



**Buried Ideas: Legends of Abdication and Ideal
Government in Early Chinese Bamboo-Slip
Manuscripts (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy
and Culture)**

Sarah Allan

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Four Warring States texts discovered during recent decades challenge longstanding understandings of Chinese intellectual history.

The discovery of previously unknown philosophical texts from the Axial Age is revolutionizing our understanding of Chinese intellectual history. *Buried Ideas* presents and discusses four texts found on brush-written slips of bamboo and their seemingly unprecedented political philosophy. Written in the regional script of Chu during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), all of the works discuss Yao's abdication to Shun and are related to but differ significantly from the core texts of the classical period, such as the *Mencius* and *Zhuangzi*. Notably, these works evince an unusually meritocratic stance, and two even advocate abdication over hereditary succession as a political ideal. Sarah Allan includes full English translations and her own modern-character editions of the four works examined: *Tang Yú zhi dao*, *Zigao*, *Rongchengshi*, and *Bao xun*. In addition, she provides an introduction to Chu-script bamboo-slip manuscripts and the complex issues inherent in deciphering them.

Sarah Allan is Burlington Northern Foundation Professor of Asian Studies in honor of Richard M. Bressler at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* and *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China*, both also published by SUNY Press.

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