, owing to changes in military deployment, Cai was transferred to head the 26<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. In August 1940, Cai's division was re-organized and he had no army to command except for some guerrilla forces, he felt disappointed and resigned in late September 1940. Cai returned to his hometown for a few months before going to Guilin in December. While in Guilin, Cai was re-appointed as a special staff adviser.<sup>73</sup>

From January 1941 to July 1944 Cai traveled between Hong Kong, Chongqing and Guilin.<sup>74</sup> In July 1944 when Guilin was threatened by the advancing Japanese Cai and his family left for their hometown. On 14<sup>th</sup> September, he received a phone call to alert him that the Japanese were advancing towards Luoding. In a local meeting Cai was appointed commander of a militia to defend the southern part of Luoding where Cai's home village located.<sup>75</sup> Although the Japanese entered Luoding, they never reached Cai's home village.<sup>76</sup>

In March 1946 Cai and others announced the establishment of the GMD Democratic Promotion Party (DPP)(民主促進黨). Cai was appointed as the Chairman, and he decided to fund a newspaper to help promote the Party's political ideals. In June Cai's stillborn newspaper, together with thirteen other newspapers in Guangdong that advocated democracy were banned. Cai and others were ordered to leave the province. In October, Chiang invited Cai to Nanjing for a meeting. Cai arrived at Shanghai and took the opportunity to meet Communists working underground to discuss the progress in establishing the DPP.<sup>77</sup>

In 1947 in Hong Kong, Cai, together with others, founded the "Freedom Magazine" as a means to establish contact with those who held democratic views and wanted to promote democratic revolution. In November Cai, together with Li Jishen and

others decided to establish the China GMD Revolutionary Committee(中國國民黨革命委員會). Many members of the Committee were from the DPP.<sup>78</sup>

In 1948 January the China GMD Revolutionary Committee was officially established with Cai as a Central Committee member. The Committee advocated joining hands with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and other democratic organizations to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship and to resist the US's interference with China's internal politics. In May 1948, in response to the CCP's May First Appeal (五一號召), Cai together with Li Jishen and others sent a telegram to Mao Zedong (毛澤東) to express their support. In September Cai departed from Hong Kong secretly for northeast China to discuss with the Communists about preparations for the first Political Consultative Committee (PCC )(政治協商委員會).<sup>79</sup>

In June 1949 Cai and four others, representing the DPP, participated in the preparatory committee for the Political Consultative Committee held in Beijing. In September Cai and eight other DPP members participated in the PCC, Cai was appointed as the chief representative. At the closing of the meeting, Cai was elected as a PCC member, in addition to his appointment as member of the Central People's Government Committee.<sup>80</sup>

In 1950 November Cai was one of the delegation members that represented Mainland China in Warsaw Poland for the Second World Peace Conference. In 1951 February Cai, representing Mainland China, arrived in Berlin to participate in the committee meeting of the World Peace Conference that aimed at "fighting against the American aggression". In the same year Cai also visited Chinese soldiers fighting in Korea.<sup>81</sup>

In 1952 Cai took up the post of Deputy Minister for National Sports under the jurisdiction of He Long. In 1956 December Cai visited Guangdong on an official trip. In 1957 August Cai visited Japan to participate in the Third International Committee that supported army reduction and the banning of atomic weapons.<sup>82</sup> In 1961 January, accompanying Zhou Enlai (周恩來), Cai visited Burma to celebrate its thirteenth anniversary of independence. In the same year Cai was appointed as Deputy Chairman of the National Defense Committee. By year end Cai returned to Guangzhou on an official

visit. He took the opportunity to visit his home village near Luoqing and met old friends. This was the first time for Cai to visit his home village after 1949. He was saddened after knowing that his house in the village had been destroyed. In 1964 in December Cai was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Fourth National Political Consultative Committee.<sup>83</sup>

During the Cultural Revolution that started in 1966, the Red Guards saw the PCC as the shelter for all evils. They wanted to rid the Community Party from all GMD remnants. Like many former GMD leaders, Cai became targets for political struggle. In August 1966, Red Guards tried to storm Cai's house and was stopped narrowly by the local authority. As for his neighbor Jiang Guangnai, he was not that lucky. Jiang was picked out for political struggle and died the next year. Noting the turmoil and chaos in the country, Cai lived in sadness and regret.<sup>84</sup> He passed away in April 1968 in Beijing at the age of 76.<sup>85</sup>

## Chapter Five – Regionalism in Guangdong

China is a vast land. Its geography and climate are so diverse that there is a great variety in food, dialect, regional culture and social custom. In such a society when physical mobility is limited, it is natural for one to develop strong attachment to his own region. Regionalism is a strong sense of local identity, based on common ties of culture and history.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1997, the ashes of Jiang Guangnai and Cai Tingkai, after being stored in Beijing for some thirty years, were shipped back to Guangdong, honoring the regional sentiment of the people. They are now at the memorial mausoleum built in 1933 in Guangzhou at Sha He Ding (沙河頂) to honor soldiers of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA killed in the Battle of Shanghai of 1932.<sup>2</sup>

When we talk about regionalism, there must be a corresponding center, the center in China is always in the north, it has been the source of orthodoxy and legitimacy for over two millennium. This center was established long before the Qin dynasty (211-206 BC) had came into being.<sup>3</sup> Guangdong has been part of the Chinese empire since the Han (漢) dynasty (202 BC – AD 220) and it lies at the southernmost frontier of the empire. It is separated from the next province to the north by a series of high mountains known as the Five Mountain Ranges (Wu Ling 五嶺). Guangdong is also called Lingnan (嶺南); in translation it means “south of the mountain ranges”. Looking from the political center in the north, Guangdong is beyond the Five Mountain Ranges.<sup>4</sup> Owing to its relative isolation, Lingnan was historically a place for political exiles. For the same reason in modern time it is a favorite place for dissidents to establish a base to mount campaigns to confront the political center in the North, starting with the Taiping Rebellion of the mid-1850s. It is noted that successful national revolutionary forces had made their debut in the south and eventually they overthrew the center in the North: the Northern Expedition that started in 1926. South China is a place that could offer dissidents a safe distance from the North.

