

Zigao 子羔

Expert source: sarah allan, Dartmouth College

Entered by Matthew Hamm, University of British Columbia

** Expert Source entry, prepared by a Ph.D. RA or DRH Editor from an expert's published work(s), and then personally edited and approved by the expert.*

Entry tags: Religious Group, Chinese Religion, Text, Early Chinese text, Excavated text, Confucianism

The Zigao 子羔 is a short text written on fourteen bamboo strips that was part of a collection of such texts purchased by the Shanghai Museum in three batches in Hong Kong in 1994. The texts were looted from a tomb by grave robbers and their exact provenance is thus unknown. Similarities with the collection of texts excavated near the village of Guodian 郭店 in Hubei province in 1993, suggest that the Shanghai texts may have come from Guojiagang 郭家崗 Tomb One near the village of Guodian, though there is no way to confirm this. The Shanghai texts likely date from around the same period as the Guodian texts (between 300 and 278 BCE) and the text of the Zigao itself was likely written in the 4th century BCE. The text itself features clear calligraphy but is partially damaged, with one fragment of the text currently housed in the collection of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The Zigao is written as a dialogue between Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) and his disciple, Zigao 子羔, and in its own time would likely have been considered a ru 儒 text. The term ru refers to a group of teachers and students who defined themselves by their adherence to the figure of Confucius, whom they took as their master. However, this group did not have a consistent philosophy and instead occupied a spectrum of intellectual positions based on shared ideas such as ren 仁 ("humanness") and yi 義 ("righteousness") as well as shared traditions such as the shi 詩 ("songs"), shu 書 ("documents"), and li 禮 ("rites"). In particular, the Zigao seems to have been part of an early debate over whether rulers should pass on the throne to their descendants or abdicate in favour of a worthy individual. The Zigao does not make an explicit statement regarding this issue, but focuses on comparing the sage-king Shun 舜 (who, according to legend, received the throne when the sage-king Yao 堯 abdicated) to the three figures of Yu 禹, Xie 契, and Hou Ji 后稷. These three figures were the progenitors of the Xia 夏, Shang 商, and Zhou 周 dynasties, respectively. According to the Zigao, they were also all "sons of Heaven" (tianzi 天子) because they were engendered through divine conception and born through miraculous births. While the text suggests that it was this divine origin that established the three dynasties as legitimate, it also states that, in ancient times, good rulers abdicated in favour of other worthy individuals and that none of the three dynastic progenitors were comparable to the fully human Shun (who had no divine provenance). The text, thus, advocates abdication and lays the foundation for future claims that Confucius was the "uncrowned king" (suwang 素王) by implying that he was the fully human sage most deserving of the position of king.



Date Range: 325 BCE - 278 BCE

Region: Shanghai Museum (Shanghai Bowuguan 上海博物馆)

Region tags: China, East Asia, Shanghai

The Shanghai Museum (Shanghai Bowuguan 上海博物馆) purchased a cache of bamboo texts (the "Shanghai Strips") in Hong Kong. Because these texts are looted materials, their provenance is unknown. As many of them are previously unknown texts, the only known location that can be associated with them is the museum itself.

Status of Readership:

- ✓ Elite
- ✓ Religious Specialists

Sources and Corpora

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Allan, Sarah. *Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip Manuscripts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015).
- Source 2: Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書. Edited by Ma Chengyuan 馬承源 (Shanghai: Shangjai Guji, 2001), vol. 2, 31-49; 181-191.

General Variables

Materiality

Methods of Composition

- Written



Inked

- with Ink

Medium upon which the text is written/incised

- Bamboo

Notes: The manuscript is written using ink and brush on fourteen strips of bamboo. These strips appear to have been bound into a larger scroll of forty-nine strips. The other thirty-five strips have been classified by scholars into two other texts: the Kongzi shi lun 孔子詩論 ("Confucius' discourse on the Songs") and the Lubang da han 魯邦大旱 ("Great drought in the land of Lu"). The three works appear to be separate but possibly related works. Some of the manuscript strips are damaged with text missing and there is a separate textual fragment currently housed in the collection of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Allan 2015, 142-144).

Was the material modified before the writing or incising process?

- Physical preparation

Notes: Bamboo stalks would have been cut into sections and then into strips, upon which the text was written. The strips were bound before being tied with cords.

Was the text modified before the writing or incising process?

- Other [specify]: No information is available on this point.

Location

Is the text stored in a specific location?

