

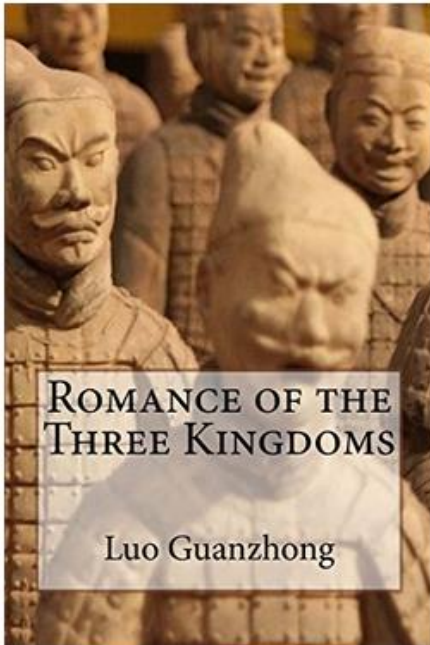


Romance of the Three Kingdoms

By Brendan Wagner
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Introduction

In the final years of the Eastern Han dynasty, the Yellow Turban rebellion raged for eight months until it was quelled. In 189 AD, the 14-year-old Emperor Shao (Liu Bian), succeeded to the throne. His powerful maternal uncle, Commander-in-Chief He Jin, sought to exterminate the palace Eunuchs by adopting Yuan Shao's idea of ordering Dong Zhuo to secretly lead an army toward the capital. The era of the Three Kingdoms, over 100 years of war and chaos, thus began.



In 189 AD, Dong Zhuo deposed Emperor Shao, and put Liu Xie, the Prince of Chenliu, on the throne as Emperor Xian. Dong Zhuo, as the self-appointed Chancellor, had the entire court under his power. Thus he provoked the wrath of Heaven and men alike, and caused the indignation of the whole nation.

After much anger and rage through the court, Cao Cao took it upon himself to become close

enough to the villainous Chancellor, to make an assassination attempt on him, but it fell through when the reflection of the dagger on a mirror woke Dong Zhuo as he slept. Cao Cao managed to escape Luoyang, but now the idle seething of Dong Zhuo has turned into an open fury.

Bannerman, heroes, brave men, and men of the World: the Dynasty of Han calls on you now! Great calamity has befallen the Imperial House. Just as the Yellow Turbans have been quashed a new villain presents himself! The traitor dog Dong Zhuo, with the illustrious Lu Bu by his side, takes the Emperor hostage, as he ravages the court. The boor threatens the stability of the Han at our most perilous hour. The responsibility is all of ours as lords and countrymen of the nation.

Important Terms

Yellow Turbans: The Yellow Turban Rebellion isn't just a footnote or small rebellion in the history of China. It is one of the deadliest rebellions in the history of the world with an estimated death toll of ~8,000,000. While the majority of it was settled in less than a year, it wouldn't be truly over until 205 AD. It was focused in the Central Plains of China, but spread throughout the whole empire. It was a peasant rebellion (recognizable by their Yellow Turbans) that marked the end of the Han Dynasty, would be the kindling for the Three Kingdoms, and would mark a major point in Taoist history. While the majority of Yellow Turbans have been quashed, they are still around, and it is the duty of any man loyal to the Han to fight these scoundrels at every turn.

Style Names: All the main characters have both their given names and their Style names. Style names are names chosen by the individual at adulthood. It is cordial to call a man by his Style name and seen as disrespectful to call a man by



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his given name. Alternatively it is seen as pompous and haughty to call oneself by one's styled name and is proper to call himself by his given name. For example: Cao Cao would refer to himself as "Cao Cao" but he would call Yuan Shao "Yuan Benchu". Delegates shouldn't be concerned about Style names for non-delegate characters. Also all names have been written in traditional Chinese style with the surname coming first.

Military Law: Oftentimes, failure to complete a task, one would be subjected to, "Military Law". Military law is execution. It was common for lords and generals to volunteer themselves for a task, with the promise of being submitted to Military Law, if one fails. There are many cases of escaping this fate by being demoted and proving their worth on the battlefield or lashes.