Until the Tang Dynasty (唐)(618-907), Guangdong was regarded by the Centre as an uncivilized region.<sup>5</sup> In ancient time the present Guangdong was known as Yue (越) and was a region occupied by aboriginals. It was brought under Chinese control by the

First Emperor (始皇帝) around 230 BC when he extended his control into this southern frontier.<sup>6</sup> In 111 BC the Han dynasty established a government in the region.<sup>7</sup> According to Diana Lary, people in Guangdong have some pride in their Yue identity.<sup>8</sup> In Guangzhou, there is a tomb near the city center museum. It houses the king of the Nanyue (南越) kingdom who had ruled Lingnan after the end of the Qin (秦) dynasty (221 – 206 BC) for over one hundred years and was independent from the North. The king was the second king of Nanyue, Zhao Mei (趙昧); whose tomb was discovered in 1983. The first king of Nanyue was Zhao Tuo (趙陀), often presented as a civilized hero from the North who came to enlighten the local “primitives”. The archeological discovery confirms a distant and glorious past of Lingnan that was autonomous and detached from the powerful Center.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Han dynasty the local people in Guangdong had maintained their own language, customs and identity while newcomers from northern China periodically enriched the province's culture. The first wave of Chinese from northern China arrived in Guangdong during the Wei, Jin, Nai-Bei Chao (魏晉南北朝) (220-589). The second wave arrived during the Tang dynasty, to be followed by others during the Song (宋) (960-1279) and Ming (明)(1368-1644).<sup>10</sup> In modern time there are three main groups of Han people in Guangdong, all come from Northern China: the Guangfu (廣府), Chaoshan (潮汕) and Hakka (客家),<sup>11</sup> all three have preserved their own dialect. Away from the Center, it is easier for people in Guangdong to maintain their regional identity; the most obvious is their language.

Guangdong's early contact with the West provided political and intellectual stimulus that would further distinguish it from other provinces. During the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Xiuchuan (洪秀全) was inspired by western religion imported into Guangdong. It is no accident that revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen, and reformers like Liang Qichao (梁啟超) and Kang Youwei (康有為) were Cantonese.<sup>12</sup> Most of the ten unsuccessful anti-Manchu revolutionary attempts made before the October 1911 Wuchang uprising were either carried out in southern China or committed by the Cantonese.<sup>13</sup> Since the mid-Qing, many events that happened in Guangdong had national implications in scope: the Opium War (1839-42) and the subsequent opening of treaty

ports; the Christian preaching and the Taiping Rebellion; the revolutionary idea of Sun Yet-sen and the 1911 Revolution.<sup>14</sup> Sun's connection with the USSR and his admission of Communists into the GMD had laid the foundation for the Northern Expedition.

Relations between Guangdong and the North remained strained during the period 1911 – 1936. Similar tensions existed even after the CCP came to power in 1949.<sup>15</sup> One reason why the Center wanted to control Guangdong tightly was its distinct sub-culture, one of the principal features of which was the Guangdong dialect. Guangdong's location also poses a problem: the province is far from the Center but very near Hong Kong and Macao. After 1949 the latter two cities were potential source of ideological contamination.<sup>16</sup>

Guangdong people had a history of migrating overseas. Many Cantonese set up major Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and in North America. They were patriotic. In the following few paragraphs, I shall look at the overseas Chinese in Vancouver, most of them Cantonese, to see how they responded to Japanese aggression in China in the early 1930s.

Most Chinese in Canada came from Guangdong's four adjacent counties of Xinhui, Kaiping, Taishan and Enping. Collectively they are known as the Siyip (四邑). In the 1881, about 4,300 Chinese were estimated to be in British Columbia and in 1921 the figure rose to about 23,500.<sup>17</sup> It was estimated that two-thirds of the Chinese in Canada in 1884 came from the Siyip.<sup>18</sup> One reason for the large number of migration from the Siyip is that geographically the region is easily accessible to the sea. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, migrants had left Guangdong for overseas destinations because of population pressures and the political instability at home. Treaty ports such as Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Macao served as contact points for migrants who wanted to leave.<sup>19</sup>

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 1931, the Chinese in Vancouver learned from a local Chinese paper, *Da Han Gong Bao* (the China Times 大漢公報) that the Japanese army had caused an explosion near Mukden (Shenyang) in the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> September. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nanjing government, ordered the Chinese army not to retaliate. He opted for a peaceful solution to this aggression that was known as the 9.18 Incident.<sup>20</sup>

Chinese in Vancouver reacted immediately to the Japanese aggression. One week later, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) (Zhong hua hui guan 中華會館) held a meeting in Vancouver to discuss the 9.18 Incident. They passed a resolution to send a telegram to China requesting the two power centers respectively at Nanjing and at Guangzhou to settle their disputes and to join hands in fighting the Japanese. On 27<sup>th</sup> CBA passed a resolution to boycott Japanese goods. In addition, on 1<sup>st</sup> October, some Chinese set up the Resist Japan Save Nation Association (RJSNA) (Juri jiuguo hui 拒日救國會).<sup>21</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> January 1932, the RJSNA released its financial statement as of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1931, showing that they had collected Can.\$1,050 from the charity opera that was performed one week earlier. This association contributed Ch.\$3,000 to the anti-Japanese force in North East China under the leadership of Ma Zhanshan (馬占山) who was regarded as an anti-Japanese hero because he led guerillas to fight the Japanese in Manchuria.<sup>22</sup>

After the outbreak of the 1.28 Incident, another Vancouver-based organization, the Chinese Merchant Association (CMA) (Zhonghua shanghui 中華商會) on 1<sup>st</sup> February donated Ch.\$15,000 to the 19<sup>th</sup> RA and Cai Tingkai sent his appreciation for this donation. Money continued to be remitted to China from the overseas Chinese in Canada. On 15<sup>th</sup> February, the CBA remitted Ch.\$40,000 to the GMD Nanjing government to support the war effort, specifically Ch.\$10,000 was earmarked to be used by the 19<sup>th</sup> RA. Overseas Chinese in Vancouver showed their patriotism by sending money for the war effort.<sup>23</sup>

The patriotic feeling of overseas Cantonese was understandable. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Guangdong people had had a first hand experience of how foreigners seized Hong Kong and Macao from their province. Many Cantonese believed that because the Manchu were aliens, they had no hesitation in sacrificing the interests of their Chinese subjects in order to preserve their own ruling position.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, since the late Qing, Lingnan had begun to detach itself from the Center. During the 1900 Boxer uprising, the gentry and merchants in Guangdong worried that foreign powers would take the opportunity to intervene militarily in south China. To prevent the conflict spreading south,



Guangdong merchants proposed to declare Guangdong and Guangxi independent of the Court.<sup>25</sup>

The Qing's first major project for national reform under the nine-year Plan was the creation of the provincial assemblies. In Guangdong provincial Governor-General Chen Mingzhi (張鳴岐) was appointed to head a preparatory bureau in January 1909. According to one estimate, the reform program was to culminate in 1916 with the election of a legislative assembly together and a responsible cabinet in the North.<sup>26</sup> But the reform effort came too late. In Guangdong in the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1911 the new Manchu-general who was named to succeed the murdered general was himself assassinated. Gentry in the province suggested solutions to the Governor: to seek permission from the central government to allow provincial rulers to act as the circumstance required, and to make urgent reforms in the political system.<sup>27</sup> Governor-General Chen agreed and he froze all troops, funds, and weapons within the province. He promised that "hereafter the maintenance of order in the province was the joint responsibility of the officials and the citizens".<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the Governor-General and the merchants agreed that pending the formation of the republican government, the authorities in Guangdong would restrain the troops. Revolutionists such as Wang Jingwei, Hu Hanmin, and others arrived at Guangzhou to set up the new government. In early November 1911 Guangdong finally claimed its independence of the Qing.<sup>29</sup>