[Note at which point in time, for reference, if known; select all that apply]

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The Zigao was part of a collection of bamboo texts that were purchased by the Shanghai Museum in three batches in Hong Kong in 1994. These texts were originally stored in a tomb, but because they were sold by tomb robbers who had looted them, their provenance is unknown and no information is available regarding the site. Based on newspaper reports of tomb robberies as well as similarities with the corpus of texts discovered at Guodian 郭店 Tomb One, it is possible that this collection came from Guojiagang 郭家崗 Tomb One near the village of Guodian 郭店. There is, however, no certainty regarding this speculation (Allan 2015, 51-58). At present, the text is stored in the Shanghai Museum.

Is the location where the text stored accompanied by iconography or images?

– Field doesn't know

Is the area where the text is stored accompanied by an-iconic images?

– Field doesn't know

Production & Intended Audience

Production

Is the production of the text funded by the polity?

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Due to the previously unknown status of the Zigao and the lack of information about its provenance, it is not possible to make any claims regarding the details of its production.

Is the text considered official religious scripture?

– No

Notes: The Zigao has not been passed down in the received textual tradition as an authoritative text, nor does its content seem to exactly match later ru 儒 or "Confucian" thought. Most likely, the work would have been considered a ru text in its own time and was part of wide-ranging debates among the followers of Confucius, particularly over the issue of whether abdication or hereditary inheritance was part of the proper way of rulership (Allan 2015, 144-145; 163-167).

Written in distinctly religious/sacred language?

– No

Notes: The text is written in Classical Chinese and would, presumably, have been accessible to any literate person of the time.

Intended Audience

What is the estimated number of people considered to be the audience of the text

This should be the total number of people who would serve as the intended audience for the text.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: There is no information available on the number of literate individuals in early China, let alone how many of those individuals considered themselves followers of Confucius or who would have otherwise been considered the intended audience of the text.

Does the Religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members?

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The ru were defined by lineages of teachers and students, but whether or not these teachers actively sought out new students is unknown (Allan 2015, 144-145). The argumentative nature of the text suggests that it was trying to convince its potential readers of its points, but it does not seem correct to class this as "proselytism."

Are there clear reformist movements?

(Reformism, as in not proselytizing to potential new conservative, but "conversion" - or rather, reform - to the "correct interpretation"?)

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Because the ru were not defined as a coherent group beyond shared concerns and veneration of Confucius, there was no established orthodoxy (institutional or philosophical) that would have been been the target of reform (Allan 2015, 144-145).

Is the text in question employed in ritual practice?

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Because the text was buried in a tomb, it can be considered part of the ritual practice of formal burial, although the details of its role are not known. Most likely, the text was a personal possession of the deceased that was placed in the tomb in order to reflect the identity of the deceased as perceived by his or her mourners (Allan 2015, 26; 57-58)

Is there material significance to the text?

– Field doesn't know

Context and Content of the Text (Beliefs and Practices)

Context

Is the text itself accompanied by art?

– No

Notes: No images are present on the bamboo strips, only the written characters of the text.

Are there multiple versions of the text?

– No

Notes: The manuscript of the Zigao contained within the Shanghai collection is the only copy of the text that has been discovered, either archaeologically or within the received tradition.

Is the text part of a collection of texts?

– Yes

Notes: Assuming that all of the texts in the Shanghai collection came from the same tomb, they presumably reflect the personal library of the deceased and were placed in the tomb in order to reflect the deceased's identity as the mourners understood it (Allan 2015, 26; 56-57). As a result, there is no sense of canonization in the collection.

↳ Is there a sense of canonization?

– No

↳ Is the text part of a series of volumes?

– No

Notes: The Zigao was, however, bound together with other texts into a single bamboo scroll. The other slips of the scroll have been classified by scholars into two other texts: the Kongzi shi lun 孔子詩論 ("Confucius' discourse on the Songs," six slips) and the Lubang da han 魯邦大旱 ("Great drought in the land of Lu," twenty-nine slips) (Allan 2015, 142).

If the text is not explicitly scripture, is it part of another important literary tradition?

– Yes

↳ Cultural with religious implications?

– No

↳ Behavioral literature?

– No

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: Many writings in the Warring States period appear to have circulated as short, highly malleable, units that were later combined into longer and more fixed texts at a later time. The Zigao appears to be an instance of this, existing as a short discussion of the issue of hereditary rule vs. abdication that would have circulated among ru lineages and networks who were engaged in debating matter of shared concern (Allan 2015, 27; 145; 163-167).

