

# China's Top Future Leaders to Watch: Biographical Sketches of Possible Members of the Post-2012 Politburo (Part 2)

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The composition of the new Politburo, including generational attributes and individual idiosyncratic characteristics, group dynamics, and the factional balance of power, will have profound implications for China's economic priorities, social stability, political trajectory, and foreign relations. To a great extent, these leaders' political position and policy preferences are often shaped or constrained by their personal experience, leadership expertise, factional affiliation, and bureaucratic portfolio. This series will provide concise and primarily fact-based biographies for 25 to 30 possible members of the next Politburo, focusing on the following three aspects: personal and professional background, family and patron-client ties, and political prospects and policy preferences.<sup>1</sup> The aim is to present a complete set of biographical sketches of all members of this supreme leadership body by the time the 18th Party Congress has wrapped up in the fall of 2012.\*

## Liu Yunshan 刘云山

- Born 1947
- Director of CCP Propaganda Department (2002–present)
- Politburo member (2002–present)
- Member of Secretariat (2002–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (1997–present)

### *Personal and Professional Background*

Liu Yunshan was born in 1947 in Xinzhou City, Shanxi Province (though some official biographers say that Liu was born in Tumd Right Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and that Xinzhou was his ancestral home). Liu joined the CCP in 1971. He started his career as a teacher in rural Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (AR) (1964–68), and was a “sent-down youth” (manual laborer in the countryside) in a rural commune in the region during the Cultural Revolution (1968–69).<sup>2</sup> He received an undergraduate education (on a part-time basis) from Jining Teachers College in Jining City, Inner Mongolia AR (1964–68) and took courses in public administration (on a part-time basis) at the Central Party School (1989–1992). He was a clerk in the Propaganda Department of the CCP Committee of the Tumd Right Banner, Inner Mongolia AR before joining the Inner Mongolia AR branch of the Xinhua News Agency, where he was a reporter and division head (1975–1982). Liu was deputy party secretary of the CCYL Committee in Inner Mongolia AR (1982–84), then deputy head and head of the Propaganda Department of the CCP Committee of Inner Mongolia AR (1984–87). He was promoted to secretary-general of the CCP Committee of Inner Mongolia AR (1987–1991), party secretary of Chifeng City (1991–92), and deputy party secretary of Inner Mongolia AR (1992–93). In 1993, Liu was transferred to Beijing where he served as deputy director of the CCP Propaganda Department (1993–2002). Liu was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 12th Party Congress (1982).

### *Family and Patron-Client Ties*

Liu advanced his career largely through the CCYL and is widely considered a *tuanpai* official.<sup>3</sup> He formed close ties with Hu Jintao when both of them worked at the CCYL. Liu Yunshan’s son, Liu Lefei, is married to Jia Liqing, the daughter of Jia Chunwang, another heavyweight *tuanpai* leader, who served as minister of State Security, minister of Public Security, and the head of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate. Liu Lefei is currently CEO of the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) Private Equity Funds Management Co., Ltd, a strategic onshore private equity investment platform of the CITIC Group and CITIC Securities.

### *Political Prospects and Policy Preferences*

As a two-term Politburo member, Liu is likely to be promoted to the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC). He will most likely succeed Li Changchun and become the new “propaganda tsar” of the country. But the possible reduction of the number of PSC seats from nine to seven may undermine Liu’s chance for promotion. It is expected that he will continue the policy of tight control over media and the internet.

## Zhang Gaoli 张高丽

- Born 1946
- Tianjin party secretary (2007–present)
- Politburo member (2007–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2002–present)

### *Personal and Professional Background*

Zhang Gaoli was born in 1946 in Jinjiang City, Fujian Province. He joined the CCP in 1973. Zhang received an undergraduate education in statistics from the Department of Economics of Xiamen University (1965–1970) and pursued mid-career studies at the Central Party School (1990). He spent his early career in the oil industry, working as a porter, personal secretary (mishu), head of the planning department, and deputy general manager, additionally holding various party secretarial positions, all in the Maoming Petroleum Company in Guangdong Province (1970–1985). In 1985, Zhang was appointed chairman of the Economic Commission of Guangdong Province (1985–88). Three years later, he became vice governor of Guangdong Province (1988–1997). Zhang served as party secretary of Shenzhen City (1997–2001). In November 2001, he was transferred to Shandong Province, where he served first as governor (2001–02) and then as party secretary (2002–07). Zhang was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 15th Party Congress (1997).

