

## **Battles of Miaohang, Qianjing & Loutang - 1932**

Shirakawa Yoshinori, upon arrival at the Yangtze river mouth on cruiser Myoko in the morning under the escort of the 4th Navy Battle Group and minesweeper units, immediately executed the third offensive. Shirakawa Yoshinori ordered Ueda 's 9th SquDiv to attack the Chinese 5th Corps troops to the north and push towards the Zhangjiaqiao-Xiamawan line while the 24th Mixed Ryodan was ordered to attack towards the west of Zhangjiaqiao and Zhujiqiao as the central prong and another portion of the attack force acted as the left prong to attack the Chinese convex position in western Jiangwan town, near the International Settlement. At the Yangtze riverbank, Koutou's 11th SquDiv was to land at Qiyakou to take over Liuhezhen town on the northern Yangtze bank and then march against Dachangzhen and Zhenru. The Navy 's 3rd special landing Daitai and the Navy 's aircrafts were ordered to assist the infantry in the offensive. The Japanese designated the Wusong Detachment to guard the wharfs of the Wusong Railway line. As a diversionary tactic, the Japanese fake a continuous attack at the Wusong Battery on March 1st, while at Baziqiao of Zhabei, towards the settlement direction, the Japanese, with tanks, continued attacks from the 29th onward. The Chinese Zhabei defenders, throwing grenades and machinegun-firing at the Japanese tanks in front of the British and Americans for one month, pulled out to evade the Japanese double envelopment on the night of March 1st.

On March 1st, at 6:30 am, the 9th SquDiv and 24th Mixed RyoBrig, after three and half hours ' blanket bombing and shelling, launched multiple-route incursions with tanks and armored vehicles, with main thrusts directed at Zhuyuandun-Guangzhaoshanzhuang-Zhangsanqiao [defended by Huang Gu 's 155th Brigade of the 78th Division], Zhuyuandun-Jinjiamadou-Tangdongzhai, Miaohangzhen-Caijiazhai-Zhougang. The 7th Rentai, as the center attack force of the left prong, launched a general attack behind the cover of armored vehicles at 11 am. Before noon, the Japanese left (western) prong, consisting of troops from the 9th SquDiv, intruded into the line of Guangdingyidi, Maijiazhai and Lujiazhai. At Xiajiatang-Guangzhaoshanzhuang, the 1st Regiment of Huang Gu 's brigade exhausted itself in defense under the attacks by the Japanese cavalry and tanks. Post noon, the remnants of the 1st Regiment retreated towards Tanjiazhai-Mengjiajiao villages. At Zhangsanqiao-Zoumatang line, the 2nd Regiment of Huang Gu 's Brigade defended the positions till noon when the Japanese sent over reinforcement from the 11th Shidan. With one battalion from the 3rd Regiment of the 60th Division coming to the relief, the remnant 2nd Regiment held on to Yangjialou position at 1 pm. At Guangzhaoshanzhuang-Zhuyuandun, the 3rd Regiment of Huang Gu 's Brigade fought till 3 pm when the Zhuyuandun position was breached. The Japanese at 2 pm pushed against the Chinese forces to the east of Tanjiazhai, Lingnanqiao and Yangjialou line. During the battle, Japanese 7th Rentai commander Hayashi Daihachi was killed at Hanjiatang. (Later in 1937, the Japanese, who gave Hayashi a posthumous title of major general, set up a checkpoint at Hayashi 's death place and purportedly named it Daba [Daihachi in Japanese], which later mutated into Daba-shi [the Greater Eight Monastery] without substantiation of a monastery as coded in the name.) At 3 pm,

the Japanese breached the positions of the 78th Division, which exposed the right flank of the 5th Corps and led to the Chinese right flank troops ' retreat to the line of Yanghuanqiao, Shuichedou, Tanjiazhai and Mengjiajiao.

The Japanese central prong took over the north side of Ershisanyuan (23 gardens). The 24th Mixed RyoBrig in the afternoon took over Daijiazhai and intruded into Zhangjiaqiao and Zhujiqiao line. The assigned tasks for the 24th Mixed RyoBrig was to attack west against Hujiawan and Lijiaku (Liku) with its main force while exerting a small portion of its force to providing cover to the 9th Shidan attacking northward.

