

## **Between China and West: Comparison of Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei's Educational Thoughts——Take "Xinmin Theory" and "Five Education Simultaneous Development" as examples**

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**Keywords:** Liang Qichao; Cai Yuanpei; Educational Thoughts; Similarities and Differences

**Abstract:** Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei, as the iconic figures of the modern national social revolution, the Xinmin Theory and the Five Education Simultaneously reflect their respective educational ideas. In their thinking, there is not only the persistence to the Confucian "benevolence" and "righteousness" thoughts, but also the respect for modern Western values such as democracy, equality, and freedom. The modern intellectual elite's expression of both Chinese and Western when preaching the progress of the country and society reflects the openness and integration of the intellectual elite's thinking during the transformation of modern society. It is the modern intellectual elites represented by Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei's educational ideology that integrates Chinese and Western education, which promotes the continuous reform of modern society.

### **Introduction**

After the Reform Movement of 1898, Liang Qichao went into exile in Japan. During his stay in Japan, he was deeply influenced by the mode and experience of Meiji Japan's modernization reform. In the early twentieth century, he published a series of articles in "Xinmin Cong Bao", discussing a series of issues such as national progress, national enlightenment, and cultural transformation. The articles were later compiled into a book and named "Xinmin Theory".

After the establishment of the Republic of China, in July 1912, the National Temporary Education Conference was held. At the meeting, Cai Yuanpei submitted to the meeting a proposal to take the "Five Education Simultaneously" such as military nationalism, materialism education, civic moral education, worldview education, and aesthetic education as the educational purpose of the Republic of China, and further explained the content to the meeting. After the conference, a vote was taken to accept part of the Five Education Simultaneously as the educational purpose of the new Republic of China government and be promulgated.

As iconic figures in the social transformation of modern countries, the educational thoughts of Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei reflect the revolutionary ideas of the intellectual elites of that era to promote social progress. What is there in the educational thoughts of "Xinmin" and "Five Education" The connotation of cultural tradition and the origin of theories, and what are the similarities and differences between the two educational thoughts? This is exactly the question that this article focuses on exploring.

### **1. Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei's Educational Thoughts**

During Liang Qichao's stay in Japan, he was deeply influenced by the experience of Meiji Japan's modernization. He saw that the post-developmental countries in the East learned from the Western industrialization model, and their thinking, knowledge, and expression had undergone great changes. Based on this, he published a series of articles that strongly advocated that the fundamental force of the country's social progress lies in people and in cultivating "Xinmins." Only by cultivating "new people" can the nation and nation have the new strength to achieve prosperity. Liang Qichao believes that "Xinmin" is a member of society that matches the modern industrial society. The most notable feature of such members is that they have a strong motivation, pursue democracy and individual freedom, have the ability to pursue strength and wealth, have a healthy

mentality, and have a strong body. They are essentially bourgeois people who pursue individual liberation, and are different from traditions, the new society "citizens". Shaping the ideal personality of modern society is the purpose of Liang Qichao's writing and propagating "Xinmin".

"The Xinmin don't want our people to abandon their old and follow others. The new means two things: one is to strengthen what it is and to be new, and the other is to replenish what it is and be new."<sup>[1]</sup>

"Those who have national thoughts and can state politics are called nationals."<sup>[1]</sup>

The cultural tradition based on a nation is the cornerstone that determines the existence and development of a nation or country. One of the most important factors in the vitality and continuity of this cultural tradition is national quality. The beginning of revealing this understanding was Liang Qichao. This change in understanding means that the modern concept of the state has moved from the "dynastic" era to the "national state" period. The state and social order it advocates is no longer the traditional "three outlines and five constants", but a democratic, free and equal "Xinmin" relationship, which is essentially the ideological enlightenment of the modern "new citizens" consciousness.

"A country that can stand in the world must have its own unique characteristics. From morality and law, down to customs and habits, literature and art, there is a spirit of independence. The grandfather passes it on, the descendants follow it, and then the group and the country can be success. This is the root and source of nationalism."<sup>[1]</sup>

In Cai Yuanpei's eyes, the fundamental goal of education is to satisfy the real society and serve politics, and to consider the overall development of people and the improvement of their personalities on this basis. The core of developing education is to shape healthy citizens, and the ultimate goal is to promote the development of the country and the nation.

