

Chen Min'er 陈敏尔

Born 1960

Current Positions

- Chongqing Party Secretary (2017–present)
- Member of the Politburo (2017–present)
- Full member of the Central Committee of the CCP (2012–present)



Personal and Professional Background

Chen Min'er was born on September 29, 1960, in Zhuji City, Zhejiang Province. Chen joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1982. He received a three-year college education in Chinese language and literature at Shaoxing Normal College in Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province (1978–81). He then attended a course for instructors of political theory at the Zhejiang Provincial Party School in Hangzhou (1982–83); participated in a one-year, full-time training program for young and middle-aged cadres at the Central Party School (CPS) (1995–96) in Beijing; and received a master's degree in law from the CPS (via part-time studies, 1995–98).

Chen worked as a propaganda clerk, first at Shaoxing Normal College (1981–82) and then in the propaganda department of the Shaoxing Municipal Party Committee (1984–87). He served as head of the propaganda department and, concurrently, as a member of the Standing Committee of the Shaoxing County Party Committee (1987–89). He was promoted to be deputy head of the propaganda department of the Shaoxing Municipal Party Committee (1989–90). He then served as deputy party secretary of Shaoxing County (1990–94) and, concurrently, as head of Shaoxing County (1991–94). After that, he served as party secretary and head of Shaoxing County (1994–95). He was then party secretary of Shaoxing County and, concurrently, a member of the Standing Committee of the Shaoxing Municipal Party Committee (1996–97). Subsequently, Chen was made a vice mayor and member of the Standing Committee of Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province (1997–98); executive vice mayor of Ningbo City (1998–99); and then deputy party secretary of Ningbo City (1999). Following that, he served as president and party secretary of the newspaper *Zhejiang Daily* (1999–2001). He was made director of the propaganda department of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee (2001–07) and, concurrently, a member of the Standing Committee of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee (2002–07). He then became vice-governor of Zhejiang Province (2007–12).

In January 2012, Chen was transferred to Guizhou, where he served as deputy party secretary (2012–15) and, concurrently, governor (2013–15). He was then promoted to be party secretary of Guizhou (2015–17). He was first elected to the Central Committee as an alternate member at the 17th Party Congress in 2007.

Family and Patron-Client Ties

Chen Min'er is one of Xi Jinping's most trusted protégés. When Xi was party boss of Zhejiang Province (2002–07), Chen served as director of the propaganda department and as a standing committee member of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee. During those five years, Chen was widely believed to have substantially assisted Xi in preparing weekly columns for the provincial party newspaper, *Zhejiang Daily*. In 2015, Xi took the noteworthy step of promoting Chen to provincial party secretary of Guizhou, making Chen one of only three provincial party secretaries born in the 1960s (the other two—Hu Chunhua, then the party secretary of Guangdong, and Sun Zhengcai, then the party secretary of Chongqing — were both Politburo members).¹ Again with Xi's backing, Chen was appointed party

secretary of Chongqing in 2017, replacing Sun Zhengcai, who was investigated for corruption and other transgressions. These two appointments have positioned Chen well for further political advancement.

The identity of Chen Min'er's wife is unknown. The couple has a daughter, who was previously married to the son of Si Xinliang, the former head of both the propaganda department and the organization department in the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee. Si Xinliang was purged on corruption charges in 2015.

Policy Preferences and Political Prospects

In his capacity as a provincial leader over the past two decades, Chen has focused his efforts on advancing certain policy initiatives. As a leader in Zhejiang, Chen Min'er was seen as strongly supportive of private sector development. In Guizhou, Chen was known for his dedication to poverty alleviation, commitment to environmental protection, and promotion of big data, e-commerce, and innovation. During Chen's tenure in Guizhou, the province became a center of big data in the country.² Now in Chongqing, Chen has emphasized the need to create a new "political ecology," in contrast to the "poor governance" practiced under the leadership of both Bo Xilai and Sun Zhengcai. He has also called for the promotion of small townships with distinct characteristics in terms of subculture, commerce, and geographic landscape.

As one of the few sixth-generation leaders in the current Politburo and, more importantly, as a confidant of Xi Jinping, Chen is a leading contender for the next Politburo Standing Committee (PSC). If Chen obtains membership on the PSC, he will most likely serve as executive secretary of the Secretariat of the CCP Central Committee and be responsible for propaganda and party building.

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

Notes:

¹ Cheng Li, *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2016), p. 343.

² Jiang Xun and Yuan Weijing, "Political Rising Star Chen Min'er is a Confidant of Xi Jinping" [政坛新星陈敏尔是习近平亲信], Mirror Network, August 17, 2017, http://news.mingjingnews.com/2017/08/blog-post_502.html.