

TO: Professor Dean Williams & Karen Gaulke FROM: Livia Liwei Sun  
 SUBJECT: 《The Gate of Heavenly Peace》 Analysis (MLD-201B Exercising Leadership)

**Comment [KG1]:** This is an outstanding paper Livia. Well done.  
  
Grade: A+

**1. Evaluate the actions of the government and the students? Did Chai Ling, Li Peng & Deng Xiaoping exercise leadership?**

While evaluating the actions of the government and the students, I imagine that the tremendous forces behind and among each faction were interlaced with each others to form a complicated web. People like Deng Xiaoping, Li Peng and Chai Ling were trapped in the web and let the bigger forces control their actions just like playing puppies. None of them were conscious enough to step out or even just make a turn in the web. They were all so stuck in their roles that unable to cut the strings tying their hands, legs or heart and mind to reach out (experiment), to hold other people’s hands tying by different strings (listen and partner), to destroy part of the web (make interruptions and conflicts), and to help reconstruct the web and make it interlace in different patterns (allow people to work out the answers to adapt).

Therefore, neither Chai Ling nor Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng exercised leadership. Chai Ling let the forces tie her down and imposed a specific delusional purpose on people rather than giving the work back to the students. Li Peng, as one of the top authority figures in the country, faced at least three major holding environments: the students, the government, and the whole society. The factions among and within these three circles clashed with each others in values, purposes and interests. Which was/were the best for China? As Premier of China, Li Peng could’ve exercised leadership with authority by using the resources given to his role to provide more protection to the system. Deng Xiaoping, as supreme political figure who had final say on almost everything, he should’ve had the authority over main levers of the state, namely hardliners, reformers, PLA and the media. From this perspective, I would argue that his constraints probably were more out of personal fear than from the system. But his fear also represented one faction in the government and the society. Such constraints prevented him from interpreting the real value behind the students’ movement; inevitably, he wasn’t able to exercise leadership either.

**Comment [KG2]:** Did you see her exercise any leadership?

**2. Consulting to the major characters in the documentary:**

	Role /Faction	Clarifying Questions	Questionable Assumptions	Instructions	Key concepts
Deng Xiaoping	Top authority figure & chairing Central Military Commission	What do the students really want? What’s the real value behind their activities?	Is the students’ purpose to create dong-luan (turmoil or unrest)?	Be patient and persistent on what you have started in 1978!	History is an ongoing process. The important thing is how current events are going to strengthen China’s capacity to sustain further reforms in the long run.
Li Peng	Premier; Hardliners	Do the reformers and students really intend to create instability?	Is the value we inherited from revolutionary forefathers unchallengeable?	Understand the reformers’ real intent and prepare the hardliners for strong stomach.	Listen to the music beneath the students’ petitions. Even if the demonstration can be quelled in the short term, people won’t

**Comment [KG3]:** This is outstanding.

					be likely to give up the aspiration to change.
Zhao Ziyang	CCP General Secretary; Reformers	Are hardliners' concerns legitimate? How to reconcile their concerns and the pace of reform?	Do the hardliners not want China to make progress? And not want to create welfare for the country?	Communicate with students and help them understand and build their boundaries.	Reform takes time. Being a martyr is brave; but being a survivor is even more courageous.
Chai Ling	Radicals	What is the purpose of the movement? What are other ways to reform China? How to maintain the energy and transform to the next stage? Who are the partners outside the movement?	What does democracy or reform really mean to China at that time? Are they a panacea that'll be able to cure everything? Do you expect the movement to achieve everything?	Hold steady on the real purpose rather than delusive vision of the students' movement.	Beware of the seduction and constraints in the system. Get on the balcony frequently.
Wang Dan	Moderates			Hold steady to make necessary interventions instead of holding back.	Making interventions and causing tensions and conflicts is a necessary phase to deal with leadership challenges. Be strong and brave!

**Comment [KG4]:** Excellent.

**Comment [KG5]:** Yes. I think this is the fundamental problem of the student movement.

**Comment [KG6]:** Yes, again, what is the purpose? Very good.

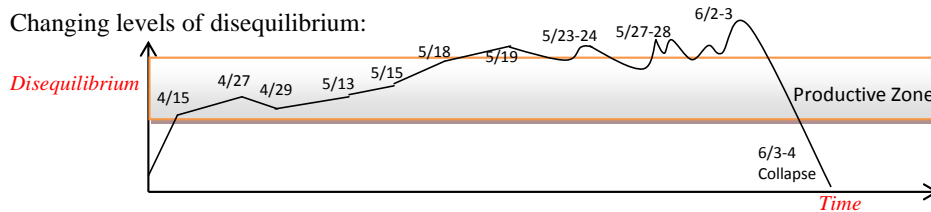
**Comment [KG7]:** This is great too Livia, particularly your parenthetical analyses.

