Military families and the Southern Song court—the Lü case

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Introduction

The centralization of military power has been considered one of the chief characteristics of Song military policy. Many historians have argued that Song emperors were always suspicious of military men, because their dynasty was established through a military coup. To preclude the possibility of military rebellions, the dynasty centralized military power and prevented any general from personalizing relations with his troops.[1] Furthermore, most emperors and civil officials contained military power by maintaining peaceful relations with their neighbor countries. Lacking an arena for their talents, military officials enjoyed only limited influence in the political structure, and their status was inferior to that of civil officials.[2]

The policy of centralizing forces and asserting the supremacy of the civil, however, provides an incomplete picture of Song military history. Rather, the persistence of military families throughout the dynasty must be acknowledged. Family members serving together in armies was a common phenomenon. Through kinship networks, some military families came to enjoy great influence at the expense of the court, especially in times of turmoil. In the thirteenth century, the Song sank into a marathon war with its northern neighbors, which forced the court to entrust more power to professional soldiers. Top military

1. Edmund H. Worthy, "The Founding of Sung China, 950–1000: Interactive Changes in Military and Political Institutions," 180–190; John Labadie, "Rulers and Soldiers: Perception and Management of the Military in northern Sung China (960–CA.1060)," 35–39.

2. Brian McKnight, *Law and Order in Sung China*, 191–198; Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, 48–58, 148–155.

officials were able to expand their kin networks to enjoy vast political influence. This paper will study the most important such network—the Lü family, created by General Lü Wende 呂文德 (d. 1269). Coming from a commoner family with no official among his predecessors, Wende established a powerful group through kinship networks. During the last two decades of the Southern Song, Lü family members played crucial roles in border defense. Finally, the collective betrayal of the Song by Lü members directly precipitated the fall of the dynasty.

Why would a court with a long tradition of suppressing military power ignore the potential danger of such a powerful family? How did a commoner like Lü Wende develop so influential a military network so quickly? What prompted the Lü collectively to surrender to Mongol troops after more than two decades of struggle against them? Close analysis of the interaction between the Lü clan and the Southern Song court will reveal the political context in which the family developed, their special role during the marathon war between north and south, and the destructive effect of military families on the court.

Generals' Families Producing Future Generals

One of the unique innovations of the Song was to expand both educational institutions and the examination system. Apart from ending the monopoly of a long-entrenched aristocracy over the literary and political realms, this expansion provided the government with a larger candidate pool from which to select civil officials. In contrast to this successful system of civil education and recruitment, the cultivation and recruitment of military talent remained a major problem. Beginning with the reign of Emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 997–1022), the government often worried about the shortage of talented generals to handle military threats within and without. To solve this problem, the ruling elite adopted the same approach as they had for civil officials. Under Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022–1063), the court first established the military examination, then a military academy, expecting to recruit qualified generals through these two systems. However, in function, neither institution fulfilled its original purpose, so the emperor later abandoned them.[3]

3. The military school was eliminated in 1043, after only for three months, because some civil officials questioned its function. See Li Tao (1115–1184), *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* (hereafter XCB), 142.3423–24. The military examination was abolished in 1049, after twenty years, because the court worried that the military examination might attract too many literati away from Confucian

Although the initial attempt to create a military examination and academy failed, the need to recruit military talent remained, which forced the successors of Renzong to make another effort. After some adjustments, in 1065, the military examination was revived, and afterward it was held every three years.[4] The military academy was also resuscitated, as some officials insisted on the necessity of military education. In 1072, after clearly regulating the training and examination procedures for students, the court reintroduced the military academy to the capital.[5] Although the government continued to manage these two institutions until the end of the Southern Song, they ultimately could claim few substantive achievements in recruiting military officials. The crucial problem of the military examination and its related academy, as one thirteenth-century bureaucrat pointed out, was that they insisted on "using literary approaches to recruit military talent" (*yiwen qiuwu* 以文求武).[6] As a written examination provided the main mechanism for screening military candidates, the military academy ultimately cultivated students largely of literary background. The end result was that most men participating in the military examination and academy were literati without expertise in martial affairs. For less talented literati, the military examination and academy became a circuitous route to reach civil posts, because the government provided the opportunity to transfer from military office to civil office.[7] Although their numbers increased, military academy graduates and military degree holders lacked interest in a military career, so they never played a significant role within the army itself. In the second half of the twelfth century, the court tried to reform the malfunctioning military examination, but all such efforts ultimately failed.[8] In 1253, Emperor Lizong 理宗 (r. 1224–1264), in a question to Palace Examination candidates, continued to echo the complaint that the military examination failed to recruit talented generals.[9]

Due to the failure of the court's system of military education and recruit-

learning to military learning. See Xu Song (1781–1848), ed., *Song Huiyao jigao* (hereafter SHY), "xuanju 選舉"17.5–9.

4. Yang Kangsun, "Song wuju shulue," 51.

5. After the Jurchen invasion forced the Song court to move south, the military academy was rebuilt in the capital, Lin'an 臨安 (modern Hangzhou 杭州), in 1146. See Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi*, 252, 272.