Bowing and Prostration: It was common practice in Han court for generals, advisors, and lords to bow at a slight degree or a "1" (see Image Index, img), with hands held in front, to signal they had something to say. Delegates are encouraged to use this in place of holding up a placard. ****This is not required**** Delegates who would rather raise their placards to speak will still be recognized equally. Something also very often found in Han court was prostration, or "kowtow" 磕頭, which was bowing until one's forehead reached the floor (see Image Index, img 1; 5-6), in an ultimate sign of submission, almost always from a underling to a superior. **Never** will a delegate be asked to prostrate or "kowtow" by **anyone**, staff or other delegates.

Children's Songs: A way a man could learn of the changing tides was by listening to what children would sing. In ancient Han Chinese culture, what children would sing about was representative of what the people of China thought and desired, or at least that's what everyone believed in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Delegates should pay attention to "what the children are singing about" if they want to understand the sentiment of the Han people.

Mandate of Heaven: For a sovereign to be able to govern, he must have "legitimacy".

Depending on the government type, this legitimacy may consist of different things, but for Han China, it was largely defined as "The Mandate of Heaven,". The "Mandate" is a culmination of the desires of the people, the Earth, and the Heavens, witnessable through happenings largely described as, "destiny". The "Mandate" is very unique in the way it combines the reality of the physical/material, and the spiritual.

Li: A *li*, sometimes known as a "Chinese mile," was the way of measuring great distances. It was equal to about .3 miles, or .5 kilometers.

Supplies: One of the most important aspects of military strategy of the ancient world was logistics and supplies, especially when traveling great distances. While delegates shouldn't be overly concerned with their troop counts, a warlord who takes no consideration for his supplies will surely end up in a regrettable situation. Continuous military action will quickly deplete ones' reserves. Alternatively, if someone wanted to make quick work of their enemies, attacking their supplies is a sure fire way to do it. If a delegate/warlord would like to check on their supplies all they must do is ask one of their advisors (write to Crisis).

Imperial Seal/Heirloom Seal of the Realm: Originally created by the order of Qin Shi Huang in 221 B.C., the first Imperial Dynasty of China. An inscription is carved into the side of it reading, "Having received the Mandate of Heaven, may (the Emperor) lead a long and prosperous life". The Seal represents legitimacy and partially the Mandate, however if one considers themselves loyal to the Han, and holds onto the Seal, they shall meet the wrath of other Han loyalists.

Prowess: For the purpose of this committee "prowess" specifically refers to ones personal combat ability.



Non-Delegate Characters

Dong Zhuo, Chancellor: A true enemy to the Han and usurper of power, he uses the court's treasures and resources to his whim. He can be described as arbitrary, vengeful, and quick to anger.

Lu Bu, Warrior of Legend: Adopted son of Dong Zhuo, and a force on the battlefield, it has been said that Lu Bu is equal to 10,000 troops. There is a common saying that goes, "Among men, Lu Bu; Among horses, Red Hare." Red Hare is the famous mount of Lu Bu that is said to, "capable of traveling 1,000 *li* in a day," and it "... crosses rivers and climbs mountains as though it were moving on flat land." Lu Bu was gifted Red Hare by Dong Zhuo after Lu Bu killed his first adoptive father, **Ding Yuan**, for Dong Zhuo. The only other known thing that Lu Bu cares for is a courtier of the Han court, **Diaochan**. With his Trident Halberd in hand, and atop Red Hare, Lu Bu should be feared as a menacing force on the battlefield.

Liu Xie, Emperor Xian of the Han: In 189, at the age of 8, he became Emperor after Dong Zhuo deposed his older half-brother. He has known nothing, but strife, manipulation, and deceit.

