

Nine: Jiang's Beginning & End

1: Resentment From Hell



In the Ninth year of the Wude Period of the Tang Dynasty, the founding Emperor, Gaozu, also known as Li Yuan, with the help of his formidable second son, Li Shimin, quelled 18 rival kings and 72 groups of rebels, unified and secured the nation.

Gaozu had four sons. Baby son, Li Yuanba, died young. The rests were Jiancheng, King of Ying, Shimin, King of Qin, and Yuanji, King of Qi.



The eldest, Jiancheng, weak and rather incompetent. Yuanji being of something of conceited, and self-righteous dandy had long coveted the throne. Li Shimin, however, was popular, and successful, and as such, irked Yuanji. Day in and day out Yuanji brooded over the matter, finally arriving at a scheme, which was first to employ Jiancheng to bump off Shimin, and then, in turn, have Jianhcheng killed, making himself the sole heir to the throne.



Jiancheng and Yuanji were romantically involved with Gaozu's favorite concubines, Zhang Yanxue and Yin Sese. And their affairs were discovered by Shimin. On this account, brothers Jiangcheng and Yuanji held grudges against Shimin, though Shimin did not bring the affairs to their father's attention.

Li Shimin, a true prince, peerless in merit, almost single-handedly

outsmarted and muscled the Li family's enemies, to establish the Tang Dynasty. His feat winning the praise of Gaozu evoked jealousy and resentment on the part of Jiancheng and Yuanji.



It happened that, one day Princess Pingyang died of illness. Her funeral brought together all civil and military officials as well as family members. With ill intent, Jiancheng and Yuanji invited Shimin to a feast at which they had prepared a poisonous drink for the brother. Shimin, unsuspecting and broad-minded as he was, took the invitation to be an attempt by his brothers to atone for their misconduct.



As always, the real king never dies prematurely. So fate has it, that as Shimin raised his cup at the banquet, and took a sip, a swallow flew overhead and released droppings that landed in the cup and on his clothing.



Shimin left to change his attire when sharp stomach pain suddenly gripped him. Back at his residence, he laid all but dead after a night of loose bowels and vomiting liters of blood.

He knew something must have been amiss with his drink.

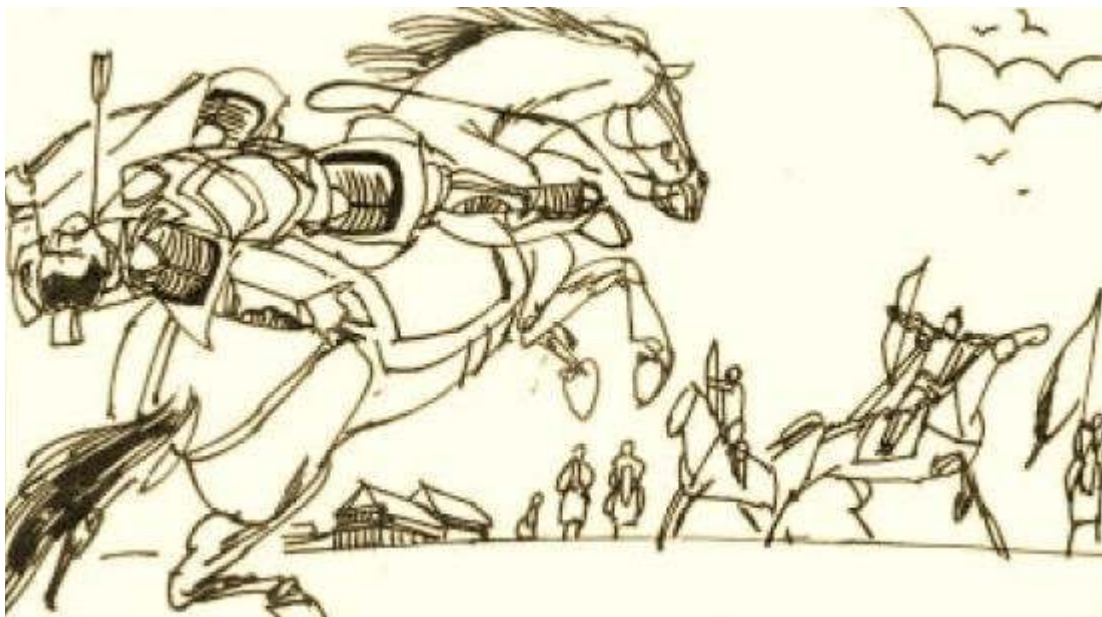


Upon hearing what happened, Emperor Gaozu feared that Shimin and his brothers couldn't get along. Gaozu made a plan to send Shimin to Luoyang. After their scheme failed and exposed, Jiancheng and Yuanji were desperate knowing full well that their courageous and open-minded brother Shimin would prove invincible with his team of great civil officials and generals. In another venomous scheme, the brothers plotted to redeploy Shimin's leading generals to fight the Turks. At this, Shimin, angered by his brothers' tricks, revealed to Gaozu the details of Jiancheng's and Yuanji's affairs with

the concubines. Enraged Gaozu ordered Jiancheng and Yuanji to appear before the Imperial Court the next day to address Shimin's allegations.