After the collapse of the Qing, one change in the political order in Guangdong was the emergence of provincial home rule. In the late Qing period, gentry, merchants and revolutionaries all had agitated for greater autonomy under the slogan, "Guangdong belongs to the people of Guangdong". Administratively, after 1911 it made its own official appointment while the central government exercising no more authority than confirming its choices.<sup>30</sup>

After Yuan Shikai became president in 1912 he had been anxious to check the autonomy of the former secessionist provinces, including Guangdong, for the purpose of centralizing power.<sup>31</sup> During the Second Revolution in 1913 Guangdong military commanders supported Yuan. They realized it was futile to mount any anti-Yuan attempts because the Center had superior financial and military resources. In August 1913 Long Qiguang (龍濟光), a supporter of Yuan, sent his army into Guangdong and

ended the two-year rule of the revolutionaries. All the officials of the revolutionary regime left the province.<sup>32</sup>

In the early 1920s in Guangdong there was a federalist movement led by Chen Jiongming.<sup>33</sup> In order to advance regional independence, Chen proposed his own national constitution and showed it to Wu Peifu (吳佩孚) in April-May 1922. This plan emphasized the need for a “shared authority” system of government.<sup>34</sup> But the independence movement in the south was short lived. When Chen’s Guangdong Army together with the Yunnan Army were defeated by the GMD army, the Federalist movement in China came to an end in 1926.<sup>35</sup>

According to Lary, history has shown that whenever the Center was weakened sufficiently, Lingnan would try to opt out. Indeed, it was not fully under central control during many periods in history, for example from the end of the Han (202 BC – AD 220) to the Sui/Tang period (581 – 907 AD). Also, Lingnan had always mounted strong resistance to alien invasion from the North: during the Mongol conquest in the late Song and the Manchu conquest in the late Ming.<sup>36</sup>

Lingnan’s wish for autonomy should not be interpreted as secession. Lingnan never sought total separation from China. It only tried to distance itself from the North when the latter was weak. What they looked for was more independent thinking and less subservience towards the North. It was economic and cultural autonomy rather than political.<sup>37</sup> Lingnan people always have a fond memory of their autonomy from the North in ancient time, and the fact that their ancestors were independent of China had always haunted the local leaders.<sup>38</sup>

## **Chapter Six – The Center Verses Regions in the Nanjing Decade**

China's political center was established in the north more than two thousand years ago.<sup>1</sup> When the Qing was collapsing, Yuan Shikai took over from Sun Yat-sen the new Republic and established its capital in Beijing.<sup>2</sup> It saw itself as the center of orthodoxy and expected regions to accept such as a political reality. In modern time, the center was also recognized by foreign powers and it carried the benefit of borrowing money and securing loans against national tariff and revenue.

In China when the Center was weakened, for example, at the end of dynasties, the reduced control from the Center permitted the rise of regionalism. Often regions were not against the center; they just provided a substitute for it.<sup>3</sup> However, some regionalists were without regional altruism and usually they were called warlords. They often engaged in self-seeking maneuvers and respected neither the welfare of the region nor the nation.<sup>4</sup> In China, it is a fact that over the past 2,000 years there were equally long period of division and unity.<sup>5</sup>

The threat of regionalism to the Center comes from its functional side; as a cultural manifestation alone, it is not a threat. When cultural regionalism exerts itself into political regionalism and tries to make its own political decisions, it becomes a challenge to the central authority of the state. We can define 'regionalism' loosely, simply to mean a sharing of regional identity.<sup>6</sup> When the state is losing its authority, provincial regionalism may assert its influence.<sup>7</sup>

People who held political power in the regions in late Qing and early Republic period were mainly soldiers who became increasingly powerful as the civil order declined. Regional militarists sought national recognition in the form of official titles given out from the Center and absolute regional separation was not heard of in China. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the common understanding that China should have a single political entity never lost its currency, even among regional militarists.<sup>8</sup> In the imperial period, political orthodoxy was always in the hands of those who occupied the northern plain, probably because of the rich resources available could provide an edge in the event of a conflict with outer regions.

One of the ramifications of the 1911 revolution was the rising status of the military in China. The Qing's collapse led to the appearance of regional military leaders. When Yuan took over the Center in 1912 he changed the rules for the political game without popular consent. Yuan died in 1916, the incumbency of the power center in the north changed hands every a few years from 1916 to 1928. Also, its authority never reached directly and effectively the southern regions. In the south in 1917 the GMD under Sun Yat-sen established its own government in Guangdong to counteract the Center under the ruling of Duan Qirui (段祺瑞).<sup>9</sup>

The GMD mounted the Northern Expedition in the summer of 1926. It successfully established the new Center in 1928. Many regionalists joined the GMD out of practical need or for personal ambition, for example Feng Yuxiang.<sup>10</sup> But the new center was weak politically and financially.<sup>11</sup> The Nanjing leadership had yet to be accepted by regional militarists as the supreme organ of the country. Regionalists were not ready to hand over their power to the Center.<sup>12</sup> Their suspicion of the Nanjing regime was reflected in their behavior at the Disbandment Conference held in 1929.<sup>13</sup> Regional militarists continued to cling to their regional power bases and waited for opportunities to supplant the leader in the Center. On the other hand, the Nanjing regime tried to suppress regionalist since 1929: Li Jishen, a southerner from Guangxi who had his military base in Guangdong was the first target.<sup>14</sup> The second target was Hu Hanmin, a Cantonese politician who once was a potential successor of Sun Yat-sen in the GMD leadership, he was arrested by Chiang in early 1931. Others Cantonese leaders including Wang Jingwei, Sun Ke, and Chen Mingshu would also lose power during the Nanjing decade.

Apart from the Cantonese, Nanjing was also challenged by other regional leaders, e.g. the New Guangxi Clique (新桂系) under Li Zongren over the control of Hunan in 1929.<sup>15</sup> Feng Yuxiang in 1930 struggled with Nanjing over the control of Shandong led to the Battle of the Central Plain.<sup>16</sup> Some regions could maintain their regional independence during the Nanjing decade, for example Yan Xishan in Shanxi.<sup>17</sup> In Sichuan five local militarists dominated their region up to the mid-1930.<sup>18</sup> Also, Guangdong and Guangxi maintained a semi-independent empire since 1931<sup>19</sup> and was successful in blocking Nanjing from extending its control to the South until late 1936.<sup>20</sup>

Regional leaders often competed with Chiang Kai-shek for political power in the Center. After 1926, Chiang on two occasions had to step down as the national leader. In late 1927 he was forced to resign for five months, and again in December 1931 he had to retire for several weeks. On the latter occasion, Cantonese led by Sun Ke and Chen Mingshu were able to replace Chiang to dominate the Nanjing regime from late December 1931 to early January 1932.<sup>21</sup>