### *Family and Patron-Client Ties*

Zhang is widely considered to be a protégé of Jiang Zemin and Zeng Qinghong. When Zhang was party chief in Shenzhen, he turned this frontier city of China's economic reform into Jiang's showcase for the new phase of China's development, known as the "three represents."<sup>4</sup> Both Zeng and Zhang advanced the early stages of their careers within the oil industry. Some analysts believe that Zhang's rise to the top provincial position can be attributed to Zeng's favoritism. When Zeng was in charge of the powerful Organization Department of the CCP Central Committee in 2001, he helped Zhang get the post of governor of Shandong, and one year later, party secretary of Shandong. Zhang married a classmate from Xiamen University, and they have one daughter, who is married to the son of Lee Yin Yee, a wealthy businessman who serves as chairman of Xinyi Glass Holdings Limited in Hong Kong.

### *Political Prospects and Policy Preferences*

Zhang has extensive leadership experience in economically advanced regions (Shenzhen, Shandong, and Tianjin), and if Wang Qishan is not given the post of executive vice premier, Zhang will most likely seek that position so that he can secure a concurrent seat on the Politburo Standing Committee. Zhang could also serve as chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). He has taken a low-profile approach in his career advancement and it is therefore unclear what his hot-button issues will be when/if he obtains membership on the next Politburo Standing Committee.<sup>5</sup> In general, Zhang has been known for his pro-market economic policy orientation, especially evident in his leadership tenure in Shenzhen.

## Wang Yang 汪洋

- Born 1955
- Guangdong party secretary (2007–present)
- Politburo member (2007–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2007–present)

### *Personal and Professional Background*

Wang Yang was born in 1955 in Suzhou County, Anhui Province, and joined the CCP in 1975. He studied political publicity in a political economics program at the Central Party School (CPS) in Beijing (1979–1980), received a bachelor's degree in public administration from the CPS (via correspondence courses, 1989–1992), and received a master's degree in management science through part-time studies at the China University of Science and Technology in Hefei City, Anhui Province (1996). Wang also pursued mid-career cadre training at the CPS in Beijing twice (1997 and 2001). He began his career as a worker in a food factory in Suxian County, Anhui Province, and advanced it first through the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL), serving as CCYL deputy secretary of Suxian (1981–82), propaganda director of the CCYL Anhui Provincial Committee (1982–83), and deputy secretary of the CCYL Anhui Provincial Committee (1983–84). He headed the Anhui Provincial Sports Commission (1984–88), served as mayor of Tongling City (Anhui Province, 1988–1992), chairman of Anhui Province's Economic Planning Commission, and as assistant governor of the province (1992–93). At the age of 38, Wang was appointed executive vice governor of Anhui Province, holding the post from 1993 to 1999. He was then transferred to the central government (1999) to serve as vice minister of the National Reform and Development Commission (NDRC, 1999–2003) and deputy secretary-general of the State Council (2003–05). He served as party secretary of Chongqing (2005–07). Wang was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 16th Party Congress (2002).

### *Family and Patron-Client Ties*

Wang was born into a humble family. His father died when Wang was a young boy. As the eldest child, he began to work at the age of 17 to help his mother support the family.<sup>6</sup> Wang has been widely considered a protégé of Hu Jintao, with whom he developed strong patron-client ties in the early 1980s when Hu was the head of the CCYL and Wang was deputy secretary of the Anhui Provincial CCYL Committee. Some PRC journalists recently reported that it was Deng Xiaoping who “found” Wang Yang in 1992 when Deng visited Anhui and met this 37-year-old mayor of Tongling City. Deng was quoted as saying: “Wang Yang is an exceptional talent.”<sup>7</sup>

### *Political Prospects and Policy Preferences*

Wang possesses broad leadership experience in both the central government (the NDRC and the State Council) and in major provincial posts (in inland Chongqing and coastal Guangdong). If Wang Qishan is not given the position of executive vice premier, Wang Yang will likely seek it in order to gain a concurrent seat on the Politburo Standing Committee. Alternatively, Wang may serve either as secretary of the Central Commission

for Discipline Inspection, which is responsible for party discipline and investigation of corruption, or secretary of the Central Political and Legislative Committee, which is responsible for public security. But the possible reduction of PSC seats from nine to seven may undermine his chance for promotion. Wang was often seen as a main rival of Bo Xilai, but Bo's downfall does not necessarily mean an absolute victory for Wang. Other princelings now believe that Wang's power and influence will expand very quickly, and thus they may create barriers to his quick advancement to the PSC, the pinnacle of power. Wang's hot-button issues include the transformation of China's economy from an export-driven one reliant on cheap labor to an innovation-led model driven by domestic consumption; the promotion of intra-party democracy and village elections; media transparency; and bolder political reforms.

