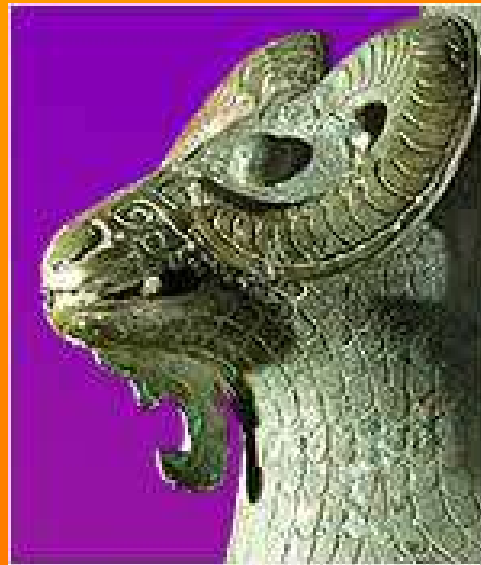


Chapter 20: The Shang Dynasty



Key Terms....



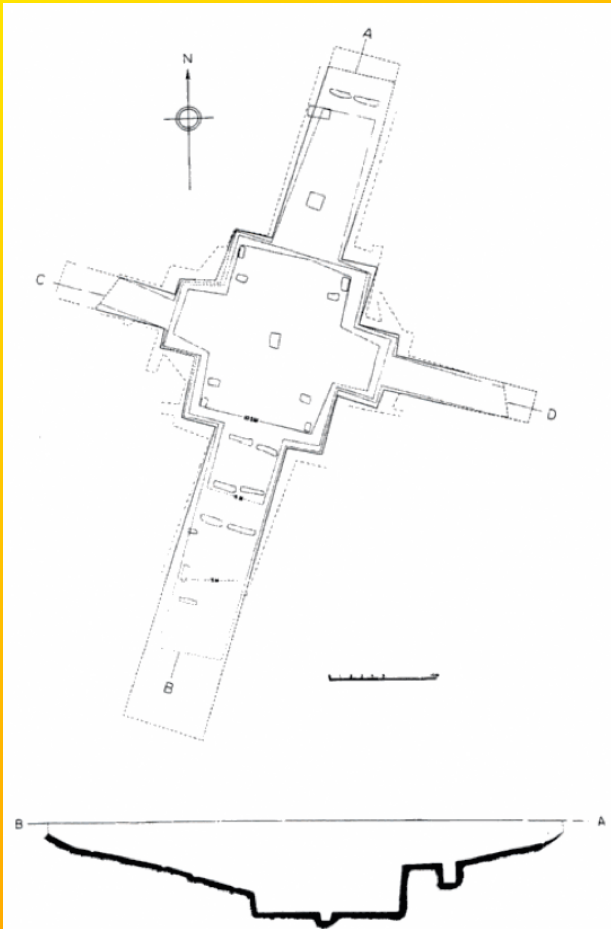
A **Dynasty** is a line of rulers that come from the same family

An **aristocrat** is a noble, or upper class person, whose wealth comes from their land



- Archaeologists believe Chinese civilization began in the river valley of the Huang He (Yellow River).
- The Shang kings were part of a dynasty that ruled from about 1700 B.C. E. to 1122 B.C.E.
- Ruins at **Anyang** reveal a city that may have been China's first capital.

Royal Tombs Provide Clues

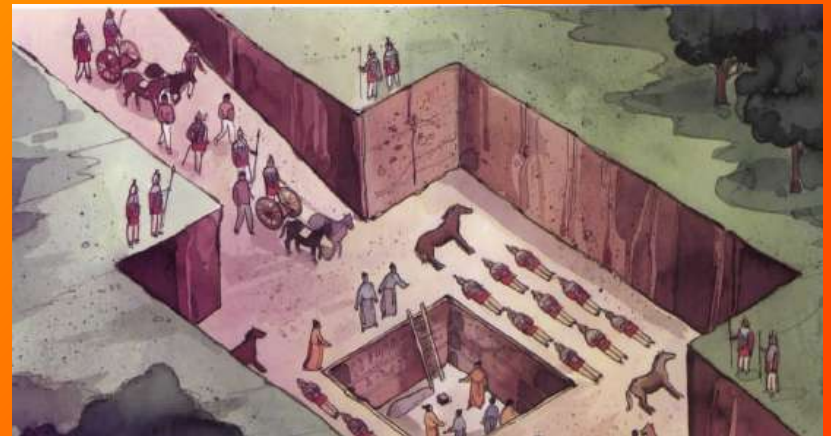


Many artifacts discovered in the tombs of Shang emperors or their families provided important clues about the government, social structure, religion, art, and technology of the Shang dynasty.

Tomb of Fu Hao

(Warrior Princess)

- Museums display recreations of objects found in royal burial tombs.
- Along with bronze vessels, jade ornaments, and bronze weapons, royalty were buried with food, animals, servants, and slaves to serve them in the afterlife. All were marched down a ramp into the tomb.



Social Classes Under the Shang



The king was the ultimate ruler; yet, to expand his power, he set up smaller kingdoms under his younger brothers and nephews.