Ambitious regionalists were particularly eager to discredit the Nanjing government for its appeasement policy towards Japan. It was easy to challenge the regime by playing up nationalism. All along the GMD defined nationalism in a very loose sense. After coming to power in Nanjing in 1928, the regime failed to specifically translate nationalism into concrete economic, social and political policies. As such, nationalism could mean many things to many people. Nationalism was up for grabs for any party and faction that needed it to justify their behavior or action.<sup>22</sup>

To achieve national unity is the goal of all national leaders in the Center, but China is too big to be unified all the time. In imperial time, China depended on civil examination to ensure its bureaucrats had uniform Confucian ideological training to rule over China. On top of Confucian thought, China was united by a common culture: a common written language and a shared history. Immediately after the 1911 Revolution, China began to divide, basically between the North and the South. It was in late 1911 that the North represented by Yuan Shikai met the representatives from the South e.g. Wu Tingfang (伍廷芳) who was representing Sun Yat-sen to negotiate for national unification.<sup>23</sup>

After 1928 regional militarists, although under the GMD flag, had not surrendered their military power to the Center and they control their regions as independent as ever.<sup>24</sup> The regionalists attached to the GMD for the sense of nationalism and the chance to feel being a nationalist. They set out to reconstruct their region and develop regional solidarity in the process.<sup>25</sup> Apart from regional economic construction, regionalists also built up their military strength.<sup>26</sup> Regional militarists were eager to turn their regions into strongholds. There were several benefits: a strong hold would deter the Center from absorbing it easily by military means. Also, the regional militarists could see themselves as patriotic by building up their regions as a way to serve the nation.<sup>27</sup> Should the center

collapse due to weakness, the regional militarists would have a chance to supplant the leadership and become new leaders of the nation.

During the Nanjing decade, the Center had a lot of worries: externally there was Japanese imperialist encroachment in Manchuria and North China. Internally, the country was troubled by the Communists who had built up soviets with the backing of the Red Army. Inside the GMD, regional militarists threatened the orthodoxy and authority of the party regime. In fitting moments, regionalists teamed up themselves to form a coalition to strengthen their semi-independent existence. For example Yan Xishan teamed up with Feng Yuxing in 1930. Li Jishen lined up all anti-Chiang parties in 1933 in Fujian, including the Red Army. Chen Jitang teamed up with the New Guangxi Clique in June 1936.

Nanjing used different tactics to deal with its challengers. To deal with the Japanese Nanjing opted for a non-military solution. As for the regional militarists, Nanjing used political, financial, and military means. But in handling the Communists he preferred the use of force. To unify the country was always the wish of the leader in the Center: Beijing governments from 1912-1927 and Nanjing government from 1928-1937.

Regionalists, for example those in Guangdong, Shanxi, Sichuan and Hunan, on different occasions withheld local revenue to maintain local troops and therefore hindered the Center to discharge its duties in nation building and construction. There was a tension between Center and region on revenue collection.<sup>28</sup> The Center, out of political reality, had to allow the provinces to keep the land tax after 1927 and focused itself instead on the collection salt tax and customs revenue.<sup>29</sup> Military expenditure for the Center was huge.<sup>30</sup>

Guangdong and Guangxi finally yielded to the Center in late 1936.<sup>31</sup> They were able to maintain a semi-independent existence from 1931 to 1936 mainly because Guangdong was a wealthy region. Although its resources could not tip the balance between North and South, it could at least provide enough financial means to withstand the challenge from the North and ignore the call for unity until the Center was well prepared politically and militarily.

## **Chapter seven - Conclusion**

### **a) Cai Tingkai and his opportunities**

One ramification of foreign aggression in late Qing was the rise of militarism and nationalism in China. Since the late Qing it was a period of military men; many Chinese pinned their hope on the military leaders to overthrow the Manchu and to save the country from foreign aggression. After 1911 regional military leaders and warlords took the center stage. They needed soldiers to fight and defend their territories, their military might was the guarantee for their survival. While the demand for soldiers was great, the supply was abundant. Many Chinese joined the army out of poverty. The army had provided a bright career for some; one of them was Cai Tingkai.

Cai's military career path was meteoric. His career was the product of the social, economic and political environment of the time. In 1931 at the age of forty Cai had reached the rank of Army Corps commander and began to consider retirement. One of the reasons for Cai's rapid promotion in the army was his bravery. During his long military career, Cai received bullet wounds on three occasions, and he narrowly missed one hitting him during the 1.28 Incident that had left a bullet hole in his uniform.<sup>1</sup>

Cai was born to China in a period with foreign aggression. In Chinese history militarists were made heroes because they stood against barbarian aggression, men such as Yue Fei. As a boy Cai heard stories about how Chinese heroes of modern time who had defended their country against imperial aggression, for example Liu Yongfu. These stories influenced the young Cai's thinking and his career choice. Ignoring Nanjing government's persuasion to yield, in 1932 Cai led his army to engage the invading Japanese in full scale.

Cai came from a poor family and had only received about one-year modern formal education: in an army school in Guangdong in 1920. Cai's minimum education might have handicapped his ability to appreciate national politics. Indeed, he never had any interest in politics and had little flare for it. He always tried to avoid political problems, e.g. in 1927 he led his the army away from Zhang Fakui and cut his connection with the Communists. But such a handicap could be a blessing because he could judge matters right or wrong straightly from his pure heart, and allowed sincerity to take precedence over logical calculation of consequence.

Cai was patriotic; he wanted to save the country. The fact that Zhang Xueliang (張學良) failed to engage the Kwantung Army during the 9.18 Incident had outraged him. Cai had an army, to him it could be the tool for him to save the country. Cai always wanted to engage the Japanese, as indicated by his determination to line up voluntary soldiers to fight the Japanese on many occasions: weeks before the 1.28 Incident in Shanghai, in mid-1933 in Fujian, and in July 1936 in Guangxi.

### **b) National politics**

Chiang Kai-shek's foreign policy in dealing with the Japanese was at odds with Cai's expectation. Both Chiang and Cai wanted to save China, but they had different solutions for different considerations. In the 1.28 Incident when Chiang wanted a political solution, Cai chose the military one. Chiang, holding the position at the Center, knew that there was no chance for China to win the war with Japan. Furthermore, to turn Shanghai into a battleground would bring only disasters to the economy of China. As the supreme leader at the Center, Chiang had the ultimate responsibility for the fate of China. He opted for delaying the war because without a war there would be no clear winner and loser, the face of China could be saved, somehow. Chiang was prepared to trade China's dignity for time, in Chinese this is *renru fuzhong* (忍辱負重 literally means to bear disgrace and a heavy burden).<sup>2</sup> This policy was in conflict with Cai's wish to uphold the dignity of China and its soldiers, and thought such policy was *sangquan ruguo* (喪權辱國 literally means giving up the right of the country and causing insult to the nation)<sup>3</sup>. Cai wanted to discharge the traditional duty of the soldier, using the right spirit to engage the enemy and to protect the country, even at the cost of his own life: *shesheng quyì* (捨生取義 literally means to sacrifice one's life for a righteousness).<sup>4</sup>

Chiang's policy of appeasement carried self-interest: his power base was in and around Shanghai that was at the coastal region, a location capable of generating the much-needed revenue to support his army. A war with Japan would erode his financial base because the Japanese navy would blockade the coastal regions. Chiang had to avoid the war for practical reasons. If the Center was weak, regionalists would rise and China would disintegrate again.



