

Shangshu 尚書 ("Exalted Writings"; also, "Documents")

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Entry tags: Early Chinese text, Excavated text, Canonical texts, Text, Chinese Religion, Confucian (rujia 儒家) Traditions, Religious Group

The Shangshu 尚書 (Exalted Writings; also known as Book of Documents) is one of the foundational texts in Chinese history, and with a most complex textual history, as recorded in Han 漢 dynasty (202BCE–220CE) documents. This text is a collection of speeches attributed to rulers and important ministers of the Zhou 周 dynasty (1046–256 BCE). It became one of the Five Classics 五經 during the Han dynasty (see Nylan 2001), i.e. one of the texts on which the imperial curriculum was based. Knowledge of these classics was prerequisite to assume any official position. While some chapters were put together after the fall of the Han dynasty, almost half of it are genuine compositions of early date, and present very challenging language. Wang Guowei 王國維, a most experienced scholars in the study of Chinese classics, admitted to understanding no more than half of them, and that it is true of previous scholars too, 《詩》《書》(…)於六藝中最難讀。以弟之愚闇，於《書》所不能解者殆十之五；於《詩》亦十之一二。漢魏以來諸大師未嘗不強為之說，然其說終不可通，以是知失儒亦不能解也。(In Guantang jilin 觀堂集林). ____ One of the loci classici to begin to understand the history of this text is the Treatise on Arts and Letters 藝文志, the oldest extant bibliography included in the Book of Han 漢書. In there, the Shangshu is presented as originally of 100 chapters (pian 篇) and a preface, of which only 28 survived. Han scholar Fu Sheng 伏生 (active second century BCE) is credited with having saved these 28 chapters from the burning of the books that occurred during the Qin 秦 dynasty (221–202 BCE), to which another one, the Taishi 太誓, was added. These became known as jin wen 今文 chapters, because they were written in clerical script (in use during the Han dynasty). However, Fu Sheng was an official serving under the Qin, thus belonging to a category that could possess books. Hence this narrative poses a contradiction on why he needed to hide this text at all. 16 more chapters were recovered from in the wall of the once house of Confucius, when Prince Liu Yu 劉餘 (d. 127 BCE) started construction to enlarge it. These were written in a script that preceded the standardization of the script ordered by Qin minister Li Si 李斯 (circa 280–208 BCE), and became thus known as guwen Shangshu 古文尚書 (ancient script Shangshu). The Treatise seems to imply that a witch trial interrupted the establishment of an office for the study of these newly recovered chapters. In his memorial to Emperor Ai 哀 (r. 7–1 BCE), Liu Xin 劉歆 calls for the establishment of a boshi 博士 ("erudite") position for the study of all texts in ancient, suggesting that these 16 guwen chapters were located in the imperial library. After this reference, we lose track of these 16 chapters. While the Book of Han most certainly refers to it as a somewhat defined collection, the Records of the Historian (which mentions a total of 68 chapters) seems to be using the term also to indicate a category of writing. ____ While Liu Xin's collated edition of jinwen and guwen chapters seems to have remained within the library, the 29 jinwen chapters enjoyed wider readership, and were frequently referred to as Shangshu. As for many other texts during the Han dynasty, the Shangshu too presents different lineages and scholars who taught this text, most famously Ouyang Gao 歐陽高, Xiahou Sheng 夏侯勝 and his nephew Xiahou Jian 夏侯建. Thus, in the body of Han literature we have references to the Ouyang Shangshu 歐陽尚書, the Da Xiahou Shangshu 大夏侯尚書 and the Xiao Xiahou Shangshu 小夏侯尚書, however without extensive details on the textual differences that existed among these lineages. Of these, the Ouyang Shangshu was the most renown, and one for which one textual change is mentioned: Ouyang divided the Pangeng 盤庚 chapters into three parts (as we still read it today), making it into a 31-chapter Shangshu. ____ The next central figure for the history of the Shangshu is that of Du Lin 杜林 (first CE), who made a lacquer edition of the Shangshu in 29 chapters. Because this edition was written in ancient script, it became known as Guwen Sangshu 古文尚書. This led to the mistaken assumption that his edition included the 16 guwen chapters found in the first century BCE. These 29 chapter Shangshu

