

T 10: Ancient China From Neolithic Culture to Zhou Dynasty

Ancient China

- Two river basins: Huang He (aka Yellow River) in the North and Yangzi in Central and Southern China most fertile agricultural areas
- Millet (a cereal grain) in the North and rice in the South
- Protected by natural barriers like mountains, deserts, rivers



Timeline

- Neolithic Age (c.5000 BCE)
- Bronze Age and Dynastic Rule:
- Shang Dynasty (c. 1600- 1045 BCE)
- **Zhou** Dynasty- (c. 1045 771 BCE)
- **Han** Dynasty (c.206 BCE 221 CE)

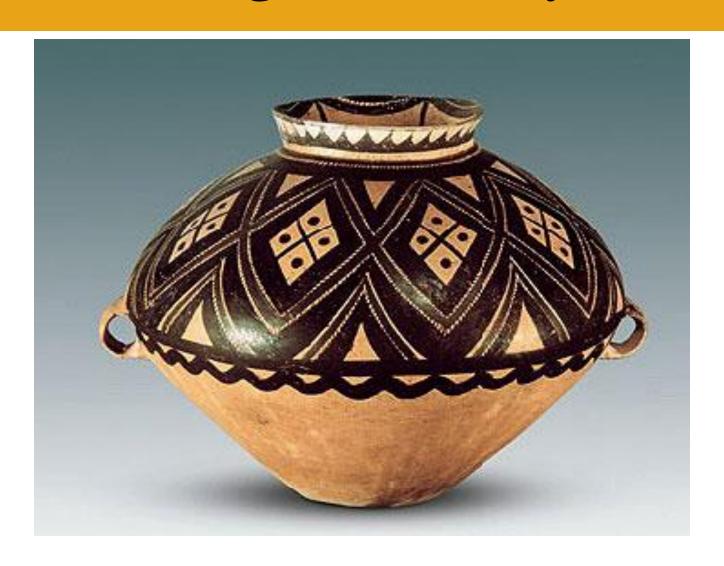
Neolithic China

- Remains of developed Neolithic Age from C.
 5000 BCE found
- Two prominent centers Yangshaw and Banpo villages in North-West China
- Known as Yangshaw Culture
- Agriculture based on millet practiced crop rotation
- Made fine pottery with designs without potter's wheel
- Domestic animals (pigs, dogs, cattle...)

Millet



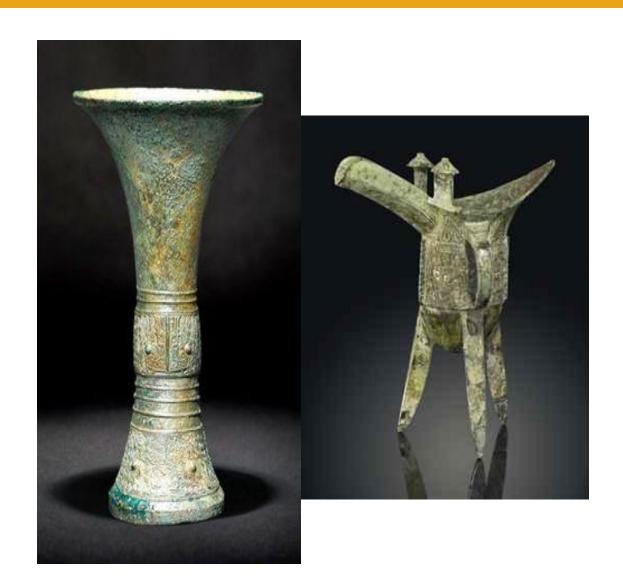
Yangshaw Pottery



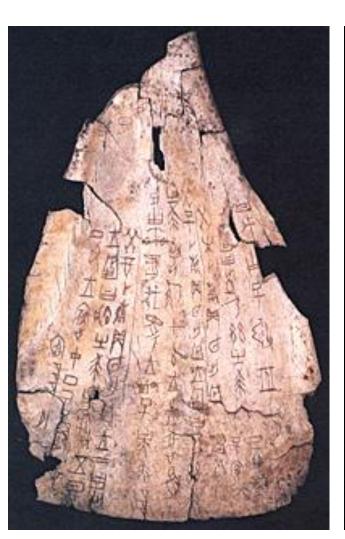
China in Early Bronze Age

- Shang State (1600-1045 BCE) first Bronze Age civilization
- A Territorial State (not out of City States)
- Theocracy the king was also the chief priest -Ancestor Worshipping practiced
- Inscriptions on Oracle Bones Divination
- Overthrown by the **Zhou Dynasty** c.1046 BCE

Shang Dynasty Ritual Wine Vessels



Oracle Bones







The Zhou Empire

- Continued Shang way of dynastic rule, loose central control and ancestor worshipping
- Power based on Mandate of Heaven
 (Heaven's approval) legitimized regime
 change conditional Divine Right to rule

Zhou Empire (Contd.)

- Developed civilization construction of dikes and irrigation systems, canal digging
- Planted the seeds of a durable state through Good Governance
- Western (1045-771 BCE) followed by Eastern Zhou Empire that ended in 221 BCE
- Never became a regional power **integration** rather than **unification**
- Zhou rule considered a **golden age** a model for later rulers

Zhou Achievements

- Built roads and expanded foreign trade
- Obtained horses, formed Cavalry, chariots
- Further developed the system of writing
- Development of agriculture iron ploughs, improved irrigation and flood control system
- Began the process of integrating diverse peoples and territories

Study questions

- What Neolithic cultures emerged in ancient China?
- What was the first territorial state in China?
- Why was ancestor worshipping practiced in ancient China?
- What is 'Oracle Bone'?
- How did the Zhou rulers justify their takeover of power from the Shang Dynasty?
- Why is the Zhou period known as a 'golden age' in ancient Chinese history?
- What were the achievements of the Zhou dynasty?

Thank You