

Huang Kunming 黄坤明

Born 1956



Current Positions

- Member of the Politburo (2017–present)
- Director of the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee (2017–present)
- Deputy Head of the Central Spiritual Civilization Steering Committee of the CCP Central Committee (2017–present)
- Director of the Office of the Central Spiritual Civilization Steering Committee of the CCP Central Committee (2014–present)
- Member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CCP (2017–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2017–present)

Personal and Professional Background

Huang Kunming was born on November 15, 1956, in Shanghang County, Fujian Province. He joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1976. He received a bachelor's degree in politics from the Department of Political Education at Fujian Normal University in Fuzhou City, Fujian Province (1978–82); a master's degree in economic management from the Central Party School (CPS) in Beijing (via part-time studies, 1985–88); and a doctoral degree in management from the Tsinghua University School of Public Administration in Beijing (via part-time studies, 2005–08).

Huang began his career as a PLA soldier (1974–77). He was also a “sent-down youth” at the Tongxian Commune in Shanghang County, Fujian Province (1977–78).¹ After graduating from Fujian Normal University, he worked as a clerk in the Young Cadre Division of the Organization Department of the Longyan Prefecture Party Committee of Fujian Province (1982–88). He served as deputy director of the General Office (1988–90), and then as director of the General Office and deputy secretary-general of Longyan Prefecture, Fujian Province (1991–93). After that, he served as party secretary of Yongding County, Fujian Province (1993–98) and deputy party secretary and mayor of Longyan City (1998–99).

In 1999, Huang was transferred to Zhejiang, where he served as deputy party secretary (1999–2003) and mayor (2000–03) of Huzhou City and then as party secretary of Jiaxing City (2003–07). He then became director of the Propaganda Department of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee (2007–10) and party secretary of Hangzhou (2010–13). After that, Huang was appointed as deputy head of the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee (2013–14). He was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 18th Party Congress in 2012.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Huang Kunming is a protégé of Xi Jinping. He is believed to have substantially assisted Xi in preparing his “New Thought in Zhejiang” (*zhijiang xinyu*) newspaper column, which was published in *Zhejiang Daily* from 2003 to 2007, when Xi was Zhejiang party secretary.² Xi and Huang frequently exchanged ideas and views during those years. In 2007, Xi appointed Huang as director of the Propaganda Department of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee.³ Soon after Xi became general secretary of the party, Huang was promoted to be deputy director of the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee. Huang's wife, Qiu Ping, served as director of the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau of the Zhejiang municipal government before her retirement several years ago. The couple has one daughter.

Policy Preferences and Political Prospects

Huang has played an important role in promoting Xi's thoughts on governance and Xi's first-term achievements. In addition to holding Politburo membership, Huang was promoted to be director of the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee during Xi's second term. Because of Huang Kunming's long experience working with Xi in Fujian and Zhejiang and his work to promote Xi Jinping thought over the past decade, Huang may succeed Wang Huning as executive secretary of the Secretariat of the CCP Central Committee at the 20th Party Congress and thus obtain a seat on the new Politburo Standing Committee. Given that Huang does not have an advantage in terms his age, he may step down from the Politburo in October and serve in a more ceremonial governmental position.

Compiled by Cheng Li and the staff of the John L. Thornton China Center at Brookings

Notes:

¹ "Sent-down youth" (插队知青) refers to young, educated urbanites who left their home cities to serve as manual laborers in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.

² The articles that appeared in the column were later compiled into a book; see Xi Jinping, *New Thoughts from Zhejiang [Zhejiang xinyu]* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 2007); also see Cheng Li, *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2016), pp. 241–42.

³ Ye Maozhi and Liu Ziwei, "Xi Jinping promoted confidants, quietly but aggressively" [Xi Jinping qiaoqiao daju tiba xinfu], *Mirror Newsnet*, May 10, 2014, <http://www.wenxuecity.com/news/2014/05/10/3257474print.html>.