Content

Is the text - or does the text include - a ritual list, manual, bibliography, index, or vocabulary?

(Select all that apply)

– Other [specify]: None

Are there lineages or a single lineage established by the text?

– Yes

Notes: The content of the text can be seen as defining three separate types of lineages. The first is the teacher-student lineage established through the dialogue between Confucius and Zigao. The second type encompasses the genealogies of the three dynasties discussed by the text: the Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Each of these groups is located in the person of a progenitor who is defined as being the son of Heaven and a human woman who became pregnant through some type of divine conception and experienced a miraculous birth. The third type of lineage exists in opposition to these hereditary lineages and is the political lineage of sage-rulers created through the practice of abdication and illustrated through the figures of Yao and Shun (the former of whom abdicated to the latter).

↳ Does the lineage involve establishing a chain of authority?

– Yes

Notes: All three of the lineages discussed in the text can be considered authoritative in one sense or another.

↳ Is the lineage defined by concrete cycles or measures of time?

– Yes

Notes: Insofar as the second and third types of lineages relate to dynastic or reign periods, they can be seen as being associated or defined by concrete measures of time. However, the text is more concerned with the method of transmission of rule within these lineages (either by blood or abdication) than it is with the time periods with which they are associated.

↳ How is the lineage established?

– Student-Teacher Relationship

Notes: Confucius is presented by the text as a figure of authority, answering the questions of his student, Zigao, regarding the divine origins of the three dynastic progenitors and how they might be compared to the sage-king Shun 舜. Zigao is present in other texts as a student of Confucius, though he is frequently portrayed negatively (Allan 2015, 138-142).

– Supernatural forces

Notes: The three dynastic progenitors described in the text are referred to as the "sons of Heaven" (tianzi 天子) because each was born from a mother who experienced divine conception and a miraculous birth. The text suggests that this divine origin is what conferred legitimacy on the three dynastic lineages. This point is unusual because most texts in early China and later China define the legitimacy of the three dynasties according to the dynastic cycle or "Mandate of Heaven" (tianming 天命). By contrast, the Zigao does not even refer to the three groups as dynasties, focusing instead on their respective descents from divinely engendered ancestors (Allan 2015, 151-153). The first progenitor is Yu 禹, who gives rise to the Xia 夏. He was born because his mother ("a Lady of the Youxin lineage" youxinzhinü 有莘氏之女) picked the seeds of a Job's Tears plant. She was pregnant for three years until a cut was made on her back and she gave birth. Yu is described as being able to speak at birth (Allan 2015, 153-

155). The second progenitor, Xie 契, gives rise to the Shang 商. His mother, "a woman of the Yourong lineage" (yourongshizhinü 有娥氏之女), was strolling atop the Sun Tower when a swallow placed an egg in front of her. After swallowing the egg she became pregnant for three years, after which time a cut was made on her breast and she gave birth. The text adds that Xie cried out "metal" (jin 金) upon his birth (Allan 2015, 156-157). The final progenitor, Hou Ji 后稷, gives rise to the Zhou 周. His mother, a "woman of the Youtai lineage" (youtaishizhinü 有邰氏之女), trod in a human footprint while offering thistles and reciting a prayer. Unfortunately, the remainder of the passage is damaged but it may resemble the account in the "Book of Songs" (shijing 詩經), which describes how Hou Ji's mother prayed to the high god for a child, became pregnant by stepping in the god's footprint, and later experienced a miraculously painless birth (Allan 2015, 157-158).

– Other [specify]: Abdication. The political lineage of Yao and Shun is defined in terms of one good ruler recognizing another worthy individual and abdicating the throne to that person.

Does the text express a formal legal code?

– No

Formulating a specifically religious calendar?

– No

Beliefs

Is a spirit-body distinction present in the text?

– No

Is belief in an afterlife indicated in the text?

– No

Is belief in reincarnation in this world specified in the text?

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses dicated in the text?

– No

Does the text indicate if co-sacrifices should be present in burials?

– No

Does the text specify grave goods for burial?

– No

Are formal burials present in the text?

– No

Are there practices that have funerary associations presented in the text?

– No

Are supernatural beings present in the text?

– Yes

↳ A supreme high-god is present

– Yes

Notes: While the high god (di 帝 or tian 天) is not an explicit character within the text, its presence is crucial as it is defined as the literal parent of the founders of the three lineages.

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic or described in anthropomorphic terms

– Yes

Notes: Only insofar as it is described as the parent of the founders of the three lineages (Allan 2015, 170).

