

Lady Fu Hao

Who Was She?

Lady Fu Hao was one of the many wives of King Wu Ding; a king in ancient China who reigned over 3,000 years ago during the Shang Dynasty. The Shang Dynasty was centred around the Yellow River in north east China and is famous for its bronze and jade artwork. Lady Fu Hao had many roles including being a general and a high priestess and controlling her own territory. She was the first female military leader in known history. Lady Fu Hao was also known as Mu Xin.

Why is She So Important?

Lady Fu Hao was a powerful woman both during her life and after she died around 1250 BC. Her tomb, when it was found by archaeologists in 1976, was the only royal tomb from the Shang dynasty that was undamaged and still had her precious things in, meaning historians could learn a lot from it.

What Do We Know About Her Tomb?

It is in modern day Anyang outside the main royal cemetery and was built smaller than other royal tombs. Because she died before her husband, a tomb was built for her which was a large pit measuring 5.6 metres by 4 metres. The body of Lady Fu Hao was placed in a coffin within a wooden chamber. There may have been something built over the tomb to allow people to hold memorial ceremonies.



Did You Know...?

The Shang were the first Chinese to develop writing. They used pictographs, characters and other images to express meaning.



What Did They Find in Her Tomb?

- The remains of 6 dogs and 16 humans.
- Over 450 bronze objects (including 130 weapons, 23 bells, 27 knives, 4 tigers and 4 mirrors)
- Over 750 jade objects
- 63 stone objects
- Over 550 bone objects (mainly bone hairpins and some arrowheads)
- 11 pottery objects
- Almost 7,000 cowry shells (Shang money)



The ding (a sacrificial container) found in the tomb is named the 'HouMuWu'. It weighs a massive 875kg!

Until Death Do Us Part?

Human sacrifices were also performed as part of a ritual at the burial of an important person. This was done so that the individual would have servants to serve them in the afterlife. Fu Hao was clearly considered important as the skeletons of 16 human beings were buried around the perimeter of her tomb.

What Did Lady Fu Hao Achieve?

Lady Fu Hao led many military campaigns. She had important generals serving under her, as well as 13 000 soldiers. Fu Hao's army became famous for defeating the Tu-Fang, fierce rivals of the Shang, in one single battle. She went on to lead several successful military campaigns against neighbouring kingdoms. She was not only the first known female military leader, she was the most successful and powerful military leader of her time, male or female. Fu Hao was awarded land from the territories that she conquered and became an active politician and spiritual leader, both of which were unusual roles for women at the time.



Lady Fu Hao Questions

1. Who was Lady Fu Hao's husband?

2. Where in the world was the Yellow River? Tick **one**.

- ☐ South West China
- ☐ North East China
- ☐ North West China
- ☐ South East China

3. When was Lady Fu Hao's tomb discovered?

4. Explain why Lady Fu Hao's tomb was such an important discovery for archaeologists.

5. What were 'cowry shells'?

6. What is the name of a sacrificial container from the Shang Dynasty? Tick **one**.

- ☐ tomb
- ☐ grave
- ☐ ding
- ☐ gong

7. Explain how archaeologists knew that Lady Fu Hao was important from their discoveries.

8. Why is Lady Fu Hao considered to be an important historical figure? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Lady Fu Hao Answers

1. Who was Lady Fu Hao's husband?

King Wu Ding

2. Where in the world was the Yellow River? Tick **one**.

☐ South West China

☒ **North East China**

☐ North West China

☐ South East China

3. When was Lady Fu Hao's tomb discovered?

1976

4. Explain why Lady Fu Hao's tomb was such an important discovery for archaeologists.

Pupil's own response, such as: Lady Fu Hao's tomb was such an important discovery for archaeologists because it was undamaged and contained all of her precious things that taught historians about her and the Shang Dynasty.

