

Chang Chien's Middle Way for Gradual Reform

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Abstract

Chang Chien (1853-1926) was a native of Nant'ung, Kiangsu. In spite of the various works on Chang Chien, which testify to the significance of his role in modern China, *Chang Chien's Middle Way for Gradual Reform* is still not well-researched. The purposes of this paper are firstly, to analyze *Chang Chien's Middle Way for Gradual Reform* systematically and clearly in the hope that it may become a useful reference for researchers on modern Chinese political thought, and secondly, to stimulate scholars for further research. This paper depends more on basic source materials rather than second-hand data. Among various source materials, *Chang Chien's Diary*, *The Nine Records of Chang Chien* and *The Complete Work of Chang Chien* are the most important. Chang Chien's Middle Way for Gradual Reform may be summarized as follows: 1 taking notice of both economic basis and superstructure; 2 elitism; 3 pragmatism; 4 concept of limited change; 5 gradualism; 6 golden means; and 7 government by the people.

Keywords: Gradual Reform, Middle Way, Confucianism, Modernization, Industry

1. Introduction

Scholars are inclined to divide the world views into conservative, liberal and revolutionary. A conservative world view generally values maintenance of status quo and discounts the elements of change; a liberal world view values reform of status quo through an evolutionary process of incremental change; and a revolutionary world view values transformation of the status quo through revolutionary and rapid change (Goldstein, 2001:8-9).

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To take an example in the Late-ch'ing period of modern China, The Ch'ing government put emphasis on order, so as to maintain the status quo; The Constitutional Monarchists paid special attention to gradual reform regardless of the race conflicts; and the Revolutionaries advocated rapid revolution for the establishment of a republic by exaggerating the race conflicts (Sun & Chu, 1997:422). Chang Chien, one of the Constitutionalists in China, paid special attention to evolutionary process of incremental change as the middle way, neither conservative nor rapid change, with the characteristics of gradual reform opposing rapid change.

1-1 Review on the research outcome on Chang Chien and the purposes of this paper So far lots of scholars have done research on this topic; however, the answers to this question have not been completely discovered yet. Chang Hsiao-jo 's *Biography of Mr. Chang Chien of Nant'ung* is a pioneer work which contains a great many source materials on this topic, however, this book suffers from loose organization and superficial treatment of Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform (Chang, 1930). Sung Hsi-Shang 's *The Career of Chang Chien* is less a biography than an annotated collection of source materials, drawn largely from Chang Chien's works, supplemented by personal remembrances, but touches little on Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform (Sung,1963). Liu Hou-sheng 's *Biography of Chang Chien* concentrates on the political events of Chang Chien's time including Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform (Liu, 1958). Samuel C. Chu's *Reformer in Modern China: Chang Chien, 1853-1926* emphasizes Chang Chien's role in industry, education, land reclamation, water conservancy and his involvement in national affairs including Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform (Chu, 1965). Chang K'ai-yuan's *The Footprints of A Trailblazer : Draft Biography of Chang Chien*(Chang,1986), and *Biography of Chang Chien* (Chang,2000), and Chang K'ai-yuan & T'ian T'ung 's *Chang Chien and Modern Society* (Chang & T'ian , 2002), and *Chang Chien and Modern Society During the Period of the 1911 Revolution* (Chang & T'ian ,2011)discuss his career, his political activities and his middle way for gradual reform. Shao, Qin's *Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890-1930* argues that the 1911 Revolution was not a breaking point in terms of local self-government. To be sure, the collapse of the Ch'ing dynasty demanded the reorientation of local self-government from being a base for a constitutional monarchy to being one for a Republican government"(Shao, 2004:11).Other works by Wong King-kong (Wong,1957),Jerome Ch'en (Ch'en,1983), Chang P'eng-yuan(Chang,1968,1969,1983), LuYao-tung (Lu,1980) , Li Shih-yueh (Li ,1962), Hsu Lun, (1962), T'a Fu-hui, (Ta,1970), Meng-ch'un and Chang T'ingu-hsi (Meng & Chang, 2010), Sun, Shun-chih (Sun, 1991, 1995, 2009, 2013) also give interpretation to Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform.