Guan Yu (Yunchang) and **Zhang Fei** (Yide): The two sworn brothers of Liu Bei also come from humble backgrounds, Guan Yu being a guardsman and Zhang Fei a butcher. They all met when the Yellow Turbans began rising and swore to defeat them together. They made a pact together, "The Peach Garden Oath." In this Oath they swore to vanquish the traitors to the Han and all evil doers. They went on to say, "We seek not to be born on the same day, in the same month and in the same year. We merely hope to die on the same day, in the same month and in the same year." Guan Yu is described as having a long beard, and intense, red face with eyebrows like a Phoenix. He carries a heavy polearm with a long blade on it named, "Green

Dragon Blade". Zhang Fei is described as having the body of a bear and the intensity of an angry tiger. He carries a spear with a long curving blade resembling a moving snake called the, "Serpent Spear."

King Shamoke: It is quoted in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, "His face was spotted with red as if splashed with blood that is split from the mouth, and his eyes were blue and big. He rushed among [the] troops, mighty and fierce, wielding two spiked iron maces with long poles, with two bows slung at his belt." He is a fierce warrior from a group of barbarians that aren't Han. While the barbarians are far from united, Shamoke will be eager to unify the tribes. If his description wasn't fierce enough, he employs flaming axe men, tigers, and elephants in his army. King Shamoke is incredibly tough, but isn't completely removed from diplomacy. However he is approached, he should not be underestimated.

Tao Qian, Governor of Xu: Known in his youth for being studious and honest, Tao Qian is a direct, but unambitious man. Much older than most of the men here, he is reaching the end of his days in the territories he was awarded by the Han with helping put down rebellions across the land. Since his acquisition of them, he hasn't sought to expand any further. His rule has been kind and in return, he has won the hearts and minds of the people of Xu province. Despite his age, he has no heir-apparent. It should be noted that Tao Qian is also a part of the coalition against **Dong Zhuo**.

Liu Biao, Governor of Jing: A level and temperate man, Liu Biao has aligned himself to the Empire (ergo the coalition against the coalition against **Dong Zhuo**), but does not seek war. He is in his later years and currently finds himself in a predicament when it comes to his succession, between two sons from two mothers. He is a level headed man, however his wealth that he has amassed is heavy and should not be tested without proper consideration.

Sleeping Dragon and Fledgling Phoenix: There is tale of two legendary advisors. Illusive intellectuals, with incredible insight. These particular scholars are seeking lords they find fit to serve. If a man was to acquire the services of one of these individuals their cause would be greatly boosted.

Sage Words

“Why are the soles of a man's feet paler than his face and his hand? Because he always keeps them hidden.” - Cao Cao

“All warfare is based on deception” - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 1 par. 18

“One should never invite a tiger in, to get rid of wolves.” - Unknown

“There are not more than five primary colours, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever be seen.” Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 5 par. 8

“Simulated disorder postulates perfect discipline; simulated fear postulates courage; simulated weakness postulates strength.” - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 5 par 17

“When you engage in actual fighting, if victory is long in coming, the men's weapons will grow dull and their ardour will be damped.” - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 2 par. 2

“Now when your weapons are dulled, your ardour damped, your strength exhausted and your treasure spent, other chieftains will spring to take advantage of your extremity. Then no man, however wise, will be able to avert the consequences that must ensue.” - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 2 par. 4

“Hence a wise general makes a point of foraging on the enemy. One carload of the enemy's provisions is equivalent to twenty of one's own, and likewise a single *picul* of his provender is

equivalent to twenty from one's own store.” - Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, ch. 2, par. 15

Character List

Note: Bold named characters are not controlled by delegates. These are controlled by Crisis Staff.

Yuan Shao (Styled Benchu),

Administrator of Bohai: Yuan Shao comes from a clan that is both illustrious and has a history of prominent civil service to the Han. Benchu was a top aide to He Jin, and the instigator behind the massacre of the corrupt eunuch faction.



Now, as The Administrator of Bohai, he has called warlords of the realm to flock to the Guandong Collation, against Dong Zhuo. While officially not the leader of this alliance, many already recognize him as such. He is familiar with Yuan Shu, being his elder cousin, as well as childhood friends with Cao Cao and Zhang Miao. He is equally known for recognizing men of talent and being indecisive. Benchu hopes to make himself a prominent man of history, via power and prestige. Whenever he is unsure of what to do he can always rely on his advisors **Xu You**, and **Tian Feng**, and his generals **Yan Liang** and **Wen Chou**.

