



Chen Jiongming and the Federalist Movement: Regional Leadership and Nation Building in Early Republican China (Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies)

Leslie Chen

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The local self-government movement in China began in the late Qing, and by the Revolution of 1911 no less than five thousand self-government councils had formed around the country. While the idea of a federated state was cherished by early revolutionaries, a growing conflict between federalist and centralist leaders culminated in the defeat of federalism in the mid-1920s. The story of this movement has since remained hidden behind Nationalist and Communist accounts of the early revolutionary struggle.

This study of Chen Jiongming's political career reopens the record on federalist efforts, focusing on Chen's policies and administrative achievements in Fujian and Guangdong. It describes Chen's role in the tumultuous politics of southern China from 1909 until his death in 1933, including his relationship and notorious break with Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the centralist revolutionaries. Leslie Chen argues that his father's attempts to create a democratic, federalist system in Guangdong were aimed at providing a model for China as a whole. His account is lively and readable; it gives an intimate, yet historically accurate, account of Chen Jiongming's considerable role in early twentieth-century Chinese history.

Leslie Chen was born in Guangdong, China. In 1988 he compiled "A Collection of Historiographic Materials for a Biography of Chen Chiung-ming [Jiongming], 1878-1933." He has published two Chinese-language biographies of Chen Jiongming.

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