The fourth international symposium on Chang Chien held in Nant'ung on the 25th - 28th of November 2006, 88 articles in relation to Chang Chien and modern Chinese society had been submitted to this symposium (Chang Chien International Symposium Committee, 2007), and the fifth international symposium on Chang Chien held in Haimen on the 17th-19th of April 2009, 120 articles in relation to Chang Chien and Haimen: The Thoughts and Practice in the Early Period of Modernization had been submitted to this symposium (Ts'ui, 2010), however, Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform still has not been fully explored yet. The purposes of this paper are firstly, to analyze *Chang Chien's Middle Way for Gradual Reform* systematically and clearly in the hope that it may become a useful reference for researchers on modern Chinese political thought, and secondly, to stimulate scholars for further research.

1-2 Basic Materials

This paper depends more on basic source materials rather than second-hand data. Among various source materials, Chang Chien's Diary (Chang, 1986. Hereafter cited as Jih-chi) is the most basic one, which covers almost 53 years from 24 October, 1873, when he was twenty years three months and twenty three days, to 2 August, 1926, twenty two days before his death.

This diary contains approximately 875,000 words by which we are able to understand the life of a typical Chinese intellectual, to check the exact dates of some writings of his, and to correct errors against related sources. The first part of Chang Chien's diary which covers approximately the period from 1873 to 1892 was published in Taipei in 1967; and the second part of Chang Chien's diary which covers approximately the period from 1892 to 1926 was later published in Taipei in 1969. These two parts of Chang Chien's diary were reprinted together in 1986 in Taipei covering the period from 1873 to 1926. The Nine Records of Chang Chien (Chang, 1983. Hereafter cited as Chiu-lu.) is an indispensable source material to Chang Chien's political thought. This collection of his writings is divided topically into: Cheng Wen Lu (On Politics), Shih Yeh Lu (On Industry), Chiao Yu Lu (On Education), Tzu Chih Lu (On Self-government), Tz'u Shang Lu (On Philanthropy), Wen Lu (Essays), Shih Lu (Poems), Chuan Lu (Special Section), and Wai Lu (On the Civil Service Examination). Within each topical section the sources are arranged in Chronological order.

The Complete Work of Chang Chien (Chang Chien Research Center, 1994) includes some new data not found in The Nine Records of Chang Chien, is an invaluable source material to Chang Chien's thoughts and activities.

2. Chang Chien's Career and the Development of His Middle Way

Chang Chien (1853-1926), *tzu* (courtesy title) Chi-chih, *hao* (alias) Se-an, and Se-Weng, was born the fourth of five sons, on July 1st, 1853 in the village of Ch'ang-lo, Hai-men, Kiangsu, China, and died on August 24th, 1926 in Nant'ung, Kiangsu, China. Chang Chien began his student days in 1856 at the age of only four. His first teacher was his father Chang, P'eng-nien, who taught him to read *Book of a Thousand Characters*. The following year, 1857, Chang Chien was sent to a village school. The teacher was Ch'iu, Ta-chang, under whom Chang Chien in a period of seven years (1857-1863), had finished the primers such as *Trimetric Classics*, and *Books of Family Names*; the basic poetic readers such as *Works of A Thousand Poets*, and *Poems of A Boy Prodigy*; and the Confucian Classics such as *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of Golden Means*, *The Analects of Confucius*, *Mencius*, *The Filial Piety Classic*, and *The Book of Odes*. The study of these books served as a basis for examination work, though they were for elementary education only.

