

Four: Villain Holding Sway

3: The Two Con Men



After Deng Xiaoping's southern tour, Jiang Zemin's shaky political status aggravated his partner, Zeng Qinghong.

Zeng's father, Zeng Shan, was at one time the Minister of Internal Affairs.

His mother used to be the director of Yan An nursery, where the top leaders sent their children to.

Zeng Qinghong had been the head of the top leaders' children. He has always been an extremely ambitious figure, with a yearning for political power. He likes power, and plays with power.

He came to believe that, using Jiang Zemin was a shortcut to the upper echelon of power.



He analyzed the situation for Jiang Zemin, as he rendered it: the Yang brothers, Qiao Shi, Wan Li, Tian Ji-yun and Li Ruihuan were all political enemies. The threat came mostly from the Yang Brothers, as they held military power, and Deng Xiaoping trusted them more than others. Yang Shangkun laughed at Jiang Zemin, when Jiang Zemin trembled, upon touching a gun, and did not know how it felt to fire a bullet. Zeng Qinghong thought that, although the Yang brother's political power was soaring at the time, they were nonetheless, mere military men, and as such, knew nothing of political tactics.



When Deng Xiaoping, who had served in the Second Field Troop of the military, became the Chairman of the Military Commission, people from other factions, were edged out. Yang brothers had the greatest power, and as such, were the target of other dissatisfied factions in the military.

In the early years of the reform, Deng declared that the military must show tolerance. Yang Shangkun and his brother loyally implemented the policy.



In August of 1992, Deng suffered a stroke and was sent to the hospital. Yang Baibing called a meeting with 46 high ranking army officers at the end of August in Beijing. The meeting discussed whether Jiang Zemin would be a competent chair of the Military Commission. Yang Baibing mentioned that there many who opposed Deng's reform policy, and proposed means by which the troops could, following Deng's eventual passing, preserve and implement the program of the reforms. Jiang Zemin was shocked and alarmed upon learning the meeting. Zeng Qinghong sensed that it's an opportunity for something big, and that Deng Xiaoping could be used to bring down the Yang brothers.



Yang Shangkun was, in fact, initially reluctant to use military force to suppress the students in Tian An Men Square. Thus on the issue of the Massacre, there was a disagreement between Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun. Jiang Zemin thus began leaking rumors to the outside, and told Deng that there were signs that Yang brothers had betrayed him. Jiang told Deng that he was worried. After several such conversations, Deng Xiaoping began to feel that Jiang Zemin was telling the truth, and asked his followers to look into the issue. His followers claimed that what Jiang Zemin said was valid.

From that point on, the Yang brothers had lost Deng's trust.

Deng Xiaoping was by then in his later years, and lived in seclusion of his home, notable was that he was deeply affected by his children.



Zeng proceeded to get in touch with Deng Pufang, Deng Xiaoping's eldest

son, through friends, Liu Jing and Yu Zhengsheng. Under Zeng's instruction, Liu and Yu met with Deng Pufang, and spoke about the danger of "Yang Forces", and the need to take precautions against the Yang brothers.

Later, when Zeng met with Deng Pufang in person, he stressed to Deng how loyal Jiang Zemin was to Deng Xiaoping, and how capable a leader Jiang was, and that Jiang was unable to fully wield power, owing to interference from the Yang brothers.



Yang Baibing was in charge of the military personnel assignments and organization structures, listed out one hundred middle and high ranking officers, who were to be promoted. After the names were approved by Liu Huaqing and Yang Shangkun, Yang Baibing presented the list to Jiang Zemin.

Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong closely reviewed the list, and thought it was a great opportunity to drive a wedge between the Yang brothers and Deng Xiaoping. Jiang and Zeng held on to Yang's list, and didn't give it approval. Zeng Qinghong was playing off Deng Xiaoping's political anxiety over Tian An Men Massacre.



He then, with Yang Baibing's list of one hundred officers in hand, told Deng Pufang, that Yang brothers had too much power, and were planning to replace Deng Xiaoping's followers in the military, a dangerous prospect. Zeng Qinghong also told Deng Pufang that if Zhao Ziyang were to reemerge and become the Chairman of the Political Consultative Conference, it would indicate that Deng Xiaoping had indirectly admitted his mistake in Tian An Men Massacre. Were Yang Shangkun to team up with Zhao Ziyang, Zeng implied, they might well supplant Deng Xiaoping's power.



Jiang and Zeng used various means to ensure that, Deng heard the news of the Yang brothers' supposed aspiration to seize military power, and readdress the Tian An Men Massacre. Deng Xiaoping thought it was serious, serious all the more in that Deng had just been ill. And he realized that, he needed to do what he could to arrange political affairs after his

death, not only ensuring that, the 14th CCP National Congress continuing to execute his policy to reform and opening-up, but also to prevent the Massacre from being readdressed, and he himself from being criticized posthumously. Deng Xiaoping fell for Jiang Zemin's feigned show of loyalty, and fell for the conspiracy Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong had designed.



Facing objection from Chen Yun and Bo Yibo, Deng Xiaoping had no choice, but to abandon his plan of having Jiang Zemin replaced. He decided to remove Yang brothers military power, to recommend veterans, such as Liu Huaqing and Zhang Zhen, to Jiang Zemin for the assistance they could provide, to control the military. But Deng Xiaoping knew, deep in his heart, that Jiang Zemin was not reliable, and could only amount to a make-shift leader. In the long run, Deng wanted to select a young successor beyond the 20th century.



During the 14th CCP's National Congress, Deng Xiaoping in an unexpected move, arranged for Hu Jintao to be Jiang Zemin's successor. Something of that sort, arranging for a successor for the current successor, had never happened before in the CCP's history.



Despite his astuteness and experience, Deng Xiaoping was deceived by Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong, the younger generation, and became a victim of a cunning scheme. From then on, the Deng and Yang families ceased all interactions with one another. The sixty years of friendship between Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun, crumbled amidst the Party's internal political struggle. Little did Deng Xiaoping realize, by cutting off ties with Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, and Yang brothers, he was destroying the regime he had labored to build. Along the way, Deng Xiaoping thus lost his most capable aids, in both the Party and the military.



Even though Liu Huaqing was loyal to Deng Xiaoping, Liu was aged, and no longer that capable. He was no match for Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong in matters of Party politics. The reformist camp suffered a total loss.



With Yang brothers down, Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong finally had their ways, and consolidated their political power. These two's audacity and ambitions swelled.

They practiced more conspiracies, rumor-mongerings, and framing-ups, against their political rivals among the CCP high ranking officials. They would intimidate some, rope in others, attack and destroy dissidents.

Many officials were full of anger, feared and loathed them, however, few dared to utter a word.