Yuan Shu (Styled Gonglu): General of the Rear and Administrator of Nanyang: Also a descendant of the auspicious house of Yuan,



Gonglu was known for gallantry and frivolity; he is a man obsessed with titles and prestige. As leader of the Imperial Corps Commander of the Imperial Tiger Guards, he too moved against the Eunuchs, however when Dong Zhuo seized power, he fled to Nanyang, where he took control after Sun Jian killed the grand administrator. Gonglu will certainly be looking to put himself in an important place in the alliance, and further consolidate power. While cousins with Yuan Shao, they have a strained, but close relationship, and Gonglu certainly does not trust him. He is also familiar with Sun Jian, as Sun Jian has aligned himself to Gonglu, in this campaign against Dong Zhuo. If ever unsure of his next course of action, he should refer to his advisors **Sun Ben** and **Ma Dai**. Lest someone ever raise a sword to him, Gonglu can rely on his generals **Ji Ling** and **Huang Yi**.

Cao Cao (Styled Mengde), Cavalry Commander: Cao Mengde doesn't come from a family of high renown, in fact he is the adoptive son of a eunuch. Cao Mengde has had to struggle for every position he has held, but finally made a name for himself throughout the realm by attempting to assassinate Dong Zhuo. While the attempt failed, he is praised as a hero throughout the world for it. What he lacks in resources from his lineage, he makes up for in cleverness, craftiness, and quickness.



He once famously said, "I would rather betray the world, than the world betray me." This doesn't mean Cao Mengde doesn't adhere to filial piety, rather he reframes it. An idiomatic expression that still exists in Han Chinese culture is, "Speak of Cao Cao and Cao Cao will appear," this was due to his uncanny ability to move his troops with swiftness. Cao Mengde is known for dealing out punishment and reward fairly and justly, although considered harsh by any. Mengde grew up as childhood friends with Yuan Shao, Zhang Miao, as well as **Xu You** (see Yuan Shao). He also became acquainted with Liu Bei at the gate, as Liu Bei was being harassed by the guard while trying to get in. Mengde should ask his advisors **Xun Yu** and **Cheng Yu** if unsure of his next action. Whenever he requires a champion he should call on **Xiahou Dun** and **Xiahou Yuan**.

Liu Bei (styled Xuande), Scion of the Imperial House: Xuande comes from a humble



background of being a sandal maker and mat weaver. Xuande comes to the alliance not in hopes of obtaining power, land or prestige, but to restore glory and power to the house of Han, as a relative of the house of Han. Xuande believes through and through it is the duty of everyman to eliminate traitors. In essence, Xuande is a paragon of virtue, being described as kind and magnanimous. As said above, Xuande comes from a meagre background, and doesn't have much in the way of resources, but he brings his faithful and loyal brothers **Guan Yu** and **Zhang Fei**. They made an oath to each other in a peach garden that they would save the trouble, aid the endangered, and defeat the traitors to the house of Han. Liu Bei is childhood friends with Gongsun Zan, and is acquainted with Kong Rong as well as Cao Cao who he met at the gate, while a guard made it a struggle for him to enter. Because he lacks resources, Xuande lacks advisors, but should turn to his brothers for advice. To find out more about **Guan Yu** and **Zhang Fei**, see their section in Non-Delegate Characters.

Sun Jian (Styled Wentai), Administrator of Changsha: Sun Wentai is both brave and chivalrous, being a true man of nobility. While his area of control is small he has great capacity to expand into the areas of the Southlands, which are guarded by the natural moat of the Yangtze. Sun Wentai is accompanied by his two sons, Sun Ce (Style Bofu) and Sun Quan (Styled Zhongmou), both renowned for their own rights; Sun Ce being a fiery and fierce warrior at 16, and Sun Quan being intelligent and graceful at 8. Because of their proximity to the Yangtze River the men of the Southlands are proficient sailors and naval thinkers. If he hopes to establish control in the Southlands he will need to face the tribal people, such as **King Shamoke**.