The Japanese right (northern) prong was directed against the Chinese defense extending from Zhuyuandun to Miaohang, to Sitang and all the way along the Yunzaobang River. Relying on the Yunzaobang River which ran roughly eastward towards the Whampoo rivermouth and the Wusong Fortress, the 87th Division was able to hold on the line from Hujiiazhai to Jijiaqiao to Sitang till 11 pm at night when it pulled out under the retreat order. To the west of Hujiiazhai to Jijiaqiao to Sitang and to the south of the Yunzaobang River, Sun Yuanliang 's brigade defended the Miaohang-Zhougang line till 3 pm. At 5 pm, Sun Yuanliang's brigade pulled out of the Miaohang-Zhougang line for Yanghuanqiao-Hujiazuang line after the 88th Division lost the Zhuyuandun-Tangdongzhai line. The Japanese, at heavy casualties and fighting non-stop battles from dawn to 3 pm, took over Zhuyuandun-Jinjiamadou-Tangdongzhai from the 88th Division. The Japanese breaching of the Zhuyuandong positions of the 78th Division at 3 pm exposed the left flank of the 88th Division of the 5th Corps, triggering the retreat of the 88th Division and 78th Division to the line of Yanghuanqiao, Shuichedou, Tanjiazhai and Mengjiajiao, which in turn affected Sun Yuanliang's brigade at the Miaohangzhen-Caijiazhai-Zhougang line. After taking over Zhuyuandun and two sides of Guangdongyidi, the Japanese further intruded into the Zhoujiazhai and Shuichedou line. By 5 pm, the Japanese pressed the 88th Division to the Yanzhai, Lijiaku and Yanghuanqiao line. Later in 1936, on the 4th anniversary date, the people of Baoshan donated 30 Chinese acres of land to have a 3,000 martyrs ' monument built to the east of Zhougangcun Village to commemorate the Battle of Miaohang.

On the afternoon of March 1st, Shirakawa Yoshinori landed ashore the railway wharf and entered the Gongda (Daiko) Mill's Expeditionary Force command center in Yangshupu where he issued a statement calling for the Chinese side to immediately withdraw its troops out in good faith. At about 4:30 pm, the Japanese, In addition to the Qiyakou landing, directed a small-scale landing at the Baoshan beachhead, the place where the British made their landing to attack the Wusong battery during the Opium War over 90 years ago. With an assembly of over 10 motorboats and wooden boats, the Japanese landed at the Baoshan beach. The volunteer fighters, commanded by lawyer Wang Bingnan and including 18 soldiers, repelled the invaders with grenades. At 5 pm, the Japanese ceased offensive in the Jiangwan battlefield as a result of exhaustion after one day 's battles as well as in the attempt at trapping the Chinese army at existing positions so that the Yangtze landing forces could encircle the Chinese troops from the north. Overnight, brigade commander Weng Zhaoyuan, after receiving the evacuation order, instructed the Baoshan defenders to detach from the battlefield for a retreat to the west. One day later, on the early morning of March 3rd, when the northern half of the southern Yangtze Delta already fell into the Japanese hands, Weng Zhaoyuan, dividing his troops into two halves,

successfully pulled out the Wusong Fortress for a night trek to Jiading to the west. Possibly related to the heavy fighting at Loutangzhen and the skirmish at the Yangtze bank which distracted the Japanese attention, Weng Zhaoyuan 's troops, moving via Miaohang and along the Taicang-Shanghai Highway, as well as through the Yanghang-Liuhang path (north of Yunzaobang River), arrived at Jiading at 5 am on March 3rd without encountering the Japanese interception.