eventually reached Mei Ze 梅賾 (fl. Beginning fourth century CE), the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty scholar who is responsible for the shape of the Shangshu in 58 chapters that we see today. After reorganizing the 29 chapters into 33, he fabricated (wei 偽) the remaining chapters on the basis of older material and quotations in other texts. In fact, there is no evidence a single person was responsible for all the fabricated chapters. However, it is plausible that he was the one who eventually presented this 58 chapter Shangshu to the Jin court. While Song 宋 scholars raised some eyebrows about language used in the chapters that Mei Ze composed, the Shangshu remained by and large unquestioned, until Yan Ruoku 閻若璩 (1636–1704) and Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697–1758) identified the chapters added by Mei Ze as fabrications, showing their inconsistencies and linguistic mistakes. ____ A new chapter in the history of the Shangshu is being now written, following the recovery of bamboo manuscripts, in particular those now part of the Tsinghua University 清華大學 collection. Among these manuscripts, several bear titles similar to titles of Shangshu chapters that were listed as lost during the Han Dynasty, such as the Fu Yue zhi ming 傳說之命; others are written in what is now called shu 書 style (Allan 2012), such as the Feng xu zhi ming 封許之命, the Zhi zheng zhi dao 治政之道, and the Si gao 四告. As with many of the recently recovered manuscripts, scholars lively debate on the nature of these manuscripts. The initial publication (Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhu jian 清華大學藏戰國竹簡) identified many of these manuscripts as the de facto lost chapters of the Shangshu, including those not mentioned by Han texts. More recent scholarship has started to propose different interpretations on the nature of these manuscripts: while some resemble polished texts that might as well be originally part of the Shangshu, some manuscripts present mistakes and incongruities that suggest they might have been used as master copies or templates (most recently, Cheng Hao 2020; Jia Lianxiang 2020).



Date Range: 700 BCE - 1911 CE

Region: Early and early imperial China

Region tags: Asia, East Asia, China

Core area of early and early imperial China

Status of Readership:

✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources and Corpora

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Shangshu Zhengyi 尚書正義. Shisanjing Zhu Shu 十三經注疏. Zhonghua shuju, 2009.
- Source 2: Liu Qiyu 劉起釭, Shangshu xue shi 尚書學史 (A History of the Study of the Shangshu), 1989 (reprinted 1996; 2017)
- Source 3: Yan Ruoku 閻若璩, Shangshu guwen shuzheng 尚書古文疏證 (various editions)

Notes: Complete translations that became standard references: James Legge, The Shoo King or the Book of Historical Documents. Volume 3 of The Chinese Classics. Oxford: Clarendon, 1895 [1861]; Bernhard Karlgren, tr. The Book of Documents. Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 22 (reprint 1950).

Reference: Chen Qiacong 陳喬樞 (1809–1869). Jinwen Shangshu yi shuo kao 今文尚書遺說考.

Reference: Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛. Shang shu jiao shi yi lun 尚書校釋譯論. Zhonghua shuju, 2005.

Reference: Chen Mengjia 陳夢家. Shangshu tong lun 尚書通論. (Various editions).

Reference: Michael Nylan. The Five Confucian Classics. (Michael Nylan), The Documents, pp. 130–167. Yale University Press; Reprint edition, 2014.

Reference: Katō Jōken undefined. Shin kobun Shōsho shūshaku 真古文尚書集釋. Tokyo: Meijishoin, 1964.

Reference: Sarah Allan undefined. On Shu 書 (Documents) and the Origin of the Shang Shu 尚書 (Ancient Documents) in Light of Recently Discovered Bamboo Slip Manuscripts, pp. 547–557. Bulletin of SOAS, London, 2012.

Reference: Jia Lianxiang 賈連翔. “从《治邦之道》《治政之道》看战国竹书‘同篇异制’现象.” pp. 43–47. 清华大学学报(哲学社会科学版) Journal of Tsinghua University(Philosophy and Social Sciences) 35, no. 1 (2020).