6. Yao Mian (1216–1262), *Xuepo ji*, 7.23.

7. Liu Zijian, "Luelun Songdai wuguanqun zai tongzhi jieji zhong de diwei," 175, 177–78.

8. Yang Kangsun, "Song wuju shulue," 60.

9. Yao, *Xuepo ji*, 7.23.

ment, military skills and knowledge generally remained hereditary in the Song. The descendants of military officials were assumed to be conversant with military issues and qualified to inherit their ancestors' careers. This long-standing concept of "generals' families producing future generals" (*jiangmen chujiang* 將門出將) strongly influenced the appointment of military officials.[10] For example, in 1041, when the western border suffered a serious threat from the Tangut, Renzong ordered a nation-wide search for the descendants of former famous generals and appointed them to military posts.[11] Even if the sons of generals passed the civil service examination to assume civil offices, they were presumed to be qualified to manage border defenses as well. One example is Liu Ping 劉平 (973–?), a *jinshi* degree holder from a military family. Zhenzong once planned to promote Liu to an important civil post, but Prime Minister Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037) successfully thwarted this plan by arguing: "Liu Ping comes from a military family, so he should only assume border defense responsibilities 平出將家, 第宜任邊耳."[12] Being the primary heirs to military learning, sons of military officials had important functions in the Song army. From the court's perspective, if the descendants of military officials did not engage in military careers, there would be a serious problem. Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127–1162) once revealed this worry: "Now the descendants of generals are all ashamed of learning archery and horsemanship, and request transfers to civil posts. If this trend continues for a few years, there will be no one conversant in military skills 今諸將子弟皆恥習弓馬, 求換文資, 數年之後, 將無人習武矣!"[13] Thus, the court by necessity encouraged rather than prohibited the inheritance of military knowledge and the hereditary pursuit of military careers. Accordingly, aristocratic military families naturally persisted in the Song dynasty.

Due to the important function of military families, a paradoxical phenomenon existed in the Song. On the one hand, Song emperors and the civil elite were suspicious of personal networks in the army, especially bonds between generals and their subordinates.[14] On the other hand, the court provided the

10. The concept of "generals' families producing future generals" had existed by no later than the Warring States Period (480–222 B.C.). See Sima Qian (145–86 B.C.), *Shi ji*, 75.2353.

11. XCB, 134.3198.

12. XCB, 101.2330.

13. SHY, "chongru 崇儒" 3.33–34.

14. In early Song, generals usually selected their best soldiers to form their own bodyguards.

descendants of military officials with hereditary privileges to encourage them to serve in the army, which continually produced many military families. Through kinship and affinal connections, some military officials formed their own networks of personal loyalty, which tended to weaken the central control of the army in times of military crisis.

A Violent Era and the Rise of General Lü Wende

Confronting a grave threat from the Jurchen, the Southern Song was established under violent and chaotic circumstances. Relying on the service of soldiers to repulse northern invaders and suppress local rebels, the court was forced to tolerate the expansion of military power. It was the first time in the dynasty that generals amassed vast powers at the expense of central control of the army. To address this dangerous situation, Gaozong and his civil ministers eagerly negotiated a truce with the Jurchen. After both sides struck a peace pact in 1141, the Song court successfully terminated the era of violence to reestablish its dominance in southern China. The diminishing of the external threat deprived soldiers of their arena, and allowed the court to revive the supremacy of civil over military officials, as in the eleventh century.[15]

Peaceful conditions, however, suddenly changed in the early thirteenth century. First struggling with the Jurchen after 1217, then with the Mongols after 1234, the Song incurred enormous losses along their borders. Although the Song court tried several times to negotiate with the Mongols, they never reached a peace agreement. The only choice for the Song was to improve their defenses. Large numbers of troops were recruited, the majority permanently garrisoned in the areas contiguous to Mongol lands. To command these troops, the Song government divided its northern border into three administrative regions, Sichuan, Jinghu, and Huainan, which officials called

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Enjoying special treatment, these bodyguards had close relations with their commanders and were considered to be a potential resource that generals could use to rebel. Thus in 966, Emperor Taizu prohibited generals from recruiting bodyguards. See XCB, 7.178, 8.190. The court was also suspicious of any general who enjoyed strong support from his soldiers. One example is General Di Qing 狄青 (1008–1057), who was deprived of military power in 1056 due to the fact that many soldiers considered him a hero. See XCB, 183.4426–27, 4435.

15. For further discussion of the recovery of civil supremacy over the military in the early Southern Song, see Huang Kuan-Chung, "Cong hai Han dao sha Yue: Nan Song shou bingquan de bianzou," 105–139; Wang Zengyu, *Songchao bingzhi chutan*, 127–145.

the "Three Borders" (*sanbian* 三邊).[16] Each of them was under the governance of a military commissioner (*zhizhi shi* 制置使). Managing both civil and military affairs in their territories, these commissioners became the core figures in managing border defenses. Under the military commissioners were circuit governors (*anfu shi* 安撫使) and prefects. All of them possessed the authority to handle civil and military affairs in their circuits or prefectures.[17]

It was in this era of turmoil that Lü Wende and his family members entered the political arena. Lü's family background and upbringing is undocumented, but he certainly came from an ordinary commoner family in Anfeng 安豐 (modern Shouxian 壽縣 in Anhui 安徽 province).[18] As a strategically important town in Huaixi circuit, Anfeng had suffered several invasions from the northern enemies in the early thirteenth century.[19] This situation may have stimulated Lü Wende's military inclinations. Lü had become a military official by at least 1229.[20] His heroic career started in 1237, when he successfully led troops to lift the Mongol siege of his hometown Anfeng.[21] Thereafter, he became the principal general upon whom the military commissioner of Huainan, Li Zengbo 李曾伯, relied to defend the border. Lü Wende not only successfully repulsed the Mongol invasions many times, but also led his men north to harass the enemy. In his report to the emperor, Li praised Wende: "Having established a reputation in enemy lands, his record of feats reverberates across the Three Borders 聲名在于敵國, 勳績著于三邊."[22]

Serving under Lü Wende, some of his kinsmen, such as his younger brother Wenxin 文信 (d. 1259) and first cousin Wenfu 文福, also acquired repute during 1240s.[23] The Huai River region became the first arena of the

16. Li Tianming, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol. 1:219.

17. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.3:1535–37, 1540–41.

