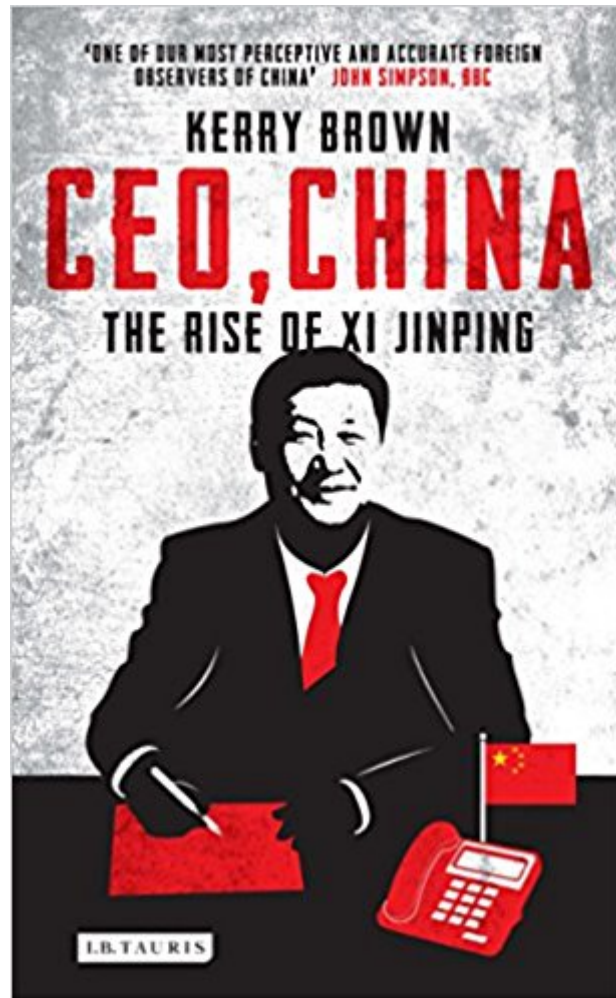


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# CEO, China: The Rise Of Xi Jinping



## Synopsis

The Economist 2016 Book of the Year Selection China has become the powerhouse of the world economy, its incredible boom overseen by the elite members of the secretive and all-powerful communist party. But since the election of Xi Jinping as General Secretary, life at the top in China has changed. Under the guise of a corruption crackdown, which has seen his rivals imprisoned, Xi Jinping has been quietly building one of the most powerful leaderships modern China has ever seen. In *CEO China*, the noted China expert Kerry Brown reveals the hidden story of the rise of the man dubbed the 'Chinese Godfather'. Brown investigates his relationship with his revolutionary father, who was expelled by Mao during the Cultural Revolution, his business dealings and allegiances in China's regional power struggles and his role in the internal battle raging between the old men of the Deng era and the new super-rich 'princelings'. Xi Jinping's China is powerful, aggressive and single-minded and this book will become a must-read for the Western world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Xi Jinping, president of China, is now undoubtedly one of the most powerful men in the world. This is the first biography of Xi in English and provides a lucid and readable account of his background, rise to power and political background. (Gideon Rachman, Financial Times 2016-07-05)  
*CEO China: The Rise of Xi Jinping*. That is the new and excellent book by Kerry Brown. Almost all books on China are either bad or mediocre, but this one is the best book I ever have read on the exercise of power in contemporary China. Every page is good, here is a short excerpt: 'More important than a