3. **Timeline, major decision points & changing levels of disequilibrium:** Fonts in green—major decision points for demonstrators; fonts in blue—major decision points for government.

Events & interpretations...	
4/15	Death of Hu Yaoban. (Catalyze the student movement, which embodied multiple values and dissatisfaction and frustrations toward the political and economic situation in China.)
4/22	Three student representatives carried a petition and knelt on the steps of the Great Hall (Li Peng's decision not to respond to the students compounded their anger and disappointment.)
4/26	People's Daily published an editorial accusing a "small handful of plotters" of stirring up student unrest and creating turmoil in order to overthrow the Communist Party and the socialist system. (The government was adding fuel to the flames.)
4/27	Ignoring warnings of violent suppression, students marched to Tiananmen Square in protest of the editorial. The whole thing turned into a (superficial) carnival. The government announced it was willing to talk. (The government demonstrated restraint.) (This event was viewed as a triumph, which should've been a window of opportunity for the government to reach out, and for students to give some space for the reformers in the government as well as for themselves to maintain or transform the energy that they had created. They failed to seize the opportunity.)
4/29	Yuan Mu held a meeting with representatives of the official student union. (The

	government should've sent someone who was more trusted by the students.)
5/4	Zhao Ziyang made a speech that departed from the April 26 <sup>th</sup> editorial, indicating that there was no dongluan (turmoil) in China. (This signaled the undercurrents of conflicting interpretations on the demonstration within the government.)
5/13	Some students began a hunger strike.
5/14	Twelve of China's most famous intellectuals talked to students at the Square, calling on the students to end their hunger strike. The students dismissed their proposal.
5/15	Soviet President Gorbachev visited China for the first time since 1959. The Sino-Soviet summit brought international attention on movement which was called it a "revolution." (The students might have been seduced by international attention and felt they were making history, which consolidated their decision to stay.) (The government should've postponed Gorbachev's visit. When the international media brought by the summit called the movement a revolution, it probably plucked the hardliers' string and tested the limit of their tolerance. From their angle, when a revolution was out of control, it would become dongluan, turmoil and uprising.)
5/18	Li Peng met with several student leaders for a televised talk at the Great Hall of the People. Both sides held their view firmly and nothing was achieved. (Li Peng's willingness to meet with the students, even though symbolic, was a data that the government was trying the last resort; the students once again failed to detect the data. This was probably the most important decision point for the students since it was the last chance for them to step out of the confrontation and "save face.") (The students' uncompromised position might strengthen the hardliners' belief what the students wanted was to unstabilize and overthrow the government.)
5/19	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Predawn, Zhao Ziyang visited students. Zhao then was removed.</li> <li>2. The government's plan for martial law was leaked to student leaders, who called off the hunger strike and declare a mass sit-in.</li> <li>3. Li Peng made a speech calling for "firm and resolute measures to end the turmoil swiftly."</li> </ol> (In my view, this is the most important decision point for the government; it decided to remove the reformer Zhao; then the hardliners took over and the decision was made to cease the confrontation by destroying the system forcefully.)
5/20	The government declared Martial Law. Troops tried to moved into Beijing but was blocked.
5/23 --24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Alliance to Protect the Constitution was set up on 23<sup>rd</sup>.</li> <li>2. The Defend Tiananmen Square Headquarters was set up on 24<sup>th</sup> and Chai Ling became the head of this most powerful faction.</li> </ol>
5/27 --28	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the Alliance to Protect the Constitution decides by a unanimous vote to recommend that the students end their occupation of the Square on May 30<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>2. Next day, Chai Ling rejected the resolution and decided to continue occupying the Square.</li> </ol> (By this point, the disequilibrium had almost reached the limit of its tolerance. The students could've still had the chance to move out of the Square and maintain the remaining energy even if they compromised under pressure; but then Chai Ling's (or her faction's) irresponsible intervention was an omen that the boundaries would collapse soon.)

6/3-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, troops received orders to reclaim Tiananmen Square at all cost. Around 10pm, soldiers opened fire on people who try to block the army's advance.</li> <li>2. Between midnight and the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>, troops surrounded Tiananmen Square; students were allowed to leave the Square at gunpoint after negotiation.</li> </ol>
A few days later	Deng Xiaoping praised the Martial Law troops and presided over the ceremony to mourn the military martyrs. (The government missed the chance to show sympathy to the students and citizens sacrificed in the movement to “heal the wound.”)