Reference: Sarah Allan. “Drought, Human Sacrifice and the Mandate of Heaven in a Lost Text from the ‘Shang Shu.’” 523–39. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 47, no. 3 (1984).

Reference: Hsiang-lin Shi. Shangshu 尚書, pp. 814–830. (David R. Knechtges, Taiping Chang), Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature (vol. 2): A Reference Guide. Part Two.. Brill, 2013.

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: CText 中國哲學書電子化計劃 : <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/zh>
- Source 1 Description: Scripta Sinica 漢籍電子文獻資料庫, Shisan jing edition: <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/>
- Source 2 URL: Database of Chinese Classics 中華經典古籍庫
<http://publish.ancientbooks.cn/docShuju/platformSublibIndex.aspx?libId=6>

Online Corpora

Relevant online Primary Textual Corpora (original languages and/or translations)

- Source 1 URL: <https://ctext.org/shang-shu/zh>
- Source 1 Description: CText searchable version, free access
- Source 2 URL: <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery?@92^1125789045^802^^^401010010002@@29779546#top>
- Source 2 Description: Scripta Sinica, Thirteenth Classics edition, free access

General Variables

Materiality

Methods of Composition

– Written

Notes: Oral transmission coexisted as well; several chapters describe dialogues between kings and ministers. It is unknown whether these were first written and then recited, or if they are written records (with some degree of fictionalization) of speeches.



—with Ink

Medium upon which the text is written/incised

— Bamboo

Notes: Possible editions in silk (such as those recovered at Mawangdui) and wood may have existed. One edition on lacquer is mentioned (see introduction to this text.)

— Paper



Specify type of paper

—Specify: Starting with the Tang dynasty, paper becomes a major support for texts. The woodblock printing technique was replaced by the movable type technique in the 11th century CE.

Reference: Tsien Tsuen-hsuei 錢存訓. Science and Civilization in China. Vol. 5: Chemistry and Chemical Technology. Part 1: Paper and Printing. Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Reference: Lucille Chia. Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900-1400. Brill, 2011.

Was the material modified before the writing or incising process?

— Physical preparation

Notes: Bamboo was cut into strips of uniform size. (See review of studies on the subject in Xiao 2017: 235-46.)

Was the text modified before the writing or incising process?

—Other [specify]: Very little is known about this process. Warring States bamboo manuscripts (in particular from the Tsinghua Collection) may elucidate this in the future.

Location

Is the text stored in a specific location?

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

— Yes

Notes: Imperial libraries had copies of all major texts.



Tomb

— Yes

Notes: It is possible that some of the Tsinghua manuscripts related to the Shangshu were originally stored in tombs. Being the Tsinghua corpus unprovenanced it is impossible to know. I have no knowledge of the Shangshu as we know it ever stored in a tomb.

- ↳ Cemetery
 - No
- ↳ Temple
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Shrine
 - No
- ↳ Altar
 - No
- ↳ Devotional marker
 - No
- ↳ Cenotaph
 - No
- ↳ Church
 - No
- ↳ Mosque
 - No
- ↳ Synagogue
 - No
- ↳ Triumphal Arch
 - No
- ↳ Monument
 - No
- ↳ Mass Gathering Point
 - No

↳ Cave(s)

– Yes

Notes: Fragments of copies of the Shangshu have been found among the Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscripts (4th CE-11th CE).

Reference: The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online

Reference: Chen Tiefan 陳鐵凡. Dunhuang ben Shangshu jiaozheng 敦煌本尚書校證. Taipei: Guojia changqi fazhan weiyuanhui 1965.

↳ Hilltops

– No

↳ Other natural sanctuaries

– No

↳ Boundary markers or lines

– No

↳ Domestic contexts

– No

↳ Library/archive

– Yes

↳ Specify

– Specify: none

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

– No

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

– No

Production & Intended Audience

Production

Is the production of the text funded by the polity?

— Field doesn't know

Notes: Very difficult subject at the current state of knowledge

Is the text considered official religious scripture?