5. What were 'cowry shells'?

Shang money

6. What is the name of a sacrificial container from the Shang Dynasty? Tick **one**.

☐ tomb

☐ grave

☒ **ding**

☐ gong

7. Explain how archaeologists knew that Lady Fu Hao was important from their discoveries.

Pupil's own response, such as: Archaeologists knew that she was an important figure because in her tomb, they found 16 human skeletons. These would have been human sacrifices made to ensure that she had servants in the afterlife. They also found hundreds of bronze and jade objects as well as 7,000 cowry shells.

8. Why is Lady Fu Hao considered to be an important historical figure? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: Lady Fu Hao is considered one of history's greatest women because she was an extremely successful military leader who defeated the Shang Dynasty enemy. This was not a role that women would usually have had at this time. She was also an active politician and spiritual leader which means that many people, including men, would have listened to her and taken her advice.

Lady Fu Hao

Who Was She?

Lady Fu Hao was one of the many wives of King Wu Ding; a king of the Shang dynasty in ancient China who reigned between approximately 1250 and 1192 BC. The Shang Dynasty was centred around the Yellow River in north east China and is famous for its bronze and jade artwork.

Lady Fu Hao had many roles including being a general and a high priestess and controlling her own territory on the outskirts of the Empire. She was the first female military leader in known history. Lady Fu Hao, also known as Mu Xin, was clearly held in high regard by the king as it was rare for women to perform ritual ceremonies like Lady Fu Hao did. According to old inscriptions, she once led 13,000 soldiers into battle against the Qiang people (one of many ethnic groups in China).



Lady Fu Hao was a powerful woman both during her life and after she died around 1250 BC. Her tomb, when it was found by archaeologists in 1976, was the only royal tomb from the Shang dynasty that was fully intact and still had her precious things in, meaning historians could learn a lot from it.

Did You Know...?

The Shang were the first Chinese to develop writing. They used pictographs, characters and other images to express meaning.



Lady Fu Hao's Tomb

Her tomb was discovered in modern day Anyang, the location of the last capital city of the Shang. It was built smaller than other royal tombs and was situated outside the main royal cemetery. Because she died before her husband, a tomb was built for her which was a large pit measuring 5.6 metres by 4 metres. The corpse of Lady Fu Hao was placed in a lacquered coffin within a wooden chamber. There may have been something built over the tomb to allow people to hold memorial ceremonies.

What Did They Find in Her Tomb?

In her tomb, archaeologists found:

- The remains of 6 dogs and 16 humans.
- Over 450 bronze objects (including 130 weapons, 23 bells, 27 knives, 4 tigers and 4 mirrors)
- Over 750 jade objects
- 63 stone objects
- 5 ivory objects (ivory was a precious material)
- Over 550 bone objects (mainly bone hairpins and some arrowheads)
- 11 pottery objects
- Almost 7,000 cowry shells (Shang currency)



The ding (a sacrificial container) found in the tomb is named the 'HouMuWu'. It weighs a massive 875kg!

Human Sacrifice

Human sacrifices were also performed as part of a ritual at the burial of an important person. This was done because the Shang believed that it would provide that individual with servants to serve them in the afterlife. Fu Hao was clearly considered important as the skeletons of 16 human beings were buried around the perimeter of her tomb.

Interesting Fact

The Shang society was divided into different classes. The royal family were of course at the top, followed by priests, warriors, craftsmen, traders and farmers and at the very bottom of the class system were slaves.

Lady Fu Hao the Military Leader

Lady Fu Hao led many military campaigns and even defeated the rival tribe of Tu-Fang who had remained undefeated previously, in one single battle. As well as leading thousands of soldiers, Fu Hao had important generals serving under her and she went on to lead several successful military campaigns against neighbouring kingdoms. She was not only the first known female military leader, she was the most successful and powerful military leader of her time, male or female. Fu Hao was awarded land from the territories that she conquered and became an active politician and spiritual leader, both of which were unusual roles for women at the time.