At the Yangtze riverbank, at 6:00 am, on March 1st, the 11th SquDiv successfully landed at Qiyakou on the Yangtze bank, northwest of Liuhezhen town, beating off defenders consisting of Feng Yong 's volunteer fighters and the central teaching corps, and pressed on towards the Liuhezhen town, i.e., the Loujiangkou Fort where Sun Quan of the Three Kingdom time period shipped grains to Manchuria to aid ally Gongsun Yuan, and Fan Zhongyan of Song Dynasty launched the Qianjing market, as well as the renamed six-nation trade port, Liujiaxiang, where Ming Dynasty 's Treasure Fleet set sail for the Indian Sea and the Middle East. Feng Yong Volunteers, about one company equivalent, fought against the Japanese at Qiyakou and Yanglinkou river mouths, and the central teaching corps soldiers, spreading across the points of Liuhezhen and Xiaochuansha, were outnumbered by the Japanese. The 19th Route Army and 5th Corps, being entangled with Japanese at the frontal battle line for the whole day, could only send the 521st Regiment and 522nd Regiment of Song Xilian 's 261st Brigade to the Yangtze riverbank. Zhang Zhizhong, other than sending one regiment of the 47th Division to Taicang from Huangdu, ordered Song Xilian 's 261st Brigade to move to Liuhe from Liujiayang and Luodian, with an order to pincer-attack and eliminate the Japanese to the west of the Liuhe River. Yu Likui, commanding the 1st Supplementary Regiment of the 19th Route Army, was ordered to Liuhe at noon on February 29th; however, the relief regiment did not arrive at Taicang, about 15 kilometers away from Liuhe, till 10:30 am on March 1st, which was days later. Fuzzing up the timeline in his recollections, Yu Likui, a follower of anti-Chiang Kai-shek hatchet gang leader Wang Yaqiao, stopped at Taicang, northwest of the Liuhe River, and claimed that Song Xilian 's 261st Brigade, which had not fully arrived at Taicang yet, had already retreated to Taicang from the Liuhe front. Song Xilian, having located 11 trucks, personally led the 1st Battalion of the 521st Regiment to the north, and arrived at Taicang where he set his interim command center. The 1st Battalion moved further northeast along the Liuhe River to arrive at the front at noon. Upon arrival, commander Tang De was ordered to lead his soldiers on a march to Qianjingying while the 11 trucks were sent back to Gujiashai, near Shanghai, for fetching another battalion of troops.

By the afternoon, the advance force of the IJA 11th SquDiv, after sacking Foqiao (pontoon bridge), reached northern Qianjingying. At Qianjing, for most of the day, one company equivalent of troops from the central teaching corps tenaciously fought against the Japanese in defense of the strategic pass. Without adequate transportation tools, only Tang De 's vanguard battalion of the 261st Brigade, riding on 11 trucks, reached the southern gate of Qianjingying when they ran into the Japanese probing force coming out of the town and immediately fought melee battles. While loitering at Taicang, Yu Likui, on the pretext that brigade commander Song Xilian informed him that Liuhe was lost, reported to the 19th Route Army headquarters for a stay on the spot in lieu of continuous move to Qianjingying-Liuhe as ordered at the beginning. At 3 pm, 521st Regiment commander Liu Anqi arrived at Liuhe with the 2nd Battalion. After

Japanese planes bombed Liuhe bus station to pieces and destroyed trucks, Liu Anqi had to continue on by foot. At about 4 pm, the Japanese main force penetrated to the left flank of the 521st Regiment, while the remnant troops from the central teaching battalion fighting on the right of the 521st Regiment exhausted themselves completely, leaving the 521st Regiment besieged by the enemy on three sides in the front, and to the left and right. Coupled with the Japanese naval and air firepower bombardment, the 521st Regiment fought on with more than half casualties, but still managed to launch several break-in charges into the Qianjingying town. At 6 pm, the 3rd Battalion reached the Liuhe town. Song Xilian arranged to have the 1st Battalion persist at the existing position, while having the 2nd and 3rd Battalions spread out along the bank of the Liuhe River, in preparation for a countercharge pending the arrival of the 522nd Regiment. At Taicang, to the southwest, part of the 47th Division arrived in the evening. Overnight, both troops from the vanguard regiment of the 47th Division and the newly-arrived unit of Song Xilian's 261st Brigade vacated Taicang for the front. Yu Likui, wrongly claiming to the 19th Route Army headquarters that the central army had abandoned Taicang, promised to guard the town on his own. The Japanese did not come to Taicang till the 4th since Song Xilian's 261st Brigade still persisted at the secondary front line, ahead of Taicang, after vacating the Qianjingying-Liuhe line overnight.