— No

Notes: While the Shangshu is among the most authoritative texts in the Chinese tradition, it is not sacred (i.e., connected with a god, or being dictated by one).

Written in distinctly religious/sacred language?

— No

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: Potentially, anyone engaging with political activities during the Eastern Zhou 東周 dynasty 770–256 BCE. Subsequently, anyone aspiring to an official position within the empire studies and worked with this text.

Does the Religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members?

— No

Notes: There is no defined religious group of which the field is aware.

Are there clear reformist movements?

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

— No

Is the text in question employed in ritual practice?

— Yes



Is it orally recited?

— Yes

Notes: Here the answer yes is meant to indicate that the text was quoted and recited in various contexts (supporting an argument; displaying erudition, etc.). It was not, as far as the field knows, recited in the way prayers are recited (to obtain a result, or with the idea that someone is listening).

↳ Is there any particular affect of the oral recitation of the text?

– No

↳ Is it read?

– Yes

Notes: Here the answer yes is meant to indicate that, starting in imperial times (221 BCE - 1911 CE), the Shangshu 尚書 became a foundational text in the education of Chinese officials and literati, hence it was read and discussed.

↳ Is there any particular affect on the reader of the text?

– No

↳ Is there any particular affect on the audience of the recitation?

– No

↳ Describe the nature of the ritual practice?

– Specify: Field does not know. Given the relevance of the Shangshu as foundational text during dynastic changes, we may hypothesize that some passages were read during rituals related to the establishment of a dynasty.

↳ Is the text employed in large scale rituals?

– No

↳ Is the text employed in small scale rituals?

– No

↳ How often do the rituals take place?

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks?

– No

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks?

– No

↳ Are there synchronic practices?

– No

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual?

– No

↳ Are there other substances (such as food or drink, for example) that are consumed during rituals?

– No

Is there material significance to the text?

– No

Context and Content of the Text (Beliefs and Practices)

Context

Is the text itself accompanied by art?

– No

Are there multiple versions of the text?

– Yes

↳ Are multiple versions viewed as proper?

– No

Notes: The textual history of the sources eventually forming the Shangshu is a most complex one. It seems that at some point, there were 4 editions (not "versions" properly) of the same material circulating during the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE). What we read today is a compilation of some of this Han material and other chapters compiled during the fourth century CE. These two categories of material are known as New Text 今文 and Old Text 古文 (chapters compiled on the basis of older material, often referred to as "forged"), for a total of 58 chapters. See the introduction to this entry.

↳ Is there debate about which version is proper?

– No

Notes: The four editions in circulation during the Han dynasty (see description above) differed in organization of chapters and textual variant. Nothing indicates that one version is more proper than the others. ____ The Shangshu is notorious for the inclusion of the so-called "forged" chapters, some of which were reconstituted during the fourth century CE on the basis of older material. This version in 58 chapters has been transmitted and accepted and valid since the fourth century, until Qing dynasty scholar Yan Ruoqu 閻若璩 (1636–1704) conclusively demonstrated the nature of the Old Text 古文 chapters, on the basis of previous studies and debates with his peers.

Is the text part of a collection of texts?

– Yes

↳ Is there a sense of canonization?

– Yes

↳ How is the authority established?

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The 58 pian 篇 Shangshu was presented at the court of Jin 晉 in 317 CE, and canonized shortly after. Little is known of the circumstances that lead to such a quick canonization; although the collection was already considerably important in the previous centuries. As mentioned in the introduction to this entry, the Shangshu was already a Classic during the Han dynasty, but because of its complicated textual history, a neat distinction between the Han version and the Jin version is hard to establish. Certainly the Han version of the Shangshu did not include the chapters forged during the fourth century CE.

↳ Can the canon be altered or added to?

– No

↳ Have major debates shifted the sense of the place of the text with respect to the larger canon?

– Yes

Notes: Qing scholars' studies demonstrated the spurious nature of half of the chapters of the received Shangshu; this led to a reconsideration of this text and other classics part of the same canon, in conjunction with major political and social changes that occurred during at the end of the last dynasty. Recently, the recovery of bamboo manuscripts from the Warring States era written in the same style prompted further reconsideration of the nature and history of composition of the Shangshu.