cabinet in the Western system of government, yet ostensibly separate from day-to-day decision making, the Politburo owns the crucial function of dispensing ideological, spiritual and political leadership. This description means it covers nothing and everything. It has the broadest framework within which to operate, which means it can wander into every area of administrative and governmental life in the country. But like the ideal city described in Plato's Republic, in a strange way China is really run on the model of philosopher kings.' Definitely recommended, one of my favorite non-fiction books of the year so far. I can readily imagine re-reading it. (Professor Tyler Cowen, chair of economics at George Mason University and New York Times columnist) There is an occupational hazard for anyone who chooses to write about Chinese politics in the second decade of the 21st century, Ā• admits Professor Kerry Brown of King Ā• Ā•s College, London, in his dazzlingly detailed new book, CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping. Ā• Ā• "We may live in an age of openness and information, but the inner workings of the Chinese political system Ā• Ā• remain one of the few bastions of opacity. Ā• Ā• More presumptive Ā• Ā• "experts Ā• Ā• should follow Brown Ā• Ā•s lead and humbly offer their Ā• Ā• "expertise Ā• Ā• with modesty. Few do. (Tom Plate, distinguished scholar of Asian and Pacific studies at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles) Xi Jinping is one of the world's most powerful people and the strongest Chinese leader in decades. Brown (Chinese studies, King Ā• Ā•s Coll. London; The New Emperors) chronicles Xi's life and rise to power while examining the nature of power in contemporary China. Over the last couple of decades, party leaders have appeared to distance themselves from Mao and some of the social problems from the early years of the People's Republic of China. President Xi, however, embraces both the Mao era and reform as the narrative leading to modern China. The party's "achievement in creating the China the world sees today justifies the cost of epic social movements, famines and turmoil from 1949 to 1978. These were the years it was learning." In this light, the author examines the strength of the president and, through efforts like the anticorruption campaign, his vision for the future of China. Verdict: This in-depth look at power in China and the new president will appeal to those interested in China or politics. (Library Journal, Starred Review, Casey Watters, Singapore Management University 2016-09-30) "Xi is determined to reshape China and bring it into the centre of the international stage. We all feel these profound changes, but few of us have the ability to step back, put Xi in perspective, analyse his rise, and guess where Xi will take us. Kerry Brown has it, and he delivers. This book provides an excellent account of Xi Ā• Ā•s rise, his visions, his determination, and the future he is making for China and for the world. All who are interested in China and its global role should read it." (YONGNIAN ZHENG, DIRECTOR OF THE EAST ASIAN INSTITUTE, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF

SINGAPORE 2017-01-06)"Kerry Brown is one of our most perceptive and accurate foreign observers of China" (JOHN SIMPSON, BBC 2017-01-06)"CEO, China is a thoughtful and thought-provoking study of China's current leader| A fascinating glimpse into the workings of the Chinese leadership." (FRANK CHING, FIRST BUREAU CHIEF IN BEIJING FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL AND AUTHOR OF ANCESTORS 2017-01-06)"A necessary read for anyone who thinks about China, which is most of us these days| Kerry Brown's book is very timely, thorough and insightful, and gives some of the prevailing orthodoxies a bit of an overdue nudge. A lot of the commentary about Xi to date has been fairly trite; this book isn't. (CLINTON DINES, FORMER CEO OF BHP BILLITON IN CHINA 2017-01-06)

Kerry Brown is the Professor of Chinese Studies at King's College London and Director of the Lau China Institute. He was formerly the Director of the China Studies Centre at the University of Sydney and head of the Asia Programme at Chatham House. With 20 years experience of life in China, he has worked in education, business and government, including a term as First Secretary at the British Embassy in Beijing. He writes regularly for the Times Literary Supplement and The Observer amongst others, as well as for many international and Chinese media outlets.

This book situates Chairman Xi as one of the great practitioners of power. What is power? What is it for? How to acquire it? The author looks at Xi through the lens of traditional Chinese statecraft, Western political science traditions and organizational theory, to make up for the lack of transparency and evidence inherent in the subject. Much use is made of official and semiofficial spokespersons for the CCP. Readers who are interested in a new approach to looking at China may profit from this book.

I've lived in China for twenty years. This book is written by someone who is able to step out of a national mindset and see China and analyze it and the party rationally.

Kerry Brown has been covering China as an academic, a diplomat, and a journalist for decades, including many years living in China. His optimism about the future of China is hard to miss in CEO, China: The Rise of Xi Jinping. Ostensibly a biography of Xi, the current president of the People's Republic of China, Brown's treatment wanders far and wide across the political, cultural, and economic landscape of modern China. Brown's comprehensive narrative lost my interest from time to time. I came away with some broad impressions about Xi and about China, but felt like I had just