### c) Regionalism and statism

Cai was caught between regionalism and statism. Here regionalism is defined as one's interest in one's own region while statism is one's desire for centralized state control over the regions. Regionalism is common in China because of its diversity. Historically Guangdong was a place for political exiles and had a tradition to breed rebels. In the recent past it was a place that provided revolutionary thinking, hideouts, money, arms, and overseas connections. Guangdong is a place that is far from the traditional political center in the North that believes in statism. It is a province by the sea and is open to western influence and ideas.

The make up of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA was mostly Guangdong soldiers. Cantonese had a long history of overseas connections and were able to obtain financial and material support when needed. In the 1920s, some Cantonese were already doing business successfully in Shanghai, e.g. the Wing On Department Store. They actively supported the 19<sup>th</sup> RA during the 1.28 Incident. Financially the battle was made possible in part by the overseas remittance from the *huaqiao*. Cai received donation over Ch.\$ 7 million during the battle and the *huaqiao*'s contribution was substantial.<sup>5</sup>

### d) Official nationalism and popular nationalism

Cai had to choose between official nationalism and popular nationalism. In the face of invasion by Japan, Chiang Kai-shek failed to convince most people about the benefit of his appeasement policy, but expected his people to be nationalistic by supporting government policies. Cai's decision to fight the Japanese in Shanghai had defined the meaning of nationalism and translated popular patriotism into action. The 1.28 Incident showed that the people could define the meaning of nationalism differently from the regime. The story of Cai highlights how a regional force could discharge one important duty the Center was hesitant to perform: to use military means to stop foreign aggression and regain national pride.

Cai and Chiang had a conflicting role in history. In 1.28, Cai and his army were motivated by their pure hearts to defend the country from outside aggression. Cai's role in 1.28 highlighted Guangdong people's love for the country. The battle gave the

individual a chance to express disagreement with the Center and to share its responsibility in defending the country: *guojia xingwang, pifu youze* (國家興亡，匹夫有責). As for Chiang Kai-shek he knew that he had a duty to contain the battle and to end it quickly to minimize damages. He had to be skillful in monitoring the course of the battle in view of the political situation.

#### e) The national hero

Cai became a national hero during the 1.28 Incident. The location of the battle itself had important implications in fostering the heroic image of Cai. In the 1930s Shanghai was an international treaty port where the western media congregated. Cai felt comfortable with both local and Western media who helped project his image both at home and abroad.<sup>6</sup> Cai was frequently seen visiting the front line and talking to reporters in his Headquarters.

The intensity of the fighting and the bravery of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA were impressive. Apart from the motivation from Cai, soldiers' strong anti-Japanese sentiment and resolute fighting spirit had to do with their past fighting experience. Cai, when fighting the Red Army a few months earlier, was nearly killed in one of the battles. The 19<sup>th</sup> RA heard about the 9.18 Incident when they were fighting a civil war in Jiangxi, the timing of these events prompted Cai and his men to rethink their proper role. Also, when they were stationed in Shanghai in late 1931, they had a first hand feeling about the arrogance of the Japanese, and that experience fostered their strong determination to engage the Japanese in Shanghai.<sup>7</sup>

One of the myths of the 1.28 Incident was that China could have checked the Japanese advance in Shanghai in 1932, and even defeated the Japanese had the Nanjing regime committed all available troops. But the reality is that in August 1937 when Chiang committed his best troops, up to 700,000 men, Shanghai still fell into Japanese hands within weeks.<sup>8</sup> For me, the fact that the 19<sup>th</sup> RA could hold its ground for over one month in 1932 is already big a victory. Cai became a national hero because of his nationalism and military skill, supported by Cantonese's regionalism.

Cai was not a Communist, nor was he welcome by the GMD. After 1932, as a non-conformist,<sup>9</sup> his historical role has been undeservedly played down by the GMD. In the mainland after 1949 Cai's former GMD identity has made him politically unlikely a

candidate for promotion as a national hero.<sup>10</sup> Hero often belongs to a period of unrest and warfare, whose single-minded sincerity and faith in his cause will not allow him to escape and compromise. His courage, sense of destiny and duty guide him forward, but he is tied to the losing side that will eventually doom him. In 1932 Cai took the cause so common among heroes: in practical term the struggle had been futile, and in many instances, even counter-productive. But a faithful man was undaunted by the danger of personal risk and sacrifice. Sincerity gave a hero the inner strength to discard everything that might hinder his impulse residing deep inside: the determination to fight for a lose cause. Cai Tingkai was just such a man.

## Notes

### Abstract

1. In his book *China's Trial by Fire: the Shanghai War of 1932* Donald Jordan in 2001 carried on with the study on the 1.28 Incident initiated by Lloyd Eastman in 1974. Eastman in *The Abortive Revolution* had pointed out that the Incident was a complex subject (p.91). Jordan noted that Patricia Stranahan had mixed up the 19<sup>th</sup> RA of 1932 with the 19th Army Group of 1937 (p.xiv). Likewise, I notice that Colin Green in his Ph.D dissertation *'The Spirit of the Military: the Tradition and its Revival in the Republican Period'* (Vancouver: the University of British Columbia, 2003) failed to note that the 5<sup>th</sup> Army only joined the 19<sup>th</sup> RA in the fighting half way, not from the very beginning of the battle (p.207).
2. Lloyd Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), p.92.

### Chapter One

1. Donald Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire: the Shanghai War of 1932* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), p.1.
2. Ibid., p.3.
3. Ibid., p.4.
4. Ibid., p.6.
5. Ibid., p.8.
6. Ibid. Pg.8.
7. Ibid., p.10.
8. Ibid., p.10.
9. Ibid., p.14.
10. Ibid., p.35.
11. Ibid., p.36.
12. Ibid., p.22.
13. Ibid., pp. 41-2.
14. Ibid., p.41.
15. Ibid., p.42.
16. Ibid., p.43.
17. Ibid., p.50.
18. Ibid., p.92.
19. Ibid., p.93.
20. Ibid., p.153. Also see Cai Tingkai 蔡廷鍇, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan* 蔡廷鍇自傳 (The Autobiography of Cai Tingkai), (Taibei shi: Long wen chu ban she, 1989), p.319.
21. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, p.109. Cai's pressure came from He Yingqi, see Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p. 404.
22. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, p.114.
23. Ibid., p.118.
24. Ibid., p.102.
25. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.322.
26. Yu Jishi 余濟時, 'Yi er ba' Song Hu kang ri zhan yi jing wei hui yi '一二八' 淞滬抗日戰役經緯回憶.(Guo fang bu shi zheng pian yi ju yin, 1981), p. 18.
27. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.324.

28. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, p.144.
29. Ibid., p.148.
30. Ibid., p.149.
31. Ibid., p.171.
32. Ibid., p.182.
33. Ibid., p.188.
34. Ibid., p.190.
35. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution*, p.92.
36. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p. 404.
37. Jordan, *China's Trial by Fire*, p.153.

## Chapter Two

1. Hu Zeyan 吳澤炎 eds., *Ci Yuan 辭源*, (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1987), p.1433.
2. Colin Green, Ph.D thesis '*The Spirit of the Military: the Tradition and its Revival in the Republican Period*' (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2003), p.153.
3. Li Jian'er 李健兒, *Liu Yongfu Zhuan 劉永福傳* (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1996). In a plate on page v, Sun Yat-sen is said to have honored Liu as a national hero.
4. Ivan Morris, *Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), p.22.
5. Ibid., p.xxi-xxii.
6. Ibid., p.23.
7. Green, *The Spirit of the Military*, p.153.
8. In his book *Nobility of Failure* Morris noted that Yoroze was the first Japanese hero who committed suicide after being defeated in battle, and also he was the first full fledged heroic figure of failure. Yoroze established himself as one of the earliest historical exemplars of makoto (sincerity), the cardinal quality of the Japanese heroes. See pg.1-13.
9. Morris, *Nobility of Failure*, p.xxii.
10. Ibid., pp. 217-275.
11. Ibid., pp.261-2.
12. Ibid., p.262.
13. Hellmut Wilhelm's "From Myth to Myth: the Case of Yueh Fei's Biography" in *Confucian Personalities* (Arthur Wright eds. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), p.159.
14. Ibid., p.155.
15. Ibid., p.157.
16. Ibid., p.159.
17. Ibid., p.159.
18. Ibid., p.160.
19. Ibid., p.160.
20. Ray Huang, *1587 A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p.163.
21. Ibid., p.167.
22. Ibid., p.174.
23. Ibid., p.175.
24. Ibid., p.181.

25. Ibid., p.184.
26. Ibid., p.185.
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41. Ibid., pp.304-5.
42. Ibid., pp.307-8.
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4. Ibid., p.25.
5. Ibid., p.36.
6. Ibid., p.40.
7. Ibid., p.43.
8. Ibid., p.50.
9. Ibid., p.51.
10. Ibid., p.65.
11. Ibid., p.74.
12. Ibid., p.83.
13. Ibid., p.89.
14. Ibid., p.102.
15. Ibid., p.129.
16. Ibid., p.131.
17. Ibid., p.136.

18. Cai in his autobiography mentioned several occasions that he received gun-shot wound. In 1920 Cai received bullet wound in his right leg, p136. In April 1923, during a battle Cai's right hand was hit by a bullet, pp.168-9. Cai joined the Northern Expedition and wounded his left hand in August 1926. Chen Mingshu sent Cai to hospital who stayed there for over a month for recovery, pp.196-8. On 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1932 while inspecting the frontline at Zhabei, he narrowly escaped a machine gun bullet that had left a hole in his uniform. Two officers accompanying him were not that lucky and were injured, p.320. In October, 1938 Cai was invited by military leaders in Guangzhou for a meeting, while traveling from Luoding to Guangzhou Cai was hit in the torso by a bullet from a Japanese fighter plane, p. 539.

19. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.137.

20. Ibid., p.149.

21. Ibid., p.155.

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23. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.187. Also see *Guangdong wen shi zi liao* 廣東文史資料 (Historical Document of Guangdong), Vol. 71.(Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chu ban she, 1992), p.309.

24. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.194.

25. Ibid., p.199.

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29. Ibid., pp.214-7.

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31. Ibid., p.236.

32. Ibid., pp.252-3.

33. Ibid., p.259.

34. Ibid., p.267.

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36. Ibid., p.274.

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40. Ibid., p.301.

41. Ibid., p.302.

42. Ibid., p.305.

43. Ibid., pp.304-5

44. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.310. Also, according to Qiu Guozhen (丘國珍) initially Cai might want to fight the Japanese outside Shanghai. See Qiu's *Shi jiu lu jun xing wan shi* 十九路軍興亡史 (Taipei: Wen hai chu ban she, no date), pg.29.

45. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.310.

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47. Ibid., p.314.

48. Ibid., p.328.

49. Ibid., p.334.

50. Ibid., p.337.



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52. Ibid., pp.338-9.
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55. Ibid., p.351.
56. Ibid., p.350.
57. Ibid., p.351.
58. Ibid., p.352.
59. Qiu Guozhen 丘國珍. *Shi jiu lu jun xing wan shi* 十九路軍興亡史 (A History on The Rise and Fall of the 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army)(Taipei: Wen hai chu ban she, no date), p.124.
60. Cai, *Cai Tingkai zi zhuan*, p.352.
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66. Ibid., p.497.
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68. Ibid., pp.507-8.
69. Ibid., pp.512-3.
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71. Ibid., p.564.
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73. Ibid., pp.602-4.
74. Ibid., pp.606-610.
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79. Ibid., pp.329-30.
80. Ibid., p.330.
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83. Ibid., pp.332-333
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### **A Brief Chronology of Cai Tingcai**

- 1892** In April Cai Tingkai is born to a peasant family in Luoding of Guongdong.
- 1901** He starts education at the age of 9 at a local village school.
- 1904** He ceases education in order to help with family housework and to cut back expenses.
- 1905** At the age of 13, he is competent enough to work as a tailor to contribute to family income. He learns the skill from his father.
- 1908** He tries to join the army but is objected by his father who later arranges for Cai a marriage in order to make him homebound. Cai's wife is Peng Huifang (彭惠芳).
- 1910** Cai joins the Qing's New Army for 10 months.
- 1911** In October after the fall of the Qing government, Cai re-joins the army as a private stationed in San Luo (三羅).
- 1913** He is promoted to squad leader (班長).
- 1914** He resigns from the army because the pay is not enough to support the family.
- 1915** Cai, urged by his friend Chen Shun (陳順), joins the army again. Cai is a private first class.
- 1917** Cai joins the anti-Monarchial battle and mounts a failed uprising.
- 1918** Cai joins the police in Tai Pang Cheng (大鵬城) as a sergeant. Several months later, when a new in-charge arrives, Cai quits his job.
- 1919** Cai joins a local militia at Lou Jing (羅鏡). Later in the same year this militia is absorbed into the regular army, the Siu Army (肇軍). The battalion commander (營長) is Chen Mingshu (陳銘樞).
- 1920** For the first time in his career Cai receives a gunshot wound: his right leg sustained injury during a bandit suppression. In mid-1920, Siu Army is reorganized. At the Battalion headquarters Chen Mingshu proposes Cai to further his study and recommends him to enter the military academy in Guangzhou.
- 1921** Cai graduates from the military academy in September and returns to his army unit under Chen, being part of the Guangdong Army (粵軍).