18. Before serving in the army, Lü Wende was a man who made a living by selling firewood and hunting. See *Songji sanchao zhengyao* (hereafter SJSC), 1.15. Due to his humble origins, Wende was criticized as "a stupid and vulgar commoner" by Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213–1280), a Song bureaucrat. See Huang's *Gujin jiyao yibian*, 19.

19. Tuo Tuo (1313–1355), *Song shi* (hereafter SS), 38.742; 40.770–772.

20. According to the record of Liu Yueshen 劉岳申 (1260–1346), Xia Gui 夏貴 (1197–1279), as a foot soldier, engaged in a campaign against rebels in 1229, and his performance earned Lü Wende's appreciation. Clearly, Lü was already a military official at that time. See Liu Yueshen, *Shenzhai Liuxiansheng ji*, 8.1.

21. For the details of the campaign in Anfeng, see Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.1:351–53.

22. Li Zengbo, *Kezhai xugao hou*, 3.54.

23. SS, 43.832, 834, 835–36. For the members of the Lü family, see genealogical chart.

Lü family. In the 1250s, the court moved Lü Wende to another battlefield, Jinghu. In 1254, when Li Zengbo, now the military commissioner of Jinghu, led troops to relieve the military crisis in Sichuan, Lü became the interim military commissioner of Jinghu.[24] Then, the court heard a report that the Mongols planned to raid the southwest part of Jinghu, which was guarded by very limited numbers of troops. The court sent Lü Wende to take charge of this unprecedented threat. From 1256 to 1258, Lü led his men to conquer the "barbarian" tribes along the southwestern border, building several new towns to strengthen defenses.[25] Lü's distinguished record between 1254 and 1258 reveals the court's exceptional trust in him. He was no longer a general following orders to fight, but had become a regional governor with authority to handle border defense independently.

The Mongol invasion in 1259 brought the Song to an unprecedented crisis, but it created the opportunity for Lü Wende to reach the peak of his career. Under the personal command of emperor Möngke (r. 1251–1259), Mongol troops launched a large-scale invasion in Sichuan. After quickly occupying many towns, Möngke laid siege to Hezhou 合州. Chongqing 重慶, the seat of Sichuan government, now came directly under his threat. One of the Mongol detachments occupied Fuzhou 涪州 in eastern Sichuan, severing communications between Sichuan and the rest of the Song empire. To deal with this crisis, the court appointed Jia Sidao賈似道 (1213–1275) as pacification commissioner (*xuanfu shi* 宣撫使) to command all military missions in the Sichuan and Jinghu areas.[26] Jia ordered Lü Wende to lead a fleet countercurrent up the Yangzi River to reinforce Sichuan. In the fifth month, Lü defeated the Mongol army in Fuzhou, forcing them to retreat to the west. Then, his fleet proceeded to Chongqing, effectively reestablishing communication between Sichuan and the court. In the seventh month, Möngke's sudden death caused Mongol troops to give up the siege and retreat north, so the crisis in Sichuan was over.[27]

Troubles for the embattled Song, however, did not end. A more serious threat emerged in the Jinghu area. Ignoring the death of the emperor, the

24. *Songshi quanwen xu zizhi tongjian* (hereafter SSQW), 35.8.

25. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.1:663, 685–86.

26. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:713–27.

27. For the details of the campaign in Sichuan, see Chen Shisong, *Song Yuan zhanzheng shi*, 146–154.

Mongol prince Khubilai (1215–1294) continued the mission Möngke had assigned to him. In the ninth month of 1259, Khubilai led his troops across the Yangzi River and laid siege to Ezhou 鄂州 (modern Wuchang 武昌).[28] Enemy penetration of their defense line along the Yangzi River utterly shocked the Song court. To stop Khubilai's march, Jia Sidao personally commanded the defense of Ezhou and ordered Lü Wende's son, Lü Shikui 呂師夔 (1230–1301), to defend Ezhou's sister city, Hanyang 漢陽.[29] To reinforce Ezhou, Lü Wende led his fleet downstream from Chongqing. In the eleventh month, they successfully broke the Mongol blockade to enter Ezhou.[30] Lü's reinforcement strengthened the Song's defense and caused Khubilai to reevaluate the siege. Pessimistic about his chances of victory, and worried about the succession dispute over the Mongol throne, Khubilai headed back north. In early 1260, Song troops finally (if temporarily) expelled all Mongol armies from their territory.[31]

Lü Wende's feats in Sichuan and Ezhou accrued for him both renown and bounty. In an edict, Emperor Lizong pronounced: "I have a minister of tiger-like bravery, none other than [Lü] Wende 朕有虎臣, 時爲文德."[32] Along with a huge monetary award, Lü received several promotions, ultimately becoming the military commissioner of Jinghu and receiving the nominal title Acting Junior Mentor (*jianjiao shaofu* 檢校少傅).[33] Conferral of Junior Mentor standing represented an unusual award for a military man like Wende and confirmed his top status among Song generals.