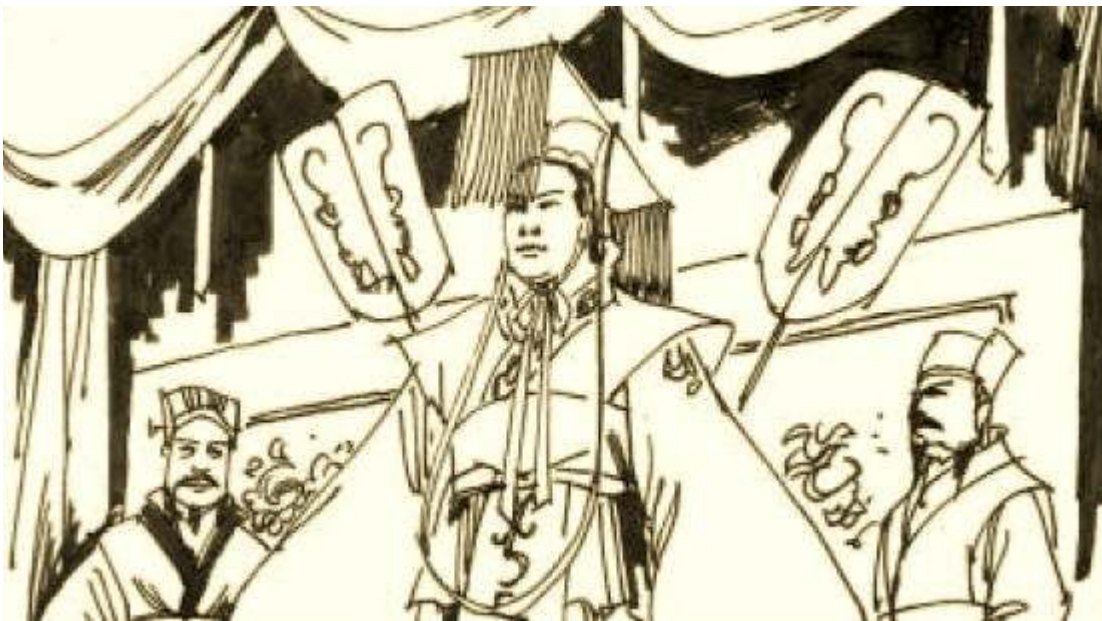
Jiancheng and Yuanji, flanked by about 500 troops, instead waited at Xuanwumen ready to kill Shimin upon his arrival.



Much to their surprise, however, Shimin came fully armed. Jiancheng and Yuanji shot three arrows in panic, but Shimin managed to dodge them all. General Qinqiong shot one arrow in return and killed Jiancheng. Then, Yuanji was killed by an arrow by General Yuchi Jingde. The story has been known as the Xuanwumen Incident.



After Yunaji was killed, his wicked soul descended to Hell to pay for his sins. Yama, the King of Hell, was fully aware of Yuanji's God-forbidden conduct; his affair with his father's concubine; the murder of Shimn's fiancée; poisoning of Shimin; and the conspiracy to have Shimin assassinated. Thus, he condemned Yuanji to the lowest rung of Hell, sending him through the gate of No-return.



Upon ascending the Throne, Li Shimin was dubbed Emperor Taizong, marking the beginning of the Zhenguan Period. Taizong's magnanimity almost divine made him immensely popular with the people. His succession to the Throne accorded both with the will of Heaven and the wishes of the people, making for a true blessing to all.



In the 22nd year of the Zhenguan period, a Buddhist monk, named Xuanzang, returned from a pilgrimage to India, in search of Holy Scripture. Taizong led an entourage of hundreds of civil and military officials to welcomed the monk home at Zhuque Bridge. To honor the occasion, Taizong later wrote: “A Preface To The Translation Of Holy Scripture By Sanzang Of Tang Dynasty”. Taizong, a wise and loving Emperor, died in the 23rd year of the Zhenguan Period.



Throughout his reign, Taizong looked out for the welfare of Buddhism and carried forward Daoism and Confucianism. Having an extraordinary background, the likes of which no ordinary man could know, Taizong, in his later incarnations, naturally upright, be he an emperor, a king, a general, a minister, a scholar, or a master of martial arts.



A thousand years later, the Noble King of Turning Wheel would come to the world in the form of Buddha Maitreya to spread Dafa and save sentient beings. However, the old forces of the cosmos, in the name of “assisting” with the affair, and “testing” Dafa’s Disciples, would sabotage the Rectifications of the Laws of the Cosmos, and the salvation of sentient beings.



The old forces, following the Law of Mutual Engendering and Restraining, wanted to create, for their purposes, a clown with human form, that lacks any semblance of proper thoughts or normal reasoning, an entity possessed of traits such as stupidity, wickedness, depravity, treachery, ugliness, pretentiousness, envy, and cowardice. The grotesque figure chosen for such a role would be destroyed afterward, having perpetrated crimes so heinous

as to be forever unpardonable.

The only place they could find such a figure is in the Hell lowest rung.



After extensive searching, the old forces found Li Yuanji's wicked soul in Hell, who had been paying for his debts, and suffering for a thousand years, and had lost his original life form and his coherent thinking, except for a sinister qi of envy and hatred. No other life would be justified for such a fate except this one. Harboring so deeply a personal resentment towards the great Savior, this one would be the best choice.



Blissfully, the old forces thus channeled the sinister qi, the remnant of Li Yuanji, into a dark and murky grave, here in this world. In that grave, a toad had been long present. It happened that as it opened its mouth was about to croak, the sinister qi of thousand years, was sucked in and entered.

Incidentally, the toad's original soul was driven from the body to reincarnate elsewhere. The sinister qi thus became the wicked soul of that toad.



A few years later, the toad died. And the qi of the wicked soul, that had assumed a toad's form, reincarnated as a human being. His name is Jiang Zemin.