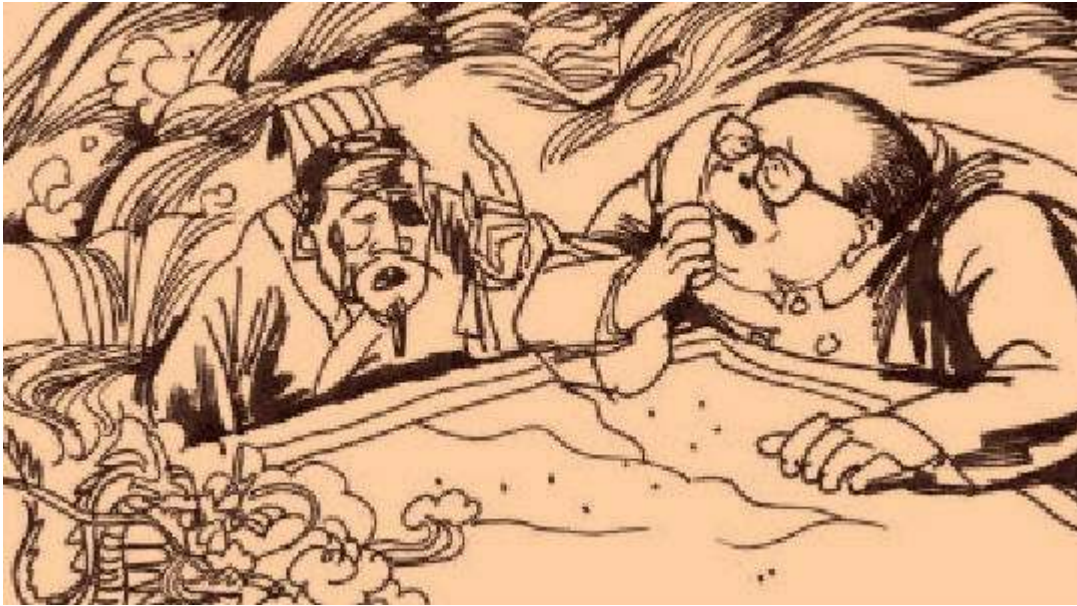


Eight: Craving For Grandiose

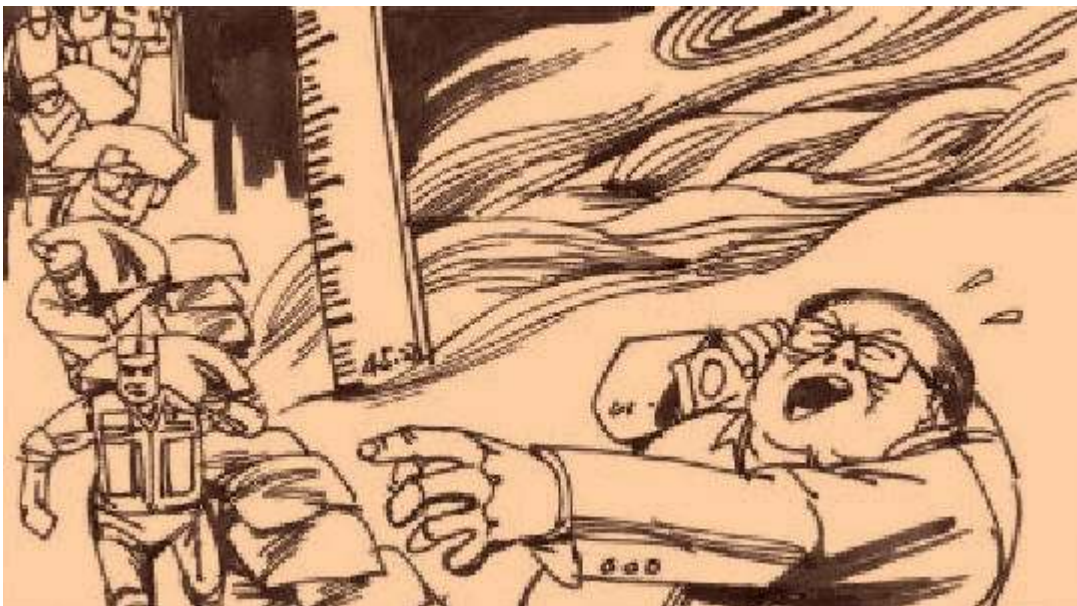
3: Gaining Through Calamities



In 1998, in the Yangzi River region, a small scale flood triggered a huge disaster of the century. Nearly 400 million people were affected, and direct economic losses were over 300 billion yuan, that's 36 billion US dollars. The reason was that Jian Zemin, like Mao Zedong and many other CCP high ranking officials, deeply believed in fortune-telling Fengshui, to guard the levee, and protect his dragon vein, refused to divert the flood.



On August 6, 1998, the water level at Changsha, reached 44.68 meters. According to the State Council, the flood gate at Jingjiang had to be opened, so that