Lü Wende's Connection with Civil Officials

Thus far, it appears that Lü Wende's elevation was mainly due to his unique set of military talents and achievements. While most Song generals could only resist the Mongol attack behind fortifications, Lü was able to attack his enemy in the open field, winning many engagements. Even his personal rivals admired his capabilities.[34] Given the court's reliance on his service, Lü's

28. Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan—his life and times*, 49–50.
29. SS, 474.13781; *Xianchun yishi*, a.27; Fang Hui (1227–1307), *Tongjiang xuji*, 27.8.
30. SSQW, 36.11; Song Lian et al., *Yuan shi* (hereafter YS), 4.62.
31. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:770–773.
32. SSQW, 36.4, 10, 13–14.
33. SS, 44.868.
34. Liu Zheng 劉整 (1213–1275), a Song general surrendering to the Mongol side owing to

promotion to high posts seems natural. On the other hand, martial capability was not the only factor behind Lü's success. His friendly relations with some high level civil officials also helped advance his career.

In the thirteenth-century Song government, the political and cultural distinctions between civil and military officials were sharp, and the most important central and local posts were controlled by civil officials. On military issues, most decisions were made by prime ministers at court and military commissioners in their border regions. For military men, the post of prime minister was unobtainable, and even the promotion to military commissioner was hard to achieve. From 1234 to 1259, only one military official, Meng Gong 孟珙 (1195–1246), ever reached that post.[35] Under this dominant civil structure, essentially it was civil officials who decided the promotion and demotion of military men. Thus, regardless of individual talent, a military official's relations with civil bureaucrats were crucial to the advancement of his career.

Lü Wende undoubtedly realized this situation. Like most talented generals of his time, Lü did not consider civilian leaders worthy of respect. However, in contrast to several of his colleagues, who paid with their lives for disregarding their civil commanders,[36] Lü always cultivated good relations with his superior officials by hiding his contempt for literati.[37] When he worked in the Huai River region, Li Zengbo was the military commissioner. Some of Li's poems and prose clearly reveal his friendship with Lü, and his appreciation of Lü's capabilities.[38] In 1244, Lü Wende had a conflict with his colleague Xu Minzi 徐敏子, prompting Xu to make a false report accusing Lü of sedition. When the court investigated this impeachment, it was none other than Li Zengbo who used the lives of all his clan members as a pledge to guarantee Wende's loyalty.[39] Wende thus avoided injury from Xu's accusation. Besides rapport with

a conflict with Lü Wende, told the Mongol leaders that Lü was the only commander on whom the Song government could rely. See SJSC, 3.9.

35. Fang Zhenhua (Fang Cheng-Hua), "Wan Song bianfang yanjiu (A.D. 1234–1275)," 122–23.

36. For example, Generals Cui Fu 崔福 and Wang Kui 王夔 (d. 1252), both famous for their bravery in the Lizong reign, were executed because of their arrogant attitude to their superior civil officials. See SS, 419.12564–65, 416.12471–72.

37. Only after Lü Wende reached his top post did he tell his civil staff about his exact feelings for literati: "I always disregard literati, because they are not able to handle any substantial affairs 吾平生輕文人, 以其不事事也." See SS, 450.13258.

38. Li Zengbo, *Kezhai zagao*, 22.18, 34.15; *Kezhai xugao qian*, 8.1.

39. Li, *Kezhai xugao hou*, 3.54–57.

his superior officials in local government, Lü Wende also tried to build good connections with top court officials. For example, Lü had a close relationship with Xie Fangshu 謝方叔 (d. 1272), who assumed the post of prime minister from 1251 to 1255. When writing letters to Xie, Lü fostered goodwill by always calling Xie "benefactor," and humbly designating himself "a servant of Your Honor."[40]

Lü Wende's close connection with Jia Sidao ultimately helped him to extend his influence far beyond that of his colleagues. In 1259, when Jia personally commanded the defense of Ezhou, his leadership was disregarded by some generals, such as Gao Da 高達 and Cao Shixiong 曹世雄. They undertook missions without informing Jia, and even publicly taunted him as an incompetent commander. In contrast, Lü Wende respected Jia's superior status and criticized Gao and Cao for their insubordinate conduct.[41] Appreciating Lü's obedience, Jia felt favorably toward him.

After Mongol troops had retreated, Jia Sidao emerged as the hero to save the empire, and was promoted to prime minister in 1260.[42] Although reaching the top post at court, Jia was not insensitive to the criticisms of bureaucrats. In the Lizong reign, the censure of censors reduced many prime ministers to short terms of office. As the Mongol invasion directly threatened the survival of the dynasty, border defense had become the primary topic for debate at court. To Jia, defending against the Mongol invasion was especially crucial, because his promotion was based on perceived military feats. To secure and legitimize his control at court, Jia needed to handle border defense effectively. Being prime minister, however, Jia was no longer able personally to command the armies, so he needed trusted officials to handle military affairs along the border. Jia considered several factors in the selection of such officials. On the one hand, the men had to be militarily talented and obedient to his orders. On the other hand, rather cynically, Jia worried that these border commanders might someday replace him by accomplishing feats similar to his own in 1259. The Song dynastic tradition, which clearly distinguished military officials from civil bureaucrats, prohibited generals from becoming prime ministers. Regardless of the merit won, therefore, a military official could not replace Jia in his current post. This restriction resulted in Jia's preference to appoint

40. Zhou Mi (1232–1298), *Qidong yeyu*, 7.125–26.
41. SS, 474.13781.
42. SSQW, 36.17–18.

professional soldiers, rather than civil officials, as military commissioners along the northern border.[43]