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity

– Yes

Notes: This is not directly mentioned in the text, but was a common understanding of di/tian during the Warring States period.

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld)

– No

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god)

– No

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god

– No

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites

– Yes

Notes: As the founders of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou, are all the sons of heaven, this means that all of the rulers of those dynasties are direct descendants of the high god.

- ↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites
 - I don't know
 - Notes: No mention is made of this in the text.

- ↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good
 - I don't know
 - Notes: This point is not addressed by the text.

- ↳ Other features of the supreme high god
 - Specify: The high god is able to generate miraculous (the founders of the three lineages) by impregnating their mothers through miraculous means. For example, in the case of Xie, his mother became pregnant after she swalled an egg placed in front of her by a swallow (Allan 2015, 170).

- ↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world
 - I don't know
 - Notes: This point is not addressed by the text.

- ↳ Has deliberate causal efficacy in the world
 - Yes
 - Notes: That the high god can create offspring is a clear indication of efficacy, but the text does not mention other feats of which it is capable.

- ↳ Can reward
 - I don't know

- ↳ Can punish
 - I don't know

- ↳ Indirect causal efficacy in the world
 - Yes
 - Notes: Given the means by which the high god conceives its progeny (e.g. through bird's eggs as described above), its efficacy could be considered indirect.

- ↳ Exhibits positive emotion
 - I don't know
 - Notes: The text does not describe the high god in emotional terms.

- ↳ Exhibits negative emotion
 - I don't know
 - Notes: The text does not describe the high god in emotional terms.
- ↳ Possesses Hunger?
 - I don't know
 - Notes: The text does not describe the high god in emotional terms.
- ↳ Can be hurt?
 - I don't know
- ↳ Can be tricked?
 - I don't know
- ↳ Can be imprisoned?
 - I don't know
- ↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural being other than the high god?
 - I don't know
- ↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature
 - Specify: The high god is able to generate miraculous births (the founders of the three lineages) by impregnating their mothers through miraculous means. For example, in the case of Xie, his mother became pregnant after she swallowed an egg placed in front of her by a swallow (Allan 2015, 170).
- ↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living
 - I don't know
 - Notes: No mention of this point is made in the text, although the miraculous means of conception could be considered a form of indirect communication.
- ↳ Does the text make communication with supreme high-god possible?
 - No

Previously human spirits are present

– No

Non-human supernatural beings are present

– Yes

Notes: The high god is indirectly present as mentioned above. For the following sub-questions, see the above comments.

↳ Supernatural beings can be seen

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings can be physically felt

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can reward

– No

↳ Supernatural beings can punish

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings communicate with the living according to the text?

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger

– I don't know

- ↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature
 - Specify: See above.

Does the text attest to a pantheon of supernatural beings?

– No

Are mixed human-divine beings present according to the text?

– Yes

- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings can be seen?
 - Yes

- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings can be felt?
 - Yes

- ↳ Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living according to this text?
 - Yes

Notes: The founders of the three lineages, Yu, Xie, and Hou Ji, can all be considered mixed human-divine beings as they have human mothers and their other parent, presumably father, is heaven.

- ↳ In waking, everyday life?
 - Yes

- ↳ In dreams?
 - No

- ↳ In trance possession?
 - No

- ↳ Through divination practices?
 - No

- ↳ Only through religious specialists?
 - No

- ↳ Only through monarch?
 - No

– No

↳ Other?

–Specify: No other means.

Is there a supernatural being that is physically present in the/as a result of the text?

– No

Are other categories of beings present?

–Other [specify]: Natural

Notes: Certain non-human animals, such as swallows are present as agents of miraculous conception. Certain plants, such as thistles, are also mentioned (Allan 2015, 170).

Does the text guide divination practices?

– No

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present in the text?

– No

Notes: The high god of the time, Heaven/Shang Di, is referenced in the text as the progenitor of the three dynastic ancestors being discussed (Allan 2015, 151). However, it is not assigned a monitoring role by the text.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment in the text?

– No

Notes: The high god of the time, Heaven/Shang Di, is referenced in the text as the progenitor of the three dynastic ancestors being discussed (Allan 2015, 151). However, it is not assigned a punitive role by the text.

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards in the text?

– No

Notes: The high god of the time, Heaven/Shang Di, is referenced in the text as the progenitor of the three dynastic ancestors being discussed (Allan 2015, 151). However, it is not described as bestowing rewards.

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present in the text?