dipped my toe into the subjects. First impression: China's government operates like a large, nepotistic corporation. (No big surprise, given the title.) How do you rise to the top in China, specifically in the Chinese Communist Party? Have the right family ties, know the right people, do what you're told, and go to work in places where you may not want to go. The most telling part of this formula is the practice of sending regional governors to serve in areas where they have no connection. Like at my company, when a new director comes in having had no experience at our site, Xi was sent to a region where he knew no one and had no natural ties. It's another step up the ladder, but in a democratic or republican system would make no sense. Another impression is that unlike other Communist countries, China leans more toward oligarchy than toward dictatorship. Xi is the leader, but he leads at the mercy of a central committee, not on his own like Castro or Stalin. Yes, he's the man in charge, but he's not the end-all of the state. He's the guy for now, but when his time comes, a suitable replacement will be appointed. It's that central committee that pulls the strings. Brown doesn't have much to say about suppression of dissidents, persecution of Christians, or the persistence of one-party rule. Given that the Communist leaders have overseen great economic growth over the last couple of decades, they have managed to fend off criticism, even from many Westerners. Brown may be right, that China is poised to take huge steps forward in building the middle class and expanding their economic footprint around the world. Xi could very well be leading China in that direction. Brown's book will be of interest to Sinophiles and those who want a decent, balanced perspective on modern China. The insights on Xi himself are limited and distant. I assume that, for obvious reasons, Brown had no access to Xi, his family, or other intimates. Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for the complimentary electronic review copy!

China's political system has little in common with America's - its CCP is the only available governance structure. Deng's military response to the 1989 Tiananmen students, in part, was to block the nightmare of empowered teenage thugs rampaging once again. The CCP has 87 million members, with 3,000 elites of vice-ministerial rank and above. They comprise the National People's Congress, and meet every five years. Their influence is simply that of voting in the 'real players.' Real power resides higher up - the Central Committee has 200 members and 150 alternatives (attend some of the meetings) and meets annually, while the Politburo has 25 members that meets months, and the Politburo Standing Committee consists of 7 members that meet weekly. The General Secretary sets agendas and runs both the Politburo and its Standing Committee. Within that system, China's top leaders travel a much different path and stricter screening methodology than do ours. Negative politics cannot work in long-term China. China's leaders top-most priority is

preserving the one-party system because they believe this is their best bet to achieve great-nation status. When Xi (1949) took over, the CCP had relied on economic growth as the core source of legitimacy. Now that message is weaker, and this may explain the shift to more nationalistic messaging to bolster its rule. Author Kerry Brown is a former British diplomat, now professor of Chinese studies at King's College London. He notes that Xi talked about corruption since the early 1990s when he was an official in Fujian, and that his anti-graft campaign not only addresses a major problem for the Party's image, but also facilitates efficient removal of powerful individuals and factions opposed to his initiatives - to end corruption, along with excessive bad debt, over-investment in hard assets, trimming the SOE sector and making it more accountable (they contribute about half of state finances). Xi's father had been a comrade of Mao, but was removed from office for allowing a literary work mentioning one of Mao's enemies. He was imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution and Xi sent to rural China for seven years of 're-education.' The inner workings of the Chinese political system, especially the lives and thinking of its leaders, are opaque to most. Xi Jinping is the China's current leader, rising to that position with little transparency, and then predicted to have much less influence and power than he has seemingly since accrued. Now they fear another personal cult in the making, a ghost of Mao. Xi was elevated to the Politburo Standing Committee in 2007 - at the time, the only question seemed to be whether he would become the first-or second-ranking leader in five years' time. In the 1990s he had barely scraped through to be elected to the Central Committee elite. Xi's application to join the CCP was not accepted until 1974 - his tenth attempt. In 1975 he began chemical engineering studies. His provincial leadership record had been unspectacular. In 1979, after graduation, Xi began work as defense minister Geng Biao's secretary, then (1982) deputy secretary and subsequently secretary in Zhengding village, executive vice mayor of Xiamen (1985), 1988 Party secretary of Ningde, 1990 Party secretary of Fuzhou, 1996 deputy governor of Fuzhou, 2000 governor of Fujian Province, 2002 Party secretary of Zhejiang Province, 2007 Party secretary of Shanghai and president of the Central Party School, 2008 chairs the coordinating committee for the Beijing Olympics, 2010 vice chairman of the CMC. Now Xi Jinping is nicknamed 'the Chairman of Everything.' Of the eight best-known and most influential leading groups, he is chair of four, and four of his colleagues have chairmanship of one leading group each.

This book is available for free on bittorrent (through Vuze) and it was on the Economist best books of 2016 list so that's why I started reading it. The first chapter describes China's government as having "bandit" roots like gang members and that their sole aim is to maintain power or else they will

go back to their gangster roots. I don't mind the propaganda if this book was more informative but the author drones on and on at length. It might be bc the substantive political stuff isn't accessible to him as a foreigner but he still needs to write enough to publish a book so he drones on and on at length without any quality content or useful information to shed light on the Chinese government - super insipid. So I didn't waste my time with Ch.2 bc my life is short.

The story is not particularly new if you read different Chinese books on him

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