↳ Is the text part of a series of volumes?

– No

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]: The Shangshu is part of the Classics.

Notes: The Classics are a collection of texts that began to emerge during the Han dynasty, initially forming a group of five that continued to grow through the centuries. These were texts strongly associated with Confucius and the Confucian tradition, and became foundational to the intellectual production of almost all Chinese empires.

Content

Is the text - or does the text include - a ritual list, manual, bibliography, index, or vocabulary? (Select all that apply)

–Other [specify]: Speeches purportedly given by ancient kings.

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

– Yes

Notes: For example, during the Han dynasty there are three main lineages in the teaching of this text (see introduction to this entry). These take the name after the scholars who taught the Shangshu, although the field does not know how they differed.



Does the lineage involve establish a chain of authority?

– No

Notes: Some scholars became particularly famous teachers of the Shangshu, such as Ouyang during the Han dynasty. From the little we know, their authority seems to be based on being extremely well versed in the texts they were teaching.



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

– No



How is the lineage established?

– Blood or Marriage relations

Does the text express a formal legal code?

– No

Notes: Yet the text has been used as basis for legal discussions; one chapter in particular, the Lǚ Xíng 呂刑, is focused on legal matters. See most recent study by Charles Sanft, "13 Concepts of Law in the Shangshu" (in bibliography).

Formulating a specifically religious calendar?

– No

Beliefs

Is a spirit-body distinction present in the text?

– Yes

↳ Spirit-Mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other parts?

– No

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body?

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The text at times refers to previous deceased kings and ancestors as still being able to be satisfied or not by the deeds of their descendants. It also refers to "spirits" (鬼神) in contrast with humans, hence implying that they are of different nature. But there is no theorization of what being a spirit entails. We can presume it meant existing without a physical body.

↳ Other spirit-body relationship?

– No

↳ Within conceptions of the mind: are there distinct notions of psychological states or aggregates?

– No

↳ Do practitioners engage in debates about mind-body dualism?

– No

↳ Are debates framed in other ways?

– No

↳ Do practitioners distinguish between a corporeal body and an incorporeal soul or spirit?

– Yes

Notes: I answer "yes" because this is the assumption underlying some passages that refer to spirits of deceased humans; the Shangshu does not focus on this.

↳ Are there other sides or features of the debate?

– No

↳ What are historical mainstream and minority positions?

– No

Is belief in an afterlife indicated in the text?

– Yes

Notes: Several characters in the Shangshu warn against upsetting the ancestors. There is however neither description nor direct indication of what afterlife is.

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– No

↳ Is the temporality of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– No

↳ Is there debate in the interpretation of the language of the afterlife?

– 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?

– I don't know

Are formal burials present in the text?

– No

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

– I don't know

Are supernatural beings present in the text?

– Yes

Notes: Where "being" is understood as "entity." These are Heaven 天 and Shangdi 上帝. See answers below.

Reference: Robert Eno. Shang State Religion and the Pantheon of the Oracle Texts", pp. 41-102. (John Lagerwey , Marc Kalinowski, Ed.), Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang Through Han (1250 BC-220 AD), Early Chinese Religion,, Brill. isbn: 978-9004168350.

↳ A supreme high-god is present

– I don't know

Notes: This is contingent to the definition of "god".

Previously human spirits are present

– No

Notes: The text refers to sacrifices dedicated to the ancestors, and to spirits more broadly. Often ceremonies took place in temples dedicated to spirits; but this may not necessarily indicate that they are present. Sarah Allan 1984 discusses a chapter now part of the Shangshu shaped after Shang (1300-1050 BCE) ritual traditions.

Non-human supernatural beings are present

– Yes

Notes: Where "being" is understood as "entity." These are Heaven 天 and Shangdi 上帝. On the former, see Luo Xinhui 2015; on the latter, see Allan 2007.

Reference: Luo Xinhui. Omens and Politics: The Zhou Concept of the Mandate of Heaven as Seen in the Chengwu 程寤 Manuscript. (Yuri Pines , Paul Goldin , Martin Kern undefined, Ed.), Ideology of power and power of ideology in early China. Leiden: Brill.