His rare combination of military talent and political compliance made Lü Wende a Jia Sidao favorite. Beginning in late 1259, Lü became the military commissioner of Jinghu, a post he held until his death in 1270. From 1261 to 1262, moreover, he served concurrently as military commissioner of Sichuan.[44] Even after that, he continued to assume control over major military missions in the Sichuan region.[45] Thus, two of the "Three Borders" were under Lü's governance for ten years. Lü's importance to Jia Sidao is vividly illustrated in an incident of 1264, when Emperor Lizong died and was succeeded by Emperor Duzong 度宗 (r. 1264–1274). To confirm his status under the new reign, Jia resigned his posts after the ascension of the new emperor. At the same time, he secretly asked Lü Wende to make a false report that Mongol troops had mounted a large-scale invasion. At the time of Jia's resignation, the news of the purported invasion immediately produced panic at court. The inexperienced emperor begged Jia to return to his work and conferred on him a higher nominal title to confirm his paramount status at court. Afterward, Jia retained control for the duration of Duzong's reign.[46]

To be sure, Lü Wende's cooperation with Jia Sidao was not totally one-sided, but mutually beneficial. Jia acceded to virtually all Lü's requests for rewards for his services. Such favoritism prompted one critical civil official to liken the court's appeasement of Lü to the spoiling of a child.[47] Along with the expansion of Wende's own influence, his kinsmen assumed many important posts. His younger brother Wenhuan 文煥 was appointed the circuit governor of Jingxi;[48] his first cousin Wenfu 文福 worked as the circuit governor

43. For further discussion of Jia Sidao's preference for promoting military officials to top commands along the border, see Fang, "Wan Song bianfang," 122–24.

44. SS, 45.878, 883.

45. From 1263, one of Lü Wende's concurrent posts was commissioner of support services in Sichuan (*Sichuan ceyingshi* 四川策應使), so he took charge of all military emergencies in Sichuan. For example, in 1267 under Lü's command, Song troops recaptured Kaizhou 開州, a strategically important city in eastern Sichuan that had been occupied by the Mongols in 1266. See Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:914, 921.

46. SS, 474.13783–85.

47. See the memorial of Gao Side in his *Chitang cungao*, 1.22.

48. SS, 46.899, 911. For Lü Wenhuan's biography, see Ke Weiqi, *Songshi xinbian* (hereafter SSXB), 131.15.

of Huaixi.[49] Wende's sons Shikui[50] and Shiwang 師望,[51] and Wenfu's son Shimeng 師孟 (1234–1304) all became prefects along the border in 1260s.[52] Wende's son-in-law Fan Wenhu 范文虎 became deputy chief-commander of the metropolitan Palace Guard.[53] Lü Wende's network also extended to his former subordinates, who identified closely with him. The most important was Xia Gui, who ultimately became the military commissioner of Sichuan, then Huainan.[54] Ruan Sicong 阮思聰 (d. 1281), who had served under Lü Wende since the 1240s, also became a top military official in the reign of Duzong.[55] Like Wende, these Lü family members also tried to win Jia Sidao's favor. Fan Wenhu, for example, spent almost half of his annual income on bribing Jia.[56]

To further develop his influence in the civil administration and central government, Lü Wende expanded his network from generals to bureaucrats and literati. In 1267, he requested that the emperor change Lü Shikui's military office to a civil one. In appreciation of the military feats of Wende and Shikui, the emperor privileged Shikui with appointment as grand master for court services (*chaofeng daifu* 朝奉大夫).[57] Another approach Wende adopted was to recruit famous literati as his staff members or recommend them to the court. When the court ordered top officials to recommend talented men for office in 1267, for example, he recommended ninety-six men, including the famous scholar Ouyang Shoudao 歐陽守道 (1209–?).[58] Fang Hui 方回 (1227–1307), another celebrated thirteenth-century literatus, originally served

49. SS, 45.877; 46.903, 904.

50. Lü Shikui became the prefect of Hanyang 漢陽, Wanzhou 萬州 and Chizhou 池州 respectively. See *Tongjiang xuji*, 25.20.

51. There remains little information on Lü Shiwang, so we only know that he was once the prefect of Hezhou 和州. See Fang Hui, *Tongjiang ji*, 2.276, 3.453–454.

52. See Lü Shimeng's epitaph, "Gu xuanwei jiayi Lügong muzhi ming," written by Fang Hui, in *Wenwu* 1959.11, 20.

53. SSQW, 36.35. For Fan Wenhu's biography, see SSXB, 131.15–16.

54. On Xia Gui's career, see his "stele in tomb path" (*shendao bei* 神道碑) written by Liu Yueshen in *Shenzhai liuxiansheng ji*, 8.4–5.

55. Lü Wende married the daughter of his uncle to Ruan Sicong as reward for his military talents. See Ruan's biography in Zhang Xuan, et al., *Zhizheng Jinling xinzhi*, 14.68–71.

56. Fang Hui, *Tongjiang ji*, 6.5.

57. *Xianchun yishi*, a.27. In the Southern Song, the status of civil officials was designated by forty ranks, and Grand Master for Court Service represented number nineteen.

58. SS, 411.12366.

under Lü Wende and Lü Shikui, then passed the civil service examination through Shikui's recommendation.[59] These efforts proved significant: they created support for the Lü family among civilian leaders in and away from court.

