

Ssu-ma Kuang's Three Books on "Clan Education" and their Influence

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Abstract

Beginning from the Sung Dynasty, a new clan system was gradually established in China. This provided another way of educating both the gentry and commoners, an educational system separate from the state schools and academies.

Ssu-ma Kuang, an important statesman and historian in the Northern Sung, played an important role in the construction of a new tradition of clan education. He edited three books about clan education: *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies (Shu-I)*, *Manners and Customs for Daily Life (Chu-Chia-Tsa-I)* and *Family Model (Chia-Fan)*. Those books not only taught the gentry and peasant families how to behave themselves politely, but also transmitted Kuang's idea of "governing the state through propriety (Li)" and "managing the clan(s) through decorum," where *Li*-decorum (or *Li*-propriety) is of course a crucial principle from classical Confucianism. Although these books had no direct and immediate influence on the people's daily life at that time, they did have a great influence on Master Chu-Hsi's Neo-Confucianism and on people's thinking and behavior in later times.

Keywords: Ssu-ma Kuang, clan education, family instruction, Li-decorum, Neo-Confucianism

