Abstract

The aim of this academic exercise is to evaluate and make a comparison between the legal enactments set by the governments from the Tang dynasty (唐 朝) to the Qing dynasty (清 朝) and the rules of behaviour of the Confucian scholars on filial piety. It hopes to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the legal enactments succeeded in promoting filial piety.

China is one country which emphasizes filial piety. Its evaluation and spread by the Confucian scholars about two thousand years ago during the periods of the Spring - Autumn and the Warring States (春秋战国时代) became one of the most important aspects of the Chinese culture. This is not only seen in the way in which the Confucian scholars promoted it but in the manner in which China enacted a detailed and flawless set of rules of filial behaviour to ensure filial piety.

The Confucian scholars stated that filial piety arose from the instinctive love and respect for parents. On the other hand, the legal enactments of filial piety forced the people to be filial to their parents and this did not agree with the thoughts of the Confucian scholars. Thus the Confucian scholars felt that the only way to encourage filial piety was through moral education. However, the legal enactments did play a part in society as it helped to prevent people from ignoring filial piety.