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Confucian religion and education system in the Kang Youwei's Reform Plans (at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries)

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Abstract

© Medwell Journals, 2016. This study deals with the views of famous Chinese reformer and founder of modern neo-Confucianism-Kang Youwei (1858-1927). During the period of the 1890s and during the Hundred Days Reform Movement of 1898 he offered to the emperor the project of establishing the Confucian Chapel and giving to Confucianism the status of official religion. He put forward similar projects immediately after the revolution in 1911. At the same time, he did not separate the plans of establishing Confucianism from the reforming of the education system in China. Historical-genetic and comparative-historical methods were used in the research. The analysis of Kang Youwei's and his contemporaries' works shows that the reformer believed the backwardness of China and inability of the country to compete with the leading Western powers-especially the United States, Britain and Germany comes from the low moral qualities of the Chinese and the imperfection of the education system. Reformation of Confucianism on the model of the Christian church and the inclusion of its values in the education system will help to awake the spirit of the nation and to bring the reforms into action quickly. The contemporaries called him "Martin Luther of Confucianism." However, the power elites of the Qing dynasty turned down his projects as radical ones. In 1898-1913 Kang Youwei lived outside China. When he came back, politicians of the Chinese Republic rejected the project of the Confucian Chapel as being contrary to the ideals of republicanism and democracy; Kang was perceived as a reactionary and conservative. The study is of interest to researchers of Chinese ideology, religious and education ideas.

Keywords

Chinese Republic, Confucian Chapel, Confucianism, Education in China, Hundred days reform movement of 1898, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Qing dynasty