He is familiar with Yuan Shu (Gonglu) as he serves underneath him in this campaign. For advice Wentai should turn to **Lu Su** and **Zhang Zhao**. For military matters he can rely on his generals **Huang Gai** against and **Cheng Pu**.

Ma Teng (Styled Shoucheng) official of Tianshui Commandery: A brave and fierce



fighter, Ma Shoucheng was cultivated by the harsh deserts and mountains of Xiliang. Starting out of poor birth, Ma Shoucheng made his name after his region was troubled with turmoil and strife, in which he amassed his power. Recognized for both his prowess and wisdom, he is a fierce supporter of the Han. While Dong Zhuo might proudly boast his "Xiliang Army" Ma Shoucheng has a large degree of support from the people of the region, whom he shares governing with **Han Sui**. Accompanying him is his son, **Ma Chao (Styled Mengqi)**, whose prowess rivals that of many great warriors of the realm, and has a hot headed disposition to match. Like all men from Liang, Ma Shoucheng was practically born in the saddle, and is incredibly competent on a horse. For civil

matters he should turn to **Lu Zheng** and **Zhuge Jin**. For battles he can turn to **Ma Chao** and **Pang De**.

Gongsun Zan (Styled Bogui), General of the Vanguard: Bogui, like many other of the men at this meeting made his name through fighting the Yellow Turbans. However, in his early days he was known for his stunning looks and booming voice.



Bogui leads an elite unite of cavalry called the "White Riders" to defend against the raiders of the northern borders. They became so feared that just the sight of men clad in white armor atop horses, would cause enemy armies to flee. He is known as a fierce leader and staunch general, being a force to reckoned with. He is friends with Liu Bei as the both studied under the same teacher when they were younger. He is also familiar with Yuan Shao and Gongsun Zan due to their proximity. Bogui cares about restoring the Han dynasty, but after fighting for so long against the Yellow Turbans looks to establish a power base in You province. For civil matters he should turn to **Cheng Fu** and **Zhao Ren**. For military matters he has his fortuitous generals **Zhao Yun** and **Dong He**.

Kong Rong (Styled Wenju), Chancellor of Beihai: Wenju is one of the greatest intellectuals of his time being ranked among the Seven Scholars Jian'an. Famous for his poetry, he is



sharp, quick witted, and wielder of a silver tongue. Many chock this up to the fact that he is the 20th generation descendant of Confucious. Despite his immediate sense of sophistry, Wenju is quick to make his displeasure known about things that don't suit him. Wenju doesn't seek to grow his influence through domination but trade and diplomacy, but rather establish a strong base of power in Qing, and restore stability to the Han. He is friendly with Liu Bei as Xuande once helped squelch Yellow Turbans in his commandery of Beihai. He is suspicious of Cao Cao however. In regards to domestic issues he should consult **Sima Ce** and **Kong Mi**. For foreign disputes he should rely on **Taishi Ci** and **Xu Chu**.

Zhang Miao (Styled Mengzhuo), Administrator of Chenliu: In his younger days, Mengzhuo was known for being chivalrous as well as helpful to the poor and needy. This won him favor amongst the scholars of his area. He began as a Cavalry Commander due to his high marks on the Imperial Examination, and was

quickly moved to the position of Administrator of Chenliu. Mengzhuo has always been a filial lord and continues to seek to do so, by restoring stability to the house of Han.



It has been told that the archers of Chenliu are masters of their craft and are widely considered to be the best marksmen on Earth. Mengzhuo is friends with Cao Cao and Yuan Shao, however will sacrifice these friendships for loyalty to the Han. For civil matters Zhang Miao can turn to **Liu Fu** and **He Rong**. To defend himself he can rely on **Huang Zhong** and **Ma Bu**.