In 1864, his father employed Sung, Hsiao-ch'i as family teacher to help Chang Chien and his brothers in the preparation for local examinations. The teacher asked Chang Chien to study again *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of Golden Means*, *The Analects of Confucius*, and *Mencius*, but from better editions. Then he proceeded to teach the boy *The Book of History*, *The Book of Change*, *The Book of Rites*, and *T'so's Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals*. Under his teacher's effective guidance, Chang Chien learned to write examination poems and examination essays which were required in the examinations. Unfortunately, this enthusiastic teacher died in the summer of 1866, and Chang Chien was sent to follow Sung Lin, the dead teacher's nephew, in a neighboring village, Hsi T'ing. Under the new teacher, Chang Chien advanced to study two more Confucian Classics, *The Rite of Chou* and *The Book of Ritual* (Chiu-lu, Chuan Lu, chuan 6, 2a-4b). Chang Chien's examination life was a long and toilsome history. In the first stage, Chang Chien was lucky enough. He spent only five years, 1864-1868, in preparation, successfully passed through the district, prefectural, and Yuan (one conducted by provincial literary examiners) examinations, placing twenty-sixth in the latter, and was classified a Fu-sheng (Licentiate) in 1868, at the age of sixteen (Chang, 1930: 25-26).

The second stage was very hard for Chang Chien. He spent seventeen more years, 1869-1885, failed five times in the provincial examinations. In 1870 he tried for Chu-jen degree for the first time, and succeeded in placing sixteenth in the k'o examination but failed to pass the provincial examination. He was to repeat this pattern of succeeding in the k'o examinations and failing in the provincial examinations four times in 1873, 1875, 1876, and 1879. The degree of Chiu-jen continued to elude him until 1885, when he competed in the provincial examination and succeeded in placing second highest among who passed.

Chang Chien spent nine more years, 1886-1894, in preparation, failed repeatedly four times in the examinations for Chih-shih degree in Peking in 1886, 1889, 1890, and 1892. In 1894, at the age of 42, Chang Chien, at the insistence of his elder brother, Chang Ch'a, and the encouragement of his aged father, once more took the metropolitan examination. This time, his name was found in the sixtieth position. He improved on this in the re-examination by placing tenth, and when the palace examination was over, he was chosen to be Chuan-yuan, the highest of all.

He was duly appointed a Compiler of the First Class in the Hanlin Academy. Unfortunately, only six months after he had won the highest title of Chuan-yuan, he lost his father, who had played the most important role in his examination life. Four years later, in 1898, when he had decided to take no office in the government and when he was busy promoting local development in his home area, Chang Chien did not forget to come back to Peking for his last examination in Hanlin Academy. According to himself, this unnecessary effort was again to fulfill the dream of his deceased father.

Through the traditional training, Chang Chien had accepted the pragmatic and the reciprocal aspects of Confucianism which later functioned as his guiding spirit in promoting industry, education and self-government as the foundation of a constitutional monarchy, and then a republic. Chang Chien believed that the best way is somewhere between the two extremes. As he understood it, there were no basic conflicts between the Chinese tradition and Western civilization. It was possible to find some form of compromise by adhering to the broad principles of Confucianism and adopting Western technology, organization, and even political system of constitutional monarchism and republicanism.

Chang Chien thought that “practical use” might be changed but “basic principle” should be permanent and could not be changed. Chang Chien’s ideas on industry, education, self-government, constitutional monarchy and republic had changed according to situations, but Chang Chien’s belief on Confucian ideas serving the people had never changed.

With the pragmatic and reciprocal aspects of Confucian ideas serving the people, adjusting to China's concrete situations, Chang Chien developed his middle way for gradual reform: firstly, saving China by industry from 1866, the time self-strengthening movement in progress; secondly, saving China by industry and education from 1895 to 1900, the time after Sino-Japanese War; thirdly saving China by industry, education and self-government from 1900 to 1903, the time self-government movement in progress; fourthly saving China by industry, education, self-government under a constitutional monarchy from 1903 to 1911, the time constitutional movement in progress; and lastly, saving China by industry, education, self-government under a republic from one month after 1911 Revolution, the time he changed to a republican and worked hard behind the scene in the North-South Negotiation for the birth of the Republic, until his death in 1926. Chang Chien indeed had successfully made considerable contributions to China's economic, educational and political modernization.