#### 4. Define the work, different conceptions of the work and factional conflicts...

1989—eleven years after the implementation of Deng Xiaoping’s “open-door” policy, forty years after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China and seventy years after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement—is an extraordinary year for China. By then China had been through so much in its recent history; yet, accomplished so little in terms of political and economic reform and cultural reflection. Just one and a half decade ago, the Cultural Revolution had not only hindered China’s development across the board but also destroyed humanity to a certain degree. So even though it had experienced so much, in 1989, the tensions rooted in history were compounded and unresolved. The reality in China was authoritarian, corruption, economic stagnation, unemployment, human right suppression and injustice. At the same time, Gorbachev’s policy of “perestroika” (reform) and “glasnost” (openness) was transforming the Soviet Union and East Europe. The sense of urgency pushed the reformers in China to think about its future. For the purpose of pursuing long-term collective interests, they knew China had to change. And because the change would be in such a huge scale, it had to be conducted cautiously and step-by-step; any mismanagement could cause catastrophe. The work for China then was to make incremental adaption politically, economically, socially and culturally, and to build up its inner capacity in this process.

Not everyone agreed with it though. Idealists, also driven by the sense of urgency, insisted unless there was dramatic reform across the country, they wouldn’t be able to “save China.” At the other end of the political spectrum, conservatives who put stability and Chinese Communist one-party rule as priority viewed the actions taken by reformers and idealists as dangerous and likely ruining the nation and the Communist Party

Among the students, even though they agreed China had to change, radicals represented by Chai Ling pushed to adopt drastic tactics by overthrowing the government, while moderates like Wang Dan would like to carry the energy they had created in the early stage of the movement back to the campus to push for gradual and grassroots democracy.

Comment [KG8]: Terrific.

Within the government, while reformers saw reform and openness as inevitability for China’s progress and resonated with what the students were pursuing, hardliners regarded stability as the highest principle to guide the party and the nation. Anything that could cause dongluan (turmoil, uprising) would be seen as a threat by hardliners. Because of this

vast difference in perspectives on the future of China, reformers were sympathetic to the students and tried to protect them. Contrarily, hardliners worried the foundation of the country and the party would be destroyed by a small handful of conspirators. Without knowing reformers in the government were protective and could've been their partners, most of the students' actions weakened rather than strengthened the reformers. For example, after April 27, should the students have returned to campus after a successful carnival-like demonstration, the leverage of the reformers could've been enhanced to push for further reforming policies. But because the students were not willing to show flexibility, in my view, the reformers had been caught into difficult conflicts and power struggles with hardliners since then. The students' actions undermined the reformers' influence in the government, and most importantly, on Deng Xiaoping. On May 19, it seems to me Zhao was making his last stand by reaching out to the students. Once again, the students were not listening and the reformers were defeated.

Comment [KG9]: Good.

5. Authority dynamics, values & virtues and pressures...

1)The authority dynamics between students and government were intertwined as follows:

	Radicals/Chai Ling	Moderates/Wang Dan
Hardliners/ Li Peng	<i>Inter-dependency</i> : Radicals pushed for a upside down change in China. Ironically, this reinforced the radicals to make forciful interventions.	<i>Counter-dependency</i> : Moderates requested gradual reforms, which, to a certain degree, refrained hardliners from taking military measures.
Reformers/ Zhao Ziyang	<i>Counter-dependency</i> : Radicals gave no room to reformers to push for further change in China.	<i>Dependency</i> : These two factions could've seen each other as potential partner.

2)Values & virtues and pressures of the students and the government:

	Students	Government
<i>Values &amp; virtues</i>	Political and economic reforms, human rights, equality and freedom of speech and association...	Stability, peaceful development, a harmonous society and protecting the Communist party machine...
<i>Pressures</i>	Without political freedom, economic reform, and cracking down corruption, China would have no future.	China's future relied on stability and Communist rule. Without it, the whole country would turn into serious turmoil.

3)How did they manage or mismanage the holding environment?

Some of the explanations are provided above. In addition, both the students and government once managed to hold the big environment together on April 26-27 by exercising self restraints—the students were let vent their feelings under the warning of the government; it was peaceful and the government was willing to talk. But they both failed to seize the short-lived opportunity to hold the environment even stronger by listening to and engaging each other. For the students, when they should've held steady to debate on staying or leaving, they didn't; when they should've held back to let their partners in the government work on the situation, they didn't. For the government officials, they could've engaged the students in more creative ways, they failed to do so; the different voices within the government should've been more tolerated, but they weren't! All the mismanagements contributed to the collapse of the system and destroyed the micros within it.