

## **Choices in the Era of Change: A Study on Gong Xiangrui's career in the legal system (1911-1996)**

Chen, Hui-Fen

### **Abstract**

This article explored Gong Xiangrui's careers in the legal system as time changes. Gong Xiangrui's career in the legal system can be divided into four stages: (1) In the 1930s, he accepted the basic training of liberal legal and political education in the Department of Political Science of Tsinghua University and later under the supervision of Harold Laski in the London School of Economics and Political Science; (2) In the 1940s, after finishing studies in England and back to China, Gong Xiangrui not only engaged in research and teaching but also tried to participate in the national politics. He paid attention to the modernization of the civil service system in China and hoped it could save the country; (3) After the founding of People's Republic of China by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, he decided to reinvent himself and to study Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. He began to shift from liberalism to socialism rapidly and then he actively participated in the class struggle. (4) After the 1980s, Gong Xiangrui returned to Peking University to teach, and frequently visited abroad for academic exchanges since the Reform and Open Door Policy of China. He devoted to absorb new information and proposed reformation of law in China. He advocated "act in accordance with the law" and "rule by law," emphasizing that the laws should follow the principles of fairness and justice. He insisted that the powers of the government and civil rights

should be balanced. The late 1980s, he clearly indicated the new direction of Constitutional democracy in China. All in all, Gong Xiangrui's life showed the legal choices of a Chinese intellectual under the dramatic changes in the 20th century.

Keywords: Gong Xiangrui, Qian Duansheng, Lou Bangyan, Wang Tieyai, Harold J. Laski, Anti-Rightist Movement, W. Ivor Jennings, Lord Denning