– No

Is an eschatology present in the text?

– No

Norms & Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the text?

– Yes

Notes: The text places a general emphasis on the "goodness" (shan 善) or "worthiness" (xian 賢) that makes worthy of receiving the throne, as in the case of Shun (Allan 2015, 174-177). However, the text goes into very little detail as to how these terms are defined. Similarly, the text implies that abdication is a worthy practice that reflects an individual's worthiness.

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious text?

– No

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the text?

– Yes

Notes: The text places a general emphasis on the "goodness" (shan 善) or "worthiness" (xian 賢) that makes worthy of receiving the throne, as in the case of Shun (Allan 2015, 174-177). However, the text goes into very little detail as to how these terms are defined.

↳ Honesty/trustworthiness/integrity

– No

↳ Courage (in battle)

– No

↳ Courage (generic)

– No

↳ Compassion/empathy/kindness/benevolence

– No

↳ Mercy/forgiveness/tolerance

– No

↳ Generosity/charity

– No

↳ Selflessness/selfless giving

– No

↳ Righteousness/moral rectitude

– Yes

Notes: In the sense that the text references general concepts of "goodness" (shan 善) and "worthiness" (xian 賢) (Allan 2015, 174-177).

↳ Ritual purity/ritual adherence/abstention from sources of impurity

– Yes

Notes: While the text does not mention ritual purity, it states that Yao was pleased with Shun as his successor after discussing the rites with him (Allan 2015, 176).

↳ Respectfulness/courtesy

– No

↳ Familial obedience/filial piety

– Yes

Notes: One of the characteristics that indicates that Shun is worthy of rulership is that he "served his parents" (Allan 2015, 176).

↳ Fidelity/loyalty

– No

↳ Cooperation

– No

↳ Independence/creativity/freedom

– No

↳ Moderation/frugality

– No

↳ Forbearance/fortitude/patience

– No

↳ Diligence/self-discipline/excellence

– Yes

Notes: One of the characteristics that indicates that Shun is worthy of rulership is that he was "diligent in his studies" (Allan 2015, 176).

↳ Assertiveness/decisiveness/confidence/initiative

– No

↳ Strength (physical)

– No

↳ Power/status/nobility

– No

↳ Humility/modesty

– Yes

Notes: Abdicating the throne to a worthy individual could be seen to imply a certain degree of humility/modesty. This point is underscored by the meagre conditions of Shun's abode (Allan 2015, 161-162; 174-177).

↳ Contentment/serenity/equanimity

– No

↳ Joyfulness/enthusiasm/cheerfulness

– No

↳ Optimism/hope

– No

↳ Gratitude/thankfulness

– No

↳ Reverence/awe/wonder

– No

↳ Faith/belief/trust/devotion

– No

↳ Wisdom/understanding

– No

↳ Discernment/intelligence

– Yes

Notes: That Yao is able to discern Shun's worthiness is indicative of his insight and perspicacity (Allan 2015, 160-161).

↳ Beauty/attractiveness

– No

↳ Cleanliness (physical)/orderliness

– No

↳ Other important virtues

– Yes

Notes: The text implies that abdication is a virtuous practice that reflects an individual's worthiness.

Advocacy of Practices

Does the text require celibacy (full sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require castration?

– No

Does the text require fasting?

– No

Does the text require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods)?

– No

Does the text require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations?

– No

Does the text require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of adults?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of children?

– No

Does the text require self-sacrifice (suicide)?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of property/valuable items?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of time (e.g. attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.)?

– No

Does the text require physical risk taking?

– No

Does the text require accepting ethical precepts?

– Yes

Notes: Using the authoritative figure of Confucius, the text argues for abdication to the most worthy as a normative model of rulership, as well as associated virtues such as diligence. Presumably, readers are meant to accept the text's arguments for these normative features upon reading the work.

Does the text require marginalization by out-group members?

– No

Does the text require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household)?

– No

Does the text require participation in large-scale rituals?

– No

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present as indicated in the text?

– No

Does the text employ fictive kinship terminology?

– No

Notes: The text employs the term "Son of Heaven" (tianzi 天子). In most other Chinese texts and contexts, this is a title of authority that refers to the ruler who rules with Heaven's sanction, rather than its literal descendent. The Zigao, however, is unusual as it uses this term literally as a way of referring to the progenitors of the three dynasties, each of whom was a literal descendent of the high god through divine impregnation and experienced a miraculous birth (Allan 151-153).

Does the text include elements that are intended to be entertaining?

