



Chinese Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping: Renaissance, Reform, or Retrogression?

By Willy Wo-Lap Lam

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Renowned for his coverage of China's elite politics and leadership transitions, veteran Sinologist Willy Lam has produced the first book-length study in English of the rise of Xi Jinping--General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since November 2012. With rare insight, Lam describes Xi's personal history and his fascination with quasi-Maoist values, the factional politics through which he ascended, the configuration of power of the Fifth-Generation leadership, and the country's likely future directions under the charismatic "princeling."

Despite an undistinguished career as a provincial administrator, Xi has rapidly amassed more power than his predecessors. He has overawed his rivals and shaken up the party-state hierarchy by launching large-scale anti-corruption and rectification campaigns. With a strong power base in the People's Liberation Army and a vision of China as an "awakening lion," Xi has been flexing China's military muscle in sovereignty rows with countries including Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines while trying to undermine the influence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. While Xi is still fine-tuning his art of governance, his zero tolerance for dissent and his preoccupation with upholding the privileges of the "red aristocracy" and the CCP's status as "perennial ruling party" do not bode well for economic, political, or cultural reforms. Lam takes a close look at Xi's ideological and political profile and considers how his conservative outlook might shape what the new strongman calls "the Great Renaissance of the Chinese race."

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Editorial Review

Review

"A vivid and compelling account of where quasi-superpower China is being taken by its new supreme leader, Xi Jinping. Informed by the insights of the leading analyst of contemporary Chinese politics, Willy Lam offers a fast-paced and up-to-date biographical account showing why wishful thinkers about the single-party dictatorship's future need to re-think what's really happening in China. A must read with frightening implications."

Edward Friedman, *University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA*

"Following on his acclaimed studies of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao, veteran analyst Willy Wo-Lap Lam has now produced a detailed and balanced portrait of Xi Jinping. Lam's assessment of Xi's personality, career, and worldview provides remarkable insight into the prospects for China's economy, political system, and international role under its strong and determined new leader."

Harry Harding, *University of Virginia, USA*

"Chinese civilization has survived interludes of violent rule in the past and someday will emerge from its Communist period as well. Meanwhile, the crisis that looms today under Xi Jinping, who brings an unusual combination of narrow vision and brash initiative, augurs more trouble for the Chinese people and likely for the world as well. No one does better than Willy Lam in showing, in meticulous and comprehensive detail, why this is so."

Perry Link, *University of California, USA*

"Veteran China expert Willy Lam has done it again--producing the first significant book on Xi Jinping's rise and consolidation of power. Based on prodigious research and filled with keen insights, this book should be read carefully by all China watchers."

David Shambaugh, *George Washington University & The Brookings Institution, USA*

"This is a brilliant book that brings a deep understanding of the Chinese past to bear on the present and possible futures. Willy Lam is the authority on this subject; at least as well informed and insightful as a whole embassy full of specialists. His work just gets better and better."

Arthur Waldron, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*

" Xi Jinping knows that in his lifetime, China will not challenge the power of the United States in the world. He thinks however achieved in the Asia-Pacific region. From this point of view, the maritime version of the new Silk Road is of great geopolitical importance. Not only to counter the Americans, but also the Indians."

Willy Lam talking to Le Temps of Paris (http://www.letemps.ch/Page/Uuid/94809ca6-03d1-11e5-a2d8-dac5eea792f9/P%C3%A9kin_glisso_vers_un_r%C3%A9gime_diktatorial)

"In this book Willy Lam explores how a relatively undistinguished regional official became one of the most powerful and charismatic leaders in the history of the People's Republic. In an interview, Mr. Lam discussed what's behind Mr. Xi's reversal of many of the principles that have guided Chinese politics in the post-Mao era and what Mr. Lam sees as "the closing of the Chinese mind."'"

New York Times

(<http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/01/q-and-a-willy-wo-lap-lam-on-chinese-politics-in-the-era-of-xi-jinping/>)

"In his recent book, *Chinese Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping*, Willy Wo-Lap Lam, a veteran observer of Chinese elites, explains that since taking over as general secretary in November 2012 and president of China in March 2013, Xi has centralized power under his leadership to an extraordinary degree, creating and chairing the new Central National Security Commission, which has jurisdiction over the army, the police, and all foreign-related and national security agencies, along with chairing the Central Military Commission, which comes with his job as CCP general secretary."

Professor MacFarquhar, Harvard University (New York Review of Books)

"With rare insight, Lam discusses the career, ideology, and statecraft of the fifth-generation leaders and Xi's anti-corruption campaign and zero tolerance for dissent. Of particular interest is Xi's reversal of principles put in place by Deng Xiaoping, pursuing what the author calls "the closing of the Chinese mind." Compared with most books on China, this volume presents a striking, native, insider's perspectives on China's domestic politics. Moreover, it brings a rich knowledge of different sources and viewpoints within China. It is a highly laudable work and essential reading for students and scholars of China's political reforms, democratization, and elite politics. Summing Up: Essential. Upper-division undergraduate, graduate, and research collections." - X. Li, York College of Pennsylvania, CHOICE

"The analysis of *Chinese politics in the era of Xi Jinping* that Lam presents in this book is a very detailed and compelling one, drawing on extensive, mainly Chinese-language primary material. (Lam) develops a very convincing and well-argued vision of China's potential future under a Xi-administration and produces a book that should be read by political scientists and analysts working on China." - Carolin Kautz, ASIEN, 2016

About the Author

Willy Wo-Lap Lam is Adjunct Professor in the Centre for China Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Kevin Jakubowski:

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Donna Vandyne:

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