

The Story: Mu Guiying Takes Command

Mu Guiying Takes Command, is a story about a great Female Commander Mu Guiying of Song Dynasty who lead Song army to defend their homeland against militant nomad Liao from the North of China.

The army of the Song dynasty was in the heat of a seesaw battle with the invading armies of a militant nomad state - the Great Liao from China's north.

The Great Liao recruited a Song army advisor, Lu Zhong who knew how to deploy what he claimed to be an invincible battle array: the Heavenly Gate of Seventy-Two Moves, or simply the Array of Heavenly Gate ("Tianmen Zhen" in Chinese), and challenged the Song army to defeat it within a hundred days. Otherwise, they had to surrender their recently unified motherland to the Great Liao.

In the Song army, there was a family of generals named Yang, who fought hard and victoriously in many a battle against the invading enemy. However, they were either sabotaged by the capitulation wing of the Song Court or distrusted by the Song Emperor.

Eventually, the Yang army was defeated by the Liao with tremendous losses: all but three of the eight brother generals perished. One of the survived quit fighting and became a monk; another was captured by the enemy and became the Liao's first son-in-law. Yang Yanzhao was the only survivor who became the Commander-in-Chief. Except for the couple's very young sons, the positions of the generals missing in action were now filled by all the women of the family: Yangzhou's mother, his wife, his two sisters, and three of his brothers' widows. Together, they are known to the Chinese as the "Women Generals of the Yang Family.

They fought courageously and ferociously, but still failed to break the Seventy-Two Moves.

As the hundredth day deadline was drawing near, an advisor remembered and recommended Mu Guiying, a young and beautiful greenwood chieftain in the nearby mountains, whose father had been a friend of the Great Liao's army advisor, Lu Zhong, and had been the only person on earth who knew how to break the Seventy-Two Moves formation.

With her father's death, she became the only person who knew that secret. Her talent and skills soon made their due impression on friends and foes in her first battle. For the first time, the Song army had made a break-through against the formidable Seventy-Two Moves! The Commander-in-Chief thus decided to entrust his authority to Guiying.

Mu Guiying assumed the command without hesitation. Like a veteran general, she was composed and confident, calling the muster roll of officers and assigning them to different tasks. She taught and then ordered them to break the different moves of the formation one by one by the counter measures she knew. She did not forget to send a surprise detachment to cut off the enemy's supply line by burning all their food and fodder to ashes.

Lack of fodder, the Liao cavalry, the major component of their army, would be rendered useless. Without food, an army of tens of thousands strong could not sustain a protracted war out of its base.

As for the base, the City of Youzhou lost to the Great Liao in a previous battle, she ordered a third army to recapture it and thereby ridding the Liao of its bridgehead to invade Song. Then the Song army engaged the enemy in the final battle and won.