Zhang Yang (Stylized Zhishu),

Administrator of Henei: Zhishu is known for his bravery, getting his start as mid-level post under **Ding Yuan** (see Non-Delegate Characters: Lu Bu). At one point he was ordered to serve under an eunuch, but after He Jin's plan was enacted he was recalled to fight bandits in Shangdang commandery. He is described as having a mild temperament, with no history of harsh punishments. Because of his kind disposition, it is hardly likely that Zhishu will ever see displeasure amongst his populace, much less a

revolt. Due to his time serving under **Ding Yuan**, Zhishu became friends with **Lu Bu**, being the only individual here that has a positive connection with him. Zhishu being threatened by other lords like Yuan Shao and Cao Cao, his greatest concern is his self preservation. When dealing with civil matters he should ask **Kuang Tong** and **Li Fan**. For military matters he should turn to **Fu Liang** and **Mi Fang**.



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Image Index

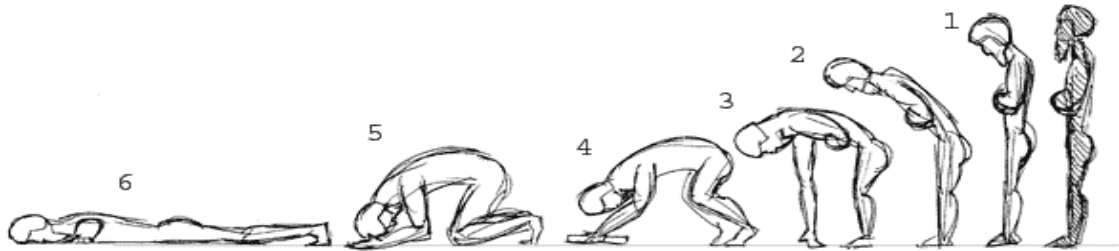


Image 1: Bowing chart.