water may be diverted to the floodway. Residents in Jingjiang's floodway moved twice to prepare for the water diversion. And the Party Committee of Hubei Province requested the action many times. The flood gate, however, never opened.



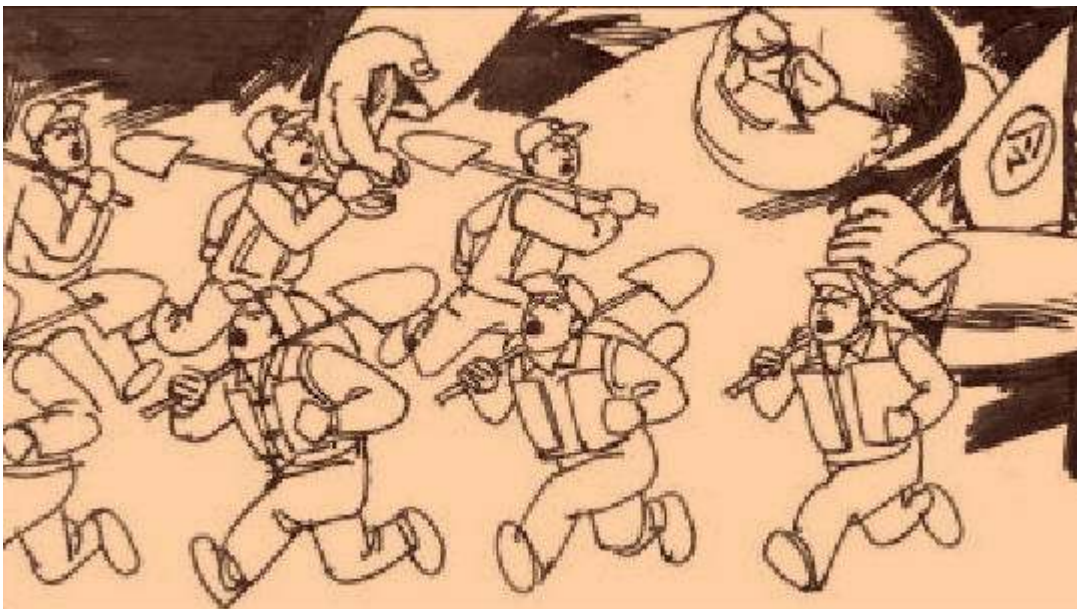
Jiang Zemin had issued an order, that nearby military troops must all work on the levee. He commanded that the troop stand united with the people, guarding the levee in this decisive battle, even at the cost of death, seeking a full victory.

Thus the flood diversion plan was never implemented.

Premier Zhu Rongji and vice premier Wen Jiabao followed Jiang's order, with great reluctance. As a result, the water level built up to an uncharted level of 45.22 meters.