"Educators are not for the past, nor for the present, but for the future. From the preface of talent educators, it takes ten years to grow a tree and a hundred years to bring up a generation of good men. It can be seen that educators must have the principle of immortality, such as civic morality. Others are necessary due to the needs of the times, such as materialism and military nationalism."<sup>[2]</sup>

"Five Education simultaneous development, all of which cannot be neglected in today's education. Military nationalism, materialism, and moral education are education subordinate to politics. Both worldview and aesthetic education are educations of super-political politics."<sup>[2]</sup>

"The Five Education simultaneous development take civic morality as the backbone, and the world outlook and aesthetic education are all completed morals, while military national education and materialism must be based on morality."<sup>[2]</sup>

Cai Yuanpei tried to use the terminology of modern Western disciplines to expound the idea of simultaneous development of the Five Education. Such an expression more reflects the innovation and science of his theoretical propositions and meets the needs of the development and progress of the times. In his view, the "Five Education" is a whole and indivisible.

"To weigh all aspects of psychology, military nationalism is adjacent to will; materialism is adjacent to knowledge; moral education is combined with will and emotion; aesthetic education is adjacent to emotion; while the world outlook is unified by the three. It is said that the three educations are balanced, military nationalism is sports; materialism is intellectual education; civic morality and aesthetic education are adjacent to moral education; and the world view is the unified three."<sup>[2]</sup>

## 2. Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei's Choice of Educational Path

How to create a "Xinmin"? Liang Qichao believes that the first is to change the autocratic regime and eliminate the millennia of chronic political illness; the second is to learn from the strengths of other nations and cultivate an enterprising and adventurous modern personality; and the third is to absorb the "gene" of the nation's excellent cultural heritage. Liang Qichao took the Confucian thoughts of "benevolence" and "righteousness" as a link to inherit and carry forward the traditional cultural genes in order to form personal moral nutrients that conform to modern society. He explained the evolutionary direction of modern China based on the path of modern industrialization

of different nations, especially the Western modernization model widely spread in Japan. He believes that China can only achieve its own transformation and transformation goals by absorbing the evolutionary characteristics of other nations and at the same time transforming the traditional and outstanding Confucian cultural genes.

"Therefore, if we do not want to strengthen our country today, we do not have to do so. If we want to strengthen our country, we have to examine the ways of self-reliance of various nations and select the elders of them to make up for what I have never achieved. Politics and academic skills do not know how to take people's strengths to make up for my shortcomings. I don't know that people's morals, people's wisdom, and people's power are the roots of politics, academics, and skills. Therefore, there is no way to make up for the new people, we have to think deeply."<sup>[3]</sup>

The theme of modern intellectual elites has always been how to realize the people's power and the country's prosperity. The path to prosperity and power in modern society has been repeated several times, during which the participants' personal origins, standpoints, and perspectives were different, and the final result and the assumption were both totally different. Liang Qichao, as the "banner-bearer" of the Reform Movement of 1898, explored the path of national and social progress before and after the reform. At first, he focused on the optimization of the late Qing polity, hoping to realize the modernization of the late Qing polity and realize the constitutional monarchy in China. However, after experiencing the setbacks of the reform, he realized that in the late Qing Dynasty, the political consciousness of most people was far from the intellectual elite, and he rashly advocated the Western political system, which was often nobody understands. At that time, the struggles of different political interest groups turned the changes that had originally dealt with the crisis of dynasty's rule into a political dispute, which ended in a tragic end. Cultivating "Xinmins" and storing consensus and popularity for the social development and transformation of modern countries and political changes is a helpless choice for reformers to learn from the setbacks.

Cai Yuanpei is also full of hope on the issue of national and national progress. He quoted Confucian classics such as "The Analects", "Mencius", and "The Daxue", discussing the values of democracy, equality, and freedom in the modernization of the West, showing that the Chinese cultural tradition does not lack the pursuit of beautiful political goals and ideals of life, although the form is different; In his view, the values of Chinese and Western cultures are essentially one source, that is, to establish a political mechanism that meets the basic demands of human nature to promote human perfection and self-development.

"Confucius said: Do not let others do what you do not want to do. Zi Gong said: I do not want others to impose on me, and I also do not want to impose on others. The ancients cover forgiveness. Equality is objectively speaking. This is also true. Although I do not meet people with inequality, I cannot allow people to meet me with inequality, so it is subjective."<sup>[4]</sup>

"Mencius said: Widower and widows are lonely, and the poor people in the world have no complaint. Yu thought that those who drowned in the world should be drowned by him. Ji thinks that if there is hunger in the world, he should be hungry by himself. There are those who are not the same as those who are influenced by Yao and Shun. Confucius said: if you want to establish yourself, you should be able to achieve it. Love is also. In ancient times, it was called benevolence."<sup>[4]</sup>

On the road of advocating the modernization of the country, Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei both adopted Confucian values and humanistic judgments, and the value influence of traditional culture is everywhere. They experienced the social evolution and cultural transformation of the late Qing Dynasty. They themselves were the promoters of social evolution and cultural change. They separated the traditional nutrients of national transformation from the culture of their own growth. Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei had the most feelings and voice. In this regard, they are at the forefront of that era.