While Lü Wende helped his kinsmen and cohorts to assume high posts, the generals he disliked suffered unfairly. For example, General Liu Zheng's remarkable record in 1259 incurred Wende's envy. Wende thus accused Liu of abusing public expenses. This baseless accusation forced Liu to surrender his troops and domain over to the Mongols in 1261.[60] One official complained that because Lü controlled the promotion and demotion of generals, most generals along the border were men with personal connections to him.[61] Reflecting on Lü's dominant power in the army, people identified the troops in Jinghu as the "Family army of the Lü clan" (*Lüjia jun* 呂家軍).[62]

The Campaign of Xiangyang and the Lü Family's Betrayal

If the betrayal of Liu Zheng derived from the dominant power of Lü Wende in the Song army, this incident actually sowed the seeds of misfortune for the powerful Lü family. In an audience with the Mongol emperor, Liu Zheng proposed a new strategy for conquering the Song. Previously, the Mongols had tended to mount large-scale invasions through simultaneous attacks on several fronts. Yet deploying numerous armies along different fronts had a serious disadvantage: it was hard for the Mongol government to supply them over a long period. To counter the invaders, defensively inclined Song generals held their soldiers behind fortifications, blocking the Yangzi River with their overwhelming navy and waiting for the enemy to retreat after exhausting their provisions. To overcome the Song advantage, Liu suggested that Khubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294) concentrate his forces to occupy one important Song city as a base for further operations. His target was Xiangyang 襄陽 and its sister city, Fancheng 樊城. Located in the northern part of the Jinghu region,

59. For Fang Hui's relationship with Lü Wende and his relatives, see his *Tongjiang xuji*, 22.3–4, 24.7, 25.19–20.

60. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi, "Ryūsei no hanran," 307–11.

61. The words of Huang Zhen; see his *Gujin jiyao yibian*, 18–19.

62. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2: 986–87.

these two cities protected the routes to the Middle Yangzi River basin and were well-defended by Song troops. The top commander in this region was Lü Wende's younger brother, Wenhuan.[63] Accepting Liu's plan, Khubilai made a watershed decision about his campaign against the Song, initiating a five-year siege on Xiangyang that ultimately succeeded.

In late 1267, the Mongols started military operations in the Xiangyang region. Instead of directly challenging Xiangyang's strong fortifications, Mongol leaders adopted a new tactic to overcome the defensive-minded Song generals. Surrounding Xiangyang, they built many fortifications and established their own navy to block the Song troops from bringing in supplies and reinforcements. By isolating Xiangyang from the rest of the Song, they believed, they could cause the Song garrisons to surrender after exhausting their provisions.[64] At the beginning, the Song generals did not intuit the change in the invaders' tactics, and assumed that they would withdraw as usual after a prolonged and unsuccessful siege. In early 1269, Lü Wende finally realized the gravity of the situation at Xiangyang, and planned to mount an offensive against Mongol armies. However, he suddenly fell ill and died in the twelfth month, so his offensive plans were aborted.[65]

Losing his most reliable general at the peak of the Mongol invasion, Jia Sidao faced a serious problem. He once thought of personally commanding the armed forces in the Xiangyang region, but Emperor Duzong rejected this plan. After a period of hesitation, Jia appointed Li Tingzhi 李庭芝 (d. 1276) as the military commissioner of Jinghu. Li had served on Jia's staff and was talented and experienced as commander.[66] Lacking connections with the Lü family, however, Li faced antagonism from the members of that network. Fan Wenhu and Xia Gui, the main generals taking charge of the mission to relieve Xiangyang, did not want to be under Li's command. Fan exploited the potential tension between Li and Jia to exempt himself from Li's supervision. As a civil official with a *jinshi* degree, Li was likely to be promoted to prime minister if he managed some outstanding feats. Thus, the success of Li could become a threat to Jia's own power. Sensitive to such concerns, Fan sent a letter to Jia,

63. On the strategic significance of Xiangyang, see Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, 82; Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:945–949.

64. Fang Zhenhua, "Jia Sidao yu Xiang Fan zhizhan," 32.

65. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:970–71.

66. SS, 421.12599–12600.

arguing: "With several tens of thousands of soldiers deployed at Xiangyang, I can eliminate the enemy in just one battle. As long as I am not placed under the command of the Jinghu military commissioner, when I succeed all credit will go to you, Mr. Minister 吾將兵數萬入襄陽, 一戰可平, 但無使聽命於京閫, 事成則功歸恩相矣."[67] Excited about Fan's idea, Jia ordered that Fan's army be placed under the direct command of the court. Song reinforcements thus came under two different command systems, precluding a concentration of forces to expel the invaders. The only achievement of Li and Fan was occasionally to pierce the blockade and transport provisions to the beleaguered cities. Unfortunately, after the Mongols reinforced their troops to total two hundred thousand men, and built more ramparts and fleets to consolidate their blockade, even provisioning became impossible. Without external support, Xiangyang was destined to fall.[68]

Meanwhile, the Mongols adhered to a strategy of forcing the Song troops at Xiangyang to surrender, for two reasons. First, they did not want to risk an all-out war over the well-defended city. Second, appraising as vital the Lü family's role in the Song army and government, Mongol authorities were anxious to convince Lü Wenhuan to change allegiances.[69] In 1269, Mongol generals sent Lü a letter to persuade him to surrender. Besides exaggerating the forces they commanded, the Mongol generals also warned Lü that his clan's enormous power might cause the Song court to doubt their loyalty. If Wenhuan surrendered, they promised, he would receive a high level post and generous emolument.[70] In 1271, Khubilai Khan personally intervened by issuing an edict that invited Wenhuan to submit.[71] However, up to 1272, these offers yielded no result. Although increasingly exhausted, Lü Wenhuan and his men stubbornly defended their territory. In late 1272, the Mongol generals decided to compel Wenhuan's surrender by occupying Fancheng. After weeks of bloody fighting that incurred huge casualties on both sides, in the

67. SS, 421.12601.

68. For further discussion of the campaign of Xiangyang, see Richard Davis, *Wind Against the Mountain: the Crisis of Politics and Culture in Thirteenth-century China*, 52–59; Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, 82–86; Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:954–1055; Fang, "Jia Sidao yu Xiang Fan zhizhan," 32–33.

