

## Political Intrigue: The Connection Between Jiang Zemin's Self-Immolation Farce and the Two Conferences

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Recently, the official media, including the Xinhua News Agency, have once again been making a big issue of the self-immolation event that occurred at Tiananmen Square over a month ago. Not coincidentally, the National People's Congress and the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the 9<sup>th</sup> Political Consultative Conference will be held soon. Why did the official media focus on the self-immolation event right before these two conferences instead of such heated topics as corruption, unemployment in state-run enterprises, and greater development in the west? For those of us who are familiar with the various strategies that accompany power struggles within the Party, it is not hard to see the connection.

It has been over one and a half years since Jiang Zemin launched the suppression of Falun Gong. Controlling all of the machinery of power and propaganda, Jiang Zemin and his allies have spared no efforts to brutally suppress the peaceful Falun Gong, who have steadfastly maintained their belief in Truth-Compassion-Forbearance. But their attempt to eradicate Falun Gong has failed, and instead they have aroused voices of discontent and disapproval both at home and abroad. More and more, they appear to have gone down a dead end road. Two points illustrate their failure: Number one, their suppression of Falun Gong has no moral foundation. Although Jiang Zemin and his followers fabricated facts and brought many charges against Falun Gong through government agencies and the media, Falun Gong's message of Truth-Compassion-Forbearance has resonated in the hearts of people all over the world. Number two, all of the methods of the persecution are false, vicious, and brutal--completely the opposite of Truth, Compassion, and Forbearance. Not only do these methods not shake the beliefs of Falun Gong practitioners, they also turn many people who would otherwise be indifferent into Falun Gong sympathizers and supporters.

Then, just at the moment when voices of discontent could be heard both at home and abroad, even from higher authorities in the Party, the self-immolation event occurred at Tiananmen Square. Clutching at straws, Jiang Zemin made the most of it. From the initial contradictions in the beginning to the mistakes added on in the following month, it has become obvious that Jiang Zemin and his accomplices staged the self-immolation incident at Tiananmen Square for the sole purpose of advancing their vicious political agenda. Immediately after this incident, the government launched a massive campaign of "exposing and denouncing" Falun Gong, with the so-called "Million People Signature" petition targeting young students who have not yet developed the ability to think independently.

On the surface, the plan looks well conceived. However, the "Cultural Revolution" quality of this campaign is making the veteran cadres and comrades, who suffered greatly in similar previous political campaigns, tremble with fear. Many of them have consequently seen the error of their ways. In addition, modern communication technology has enabled the self-immolation incident to be closely scrutinized far and wide, leading many to question both the validity of the news and the necessity for the campaign that followed.

Another by-product of the self-immolation event has been the recent spate of "award" conferences designed to single out collectives and individuals for their effectiveness in persecuting Falun Gong. The vicious people being rewarded have wantonly trampled on the law. Their hands are covered with the blood of innocent people, and they are utterly detested by the cadres and masses who know the truth of the persecution. Instead of being rewarded, they should have been publicly condemned and put on trial. How can a situation like this not make people who love justice feel bitterly disappointed?

The self-immolation incident also spawned the establishment of the "Office for the Handling of Evil [*Chinese government's slanderous word omitted*] Issues in the State Council," which legalizes and publicizes the "610 Office (the secret agency formed to persecute Falun Gong)." One of Jiang's loyal followers, Li Lanqing, is directly in charge of this office. Its purpose is to marginalize Zhu Rongji, the premier of the State Council, so that Jiang Zemin can personally direct the State Council's departments and organizations to crackdown on Falun Gong.

In fact, even with all of the extreme methods of suppression used up to now, Jiang Zemin himself had to confess that Falun Gong cannot be eliminated. This being the case, why did he go out of his way to create the self-immolation event? In an interview with a Japanese delegation just a few days after the incident, Jiang revealed his real purpose when he stated that he, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, and Li Ruihuan had all taken the same position regarding the crackdown on Falun Gong. It turns out that he intended to involve other state leaders in the Falun Gong issue, thereby using the self-immolation incident to make both a wide spectrum of cadres and masses of people his victims as well. However, Jiang misrepresented the facts. Up to now, with the exception of Li Lanqing, all of the seven members of the Standing Committee of the Central Political Bureau have expressed different opinions about the Falun Gong issue. Some wanted to remain aloof, some refused to be contaminated by the persecution's evil influences, some supported it half-heartedly, and some were directly opposed, even arguing furiously with Jiang in private. Besides the members of the Standing Committee, quite a few people in the Central Government, especially veteran cadres, often castigated Jiang Zemin openly.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that the official media is making an issue of the self-immolation event right before the Two Conferences. Furthermore, we expect that all state affairs will give way to the Falun Gong issue during the Two Conferences. All representatives at the Conferences will be made to express their attitudes about Falun Gong—especially with respect to the self-immolation incident—and their attitudes will determine their position in the Central Government as well as directly influence who will become candidates for the next generation of leaders for the country.

So that his policies will not be reversed after he retires from office, and in order to prepare for "holding court from behind the screen" (keeping a hand on state issues after retirement/by translator), Jiang Zemin has devised a way to force Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Li Ruihuan, Wei Jianxing, and especially Hu Jintao, the leading candidate for the 4<sup>th</sup> generation leadership, to make their positions known. Through the use of the self-immolation incident and the mass campaign to "expose and denounce" Falun Gong, Jiang is forcing the hands of those who would be the country's future leaders, so that he might replace his enemies and promote his allies.

The ancient people said, "Being close to the emperor is like being close to a tiger." It is absolutely true. In today's China, it is not easy to preserve one's conscience throughout one's political career. But how can the facts be concealed? I remember Zhu Rongji saying over ten years ago, when he was the mayor of Shanghai, that "Nobody can cover history; the truth will eventually come out." Indeed, truth and justice are not influenced by tyrants or power, which several thousand years of Chinese history proves.

History is our best prophet. People with consciences, please think about your own future and people's human rights, instead of becoming the victims of Jiang Zemin and his kind.

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