**1922** Cai is appointed as lieutenant (排長) and later promoted to Company commander (連長) in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Cai joins the Guomindang (GMD) (國民黨).

**1923** In April one branch of the Gui Jun (桂軍) rebels against Sun Yat-sen, Cai's regiment is ordered to engage the rebels. After the battle Cai is promoted to the rank of major (少校).

**1924** Cai is promoted to Battalion commander.

**1926** Cai participates in the Northern Expedition and in July appointed as Regiment commander (團長) under Chen Mingshu in the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corp. In December Chen Mingshu is promoted to Army Corps commander (軍長) of the 11<sup>th</sup> Army overseeing Cai, now a deputy Divisional commander (副師長).

**1927** GMD left and right factions split during the Northern Expedition. Left wing at Wuhan pits against the right wing under Kai-shek at Wu Cheong. Many army leaders are caught in the middle: Chen Mingshu chooses to leave the army. Zhang Fakui (張發奎) takes over the 11<sup>th</sup> army and appoints Cai as Divisional commander (師長). Cai's army is under Ye Ting (葉挺) and Ho Lung (賀龍), both are Communists. The Communists mount a mutiny at Nan Cheong (南昌) on August 1, 1927 but crushed. Yip and Ho lead their army, including Cai's division, back to Guangdong. On their way at Zhun Yin (進賢) in Jiangxi Cai breaks with the Communists. Cai then moves his men to the region near GeYang (戈陽) and stays there for over a month to wait for financial support. Cai declares his support for Chiang Kai-shek and invited Chen Mingshu back to lead the army into Fujian in October 1927. In December 1927, Communists in Guangzhou under Ye Jianying (葉劍英) rebelled against Zhang Fakui who now has to face simultaneously Cai's returning army. In the subsequent battles, Cai defeats Zhang and help Li Jishen (李濟深) resume power in Guangdong.

**1928** Li Jishen reorganizes the Guangdong army. Chen Jitang (陳濟棠) heads the new 4<sup>th</sup> Army; Chen Mingshu heads the 11<sup>th</sup> Army. Cai is posted to Hoi Nan Island.

**1929** In the summer Guangdong army is reorganized, with Chen Jitang commanding five divisions. Cai is the commander of the 60<sup>th</sup> Division and Jiang Guangnai (蔣光鼐) the 61<sup>st</sup> Division.

**1930** In the summer Yan Xishan (閻錫山) and Feng Yuxiang (馮玉祥) team up to rebel against Chiang Kai-shek. During the Battle of the Central Plain (中原大戰) ensued, Cai's army is deployed by Chiang in some of the battles. Chiang is the victor the Battle. After the Battle Cai is promoted to Army Corps commander (軍長) of the new 19<sup>th</sup> Route Army (十九路軍) comprising the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions.

**1931** In May Chen Mingshu is named by Chiang Kai-shek as the Right Wing Red Army Suppression Commander overseeing the expanded 19<sup>th</sup> RA: a new 78<sup>th</sup> Division is

added. In October Cai is ordered to station the 19<sup>th</sup> RA at Nanjing, Shanghai and the nearby region.

**1932** In January in Shanghai the situation is tense because the Japanese are looking for troubles. Cai holds meetings with 19<sup>th</sup> RA leaders and the local police chief Dai Ji (戴戟) on 19<sup>th</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup>. They work out a war plan. At about 11.10 pm on 28th January 1932, Cai receives a report from Wen Zhaoyuan (翁照垣) the Brigadier of the 78<sup>th</sup> Division stationed at Zhabei (閘北) that the Japanese is attacking. Cai commands Wen to hold the line and orders the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> Divisions to report to Shanghai. In mid-February Cai's army is joined by the 5<sup>th</sup> Army to hold their defense line for 33 days. When the Japanese outnumber them substantially in early March they retreat to the second line of defense. In May Cai's army is given a new duty of suppressing the Red Army in Fujian. In June Cai is promoted to Commander-in-Chief (總指揮) of the 19<sup>th</sup> RA.

**1933** In January Jiang Guangnai is promoted to Chairman of Fujian Provincial Government (福建省主席) while Cai promoted to Fujian Peace Restoration Officer (福建綏靖公署主任). In November Cai joins Li Jishen, Chen Mingshu and others at Fu Zhou to establish of a new government in Fujian independent of Nanjing.

**1934** In January Chiang Kai-shek crushes the uprising in Fujian and Cai flees to Hong Kong. In April Cai starts his worldwide visit that would last for one year and five days. He visits Europe, North American, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines before returning to Hong Kong the next year.

**1935** In April Cai arrives in Hong Kong. Cai's wife has bought about 20 mu (畝) of farmland in the New Territory. Cai begins practicing farming and receiving visitors.

**1936** In June, Guangdong and Guangxi rebel against Nanjing. Guangdong surrenders within weeks. Guangxi stands alone and invites Cai in July to reinstate the 19<sup>th</sup> RA, but shortly Guangxi also yields to Nanking and the rebellion is over.

**1937** In May Cai visits the Philippines. In July, after hearing the news that anti-Japanese war has broken out, Cai immediately returns to Hong Kong. Later in the same month, TV Soong (宋子文) phones Cai saying that Chiang invites him to Nanjing. In early September, Chiang appoints Cai as a special staff officer. In mid-September Cai's wife passes away in Hong Kong. Cai in mid-October requests Chiang for military duties. Cai meets Chiang in Hangkow, but on his way out of Chiang's office, Cai has a car accident that shatters his knee cap. Cai returns to Hong Kong to seek medical treatment in early November in a private hospital.

**1938** In February, Cai checks into the Queen Mary hospital for an operation in the knee and stays there for treatment until late May. Cai returns to Guangzhou in mid-June and visits his hometown two days later for convalescing. In October 1938 military leaders invite Cai to Guangzhou for a meeting. While en route to Guangzhou Cai is hit by a bullet from a Japanese fighter plane. Cai has to stay at Shiu Xing for medical treatment.

**1939** In January Chiang Kai-shek invites Cai to see him in Chongqing. Cai is appointed as deputy commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Army, he returns to Guilin in early February. Cai married Luo Xiou (羅西歐) in July. Due to change of military deployment, Cai is transferred to head the 26<sup>th</sup> Army Corps in November.

**1940** In August, Cai's Army corps is re-titled and he has no army to command except for some guerrilla forces, he felt disappointed. He resigns from all official appointments and returns to hometown for a few months before going to Guilin in December 1940. While in Guilin, Cai is re-appointed by Chiang as a Staff Adviser.