69. On the Mongol officials' perceptions of the Lü family's importance in the Song, see Hu Zhiyu (1227–1295), *Zishan daquanji*, 12.27; Wei Chu, *Qingyai ji*, 4.32.

70. Su Tianjue (1234–1352) ed., *Guochao wenlei*, 37.11–12.

71. YS, 7.137.

first month of 1273 the Mongols finally captured Fancheng, massacring all Song soldiers and civilians and piling up their corpses to form a tall mound, intimidating soldiers at nearby Xiangyang.[72]

The victory at Fancheng demonstrated that the Mongol army could also occupy Xiangyang by force. However, the Mongol court patiently awaited Lü Wenhuan's surrender. To show their sincerity, the Mongol authorities recalled Liu Zheng from the battlefield to prevent his personal resentment against the Lü family from becoming an obstacle to Wenhuan's surrender. Then, several high-ranking generals were sent to Xiangyang for negotiations. These efforts ultimately resulted in Wenhuan's surrender in the second month.[73] Soon after, Khubilai Khan summoned Lü Wenhuan to audience and appointed him a high-ranking general.[74] His patience and generosity immediately paid the expected dividends, as Wenhuan was now willing to design a plan to conquer the entire Song. Wenhuan's knowledge of the location of Song troops and the geography of the Yangzi River basin provided the Mongol generals with an unprecedented opportunity: through Wenhuan's direction, they could detour well-defended towns and quickly press southeastward to the heart of the Song.

Lü Wenhuan's betrayal endangered his relatives, so Lü Wenfu and Lü Shikui requested to retire from their posts. Fan Wenhu was also impeached by censors for failing to defend Xiangyang.[75] This powerful network, it seemed, would suddenly lose its influence. However, support from Duzong and Jia Sidao solved this crisis. Still, the fall of Xiangyang was also a serious strike to the reputation of the emperor and his prime minister. Many bureaucrats submitted memorials to criticize the incapacity of the court and troops in the campaign of Xiangyang, and urgently warned the emperor about the dangerous situation along the border. In this context, Emperor Duzong and Jia Sidao believed that a large-scale reorganization of border defenses would amplify the panic. Only through non-action, they thought, could the court calm the tide of critics.[76] Thus, after the fall of Xiangyang, the Song government did not adopt a new policy of defense, nor did they depose any Lü family members. Defenses

72. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:1055–60.
73. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:1061–62.
74. YS, 8.149.
75. SS, 46.913, 915; 451.13278.
76. Fang, "Jia Sidao yu Xiang Fan zhizhan," 33–34.

along the middle Yangzi River were still controlled by the Lü and their cohort. Clearly, Jia believed that Lü Wenhuan's treason would not alter the loyalty of his relatives and friends. As the Lü family enjoyed wide support among civil officials, Jia's continued reliance on the Lü family raised few questions.

In direct contrast to the thinking of Song authorities, the Mongol leaders believed Lü Wenhuan capable of convincing his relatives and friends to forgo resistance. In the ninth month of 1274, the Mongols mounted a large-scale campaign against the Song. The main body of their troops marched south from Xiangyang, with Lü Wenhuan leading his men in the vanguard to urge his former colleagues to submit.[77] Wenhuan's inducement was extremely effective. His relatives and former subordinates quickly changed their allegiance when they encountered the invaders. The main allies identified with the Lü network—Lü Wenfu, Lü Shikui, Fan Wenhu, and Xia Gui—all turned their territories and troops over to the Mongols, and helped to negotiate the surrender of other commanders.[78] The Song court was powerless to stop this collective betrayal. Thus, the Mongol armies quickly approached the Song capital, Lin'an.

This disruption of defense caused the exile of Jia Sidao, but his successors were not able to solve the crisis either. The Song authorities placed their last hopes on the Lü family, expecting that these renegade generals would yet prove helpful in stopping the Mongol invasion. Their naïve anticipation emanated from a myth created by civil officials with close connections to the Lü family. These bureaucrats argued that the Lü were not renegades, but forced to surrender to the Mongols by Jia Sidao's corruption. The punishment of Jia might resuscitate the loyalty of these generals.[79] Influenced by these arguments, in late 1275, the Song court sent a letter to Lü Wenhuan in which they blamed Jia for causing the current crisis and requested Wenhuan to forge a truce with the Mongols. Then, the last Lü family member remaining on the Song side, Lü Shimeng, received a quick promotion to high civil post and was sent to negotiate for the Song at the Mongol camp.[80]

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77. YS, 8.156.

78. Liu Yiqing, *Qiantang yishi*, 7.1–2; YS, 127.3104, 154.3631–32; SS, 47.928.

79. The memorials of Xie Fangde 謝枋得 (1226–1289) and Fang Hui, both close friends of Lü Shikui, were good examples. See *Zhaozhong lu*, 49; SS, 425.12688; Fang Hui, *Tongjiang ji*, 3.437, 441.