Cai Tingkai, said to have ignored Chiang Kai-shek's order to beef up defense at the Yangtze bank with at least three regiments of force, apparently failed to understand the motive of his miscellaneous armies such as Yu Likui's regiment. At night, on March 1st, Song Xilian's brigade continued fighting at Qianjingying-Liuhe on the Liuhe riverbank, near the Yangtze. At 9 pm, facing a critical situation at the hind and the rear side being threatened, Jiang Guangnai, at the Nanxiang command center, issued the order of across the board full retreat. The pullback order was to have troops withdraw at 23:00 pm to the line of Huangdu (yellow crossing), Fangtaizhen (square stable town), Jiading, and Taicang. The right flank troops, in transfer to Huangdu and Fangtaizhen, was ordered to occupy Zhenru and Dachang and progressively move into positions in the area of Jiangqiaozhen, Nanxiang and Guangfu, while the left flank troops, using Jiading and Taicang as base, was to occupy Hujiazhang and Yangjiahang as well as probe and guard against the enemy coming from Luodian and Liuhe direction. At 9:30, Zhang Zhizhong relayed the retreat order to the 5th Corps. The 88th Division was to retreat to Jiading from Maqiaozhai; the 259th brigade of the 87th division was to move to Loutangzhen from Tangqiao; the Independent Brigade, which was guarding against Sizilin Battery in Yangjiahang-Yupuzhen area in coordination with the 2nd Battalion of the teaching corps at Shengjiaqiao, was to pull back and relocate its the 1st Regiment to Penglangzhen, the 2nd Regiment to concentrating at Qianmentang, the 156th Brigade of the 78th Division, which was defending the Wusong Fortress, was to abandon the battery and to gather at Jiading as well. For the troops defending the Liuhe River, the 261st Brigade and the teaching corps was to pull back from Liuhe to Taicang. On the night, the 19th Route Army and 5th Corps evacuated from their positions. By this time, the 19th Route Army incurred a casualty of 8000, while the 5th Corps 5000.

On March 1st, Shirakawa Yoshinori purportedly talked about a truce and called for the Chinese troops to pull out in good faith. Overnight, the Chinese left flank army pulled back to the Jiading-Taicang line, while the right flank army the Huangdu-Fangtaizhen line. The linkage point between the two flanks was Jiangqiaozhen. On the 2nd, the Japanese, surprised by the

sudden retreat of the Chinese armies, ordered a pursuit with all its forces while reserving Matsuki Naosuke's newly-arrived 14th SquDiv at Yangshupu. From the east, the Japanese 9th SquDiv circumvented around Jiangwan to take over Dachangzhen town. From the Yangtze bank to the north, the Japanese, in order to cut off the return path of the 5th Corps, ordered a stealthy overnight attack towards the Loutangzhen town, the linkage area between Taicang and Jiading, in the attempt at cutting off the Nanking-Shanghai Railway. At about one o'clock past midnight, the 517th Regiment of Sun Yuanliang's 259th Brigade, while moving towards Loutang from Miaohang, encountered thousands of Japanese outside of Loutang, which was about 15 Chinese li away from Liuhe to the north. The three cordon companies at Loutangzhen, Zhujiqiao and Sizhuqiao, spreading across 3 kilometers apart, immediately engaged the Japanese and fought for two hours before the Japanese cut off their mutual links and encircled them in three clusters. Loutang, situated to the east of Taicang [with the northeast-going Liuhe River in-between] and to the north of Jiading, was a protruding point right in front of Gelongzhen town, which was also the midpoint between Taicang and Jiading, a line that ran in parallel to the Nanking-Shanghai Railway to the southwest.

