ABSTRACT

This study of Liang Qichao (梁启超) social thought is concerned with his ideas and their origins, with his attempt to reform the traditional Chinese society, and with his social influence on the mind of modern China.

My analysis begins with the discussion of the fundamental social unit of individual to the larger social institutions of family and marriage, social reform, educational reform and the social effect of religions.

This academic exercise consists of eight chapters. Chapter one defines and explores the essence of Liang's social thought. Chapter two discusses the three theoretical origins of Liang's social thought, namely: the "Three ages" of Kong-Yang doctrine (公羊三世说), The Social Darwinism, and the concept of grouping (群). Chapter three deals with Liang's vital concept of "New Citizen" -- the importance of individuals in a critical transition period. Chapter four looks into the malady of Chinese family and marriage institutions. Chapter five analyses the ambiguity of Liang's choice between socialism and capitalism. The next chapter focuses on Liang's educational reform programme, and the seventh chapter explains Liang's intention in promoting a religious belief as an effective tool to social solidarity.

The study concludes with a summary of the arguments in the various chapters and a general criticism on Liang's social thought.