**1941** From January 1941 to early 1944 Cai travels between Hong Kong, Chongqing, Guilin and Guizhou without substantial military duties.

**1944** In July when Guilin is threatened by the advancing Japanese Cai and his family leave for Luoding. In September, in Luoding Cai receives a phone call to alert him that the Japanese are heading towards Luoding. In a local meeting Cai is appointed commander of a militia to defend the southern part of Luoding where Cai's home village locates. Although the Japanese enter Luoding, they never reach Cai's home village.

**1945** In October Cai and his family move from Luoding to Guangzhou after the Japanese has surrendered.

**1946** In March, Cai and others announce the establishment of the GMD Democratic Promotion Party (DPP)(民主促進黨). In October, Chiang invites Cai to Nanjing for a meeting. Cai arrives at Shanghai and takes the opportunity to meet Communists working underground.

**1947** In Hong Kong, Cai, together and others found a magazine as a means to establish contact with those who hold democratic views and want to promote democratic revolution. In November Cai, together with Li Jishen and others decide to establish the China GMD Revolutionary Committee (中國國民黨革命委員會). Many members are from the DPP.

**1948** In January the China GMD Revolutionary Committee is officially established with Cai appointed as a Central Committee member. The Committee advocates joining hands with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and other democratic organizations to overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship, and to resist the US's interference with China's internal politics. In September Cai departs Hong Kong secretly for northeast China to discuss with the Communists about preparations for the first Political Consultative Committee (PCC) (政治協商委員會).

**1949** In June Cai and four others, representing the DPP, participate in the preparatory committee for the PCC held in Beijing. Cai is elected as a PCC member. In addition, he is appointed as member of the Central People's Government Committee.

**1950** In November Cai is one of the delegation members that represents Mainland China in Warsaw Poland for the Second World Peace Conference.

**1951** In February Cai, representing Mainland China, arrives in Berlin to participate in the committee meeting of the World Peace Conference that aims at 'fighting against the American aggression'. In the same year Cai also visits Chinese soldiers fighting in Korea.

**1952** Cai takes up the post of Deputy Minister for National Sports under the jurisdiction of He Long.

**1956** In December Cai visits Guangdong on an official visit.

**1957** In August Cai visits Japan to participate in the Third International Committee that supports army reduction and the banning of atomic weapons.

**1961** In January, accompanying Zhou Enlai (周恩來), Cai visits Burma to celebrate its thirteenth anniversary of independence. In the same year Cai is appointed as Deputy Chairman of the National Defense Committee. In winter Cai returns to Guangzhou on an official visit. He takes the opportunity to visit his home village near Luoqing and to meet old friends. This is the first time for Cai to visit his home village since 1949. He is saddened after learning that his house in the village has been destroyed.

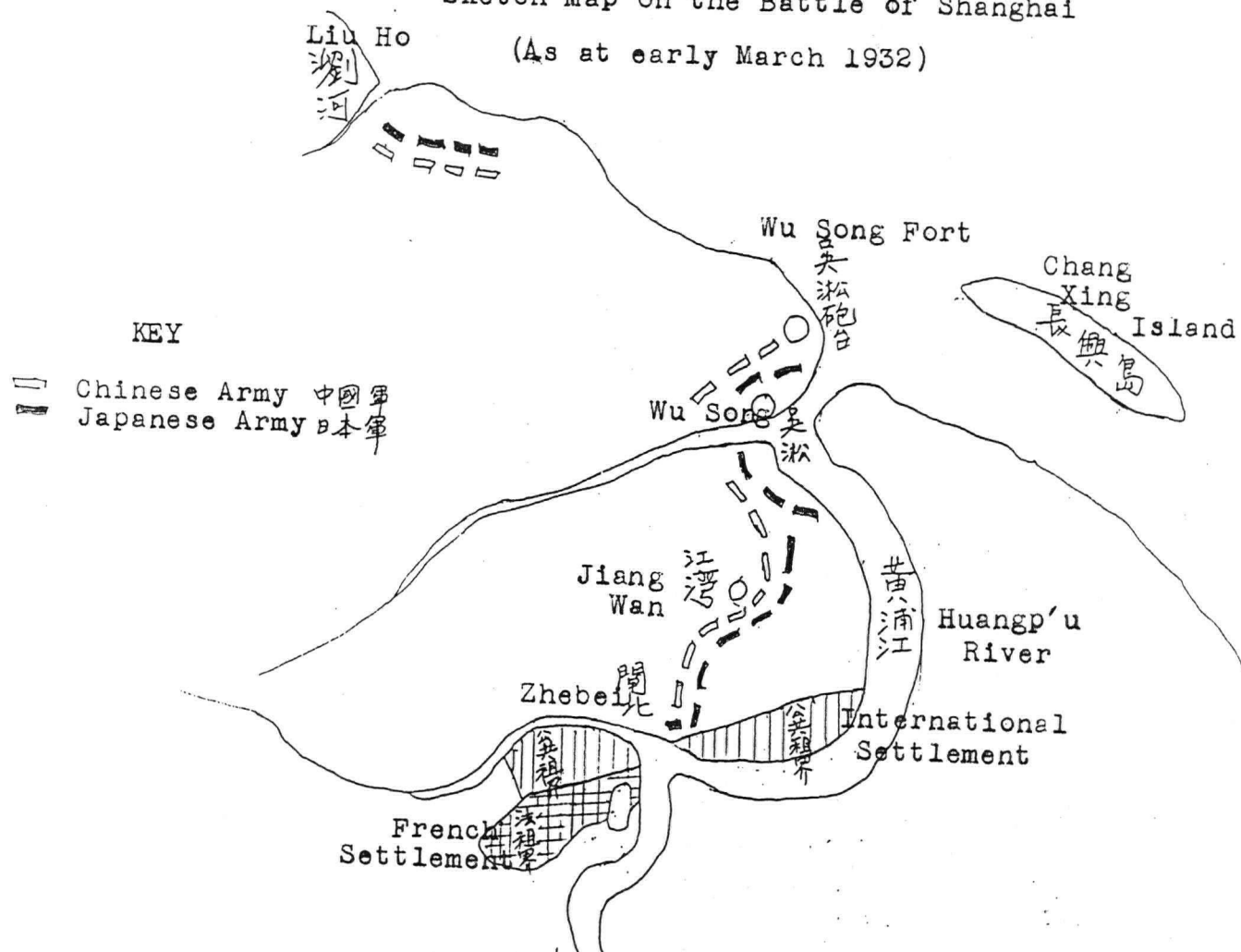
**1964** In December Cai is appointed Deputy Chairman of the Fourth National Political Consultative Committee.

**1966** In August during the Cultural Revolution Red Guards try to storm Cai's house but are stopped by the local authority.

**1968** In April Cai dies in Beijing at the age of 76.

# Sketch Map on the Battle of Shanghai

(As at early March 1932)



Cai Tingkai