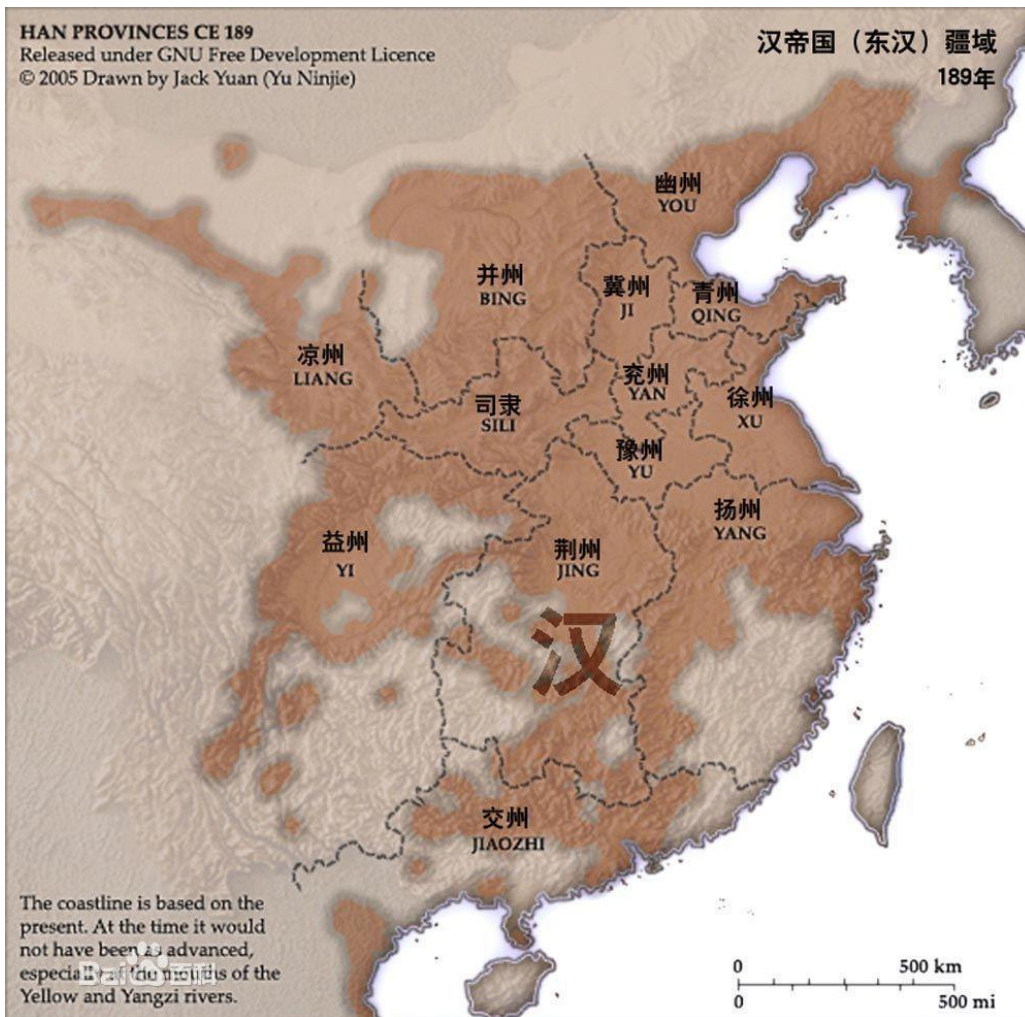
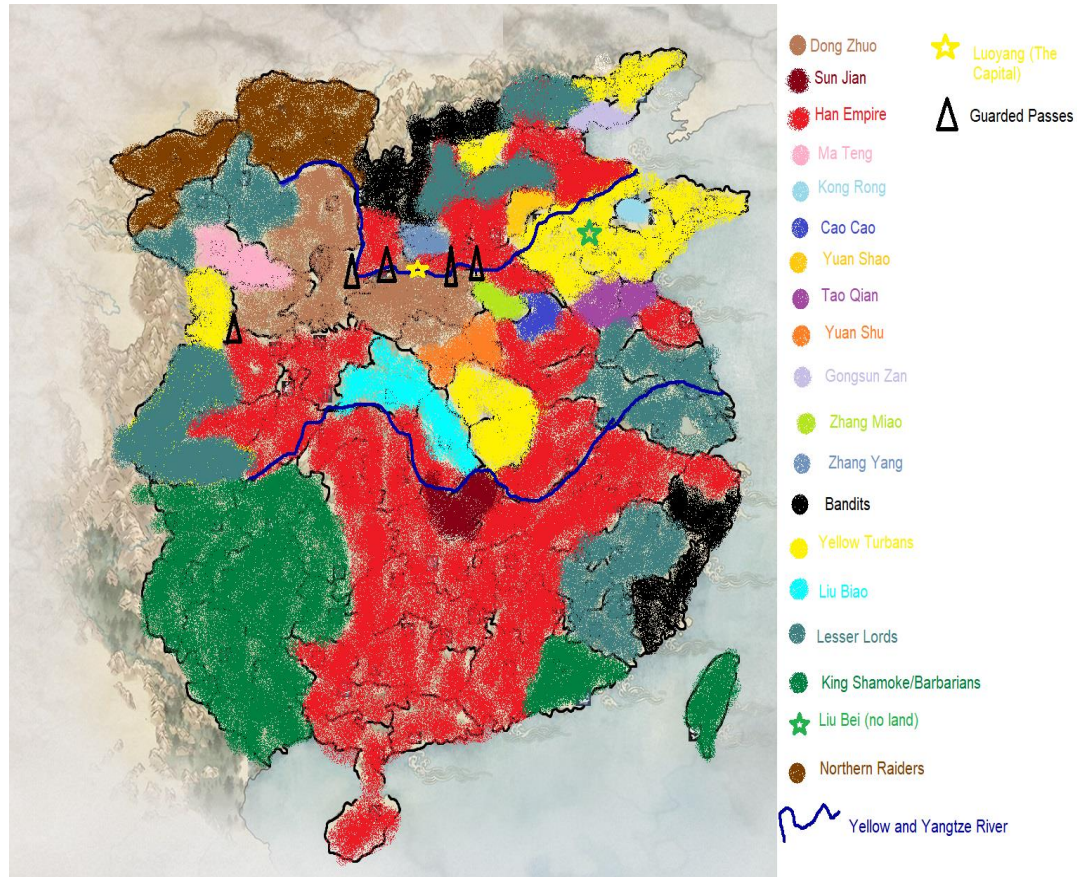


Image 2: Provinces of Han China



Image 3: Commanderies of Han China

Image 4: Controlled Territory





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