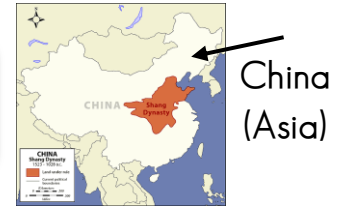


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SHANG DYNASTY OF ANCIENT CHINA



Timeline

1675 B.C.	1646 B.C.	1600 B.C.	1500 B.C.	1300 B.C.	1200 B.C.	1046 B.C.
Tang overthrows Xia and begins to rule in Yellow River area	Tang rules his people well for 29 years and his son succeeds him	Oracle bones are carved	Large scale bronze production occurs	Capital of the dynasty moved to Yin (modern day Anyang)	Death of Lady Fu Hao / Dynasty begins to decline	End of the Shang dynasty and start of the Zhou dynasty

Key Vocabulary

artisans	People who were potters, stonemasons and workers with bronze and jade.
Bronze Age	New techniques in using metals such as copper, bronze, lead and tin.
chariots	Horse-drawn vehicles with wheels making commanders mobile and fast in battle.
jade	This green ornamental mineral was carved during the Shang era from figurines to weapons.
ocarina	A clay wind instrument known as a xun, shaped like an egg and with a range of finger holes.
oracle bones	Bones (from water buffalo or other cattle) used to communicate with gods or predict the future.
pagoda	A religious temple that is built as a tower with many tiers and roofs.
pictographs	Picture characters on oracle bones which are seen as the oldest form of Chinese writing.
tomb	The Shang royal family had elaborate rooms underground to ready them for the afterlife.
Yellow River	From the Bayankala mountains, the river runs through 9 provinces of China to the Bohai Sea.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Shang year of 360 days was comprised of 12 months of 30 days. It was based on the lunar month and the solar year. An additional month was added when necessary.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Shang Society

Shang society was divided into different classes. At the top were the ruling class under the royal family, then came priests, an administrative class, warriors, craftsmen, traders, farmers and slaves. Most people were farmers who grew millet, wheat and barley but not much rice as this was grown further down south. It is also thought that silkworms were used to produce silk. Noble warriors often paid tributes to the Emperor who granted them land in return for their loyalty.

Houses

Farmers, craftsmen and peasants lived outside of the town walls in houses built of timber, over compacted earth floors. The walls were covered by wattle and daub and the roof was made of thatch. Inside the cities however, the King, nobles and priests lived in palaces made of wood and clay bricks. They had flower gardens, grew spices and had decorated painted tiles and artworks made of bronze, jade and pottery inside their homes.

Importance of the Shang Dynasty

They left a legacy of Chinese culture that proved long lasting. The hereditary dynastic succession that they set in place endured for millennia. The role of the family and importance of ancestors remain central to Chinese culture today. Their artistry, with bronze in particular, continues to be admired for its beauty and grace.

FAMOUS FIGURES

Cheng Tang (1675 B.C. - 1646 B.C.)

After overthrowing the Xia family leader, this military leader ruled the Yellow River area and set up his capital in Bo. There were then 30 Shang Emperors; a dynasty is a succession of rulers from the same family or line.



King Wu Ding (c.1240 - 1192 B.C.)

After his wife's death (Lady Fu Hao) in 1200 B.C., her tomb is filled with worldly treasures which she can use in the afterlife. The decline of the Dynasty begins as after this as subsequent rulers cannot hold the people together in peace.

Di Xin (1105 B.C. - 1046 B.C.)

The last of the Shang Emperors who lost to the Zhou in the Battle of Muye in 1046 B.C. His excessive drinking and obsession with torture and cruelty meant the people suffered greatly during his reign.

Shang Di (God)

The Shang believed in a supreme God, Shang Di, as well as subsidiary powers or spirits. Ancestor worship and the family were also central to their religious practice. They made human and animal sacrifices to ask for help from the gods.