"Xinmin Theory" has many innovations in the national value system. To be precise, it is an attempt to reconstruct.

"What our people lack the most, the merit is at one end. What merit is? The reason why the crowd is a group, and the reason why the country is a country, depends on this virtue to be

established."<sup>[5]</sup>

"For thousands of years in China, the doctrine of "being tied up and living alone" is actually the central point of moral education. Outside this scope, those who want to do their best for the public interest and public welfare of their own country, such as "not in their position, do not seek their own affairs" and other biased justice, not laughing at them, crowding them out."<sup>[5]</sup>

Liang Qichao's Xinmin theory includes the traditional content of Chinese culture, including Confucian "benevolence" and "righteousness" ideas, Mohist "materialism", "love without difference, etc." propositions, and his focus on "moral cultivation" is profound. Under the influence of Wang Yangming, he is also a Confucian traditionalist scholar who advocates change. His propositions covered all schools of thought in the West, from Plato, Kant, and Rousseau; while he admired Western liberalism, he also strongly admired nationalism. Liang Qichao's ideological structure itself contradicts itself, and the integrity of the system needs to be improved. In essence, he admired Western learning and Westernization, but his expression was in the Confucian style of the East, which gave the intellectuals at that time and afterwards a different feeling: China's modernization process was a fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. The modernization of China is to find a kind of fusion and balance in the mode of modernization.

Cai Yuanpei believes that the core role of education is to improve the ethics of citizens. Only the general improvement of all citizens' ethics can realize the gradual rationalization of the country's political ecology, and the improvement of the quality of citizens by education is the cornerstone of all this. Only by fusing the modern Western liberal and democratic thought with the essence of Chinese traditional Confucian "benevolence" and "righteousness" can we completely solve the problems encountered in people's material life and social group life, shape different aspects of people's individual personality, and satisfy people's needs of the emotional development of intelligence, affection, and intention.

Education and civic morality should be the ultimate goal. A person's happiness, food and clothing, disaster free and harmless, is nothing more than the happiness of this world. To accumulate one person's happiness is the most important thing. That's all for politics. All political education is at best just like that. "<sup>[6]</sup>

"With the education of ancient China as an example, in the time of Yu, Kui Dian Yue taught Zhou Zi nine virtues, moral education and aesthetic education. Zhou officials taught the people with three things, six virtues and six elements, moral education. The shooting of the six arts means military nationalism. Propriety is moral education, while music is aesthetic education. According to western education, the education of the Greeks is gymnastics and fine arts, that is, militarism and aesthetic education. "<sup>[6]</sup>

### 3. The Origin of Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei's Educational Thoughts

The social dramatically change of the late Qing Dynasty provided an external social environment for the emergence and development of Liang Qichao's educational thoughts; at the same time, the orthodox education he received from a young age made his inherent traditional thought blood and the integration of Chinese and Western thinking patterns constitute his ideological context. In Liang Qichao's educational thoughts, the renaissance of Confucianism and philosophical studies constituted the necessary core. After learning from Kang Youwei, Wanmu Caotang clearly required reading "Twenty-Four History" and other classics. Confucian philosophy is generally typified into two levels: moral ethics with "benevolence" as its core, represented by Mencius; and normative ethics with "li" as its core, represented by Xunzi.

"Those who are virtuous are not always remain unchanged, nor are they who were established by the ancients thousands of years ago to cover the world. However, we were born in this group, and we are born in this group today. The general trend is to observe what is suitable for our people, and invent a new morality, in order to strengthen our group, be good at our group, and enter our group. If the former king sage rarely speaks, he dares not draw himself entering. Knowing that there is public morality, and new morality comes out, and new people come out."<sup>[7]</sup>

Liang Qichao's thought has considerable ideological continuity with Confucianism. Liang

Qichao pays attention to the political philosophy of Confucianism, such as Mencius's "benevolence" and "people dominate and the monarch lightly" and other people-oriented ideas. Confucian political philosophy also advocates that sound politics needs sound people to build, and that the prosperity of politics requires the improvement of the political ability and moral level of all people. Liang Qichao gave the Confucian "benevolence" idea to the modern idea of "equality", which constitutes one of the important cores of his Xinmin thought. It was Liang Qichao who refined the ideological core of equality and freedom in traditional Confucianism, and supplemented it with modern Western post-industrial values, thus realizing the modern interpretation of Confucianism.