At 8 am, on March 3rd, 4,000 more Japanese soldiers joined the Loutang Battle, attacking the right flank of the 517th Regiment and pushing to the north bank of a river at Zhujiqiao where the regimental command was set. The 3rd Company of the 1st Battalion rushed to the rescue and launched a countercharge to beat off the Japanese. At 10 am, brigade commander Sun Yuanliang personally visited the 517th Regiment's command but failed to locate commander Zhang Shixi who was battling at the fire line. Zhang Zhizhong, upon learning of the situation, promised Sun Yuanliang that he would dispatch Mo Xiong's taxation police regiment to aiding the Loutang Battle from Penglangzhen while instructing Song Xilian's brigade to cover the left flank of the 259th Brigade and ordering Yu Jishi and his divisional headquarters to guard Jiading and lend support to the 259th Brigade at the right flank. Past noon, the Japanese breached all points of defense at Loutang, completely surrounded the 517th Regiment, and penetrated to Hejiacun, next to Gelongzhen town where Sun Yuanliang set his brigade command. At 3 pm, Sun Yuanliang wrote to Zhang Zhizhong to have the corps command center vacate Qianmentang where Zhang Zhizhong set his 5th Corps command center while he was to die with Gelongzhen. Zhang Zhizhong gave the 517th Regiment permission to break out of the encirclement for Gelongzhen by sunset. At 4 pm, Mo Xiong's regiment arrived at Gelongzhen and was deployed to front-line reinforcements. With the left flank of Zhujiqiao breached, regimental commander Zhang Shixi, in a vulnerable situation, inspired the soldiers' determination to die, led remnant soldiers in leaping out to charge at the Japanese machineguns in a breakout towards Jiangjiacun, daunting the Japanese to recede and open up an exit crack. The gallant regiment, after breaking out of the encirclement to the south, joined the 88th Division troops before returning to the 87th Division via Kunshan. Zhang Shixi's regiment incurred a casualty of close to one thousand at the Battle of Loutang, near Gelongzhen. 1st Battalion commander Zhu Yaozhang, who wrote a poem two days earlier to express wish to die as a real man fighting 100 battles and to return a brave man from afterlife ten years later, was killed by seven bullets during the breakout. Later in autumn 1932, petitioned to have a Loutang Memorial Wall-gate, measuring 6.1 meters in height and as 8.5 meters in width, built at Loutang, i.e., the Lou-jiang River pond, a name bearing the original name of the Liu-he River, to commemorate the martyrs of the 517th Regiment at the Battle of Loutang.

Total casualties for the 19th Route Army and the 5th Corps numbered at 15,173, including 883 officers, among whom the death toll was 2,449 troops for the 19th Route Army and 1,825 troops for the 5th Corps [including numbers from the taxation police regiments but excluding the 6th Gendarmerie Regiment]. The ratio of casualties for the 19th Route Army and the 5th Corps, totaling less than 50,000 in headcounts, were 39% and 30%, respectively. The Chinese casualties could be underestimated since numerous volunteer fighters and replenishment troops were sent to the front throughout the war. Japan, which exerted a total force of over 90,000 troops, including 77,000 infantry army and special landing forces, incurred a casualty of a little over 3000, including officers and the rank and file, maintaining the superior advantage over the Chinese armies throughout the 15-year war. The First Battle of Shanghai was the first three-dimensional modern warfare preceding the Second World War, as well as the first war in which Japan had applied the most numerous troops, more than what it mobilized for the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the 1931 Invasion of Manchuria. In Canton, retired army general Li Fulin, who had bought large patches of land around Lingnan University to stop the American missionaries and university schoolmaster Zhong Rongguang from low-balling encroachment on the adjacent poverty-stricken peasants and launched the He-nan (south of the Pearl River) Hospital, was to establish the 19th Route Army Rehabilitation Institute on the hospital premises to take in the wounded and disabled from the 19th Route Army. Later in 1938, when the Japanese invaded Canton, the He-nan Hospital and the Rehabilitation Institute were demolished by the Japanese and razed to the ground while the wounded and disabled veterans of the 19th Route Army were massacred as a revenge on Li Fulin's pretentious cooperation with the Japanese spy agency to conduct a rebellion to echo the Japanese invasion, which was a government-sanctioned scheme to delay the Japanese attack on Canton.

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