Abstract

Liang Shu-ming, a prominent contemporary Chinese thinker, is famous for his views on culture, but previous studies of his views on Chinese culture have hitherto not been thorough and satisfactory. To fill this gap this academic exercise concentrates on the analysis of the internal structure of Liang's theory on Chinese culture. It argues that Liang's thoughts can be divided into three periods and should be studied from the perspective of change. Out of these three periods, only two are considered important. Liang's thoughts in these two periods are thus treated as two separate theoretical systems and examined in detail.

There are differences as well as similarities between these two theoretical systems. Whereas idealism, Confucianism and the love for Chinese culture are some of the important common elements these two systems share, the differences between them show that the second system is more complicated and elaborate than the first system in terms of theory and approach.

In spite of this, Liang's theory of Chinese culture in general has difficulties withstanding criticisms, and is therefore unsound from the purely academic point of view. However, such a point of view in itself is insufficient if a more comprehensive assessment of Liang's view on Chinese culture is to be achieved. This academic exercise argues that Liang's moral quality and his historical role in the process of absorption of Western culture by Chinese culture should also be taken into account for the purpose of assessment.