– No

Does the text specify sacrifices, offerings, and maintenance of a sacred space?

– No

Notes: However, the text makes mention of Hou Ji's mother making offerings to Shang Di (Allan 2015, 170).

Institutions & Production Environment of Text

Society & Institutions

Society of religious group that produced the text is best characterized as:

– A state

Notes: The text dates from the Warring States period (475-221 BCE), a time after the Zhou dynasty when multiple, centralizing states engaged in constant warfare with one another (Allan 2015, 11-15).

Are there specific elements of society that have controlled the reproduction of the text?

– Other

Notes: Unknown

Are there specific elements of society involved with the destruction of the text?

– Other

Welfare

Does the text specify institutionalized famine relief?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of institutionalized famine relief. However, when describing good rule, the text defines it as "reverentially watching over" (fengshou 奉守) all people, whether they are "great or small, poor or rich" (xiaoda feiji 小大肥瘠), suggesting a general valuation of measures such as institutionalized famine relief.

Does the text specify institutionalized poverty relief?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of institutionalized famine relief. However, when describing good rule, the text defines it as "reverentially watching over" (fengshou 奉守) all people, whether they are "great or small, poor or rich" (xiaoda feiji 小大肥瘠), suggesting a general valuation of measures such as institutionalized poverty relief.

Does the text specify institutionalized care for elderly & infirm?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm. However, when describing Shun's virtue, the text emphasizes that he "served his parents" (shi qi qin 侍其親), suggesting that it values caring for elders (Allan 2015, 176). Similarly, the text defines good rule as "reverentially watching over" (fengshou 奉守) all people, whether they are "great or small, poor or rich" (xiaoda feiji 小大肥瘠), suggesting that it values caring for the infirm.

Other forms of welfare?

– No

Education

Are there formal educational institutions available for teaching the text?

– I don't know

Notes: Because the text is previously unknown and sources for early China are limited, there is no way to answer this question. However, the fact that the text is a dialogue between Confucius and his student, Zigao, suggests the existence of master-disciple networks for transmitting and teaching the text that defined the early ru (Allan 2015, 142-145).

Are there formal educational institutions specified according to the text?

– No

Notes: The text does not explicitly mention formal education institutions. However, the fact that the text is a dialogue between Confucius and his student, Zigao, suggests the existence of master-disciple educational networks and lineages. However, the extent to which such networks and lineages might have been considered "formal institutions" is a matter for debate (Allan 2015, 142-145).

Does the text make provisions for non-religious education?

– No

Does the text restrict education to religious professionals?

– No

Does the text restrict education among religious professionals?

– No

Is education gendered according to the text?

– No

Notes: Confucius, Zigao, and the rulers discussed in the text are all male so it is likely education was understood in a gendered way, despite the lack of explicit discussion in the text itself. Similarly, although the mothers of the three dynastic progenitors are described, they are depicted only as mothers of the three rulers without any reference made to their moral stature or education.

Is education gendered with respect to this text and larger textual tradition?

– Yes

Notes: While it is generally thought that women were excluded from education during the Warring States, there is some evidence that women may have been educated and literate (though not necessarily due to official sanction) (Allan 2015, 55-58).

Does the text specify teaching relationships or ratios? (i.e.: 1:20; 1:1)

– No

Notes: The dialogue between Confucius and Zigao implies a comparable situation in other Warring States texts where multiple disciples study with a single master. However, no ratio is specified and even the idea of multiple disciples goes beyond the content of the text itself (Allan 2015, 142-145).

Are there specific relationships to teachers that are advocated by the text?

– No

Notes: Insofar as the text is presented as a dialogue between Confucius and his student, Zigao, it would seem to imply a certain type of student-teacher relationship, though no explicit claims are made regarding it.

Are there worldly rewards/benefits to education according to the text specified by the text itself?

– No

Bureaucracy

Is bureaucracy regulated by this text?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of bureaucratic regulation.

Public Works

Does the text detail interaction with public works?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of public works.

Taxation

Does the text specify forms of taxation?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of taxation.

Warfare

Does the text mention warfare?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of warfare.

Food Production

Does the text mentioned food production/disbursement?

– No

Notes: Because it is a short dialogue focused on comparing the divinely engendered progenitors of the three dynasties with the merit of the sage-king Shun, the text does not provide a discussion of food production.

Bibliography

General References

Reference: Zigao 子羔, Allan, Sarah. Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-slip Manuscripts (albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 1-78; 135-180. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2015.