•Royalty/ Imperial Court

The king (emperor) and his family were the most powerful and wealthy people in Shang times.

•Nobles:

Warlords and officials loyal to the king were given land and peasants. In return, they fought in the king's army and provided the king with soldiers & supplies.

•Craftsmen (Artisans):

These skilled workers made artifacts for the aristocrats.

•Traders (Merchants):

Like the craftsmen, traders were a very small class. They bartered or sold goods.

•Farmers:

The largest social class, farmers often used simple wooden and stone tools.

•Slaves:

Captured during wars, slaves were from opposing clans and used as human sacrifices or laborers

Shang Warfare

- Shang rulers used warfare to control land and expand their power.
- Conflicts between the Shang and neighboring clans to the west and south were caused by boundary disputes, the desire for valuable resources, and the need to capture prisoners for human sacrifice or forced labor.



Shang Armies

- Many wars involved large armies of more than 13,000 men.
 - Foot soldiers
 - Archers
 - Cavalry on horses & elephants
 - Fighters in chariots
- Soldiers used bronze weapons such as arrowheads, spearheads, helmets, and daggers mounted on wooden shafts.



Bronze Weapons—

Created by Craftsmen and Used by Nobles

- The bronze weapons of the ancient Chinese gave Shang warriors an advantage over their enemies, who had less technologically advanced weapons.



Jade Weapons— Placed in Emperor's Tomb

- Jade copies of Shang daggers and spears were placed in imperial tombs for use in the afterlife.



Ceremonial daggers
with turquoise and jade
ornamentation



Jade spearhead
set in bronze

Ceremonial Axes—

Created by Craftsmen and Used for Kings

- Bronze ceremonial axes, which were found in many Shang emperor's tombs, were symbols of imperial authority.
- These axes were used to kill the sacrificial victims who were buried with the emperor.
- Early Chinese emperors had complete power to make all government decisions.
- Emperor's owned the land, but they gave some of it away to their loyal supporters (nobles)



Jade Carvings— Symbols of Noble Power

- When a Shang emperor gave control of a town or land to a nobleman, he also gave him symbols of his new power.
- The emperor gave jade carvings of lucky creatures, such as dragons and tigers.
- Jade was a stone reserved for nobility, and the Chinese saw the hard stone as a symbol of wisdom and charity/kindness.
- Power symbols also included chariots, flags, and drums.



Bronze Vessels— Created by Craftsmen

- Shang people believed that ancestors brought their families good or bad fortune.
- They used bronze containers, or vessels, to hold food items in ceremonies honoring their ancestors.
- They also placed such vessels in the tombs so the dead could continue these rituals and have things to eat and drink in the after life.
- Craftspeople designed some vessels to hold wine and others to hold meat or grain.



Oracle Bones— Used by Kings and Nobles

- Shang emperors and priests used oracle bones to predict the future.
- Shang priests etched positive or negative statements onto the surface of the shell or bone.
 - Rainfall--Sickness
 - Harvest--Childbirth
 - Sickness--Enemy attacks
- Then the priest applied a hot poker to a groove on the bone so the bone would crack.
- The cracks were analyzed to reveal the answer of the gods or ancestors.



Oracle bones were made from tortoise shells or the shoulder blades of cattle.

Cowrie Shells—

Used by Traders

- During the Shang dynasty, people usually traded, or bartered, for the goods they wanted.
- However, cowrie shells were also used as currency (money) during the Shang period.
- The ancient Chinese strung 5 to 10 shell together and used them as coins are used today.
- They were valuable because the source of the shells was so far away.
- Their closest supply of cowries was on the east coast of China below the Chang Jiang, or Yangtze River.



Farming Tools

- During the Shang dynasty, the main occupation of most people was farming.
- Peasants used simple wooden plows, stone shovels, stone sickles, and stone axes to work the land.



1
What was this hole used for?
A. to attach the object to a handle
B. to display the object in a Shang home
C. to attach the object to the front of a Shang war chariot
D. to attach the object to a plow

2
What was this part of the object used for?
A. to injure enemy warriors
B. to overturn soil
C. to make impressions in clay
D. to produce a musical note

3
Who used this object?
A. artisans
B. merchants
C. peasants
D. soldiers

20 1/4 inches long

Religion Under the Shang

- People believed in many gods and practiced **ancestor worship**.
- They honored their ancestors with offerings.
- Shang kings believed they received wisdom and power from the gods, spirits, and



The Sky God (T'ien)

The most powerful god was the sky god, T'ien. He was the king of gods. To the peasants, T'ien was more brilliant and powerful than any earthbound king.

Writing Under the Shang

- Early Chinese writing used **pictographs**, or characters that stand for objects.
- By the Shang dynasty, people used logographs, characters that stand for words.
- This differs from the American alphabet system (phonetic system) where each letter represents a sound.
- In the Chinese language,

巧克力



Shang Accomplishments

1. Made bronze by mixing copper and tin
2. United the clans of Inner China
3. Jade jewelry and sculptures
4. Ancestor worship
5. Logographs