

Four: Villain Holding Sway

7: Murder, They Said



After Yang Shangkun was forced to step down, Jiang Zemin was still very much afraid of him. Zeng Qinghong expressed his view, that if Yang was not done away with, he could eventually cause trouble. But it'd be risky for Jiang and Zeng to take action against Yang, while Deng Xiaoping was still alive.

When Deng passed away in Feb. 1997, 92-year-old Yang Shangkun was still in good health.



He had long been displeased with Jiang's arbitrary promotion of generals, bribing people for support, and attacks on those who disagreed with him. Yang would often rebuke Jiang at gatherings of senior cadres.



One day in the latter half of 1998, during a large gathering of senior military cadres not attended by Jiang, Yang again criticized Jiang. He said that if Jiang as the Chairman of the CMC was to continue as he was, the military would be ruined.

Zeng Qinghong's informants had by that time infiltrated everywhere.



Yang's words thus were quickly reached Jiang's ears. Jiang knew that although the brothers, Yang Shangkun and Yang Baibing, were already stripped of their military power, in the 14th National Congress of the CCP, their influence in the military was still potentially strong. Jiang also knew that he had incurred the dissatisfaction and hatred, of many people, with his disparaging attack on Zhao Ziyang, and Yang Shangkun. The attacks resulted in their downfall, thereby affected the transfer of power to himself, in the CCP, the government, and the military.



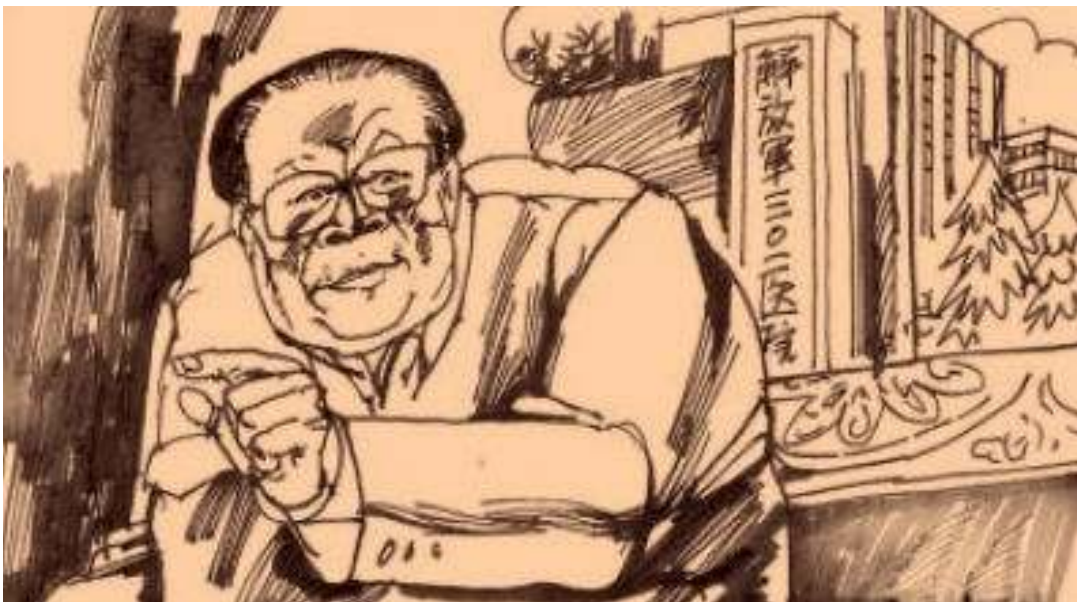
If Yang Shangkun, who held the positions of First Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission, and the Chairman of the Nation, were to gather forces to suppress Jiang, little could Jiang have to ward him off. Though Jiang often had Bo Yibo, another Party elder, giving him advice. He had, after all, no military background or power. Moreover, Bo Yibo, who attacked Hu Yaobang hard, when Hu was down, still was reviled by many

people. After deliberated planning, Jiang decided to seize upon any opportunity, to get rid of Yang Shangkun, and preclude future trouble. While Jiang plot might have been very careful, his conspiracy nevertheless, gave him away in the end.



On Aug. 3, 2003, the state-run Xin Hua News Agency released a strange piece of outdated news.

It reported that mid-winter in 1996, Jiang Zemin hosted a small special meeting, in Qin Zheng Hall of the Central Government Complex at Zhong Nan Hai. The main topic of the meeting was how to improve the temperature and humidity, in the South Wing of the PLA General Hospital, also known as the 301 Hospital.



Jiang said the temperature and humidity problem was major, for many of the nation's founding fathers, who had dedicated their lives to the military,

were now stayed in the hospital. It was imperative to concern, and take good care of them.



The majority of the Party and military elders frowned upon the corrupted, and incompetent clown, Jiang Zemin. They relied on their credentials, and dared to disrespect Jiang. During many high-level internal meetings of the CCP, these military elders would criticize, reprimand, and even attack Jiang Zemin.

Jiang could do little about it. He and Zeng Qinghong knew one thing: human beings naturally come to have ailments as they age. Then, they had realized that the hospital would help them reach their goals.



For one, they could use the improvement to the hospital to play favorites with the military elders, claiming to take care of them. And secondly, the

lives of these people would be in Jiang's hands, and at critical times his control would take effect.



Indeed, Jiang's special concern for the PLA General Hospital finally came to serve an important function. When Yang Shangkun caught a cold in the fall of 1998, he was taken to the PLA General Hospital, which was by then under Jiang and Zeng's control. Short after Yang Shangkun was hospitalized, at 1:17 am. on September 14, 1998, he was pronounced dead. As the saying goes: eventually the truth would win out.

Not long after Yang's death, it was rumored widely by the general public, that Yang had in fact been murdered.

Yang's family members, in time, asked that the Party Central investigate the cause of his death.