

# China's Long Quest for Democracy



## China's Long Quest for Democracy

*A Historical Institutional Perspective*

Lin Gang



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著者:Lin Gang

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Conceptualizing China as a country with rapid economic transformation and little political progress has led to a normative misjudgment that economic reform should occur before significant democratization. This book compares several historical junctures during China's long journey towards democracy to observe the constraints of pre-chosen ideological and institutional patterns on political elites in advancing legal and electoral reforms. Confucian legacies of moralism, elitism, and state centralism, in addition to revolutionary guardianship and populism remain embedded in Chinese practice in rule by law, grassroots autonomy, and intra-party democracy. However, China's hope for democratic development is encouraged by urban and educational development, generational change and growing individualism. This book explores the feasible paths toward democracy in China, challenging methodological wisdom in employing quantitative changes in socioeconomic structure to predict change in the political system.

#### 作者介绍:

Lin Gang is Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Academic Committee Chair of the School of International and Public Affairs, and Director of the Center for Taiwan Studies at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China. He has served as Program Associate at the Woodrow Wilson Center and President of the Association of Chinese Political Studies. He is the author of several books, including China after Jiang.

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