↳ Supernatural beings can be seen

– No

↳ Supernatural beings can be physically felt

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world

– No

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

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can reward

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can punish

– Yes

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

– No

Notes: There is no direct communication as in Heaven or Shangdi speaking to humans. But humans must fear Shangdi's rage. This may be formulated as a form of communication: calamities are the way in which Shangdi communicates its anger.

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion

– Yes

Notes: In the sense that sacrifices are made to them, assuming that this pleases them.

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature

– Specify: None

Does the text attest to a pantheon of supernatural beings?

– No

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

– No

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]: The text lao refers to "spirits of mountains and rivers, 山川鬼神"

Does the text guide divination practices?

— No

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present in the text?

— No

Notes: With the exception that there are mentions of deceased ancestors as being able to be satisfied or angered by descendants' deeds; I would however not talk of "monitoring": they are depicted as becoming upset if not revered, but there is no indication that all human actions are monitored as a consequence. One reference to counter this claim is found in Taijia Shang 太甲上: "Oh! Heaven has no (partial) affection - only to those who are reverent does it show affection. The people are not constant to those whom they cherish; they cherish (only) him who is benevolent. The spirits do not always accept the sacrifices that are offered to them; they accept only the sacrifices of the sincere, 惟天無親, 克敬惟親。民罔常懷, 懷于有仁。鬼神無常享, 享于克誠。天位艱哉." However, this is one of the chapters fabricated in the third century CE, thus it may reflect beliefs and developments later than Western Han dynasty.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment in the text?

— No

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards in the text?

— No

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

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

— No

Notes: Morality is a key moral concern, to be applied in all circumstances. For example, the Shangshu

discusses the morally correct way to treat officials and urges rulers to be moral under all circumstances. The exact criteria to define morality are however not listed.

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the text?

– Yes

↳ Honesty/trustworthiness/integrity

– Yes

Notes: In the Zhoushu 周書 chapter, Junya's ancestors are described as loyal and honest in serving the king ("Kun-ya, your grandfather and your father, one after the other, with a true loyalty and honesty, laboured in the service of the royal House, accomplishing a merit that was recorded on the grand banner, 君牙，惟乃祖乃父，世篤忠貞，服勞王家 - James Legge's translation), clearly in a laudatory way. The king expects the same from Junya.

↳ Courage (in battle)

– No

Notes: Bravery is used as a praise, if xu 勛 is so understood in the appellative, "Oh, my brave man!, 勛哉夫子!". (Legge's translation.) In 秦誓, an officer is said portrayed positively because of his combat skills. There is no elaboration on the topic though.

↳ Courage (generic)

– No

↳ Compassion/empathy/kindness/benevolence

– Yes

Notes: Benevolence (ren 仁) is almost always used in laudatory terms; he who is benevolent is cherished by the people, 懷于有仁. Thus it is an important virtue, although it only appears five times in the Shangshu (including the fabricated chapters).

↳ Mercy/forgiveness/tolerance

– No

Notes: In a couple of occasions (e.g., 胤征), the text invites to put to death without mercy enemies and officials who do not perform their duties. See also Sanft 2017.

↳ Generosity/charity

– No

↳ Selflessness/selfless giving

– No

↳ Righteousness/moral rectitude

– Yes

Notes: For example, Zhong Hui invites to order one's affairs according to righteousness, 以義制事, signaling the desirability of this virtue. In "高宗彤日 - Day of the Supplementary Sacrifice to Gao Zong", Heaven is said to reward years of life according to how righteous a person is.