Lady Fu Hao Questions

1. Who was Lady Fu Hao married to?

2. What materials did the Shang Dynasty use in their craft work? Tick **one**.

- ☐ diamonds and jade
- ☐ silver and gold
- ☐ bronze and copper
- ☐ bronze and jade

3. Who was Mu Xin?

4. What was King Wu Ding's attitude towards Lady Fu Hao and how do you know?

5. When did Lady Fu Hao die? Tick **one**.

- ☐ around 1192 BC
- ☐ around 1250 BC
- ☐ around 1000 BC
- ☐ around 1950 BC

6. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **dead body**.

7. What do the objects found in Lady Fu Hao's tomb tell us about her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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8. Explain why you would not want to be a slave in the Shang Dynasty. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

9. Name two ways in which Lady Fu Hao was a pioneering woman.

Lady Fu Hao Answers

1. Who was Lady Fu Hao married to?

King Wu Ding

2. What materials did the Shang Dynasty use in their craft work? Tick **one**.

- ☐ diamonds and jade
- ☐ silver and gold
- ☐ bronze and copper
- ☒ **bronze and jade**

3. Who was Mu Xin?

Lady Fu Hao

4. What was King Wu Ding's attitude towards Lady Fu Hao and how do you know?

Pupil's own response, such as: King Wu Ding must have respected Lady Fu Hao because it says in the text that it was rare for women to perform ritual ceremonies and Lady Fu Hao was a high priestess so she would have done this many times.

5. When did Lady Fu Hao die? Tick **one**.

- ☐ around 1192 BC
- ☒ **around 1250 BC**
- ☐ around 1000 BC
- ☐ around 1950 BC

6. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **dead body**.
corpse

7. What do the objects found in Lady Fu Hao's tomb tell us about her? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: The objects in Lady Fu Hao's tomb tell us that she was an important figure and that she was wealthy because there were hundreds of bronze, jade and ivory objects, money (7,000 cowry shells) and the skeletons of humans who would have most likely have been her servants.

8. Explain why you would not want to be a slave in the Shang Dynasty. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: You would not want to be a slave in the Shang Dynasty because you would have been at the bottom of the class system and when your rich or important master died, you might have been sacrificed and buried with them so that they would have servants in the afterlife.

9. Name two ways in which Lady Fu Hao was a pioneering woman.

Pupil's own response, such as: Lady Fu Hao was a pioneering woman because she was a successful military leader who defeated one of the Shang Dynasty's fiercest rivals and no other woman (or man in fact) had done this before. She was also a politician and spiritual leader which women would not usually be allowed to be at this time.

Lady Fu Hao

Lady Fu Hao was one of the many wives of King Wu Ding; one of thirty kings of the Shang dynasty in ancient China who reigned between approximately 1250 and 1192 BC. The Shang Dynasty was centred around the Yellow River in north east China and is famous for its bronze and jade artwork.

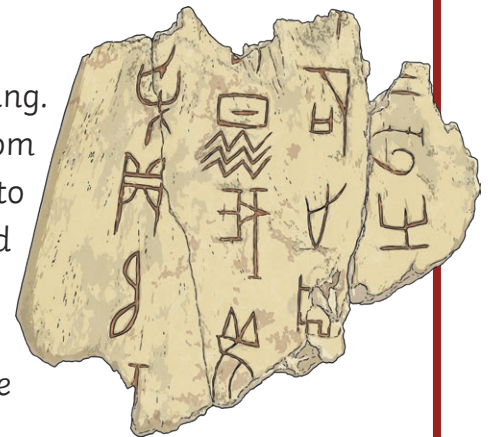
Lady Fu Hao had many roles including being a general and a high priestess and controlling her own territory on the outskirts of the Empire. She was the first female military leader in known history. Lady Fu Hao, also known as Mu Xin, was clearly held in high regard by the king as it was rare for women to perform ritual ceremonies like Lady Fu Hao did. According to old inscriptions, she once led 13,000 soldiers into battle against the Qiang people (one of many ethnic groups in China).



She is also mentioned in relation to illness and childbirth, and inscriptions found on the bones of animals show that she had a child named Prince Jie.

Did You Know...?