"Today's scholar-officials talk about reformers, they dare to speak about everything, but they dare not speak about new morals. This is because the servility of the academic world has not disappeared, and the heart of loving the group, the country, and the truth is not sincere. The land has not increased or decreased since the beginning. People who believe that morality goes through the day and the moon, and rivers and lands, has not increased or decreased since the beginning. The sages and sages of the past have fully revealed their secrets and promulgated to the descendants, that there are so-called new or old ones?"<sup>[8]</sup>

In Liang Qichao's thoughts, the modern view of the country is one of the values that best reflects his spiritual core. In modern China, from the traditional concept of "family country" to the modern concept of "country", Liang Qichao grew up in this transformation. The biggest influence on Liang Qichao was the nationalism of German political science Beren Zhili. Burren Zhili believes that a country is an organism capable of growth and development, with its own "body", "blood" and "spirit." Liang Qichao cited his thinking and mentioned that China's state institutions are regarded as "body" and the system is "blood." After Liang Qichao clarified the relationship between the nation and the nation, he proposed a social evolution path of "people-nation-society". This is the result of the choice based on the reality of China, after absorbing and discarding Burren Zhili's national theory in China.

In the spring of the eighteenth year of Guangxu (1892), Cai Yuanpei went to Beijing again to take the exam. In "The Palace Examination Policy Theory", he proposed that for each school of doctrine, each school character should be eclectic and learn from each of their own strengths. He believes that the words of different schools have different meanings, but they will be the same, and they will complement each other. Therefore, we should adopt the strategy of all directions, adopt the goodness of Confucianism and Mohism, sum up the essentials of the name and law, and act accordingly. Cai Yuanpei believes in the propositions in "The Doctrine of the Mean": All things grow together without harming each other, and Tao runs together without conflict. These all reflect his inheritance of Chinese cultural traditions. In 1920, the Asian Literary Society "The Chinese Nation and the Doctrine of the Mean" said: As for the Chinese nation, those who hold extremes will fail after a trial. But the Doctrine of the Mean is often approved by the majority and is more durable.

Cai Yuanpei has been educated in Confucianism for a long time. The Confucian ideas of loyalty, benevolence, faith, and equality are rich in humanitarianism and have a deep influence on him. He went to Europe to study many times in his life and accepted the modern Western ideas of freedom, equality, and fraternity. He combined the two aspects and explained the principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity with Confucian morals, and compared with Confucian justice, forgiveness, and benevolence. The combination of the freedom, equality, and fraternity of the nearby modern democracy fully reflects his ideological characteristics of learning Chinese and Western.

The man who is a man of wealth can't be lewd, poor and humble can't be moved, and his majesty can't be subdued. That's what freedom is. In ancient times, it was called meaning. Zi Gong said, "I don't want others to impose on me, and I don't want to give it to others." it means equality. Confucius said, "if you want to stand up, you can build up a person. If you want to achieve something, you can achieve it." Love is also. Ancient people are probably benevolent. The three are the root of all morality and civic moral education is for people who do everything.

#### 4. Conclusion

The modern elite intellectuals advocated the expression of the integration of Chinese and

Western thoughts during the reform and innovation, which embodies the openness and integration of intellectual elites in the transition period. Their thoughts include both the ideological exposition of Chinese traditional culture and the value demands of modern Western industrialization; they have adhered to the Confucian "benevolence" and "righteousness" thoughts, and the values of democracy, freedom and equality have always run through them. They tried to find the traditional source of Chinese culture in the discourses of modern Western disciplines, and tried to explain the values of Western industrialization with traditional Chinese cultural genes. All of these demonstrated the good expectations of modern intellectual elites for the transformation of the country and society, and they have unremitting pursuit of strong people and the wealth of the country. They hope to maintain the self-esteem and self-confidence of the 5,000-year cultural tradition. In terms of the choice of "Tao" and "Qi", they hope to develop and strengthen themselves by learning from the modern "Qi" of Western countries, and achieve full adherence to the traditional Chinese "Tao".

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