The case of Chang Chien's subtle promotion of China's modernization demonstrated clearly that Confucianism was not necessarily incompatible with modernization (Sun, 1995:14). To this, Samuel C. Chu commented precisely: “He saw nothing incompatible with Confucianism in the introduction of industrialization, universe education, and local self-government into China” (Chu, 1965:179).

3. The Content of Gradual Reform: Chang Chien's Middle Way

Chang Chien was a real Confucian who promoted the modernization of China by the gentry with Western methods and in a mild but progressive way. He was a man of golden means, and he liked to advocate the modernization of industry, education, and political system by inches and drops. The content of Chang Chien’s middle way for gradual reform are as follows:

1-1 Taking notice of both economic basis (industry) and superstructure (politics):

In the early industrial development of China, Tseng Kuo-fan, Tso Tsung-t'ung and Li Hung-chang all looked at modern manufacture more from the military angle. Chang Chih-tung seems to have differed from them by showing a broader interest in modern livelihood enterprise, but he still regards modern industrial organization as a purely technical matter and separated from the whole political system (Sun, 1991:139).

Chang Chien, however, was convinced that political system and laws were related to the development of industry.

Chang Chien had devoted himself to the cause of industry, education and self-government as the foundation of a constitutional monarchy, and later a republic. He recognized industry and politics were mutually related and thus pay equal attention to them. He said in 1903: "Politics is the cause and industry as the result" (Jih-chi, 2099). In a letter to the Revolutionary army in December 1911, Chang Chien expressed his opinion that a republic government will ensure the development of industry (Chang Chien Research Center, 1994:195). Chang Chien's term of office as the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce from October 21, 1913 to December, 1915 was characterized by a number of projects.

He indicated this in the first published statement upon his appointment, in which he enumerated the four basic steps which needed to be taken by the government: (1). To set up the necessary legal framework by providing forestry regulations, corporation laws, bankruptcy laws etc.; (2).to stabilized the fiscal system of the country; (3).To put the tax system into order; and (4) to offer encouragement to private enterprises in all fields. He made a conclusion that:"The development of industry is dependent on the proper performance of politics. If the performance of politics is proper, everything will be easily achieved. Otherwise there would be many problems in the future" (Chiu-lu, Cheng Wen Lu, chuan7, 1a-4a).

1-2 Elitism:

Chang Chien believed that the intellectuals were under an obligation to promote the welfare of the people. In 1903 he said:

"The formation and implementation of Politics are the duties of the emperor and the high officials; the performance of education and academic issues is the duties of the intellectuals; and the development of agriculture, artisan and commerce are the duties of industrialists. The intellectuals should act as the mediators between the politicians and the ordinary people as the intellectuals live along with the people, but they also have opportunities to communicate with the high officials "(Jih-chi, 2099).

He accepted Ku Yen-wu's sayings "all are included in our duties. If we intellectuals do not work for the people, who maybe expected to work for them" (Chang, 1930:314). In a property division agreement with his brother, Chang Chien wrote: "From now on, my skin, bones, heart and blood will be sacrificed to the world. I will not remain an ox or horse of my son and grandsons" (Chang, 1930:345).

1-3 Pragmatism:

He believed that the merits of the gentry depended on its deeds rather than its words. He again accepted Ku Yen-wu's sayings: "It is better to act than to talk". The major tasks for the intellectuals to accomplish according to him were to educate and to feed the people; but most of the intellectuals in office only sought gain for themselves and failed to do anything for the people. Thus Chang Chien, after the Korean campaign in 1882, began to join gentry's activities in his home area and after his success in the Chin-shih (Metropolitan) civil service examinations, decided to give up his official career and devoted himself to the reconstruction of his home area.

