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*Shangshu* or the *Book of Documents* is one of the Confucian classics. Its core ideas came from the remote past of high antiquity, but have transcended time, space and culture and resonated with ideas of modern values. It is capable of playing an important role in constructing spiritual civilization of modern Chinese society and demonstrating its remarkable significance in resolving common issues confronted by the humanity. Chinese culture has evolved into a “textual empire” since high antiquity and *Shangshu* is one of its cornerstones. As such, *Shangshu* has been interpreted through dynasties and has become a meta-text for many hermeneutic studies. Hard to understand as it is, *Shangshu* has attracted the attention of western sinologists, who have translated it into western languages, thus enabling its ideas to spread from East Asia to the world. The dissemination of ideas depends on the communication of conceptual meanings in terms of language. This study has selected some key words such as “de 德” (virtue), “dezhi 德治” (rule by virtue), “sande 三德” (three virtues), “tian 天” (heaven), and “tianming 天命” (mandate of the heaven), that have formed a core vocabulary in *Shangshu*. And by studying them from the perspective of modern hermeneutics, it attempts to investigate how they have evolved into an axial discourse, which has in turn become the focal points of *Shangshu*’s interpretation, and how they are understood and translated by scholars both at home and abroad in the across-cultural context. The objective is to locate inspirations for disseminating intellectual thoughts of traditional Chinese culture, making the classic an indispensable part of the world civilization, and offering ideological resources for humankind to tackle spiritual crises in the post-modern age.