## Yu Zhengsheng 俞正声

- Born 1945
- Shanghai party secretary (2007–present)
- Politburo member (2002–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (1997–present)

### *Personal and Professional Background*

Yu Zhengsheng was born in 1945 in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, and joined the CCP in 1964. He received an undergraduate education in ballistic missile automatic control from the Department of Missile Engineering at the Harbin Institute of Technology (1963–68). Yu started working as a technician in several radio factories in Hebei Province (1968–1975) before he joined the Research Institute for the Promotion and Application of Electronic Technology under the Fourth Ministry of Machine-Building Industry, where he served as a technician, engineer, and assistant chief engineer (1975–1982). He was promoted to deputy director in 1982, after which he was transferred to the Ministry of Electronics Industry (MEI) where he served as head of the Department of Microcomputer Management, and later the MEI deputy director of planning (1982–84). Subsequently, Yu served as deputy party secretary and mayor of Yantai City, Shandong Province (1985–89), mayor and party secretary of Qingdao City, Shandong Province (1987–1997), and vice minister and minister of construction (1997–2001). Yu was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 14th Party Congress (1992).

### *Family and Patron-Client Ties*

A princeling, Yu has an extraordinary family background.<sup>8</sup> His grandfather's brother, Yu Dawei, served as defense minister under Chiang Kai-shek. Yu's father Huang Jing (Yu Qiwei) was the ex-husband of Jiang Qing, who was later married to Mao Zedong, and Huang served as party secretary and mayor of Tianjin in the early 1950s. Yu Zhengsheng's brother, Yu Qiangsheng, served as bureau chief of China's Ministry of State Security and defected to the United States in the mid-1980s. Yu is widely considered a protégé of both Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. Yu worked at the China Welfare Fund for the Handicapped, headed by Deng Pufang (Deng Xiaoping's son) in the mid-1980s. Yu also formed strong patron-client ties with Jiang Zemin at the Ministry of Electronics Industry in the early 1980s when Jiang was in charge of the ministry. Yu's wife, Zhang Zhikai, is the daughter of Zhang Zhenhuan, a major general who served as deputy director of the General Logistics Department of the PLA.

### *Political Prospects and Policy Preferences*

As a two-term Politburo member, Yu is a strong candidate for the next Politburo Standing Committee, but is at a disadvantage in terms of age. He may be eliminated as a candidate for the next PSC if the leadership decides to make this supreme decision-making body younger, consisting primarily of fifth-generation leaders. Yu may also be eliminated due to the abovementioned complicated (and even controversial) family background, and his possible involvement in some alleged major corruption cases,

especially if the CCP leadership decides to adopt a “more candidates than seats” election for the next PSC.<sup>9</sup> If Yu obtains a seat on the PSC, he will most likely take the position as chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). He could also become executive vice premier if current vice premier Wang Qishan moves to another leadership body, with the dual purposes of balancing Li Keqiang’s power and strengthening the State Council’s authority. Based on his previous leadership experiences and recent public speeches, Yu’s hot-button policy issues may include the promotion of the private sector, urban development, legal development, and social reform to promote confidence-building and mutual trust in society.

## Liu Yandong 刘延东

- Born 1945
- State councilor (2008–present)
- Politburo member (2007–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2002–present)

### *Personal and Professional Background*

Liu Yandong was born in 1945 in Nantong City, Jiangsu Province (some official biographers say that Liu was born in Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province, and that Nantong was her ancestral home). Liu joined the CCP in 1964. She received an undergraduate education in chemical engineering from the Chemical Engineering Department at Tsinghua University (1964–1970). Liu also took courses as a part-time student at People's University (1990–94) and at Jilin University (1994–98), obtaining a master's degree in sociology and a doctoral degree in law, respectively. She was a technician at the Kaiping Chemical Plant in Tangshan, Hebei Province (1970–72), after which she worked at the Beijing Chemical Experiment Plant (1972–1980), serving also as its deputy party secretary and as chief of the CCP committee of its political department. Liu became a cadre in the Organization Department of the CCP Committee of Beijing (1980–81), and deputy party secretary of Chaoyang District, Beijing (1981–82). She was a member and then the executive member of the CCYL Central Committee Secretariat and concurrently vice chairperson (and then chairperson) of the All-China Youth Federation (1982–1991). Liu joined the Central United Front Department of the CCP as deputy secretary-general, and was later promoted to deputy head (1991–98); she concurrently served as party secretary of the Central Institute of Socialism, which is run by the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Liu was head of the United Front Work Department and concurrently vice chairperson of the CPPCC (2002–07). She was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 15th Party Congress (1997).

### *Family and Patron-Client Ties*

Liu is widely seen as a protégé of Jiang Zemin, Zeng Qinghong, and Hu Jintao.<sup>10</sup> A princeling, she is the daughter of Liu Ruilong, a former vice minister of agriculture. Her father introduced Jiang Zemin's adoptive father Jiang Shangqing to the Communist movement in 1927. The family ties between Liu Yandong and Zeng Qinghong can be traced back to the early 1950s when both families were in Shanghai. Liu Ruilong served as chief of staff of the CCP Shanghai Municipal Committee while Zeng's father, Zeng Shan, served as vice mayor of Shanghai. Liu Yandong attended the kindergarten run by Zeng's mother, Deng Liujin. Liu has known Hu Jintao for over three decades, first at Tsinghua University, where the two were political councilors, and then in the CCYL Secretariat and the All-China Youth Federation, with Liu serving as Hu's deputy in both entities. Liu's husband, Yang Yuanxing, is currently president of China Southeastern Commerce and Technology Corp. Their daughter, Yang Fan, works for a business firm in Hong Kong.