When the constitutional movement flourished after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Chang Chien urged the gentry (those who have passed the civil service examinations and have worked in their home areas), to promote local industrial and educational development as a basis of a local Self-government. He told them in 1906, "Let the ultimate initiative of constitutional monarchy come from government, for private individuals had better pay their primary attention to industry and education which will function as the foundation of Self-government. It is better to than to talk, an advance of even a foot or an inch is valuable (Chiu-lu, Chuan Lu, chuan 7, 14b).

1-4 Concept of limited change:

Chang Chien thought that "practical use" might be changed but "basic principles" should be permanent and could not be changed. However, Wong King-kong said:

"He believed that everything in the world is changing. The existing systems, which had been established several thousand years ago, should be reformed or abolished in order to meet the demand of the times; thus he favored the modernization of China with Western organization and technology. In his article on the reform of salt administration, Chang Chien said, there is no system that can function for hundred years without producing any abuse" (Wong, 1957:27)

Chang Chie's ideas on industry, education, self-government, constitutional monarchy and republic had changed according to situations, but Chang Chien's belief on Confucian ideas serving the people had never changed. To this, Samuel C. Chu commented succinctly:

"His basic beliefs altered remarkably little from the time he first conceived of the idea of setting up a cotton mill to the day he died. He accepted few of the western-inspired ideas, such as individualism, the equality of sexes, and the pursuit of truth for its own sake" (Chu, 1965:177).

It is true that Change Chien "accepted few of the Western-inspired ideas, such as individualism, the equality of the sexes, and the pursuit of truth for his own sake" especially in his later part of life; It is also true that "his basic beliefs altered remarkably little from the time he first conceived of the idea of setting up a cotton mill to the day he died" if "his basic beliefs" are the pragmatic and the reciprocal aspects of Confucianism. However, in the practical use of Western technology, science, management, educational institution, and even political system of constitutional monarchism and republicanism, Chang Chien's thought developed and changed step by step, --firstly saving China by industry; secondly, by industry and education; thirdly, by industry, education and self-government; fourthly by industry, education, self-government and a constitutional monarchy and finally by industry, education, self-government, and a republic.

1-5 Gradualism:

Chang Chien believes that the best form of political movement is progressive reforms. He realized the importance of planning and a preparatory stage in any political action.

Chang Chien sympathized with Kang Yu-wei's Reform Movement, but was opposed to the latter's immature actions in the Hundred Days Reform in 1898. He anticipated K'ang's failure and disasters. He even repeatedly warned K'ang against taking careless action, but K'ang ignored his advice. After his visit to Japan in 1903 he promoted the constitutional movement and considered the local government as the real basis for a constitutional national movement. He urged the gentry to join the movement for local reconstruction in their home areas

1-6 Golden Means:

Chang Chien believed that the best way is somewhere between the two extremes. As he understood it, there were no basic conflicts between the Chinese tradition and Western civilization. It was possible to find some form of compromise by adhering to the broad principles of Confucianism and adopting Western organization and technology. In the whole course of his political career Chang Chien never seemed to find himself in ideological confusion. He praised Chang Chih-tung's *Ch'uan-hsueh p'ien* (*Exhortation to Study, 1898*) as "an effort to maintain a fair balance between the new learning and the old learning".

In comparison with Chan Chien and Chang Chih-tung in terms of Chung-ti Hsi-yun (Chinese learning as basic principle and Western learning as practical use", Chang Chien's concept of yun (practical use) is broader than that of Chang Chih-tung. Chang Chien's concept of practical use included western technology, science, education, administration and even political system of constitutional monarchism and republicanism; Chang Chih-tung's concept of practical use included western technology, science only, and not political system. Chang Chien's concept of t'i (basic principle) is also had a bit difference from that of Chang Chih-tung: Chang Chien's concept of t'i emphasized the reciprocal and the pragmatic sides of Confucianism while Chang Chih-tung's concept of t'i emphasized absolutely obedience, and therefore Chang Chien is more progressive than Chang Chih-tung.