After the death of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang's wish for absolute control over the military grew stronger. He needed a legitimate reason to dispatch and employ a large number of troops in time of peace. When the Yangzi River was threatening to flood at almost every stretch, Jiang grabbed the opportunity. Following Jiang's orders, more than ten corps, 300,000 officers and soldiers, 114 major generals, lieutenant generals and generals, and over 5,000 officials at the regiment and division levels, were mobilized.



However, they were ordered to engage in military training, unrelated to the flood relief. During the flood, a total of 7 million troops and 5 million civilian reserves were used. The total number of soldiers involved was higher than that of the major battles of Huaihai, Liaoshen, and Pinjin, whose victories paved the way for the CCP to seize power in China.

What's more, the flood relief troops were frequently ordered to shift military bases, which had nothing to do with the flood, and made the already exhausted troops running around in vain. As it turned out, the honorable cause of flood relief and emergency rescue, gave Jiang a legitimate excuse to test his authority and control over the military.



At the levee in Jingjiang City over a military map, in the presence of many media, Jiang donning a military uniform and a combat hat, acted out his part, as the Commander-In-Chief. Through this operation, Jiang truly established his control over the military. Objecting to the flood diversion plan, Jiang ordered that the levee be guarded with human lives.



The civilian-built dikes ruptured at the Paizhou, Jiujiang and Jiangxinzhou areas of Jiayu County. The levee along the main channel of the Yangzi

River broke. The high and strong waves hit the populated cities and towns. In 24 hours, the land turned into an ocean. Countless lives perished. Heart-breaking cries could be heard throughout the area.



There was nothing the survivors of the flood could do to help. Even the troops on the boats were having a hard time staying afloat. The rescue efforts were severely hindered.

Many families were torn apart. Entire families died in the flood. Many bodies were never recovered.



On August 7, the main levee of the Yangzi River located in the Jiujiang section ruptured. The officials panicked, and the situation turned chaotic. The commander didn't know what to do and ordered to throw anything mobile into the rupture to block the flood. Five million tons of rice, wheat

and soybeans, more than 50 trucks and 18 wrecked boats, were thus dumped into the waters.



Later a 200-member special force group from Zhangjiakou, who were trained in levee-repair came, and build pilings around the rupture. Afterward, they used pilings to stabilize the prefabricated panels, then, they poured in mud and rocks, eventually sealing the opening.



The numerous ruptures caused tens of thousands of death and more than 50 billion yuan property loss. Also, diseases broke out in the disaster area. Refugees tried to escape from the area. Those could not travel as fast as the spread of the disease died on the journey. Only those who would leave the loved one behind to die could escape and survive. Many survivors became the only one alive in the family.



By mid-August, the flood had forced 240 million people from their homes. While all of this was happening, Jiang Zemin invited 15 prominent directors and actors to Zhongnanhai.

On the piano, Jiang played, while singing along with young actresses, “An Evening In The Suburb of Moscow”, an old Russian love song. At the time when the Yangzi River turned into an ocean, Jiang, at the top of his lung, led the whole party singing a popular song”The Ocean, My Home.”



On August 13, when the ruptures were repaired, and the flood receded, Jiang went to Hubei Province, tightly flanked by military police officials. He held a microphone, and into the TV camera, shout out slogans such as”Believe firmly, and persist in this decisive battle!”



Jiang directed the media to systematically cover up this major policy mistake. Government officials were required to repeat lies about casualties and property losses. The official numbers were set extremely low. The actual casualties and the amount of property loss were more than 50 times of the official statistics. Jiang utilized the media mouthpieces, and turned the tremendous disaster of his making, into opportunities to praise himself, as the glorious core of the Party, who was leading the people from one victory to the next. A new personality cult was in the making. The tone of the CCP's propaganda and Jiang's speeches thus elevated to a new pitch.



The CCP-controlled newspapers and magazines pretended to quote international media to further glorify Jiang. They lauded Jiang with unabashed and rather ludicrous titles, setting him besides Mao and Deng, as the men of greatness.