

SHANG DYNASTY

OF ANCIENT CHINA



1,766 BC TO 1,046 BC

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1,766 BC

Emperor Cheng Tang takes control. He overthrows the existing leader and begins to rule in the Yellow River area. He rules his people well for around 29 years and is succeeded by his son.

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1,700 - 1,500 BC

The Shang Dynasty ushers in the use of bronze. Weapons, tools and religious vessels are made. They also create looms to make silk cloth, build palaces and have walled cities.



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1,200 BC

King Wu Ding (22nd ruler) brings the dynasty to its peak. The largest amount of oracle bones found have been dated to his rule. Oracle bones are pieces of animal shell or bone (usually ox scapulae or turtle shells) that have been carved, or later in the dynasty inked, with writing to ask questions of the gods. Intense heat was then applied with a metal rod until the bone cracked. The cracks would then be interpreted to get the answer. These characters are China's earliest form of writing.



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1,200 BC

Fu Hao dies. She was wife (one of around 60) to the highly regarded King Wu Ding. She was a warrior, an oracle caster and Wu Ding had such faith in her skills that he gave her control over the borders of his kingdom. When she died, King Wu Ding built a tomb for her, it was found un-looted in 1976.

Archaeologists found over 2,000 jade, bronze, pottery, bone, stone and ivory artifacts in the grave, including a bronze battle axe, a symbol of her military authority.



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1,046 BC

Cruelty and high taxes cause the slaves to revolt. Di Xin, the last Shang ruler is overthrown and the Chou dynasty begins.