*Political Prospects and Policy Preferences*

As the only woman currently serving on the Politburo, Liu is a strong candidate for the next Politburo Standing Committee,<sup>11</sup> although her age may prove to be a disadvantage. She may be eliminated as a candidate for the next PSC if the leadership decides to make this supreme decision-making body younger, consisting primarily of fifth-generation leaders. If Liu obtains a seat on the PSC, she will most likely take the position of chairperson of the CPPCC or that of “propaganda tsar.” She is often seen as liberal-minded, and may call for the greater political participation of other parties, interest groups, and NGOs in China’s political process. In recent years, Liu has advocated for the promotion of China’s cultural exchanges overseas.

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**Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the role of and the selection process for the Politburo Standing Committee, see Cheng Li, “The Battle for China’s Top Nine Leadership Posts,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Winter 2012): 131–145; and Li Cheng, *The Road to Zhongnanhai* (通往中南海之路; New York: Mirror Books, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The “sent-down youth” (插队知青) refers to young, educated urban dwellers who left their cities to serve as manual laborers in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.

<sup>3</sup> *Tuanpai* (团派) literally means “league faction,” referring to the officials who advanced their careers through the ranks of the Chinese Communist Youth League (CCYL), especially those officials who worked at the provincial and national levels of the CCYL leadership in the early and mid-1980s when Hu Jintao served as its head.

<sup>4</sup> The idea of three represents, initiated by Jiang Zemin in 2000, was an ideological justification for the priority given to the private sector in China’s economic development and for allowing entrepreneurs to be members of the communist party.

<sup>5</sup> For more discussion about Zhang’s low-profile approach, see Robert Lawrence Kuhn, *How China’s Leaders Think* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), pp. 229–231.

<sup>6</sup> For more information about Wang Yang’s family background and his early experiences, see Du Zijia 窦梓稼, *Biography of Wang Yang: That “Wolf” in China’s Political Arena* (汪洋传: 中国政坛那匹“狼”; New York: Mirror Books, 2009); and Wang Yaohua 王耀华, *Competition among Provincial Chiefs* (诸侯争锋; New York: Mirror Books, 2009), pp. 13–58. For Wang’s recent views on and efforts toward political and economic reforms in Guangdong, see Cheng Li, “Hu’s Southern Expedition: Changing Leadership in Guangdong,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 24, Spring 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Earth week* (大地周刊), No. 23, 2009; also see <http://news.hexun.vnet.cn/2010-01-02/122228741.html>.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about Yu Zhengsheng’s family background and his early experiences, see Gao Yuanpeng 高原鹏, *Yu Zhengsheng and His Family* (俞正声和他的家族; New York: Mirror Books, 2009); Wang Yaohua 王耀华, *Competition among Provincial Chiefs* (诸侯争锋; New York: Mirror Books, 2009), pp. 133–196; and Gao Xin 高新, *The New Leaders Who Run China* (领导中国的新人物; New York: Mirror Books, 2003), Vol. 2, pp. 624–658.

<sup>9</sup> The two most important speculations regarding his involvement in corruption cases were one linking him to former minister of railways Liu Zhijun, and another involving a “shared mistress.” See Jiang Weiping 姜维平, “What Does Liu Zhijin’s Downfall Mean?” (刘志军落马说明了什么?), *China in perspective* (纵览中国), February 13, 2011, <http://www.chinainperspective.com/ArtShow.aspx?AID=10125>; and Luo Changping, “Public nepotism” (公共裙带), *Caijing* magazine, No. 4, February 14, 2011.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information about Liu Yandong's family background and his early experiences, see Hu Min 扈炯, *Hu's Five Golden Flowers* (胡锦涛的五朵金花; Hong Kong: Beiyunhe Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Some of Liu's friends recently lobbied in public official meetings for her membership in the next PSC. Zeng Haisheng, a member of the CPPCC and a sister of Zeng Qinghong, advocated the need for female representation in the highest leadership bodies. See Zeng Haisheng 曾海生, "It is necessary to ensure where the main responsibility lies when discussing the protection of women's rights" (保护妇女权益要明确责任主体), *New Beijing daily* (新京报), March 8, 2012, [http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2012-03/08/content\\_322639.htm?div=-1](http://epaper.bjnews.com.cn/html/2012-03/08/content_322639.htm?div=-1).