Is Confucianism incompatible with modernization? Mary C. Wright argued that Confucianism was totally contradictory to modernization:

"The failure of the T'ung-chih Restoration demonstrated with a rare clarity that even in the most favorable circumstances there is no way in which an effective modern state can be grafted onto a Confucian society" (Wright, 1957:300).

She concluded:

“That the Restoration failed because the requirements of Confucian stability...That the obstacles to successful adaptation to the modern world were not imperialist aggression, Manchu rule, mandarin stupidity, or the accidents of history, but nothing less than the constituent elements of the Confucian system itself” (Wright, 1957:9-10).

If the so called “Confucian system” referred to orthodoxy such as absolutely obedience and relationship orientation, it was quite true for Mary C. Wright to conclude that it ran counter to “the requirements of modernization”. But if the “Confucian system” referred to pragmatic Confucianism and reciprocal Confucianism, Mary C. Wright’s conclusion was quite wrong.

John K. Fairbanks regarded Chinese political institutions and social structure as hindrances to modernization thus:

“The resulting experience of the Chinese people in modern times has been overcast by a pall of frustration and uncertainty, owing to their inability to meet the West on equal terms. The inherited institutions of their society have played them false. More than any other mature non-Western state, China seemed un-adaptable to the conditions of modern life. Nationalism and industrialism, which triumphed so easily in Japan, were retarded in the Middle Kingdom. Neither the scientific method nor the rule of law, the inventor or the entrepreneur, have yet had their heyday in this strangely different society. Perhaps the very maturity and stability of Chinese social structure and political institutions have proved a handicap. Their dissimilarity to the West was so deep and ingrained that adjustment to the modern world has been possible only through the break-up of the old order. China's society has had to be thrown into the melting pot and her people have had to accept revolution as the law of modern existence; for the process of modernization has involved intense and rapid changes on all levels of social life and practice”(Fairbanks, 1953, 4-5).

On the contrary, Lu Shih-Ch’ang argued that Confucianism was totally compatible with modernization:

"Confucian tradition has never been a hindrance to reform. In fact, many Confucian intellectuals were able to reconcile new foreign knowledge with Confucian tradition and put it into practice. Hence Confucian tradition is flexible, and an essential foundation to modernization" (Lu, 1980:83).

It is just as unreasonable to say that all elements of Confucianism were contradictory to modernization, as it is to say that they were totally compatible with it. In fact, some elements of Confucianism, such as "equal opportunity to education", and "let people be rich" were compatible with modernization, whereas some others, like "absolutely obedience to the senior" and "dependence to the superior" which killed people's initiatives and free wills surely were incompatible with modernization. Hence Sun Kuang-the concluded precisely:

"Some ethics of Chinese traditional culture such as "I will bear my responsibility, fulfill my mission, and even die to fulfill my duty", and "I will struggle hard for success, so that I may glorify my parents, and my clan" facilitate modernization, at least, they are not hindrances to it. But some other ethics like "I always admire, hold precious and feel nostalgic about anything of ancient origin" tend to encourage conservatism. "I absolutely recognize the authority of the family head and sovereignty of the emperor" shows a lack of individual independence.

They surely are contradictory to modernization ... It is easy to see that some elements of Chinese traditional culture sometimes are compatible with modernization while other elements sometimes obstruct modernization" (Sun, 1982:187-189) and Chang P'eng-yuan also made a conclusion that:" Some elements of Confucianism for example, adjusting to the circumstances, surely facilitate modernization while some other elements of Confucianism, for example, whole-heartedly protection of tradition, surely are contradictory to modernization" (Chang, 2002:190)

In my view, Confucius's own ideas contained the elements of pragmatism, reciprocity, as well as orthodoxy in its original form. Since the Han Dynasty, especially the Sung, and the Ch'ing Dynasty, Confucianism was merely a symbol of corruption, dirty, inhumanity, rigidity and superstition. The original essentials of reciprocity and pragmatism in Confucianism have been ignored for a long time.

