

# Shang Dynasty

Key words	
Oracle Bones	
Yinxu	
civilisation	
bronze	
Divination ceremony	



The Shang Dynasty was one of ancient China's earliest recorded dynasties, ruling from roughly 1600-1046 BCE and marking a major leap in Chinese political organization, writing, religion, and bronze technology. It laid the foundations for many cultural traditions that shaped later Chinese civilization.

The 5 religious beliefs are...

1. The world was divided into three realms: heaven, earth and the underworld.
2. Ancestors were very important.
3. The human body had two souls.
4. Sacrifices were very important.
5. Special people could communicate with the spirits.

## Worship of ancestors

The people of the Shang Dynasty believed that their ancestors continued to watch over the family as spirits after they died. People honoured their deceased relatives with prayers and sacrifices at altars in their homes. An altar is a special structure where people leave offerings or sacrifices. The Shang Dynasty believed that their ancestors had the power to punish or help them. People gave offerings of food and wine to their ancestors at temples, and held celebrations to honour them.



Shang Dynasty bronzes were bright and golden brown when new. They have developed a green, brown and black patina over time, because oxygen and minerals in the soil where they were buried have reacted with the metal. The colour and amount of patina depends on the proportions of copper, tin or lead in the metal.