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

– No

↳ Respectfulness/courtesy

– Yes

↳ Familial obedience/filial piety

– Yes

↳ Fidelity/loyalty

– Yes

↳ Cooperation

– No

↳ Independence/creativity/freedom

– No

↳ Moderation/frugality

– Yes

↳ Forbearance/fortitude/patience

– No

↳ Diligence/self-discipline/excellence

– Yes

↳ Assertiveness/decisiveness/confidence/initiative

– No

↳ Strength (physical)

– No

↳ Power/status/nobility

– Yes

↳ Humility/modesty

– Yes

↳ 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

– Yes

↳ Discernment/intelligence

– Yes

↳ Beauty/attractiveness

– No

↳ Cleanliness (physical)/orderliness

– No



Other important virtues

– No

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

Does the text require marginalization by out-group members?

– No

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

– Yes

Notes: The Shangshu invites sacrifices to the ancestors, some of which may have been of small-scale.



What is the average interval of time between performances?

– Field doesn't know

Does the text require participation in large-scale rituals?

– Yes

Notes: The Shangshu invites sacrifices to the ancestors, some of which may have been of large-scale.



On average, how many participants gather in one location?

– Field doesn't know



Interval of time between performances (in hours)

– Field doesn't know



Are there orthodoxy checks?

– No



Are there orthopraxy checks?

– No

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices?

– No

↳ Is there use of intoxicants?

– I don't know

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

– No

Does the text employ fictive kinship terminology?

– No

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

Institutions & Production Environment of Text

Society & Institutions

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

– A chiefdom

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

– Other

Notes: Each empire by and large had monopoly on the production and reproduction of knowledge, including the reproduction of texts.

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

– Other

Notes: At several points in the textual history of the Shangshu circulating editions disappear. Titles of these editions are sometimes mentioned in glosses and comments by major commentators of the Shangshu. This happens first at the end of the Han dynasty, and then again in 653, with the project known as Wǔjīng zhèngyì 五經正義 (Correct Meaning of the Five Canons), supervised by Kǒng Yǐngdá 孔穎達 (574–648 CE). As result of this project, one edition for each of the Five Classics was chosen to

become the standards, leading to the destruction (possibly not intentional) of other editions.

Welfare

Does the text specify institutionalized famine relief?

– No

Does the text specify institutionalized poverty relief?

– No

Does the text specify institutionalized care for elderly & infirm?

– No

Other forms of welfare?

– No

Education

Are there formal educational institutions available for teaching the text?

– Yes

Notes: Starting with the Han empire we have references of educational centers; the capital itself has an imperial library that collects exiting literature. This was certainly true of the Qin empire, although little is known about it; most likely, similar institutions existed during the Zhou dynasty as well.

Are there formal educational institutions specified according to the text?

– No

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?

— Yes

Notes: Although this simply reflected the nature of society, where only a few males could access education and make education a profession.

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

— No

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

— No

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

— Yes

Notes: The kings of antiquity and other semi-mythical figures are often presented as models to follow.

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: Although some chapters include a clear sense of social order; others discuss the role of punishment.

Reference: Maria Khayutina. "'Bi Shi' 柴誓, Western Zhou Oath Texts, and the Legal Culture of Early China." pp. 416–45. *Origins of Chinese Political Philosophy: Studies in the Composition and Thought of the Shangshu (Classic of Documents)*, 2017. Brill.

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Public Works

Does the text detail interaction with public works?

— No

Taxation

Does the text specify forms of taxation?

– No

Notes: The Shangshu is concerned with speeches from kings and ministers, and ruling matters, but it does not include taxation.

Warfare

Does the text mention warfare?

– Yes



Does the text dictate how to control an institutionalized military?

– No

Notes: Other than exhortations to kings and princes not to lose the Mandate of Heaven, through which one rules. One may assume this entails control over the army.



Does the text restrict/advocate for participation in exogenous military organizations?

– No



Does the text celebrate/bemoan protection/subjugation by an exogenous military force?

– No

Food Production

Does the text mentioned food production/disbursement?

– No

Notes: Famine is mentioned only once, in the hope to receive abundance of grain ("The Di said, 'Qi, the black-haired people are (still) suffering from famine. Do you, O prince, as Minister of Agriculture, (continue to) sow (for them) the various kinds of grain,' 帝曰：棄，黎民阻飢，汝后稷，播時百穀, James Legge's translation). Clearly, supporting the people correctly is part of good government, but there is no description of food production or disbursement.

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