Chang Chien, however, chose the pragmatic and reciprocal elements of Confucianism and put them into practice.

With the Confucian ideas serving people, Chang Chien devoted himself to the cause of industry, education and other local affairs of self-government as the foundation of a constitutional monarchy and later a republic and had successfully made considerable contributions to China's economic, educational and political modernization.

Chang Chien's case demonstrated clearly that Confucianism was not necessarily incompatible with modernization.

1-7 Government by the people:

Chang Chien wanted to replace Kuan-chih (government by the officials) by Min-chih (government by the people). He admitted that Kuan-chih was the normal condition under autocracy, but he complained that in the past several thousand years, except during the Hsia, Shang and Chou Dynasties, the officials had done nothing for the people.

Although in imperial China the gentry could handle in their home areas some projects, including irrigation and flood-prevention work; the building of road, bridge, and ferries; the settlement of local disputes; and the promotion of local defense organization.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the gentry constituted the keystone of rural organization (Chang, 1955: 197-198). However, they acted on a voluntary basis and under the control of the officials. Chang Chien hoped that this traditional role of the gentry could be developed into a modern system of self-government under which the gentry's position as the representatives of the people rather than the agents of the officials would be institutionalized, their activities for the local public welfare would be strengthened and the program of modernization would be effectively and extensively carried out. He believed that the only way to save China was through the united efforts of the gentry to modernize the country under the system of local-self government.

On the one hand, he promoted an institutional reform—that is the transfer of political power from the officials to the gentry, the representative of people.

On the other hand, he charged the gentry with the actual task of modernization of the country. The former was the constitutional movement while the latter the local self-movement. Chang Chien dedicated himself to and made considerable contributions to these two movements.

4. Conclusion

Chang Chien was a pragmatic and moderate Confucian-constitutionalist, his ideas and attitude of the middle way for gradual reform had been shaped by pragmatic and reciprocal Confucianism and Western Constitutionalism. Chang Chien's ideas of the reciprocal and pragmatic aspects of Confucianism serving the people had never changed while his ideas on industry, education, self-government, constitutional monarchy and republicanism had changed according to situations.

As a sincerely Confucian, Chang Chien tried to revive Confucianism by developing its most flexible parts into a practical school of Confucianism. In advocating Confucian philosophy, he especially emphasized the doctrine of adjusting to the circumstances and taking the middle course with which he tried to defend his own policy of modernization and moderate reconstruction. Although Chang Chien confined most of his activities to the local scene, he never lost sight of his larger purpose of modernizing all of China. His course of action was determined by his practical nature.

The Revolutionary, Sun Yat-sen had devoted himself to the cause of industrial development with a huge paper project entitled "*The International Development of China*" (Sun, 1953), and the constitutionalists, K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao had also intended to develop to develop China's industry as well. Sun Yat-sen, K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao talked industrialization, but they had never really carried out their projects on their own. However, Chang Chien was the one who actually devoted himself to the cause of industry, education and self-government as the foundation of constitutional monarchy and then a republic, and hence Chang Chien was far more a pragmatic figure than Sun, K'ang, and Liang.

Chang Chien's middle way for gradual reform may be categorized as moderation, pragmatism and elitism—a combination of Chinese intellectual idea of serving the people with Western idea of governing by the people.

As mentioned, Chang Chien paid attention to both economic basis and superstructure of politics; believed that the intellectuals were under an obligation to promote the welfare of the people; recognized that the merits of the intellectuals depended on their deeds rather than their words; thought that practical use may be changed but basic principle of the reciprocal and pragmatic sides of Confucian idea serving the people could not be changed; acknowledged that the best form of political movement was step-by-step reform; believed that the best way is somewhere between the two extremes; and Advocated constitutional movement in China. Chang Chien paid attention to industry, education as well as politics and social problems and made great contributions to China's economic, educational, social and political modernization.

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