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# CHINA

## RENAISSANCE

**The Rise of Xi Jinping  
and the 18th Communist Party Congress**

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**The Rise of Xi Jinping  
and the 18th Communist Party Congress**

By the writers, artists and editors of the  
**South China Morning Post**

Edited by Jonathan Sharp

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**The Rise of Xi Jinping and the 18th Communist Party Congress**

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# Foreword

In November 2012, an ageing generation of Chinese leaders headed by Communist Party Chief Hu Jintao stepped aside and handed power to the fifth generation led by Xi Jinping. While the 18th Communist Party Congress and the transfer of state posts at the parliament meeting the following March went off smoothly, the year of transition was anything but orderly. Any Chinese transfer of power would be expected to yield its share of behind the scenes jockeying and intrigue — the traditional secrecy of the party's political process virtually ensures it. But 2012 featured for the first time overt campaigning for high office more resembling American democracy than Chinese communism. It also saw the downfall of one of the country's most popular leaders involved in that campaigning, Bo Xilai, undone by a web of corruption, betrayal and murder. A protégé of Hu Jintao saw his political career self-destruct in another scandal.

From the start of 2012, the *South China Morning Post* embarked on an ambitious project to chart the transfer of power and pull the veil of secrecy from a new generation of Chinese leaders who will run the country for the next decade. The result was unparalleled coverage and a series of exclusives that kept the newspaper well ahead on the story. To list but a few: the *Post* was first among international media in reporting the line-up of the seven men who would form the elite Politburo Standing Committee — that story was published before the secretive Congress even opened; the newspaper also was first with the

news that Hu would retire from all of his posts, including the military commission chairmanship, despite speculation he might hang on as past leaders have done; the newspaper also led the way on the saga of one of Hu's aides, Ling Jihua, whose career ambitions were clipped after the cover up of a Ferrari crash that killed his son. Along the way, we also profiled all of the other senior leaders who would rise in the new leadership.

Xi completed the transition in March by taking on the presidency, and the stakes could not be higher. If Hu's decade saw China grow from an economy roughly the size of Italy to surpass Japan by the time he stepped down, then Xi's decade is expected to see China grow to rival the United States as the top economic power in the world. Shanghai has grand ambitions of becoming a global financial centre, but critical reforms to the markets and the renminbi currency must take place for it to get there. China is modernising its military to ensure it can protect its security in Asia if not project its presence beyond the region. Yet at home it still grapples with the threat of unrest — seeing thousands of mass protests each year — and developing country problems related to its growth for growth's sake strategy that has left its air, land and waterways poisoned by pollution. Who are the people that will guide China through its challenges at home and on the global stage? Through our profiles of dozens of rising stars and movers and shakers over the past year, the *South China Morning Post* has provided the most complete portrait to date of the leaders who will control the halls of power of the world's most populous country over the next decade.

The book profiles the 25 members of China's new Politburo, starting with Xi and six other standing committee members. We look at senior Cabinet officials and financial leaders who will be overseers of China's economy and architects of its regulatory transformation, as well as top leaders running the country's domestic,

military and foreign affairs. We also chart the most dramatic political episode of the transition, the collapse of Bo Xilai, and the challenge the sieve-like Weibo poses for a party accustomed to secrecy and control of information. Finally, we reveal the sixth generation of leaders — those who are expected to assume power when Xi's generation is ready to retire in 2022. There are many unknowns as the new leaders set out to chart the course of Chinese history over the next decade. This book, by the reporters and editors of the *South China Morning Post*, aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive primer on the men, and the handful of women, who are going to be charting that course.

Wang Xiangwei  
Editor-in-Chief, the *South China Morning Post*  
March 2013

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