80. SS, 47.936; Fang Hui, "Gu xuanwei jiayi Lügong muzhi ming."

Although the Song authorities had high expectations of Lü Wenhuan, the result of their plea was disappointing. Realizing that they had already destroyed the Song defense system, Lü's Mongol superiors insisted on the Song emperor's unconditional surrender. Although the Song court continued to ask for Lü Wenhuan's help while promoting Lü Shimeng, as these two were the liaison between the two sides in negotiation, neither Lü obtained any advantage for the Song. In the first month of 1276, the Song emperor finally announced his submission and let the Mongols enter the capital with no resistance.[81]

Self-interest was certainly the chief motivation behind the Lü family's collective surrender. Having resisted Mongol troops in the Xiangyang region for more than five years, the Lü definitely recognized the overwhelming power of their enemies. The Mongol invasion in 1274 could have completely destroyed their power, but Mongol authorities preferred to absorb this powerful network rather than eliminate it. The benefits Lü Wenhuan enjoyed after his surrender illustrated the generosity of the Mongol government. Thus, Lü Wenhuan easily made his allies identified with the Lü network believe that the best approach to protect personal and familial benefits was to turn to the Mongol side.[82] Moreover, since they had had the Song leaders' unreserved trust, when Lü members decided to change their alliance there was no other force that could curb them. The betrayal of the Lü family was definitely beyond the imagination of Song authorities, who believed that the favor, status, and power the Lü group enjoyed would secure their loyalty. After the Lü family defected, the Song court actually lost the momentum to stop the Mongol army. The weakness of the Song officials was clearly illustrated by the fact that they begged for Lü Wenhuan's help. Lacking resources to bargain with the Mongols, however, Song court found that its pleas failed to produce results.

Conclusion

Because the Song lacked an effective institution to train military commanders, military families actually became the means to perpetuate military learning and skills. Thus, to have kinsmen working together in the army was unavoidable, even though Song authorities were usually suspicious of personal net-

81. Li, *Song Yuan zhanshi*, vol.2:1253–60.

82. The Lü family did prosper in the Yuan dynasty. See Davis, *Wind Against the Mountain*, 55.

works among army officers. The internal loyalty created by kinship networks was a potentially debilitating factor in the centralization of military forces. However, during most of the Song dynasty, the court successfully prevented the expansion of military power by maintaining peaceful relations with their neighbors and placing generals under the control of civil officials. As long as military men lacked influence in general, military families rarely grew into a threat to central authority. However, the continuous wars in the thirteenth century significantly changed the relationship between the court and generals. When the court had to reward military officials with power and status in exchange for their service, the kinship networks of generals became a threat to centralized control.

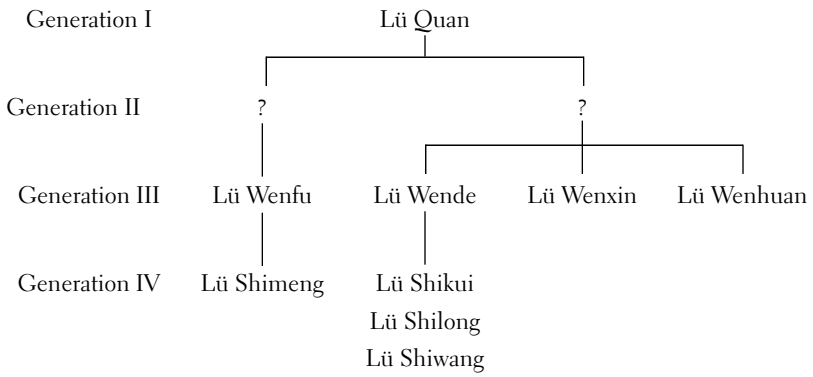
Like other military families of the time, the network Lü Wende created was based mainly on lineage and marriage, augmented through the personal connections forged by Wende with his subordinate generals. Although connections among generals provided the base of power for the Lü family, that base was not sufficient to enable them to overwhelm their military colleagues. A crucial factor producing the eminence of the Lü family was their friendship with civil officials. By maintaining obedience and modesty, Lü Wende successfully built friendships with high level civil officials, especially Prime Minister Jia Sidao. Relying on Jia's support, this network controlled border defenses after 1260. When the Lü kinsmen could dislodge generals they disliked from posts or influence, the court no longer upheld principles and fairness among its army, leading to the decline of central control.

For Jia Sidao, an alliance with the Lü family was the means to retain dominance. His ambition for political power was the primary factor preventing Jia from sensing the potential danger of the Lü family's influence. Nor were most other civil officials at that time worried about the threat of that powerful network to the court's control of armed forces. On the one hand, the Lü family did provide the military service the Song government needed for several decades, which legitimized their promotion. On the other hand, the fact that Lü members sought friendship with literati and civil officials earned them broad support among civil officials. Thus, only a few officials questioned the expansion of this influential network, and even after most Lü members changed their alliance, some civil officials still anticipated that they would assist the perishing dynasty.

In contrast, the Mongol leaders perceived this weakness of the Song court, and were eager to exploit it. Through alternately using intimidation

and bribery, the Mongol government ultimately convinced the main figures identified with the Lü network to change their loyalty, and used them to conquer the Song. In the face of overwhelming Mongol strength, members of the Lü network protected their position by collectively betraying the Song government, which had provided them with power and status in the first place. Concentrating too much power in networks such as the Lü clan, the government sowed the seeds of its own collapse in 1276.

Family Tree of the Lü of Anfeng



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