

# JIANG Zemin

Jiāng Zémín 江泽民

*b. 1926 Former CCP general secretary, president of China,  
and chairman of the central military commission*

**Jiang Zemin succeeded Deng Xiaoping as the paramount leader of China in the 1990s and continued to pursue economic reforms and improved relations with the West into the twenty-first century. He served as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party from 1989 to 2002 and as Chairman of the Central Military Commission from 1989 to 2004.**

Jiang Zemin was born into an intellectual family in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province. He graduated from Shanghai Jiaotong University with a degree in

electrical engineering in 1947. While at school, he participated in underground student activities led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). He joined the CCP in 1946 and worked in various economic- and industrial-related Communist government positions; he studied at Moscow's Stalin Automobile Works in 1955. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), his part in the industrialization of China saved him from persecution by the Red Guard.

As an advocate for economic reform, however, he prospered after the 1978 rise of Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997), becoming mayor of Shanghai in 1985 and Shanghai's CCP first secretary in 1987. Massive protests took place across China in 1989, culminating in the Tiananmen Square incident in June; perhaps because of his ability to



**Jiang Zemin at the Fortune 500 Forum, Shanghai, during the 50th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, 1999. PHOTO BY JOAN LEBOLD COHEN.**

## The Words of Jiang Zemin

*From a speech made by Jiang Zemin at the celebration marking the 80th founding anniversary of the Communist Party of China at the Great Hall of the People on Sunday 1 July 2001.*

**R**eviewing the course of struggle and the basic experience over the past 80 years and looking into the arduous tasks and bright future in the new century, our Party should continue to stand in the

forefront of the times and lead the people in marching from victory to victory. In a word, we must always represent the development trend of China's advanced productive forces, the orientation of China's advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people in China.

*Source:* Full Text of Jiang's Speech at CPC Anniversary Gathering (2001, July 26). Retrieved March 3, 2009, from <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/report/study/index.htm>

peacefully defuse Shanghai's own pro-democracy demonstrations, Jiang was chosen by Deng Xiaoping as CCP general secretary in June 1989, and he became chairman of the Central Military Commission in November 1989. He became China's president in March 1993, thus holding the three most senior positions in the military, party, and state branches of power in China.

After 1989, Jiang strengthened his authority in China more than most observers thought he would. He continued to follow reform policies and worked to strengthen the CCP's power and to eliminate the widespread corruption within it. He presided over the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese control in 1997, played an active diplomatic role by traveling abroad many times, and worked hard for China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001. During Jiang's tenure, Beijing was chosen to host the 2008 Summer Olympics; he was present at the 8 August opening ceremony. One of his most controversial decisions was to suppress the quasi-religious movement Falun Gong (1999). In a highly important

ideological proposal, made in a major speech he gave in July 2001, Jiang asserted that private entrepreneurs and other members of classes previously regarded as exploitative should be welcomed into the CCP, as long as they made a contribution to China and to socialism.

**Colin MACKERRAS**

## Further Reading

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