

## Two: Anything For Political Gains

### 4: Flip-flopping Social Climbing



In 1976, there was a terrible earthquake in Tangshan, hundreds of thousands of lives were lost. In the same year, the CCP's three big guns, Zhou En-lai, Zhu De, and Mao Ze Dong died one after another. In Sept., soon after Mao died, Ye Jian-ying went against what Mao asked of him before his death, and collaborated with Wang Dong-xing, and Hua Guo-feng, and initiated a coup d'etat. Jiang Ze-min turned fifty, in that year.



Vice-Chairman of the CCP, Wang Hong-wen, member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, Zhang Chun-qiao, members of the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee, Jiang Qing, and Yao Wen Yuan, the so-called “Gang Of Four”, were arrested. Though Jiang Qing was Mao’s widow, she was, even before Mao’s corpus turned cold, made a political prisoner, along with nephew Mao Yuan-xin. The perpetrators did so under the auspices of following Mao’s political lines. It was illustrated of the saying, no CCP leader has a good ending.



Shanghai had been the Gang Of Four’s home turf by that time. In order to control Shanghai more effectively, a central working group was sent in. Since Jiang Ze-min had worked in Shanghai before, he was temporarily made a member of the working group, and accompanied the group to Shanghai.



When the working group entered Shanghai, the military force there, who numbered more than 30 thousands, were ordered to ride in a few hundred vehicles, and marched throughout the city. They shouted in unison: "Overthrow the Gang Of Four!" Driven by college students, the long oppressed Shanghai people took to the streets, and cheered the overthrow of the Gang of Four. Jiang Ze-min was overwhelmed by the welcome that the central working group received from the people of Shanghai. Before long, the working group was no longer needed.



Jiang Ze-min reluctantly returned to Beijing, and resumed his office as director of the Foreign Affairs Bureau in the First Ministry of Machinery Industry. He had got something of a high, from the experience in the working group of the Central Committee, the sense of power, he felt like a regal delegate, and the satisfaction, of having everyone asked for his



approval. Jiang Ze-min was determined to continue to rise through the ranks.



Jiang Ze-min didn't place his bet right every time though. In 1978 Jiang Ze-min hedged a wrong bet. He didn't expect Deng Xiao-ping to return to power, because he had made speeches, that strongly criticized Deng Xiao-ping, during the Criticize Deng, and Fight the Rightists' Reversal Attempts Movement in 1975. He almost was categorized as one of the three kinds of people, a stinging label, that would spell political downfall. His political career met with obstacles.



In 1979, the central leadership formed a state administration, on import and export affairs, and a state administration, on foreign investments, both chaired by Gu Mu. Wang Dao-han was one of the vice chairmen. In 1980, Wang Dao-han was appointed Mayor of Shanghai. He strongly

recommended Jiang Ze-min to Gu Mu. Jiang Ze-min's career suddenly gained momentum. He landed the position of deputy director for both the State Administration On Import And Export Affairs, and the State Administration On Foreign Investments. This rank was at the deputy minister level.



At that time, the conflict between the pro-reform camp and the conservative one was still quite intense. Jiang Ze-min changed his opinion depending on the circumstances, leaning to the left one moment, then to the right the next. Ruan Ning, secretary of the former CCP General Secretary Hu Yao-bang, recalled about Jiang Ze-min: "He said a lot of empty words, a lot of ambiguous things. He struck me as someone who was good at bureaucracy, and flip flopping, depending on whoever was in power."





Lucky for Jiang Ze-min, before the final moment arrived, he saw that the reformers were winning, and didn't hedge the wrong bet. Thanks to the promotion and lobbying by Jiang Shang-qing's connections, Wang Dao-han and Zhang Ai-ping, in March of 1982, the then 56 years old Jiang Ze-min, was appointed Minister of Electronics Industry, in the same year, at the CCP's 12th National Congress, he became a member of the CCP Central Committee.



Jiang Ze-min didn't work very hard, but was keen on building connections with high ranking officials. He spent a lot of time trying to meet and visit central government and ministry level officials. He also made himself popular among the grown-up children of the former top leaders. Jiang Ze-min carried a small notebook with him wherever he went. In the notebook he wrote down the birthdays, interests, and hobbies of the leaders and their

relatives, that were useful to him. He would study them whenever he had time.



Taking advantage of his position, Jiang Ze-min often in person brought large screen televisions, and other expensive imported electronics to the homes of high ranking officials. In front of the most influential figures, he would even kneel down on the ground, to set up TV channels for them, so that this big shot Party boss would say: “This man is very dependable in his work!”



In 1989, Jiang Ze-min visited Deng Xiao-ping’s house for the first time. The way he poured water for Deng’s children, and fetched Deng’s slippers, is still the source of laughter at the dinner table of children of former top leaders.





Jiang Ze-min accomplished little during his tenure at the Ministry of Electronics Industry. While there were enough scandals about him circulated with quite some frequency. When he visited the United States in the Nineteen Eighties, he snuck over to the red light district in Las Vegas, to watch strippers and visit prostitutes. The expenses were reimbursed by the Chinese Government. A typical senior CCP official wouldn't dare to go so far at that time.



Later on, during the ten plus years, when Jiang Ze-min was in charged of the CCP, the central government, and the military, the way in which prostitution flourished in China far exceeded that in Western countries. The corrupted and immoral officials, supervised by Jiang Ze-min, all have mistresses. Whether openly or secretly, strips dances abound all over the country, and became the advanced cultural scenes. A popular saying



goes: "If a man doesn't visit prostitute, he's letting the Party down, if a woman doesn't sell her body, she's letting Jiang Ze-min down!"