The Shang were the first Chinese to develop writing. This was called the oracle bone script, used from 1500 to 1000 BC. This script was etched onto animal bones and shells which were then heated until cracks appeared. Shang priests would then interpret the cracks and make predictions about the future based on what they saw. These were known as 'oracle bones'.



Lady Fu Hao was a powerful woman during her life, but also became an important figure in her death. Her tomb, when it was found by archaeologists, was the only royal tomb from the Shang dynasty that hadn't been looted, and historians have learnt a lot about the Shang Dynasty from it.

Her tomb was discovered in modern day Anyang, the location of the last capital city of the Shang; the Shang Dynasty regularly changed the location of their capital city. It was built smaller than other royal tombs and was situated outside the main royal cemetery. Because she died before her husband, a tomb was built for her which was a large pit measuring 5 metres by 4 metres at the entrance and was 8 metres long. The corpse of Lady Fu Hao was placed in a lacquered coffin within a wooden chamber. There may have been something built over the tomb to allow people to hold memorial ceremonies.

It is extremely fortunate that Lady Fu Hao's tomb was discovered intact as the artefacts inside revealed a great deal about the Shang Dynasty. In the tomb, archaeologists found: over 450 bronze objects (including 130 weapons, 23 bells, 27 knives, 4 tigers and 4 mirrors), over 750 jade objects, 63 stone objects, 5 ivory objects (ivory was a precious material), over 550 bone objects (mainly bone hairpins and some arrowheads), 11 pottery objects and almost 7,000 cowry shells (Shang currency).



This ding found in the tomb is named the 'HouMuWu'. It weighs a massive 875kg!

Human sacrifices were also performed as part of a ritual at the burial of an important person. This was done because the Shang believed that it would provide that individual with servants to serve them in the afterlife. Fu Hao was clearly considered important as the skeletons of 16 human beings were buried around the perimeter of her tomb.

Interesting Fact

The Shang society was divided into different classes. The royal family were of course at the top, followed by priests, warriors, craftsmen, traders and farmers and at the very bottom of the class system were slaves.

Lady Fu Hao led many military campaigns and even defeated the rival tribe of Tu-Fang who had remained undefeated previously, in one single battle. As well as leading thousands of soldiers, Fu Hao had important generals serving under her and she went on to lead several successful military campaigns against neighbouring kingdoms. She was not only the first known female military leader, she was the most successful and powerful military leader of her time, male or female. Fu Hao was awarded land from the territories that she conquered and became an active politician and spiritual leader, both of which were unusual roles for women at the time.

Following her death around 1250 BC, the Shang's military dominance weakened and King Wu Ding was forced to make repeated sacrifices to their God and would pray to Fu Hao's spirit to defend them against invasion. Over time, Lady Fu Hao turned into a mythical figure whom historians did not believe had ever really existed until her tomb was uncovered at Yinxu in 1976, providing a wealth of information and evidence of her existence.



Lady Fu Hao Questions

1. How many Shang kings were there?

2. How else was Lady Fu Hao known?

3. What was the name of Lady Fu Hao's son? Tick **one**.

- ☐ Prince Wu Ding
- ☐ Prince Jie
- ☐ Prince Fu Hao
- ☐ Prince Mu Xin

4. Explain in your own words how the Shang used oracle bones.

5. '...but [Lady Fu Hao] also became an important figure in her death'.

Explain what is meant by the extract above.

6. What was found at Anyang? Tick **one**.

- ☐ oracle bones
- ☐ King Wu Ding's tomb
- ☐ Lady Fu Hao's tomb
- ☐ ancient ruins

7. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **enemy**.

8. Why was it particularly significant that Lady Fu Hao defeated the Tu-Fang tribe?

9. How do you think the archaeologists who discovered Lady Fu Hao's tomb would have felt? Explain your answer using evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. What sort of person do you think Lady Fu Hao would have been? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

Lady Fu Hao Answers

1. How many Shang kings were there?

30

2. How else was Lady Fu Hao known?

Mu Xin

3. What was the name of Lady Fu Hao's son? Tick **one**.

☐ Prince Wu Ding

☒ **Prince Jie**

☐ Prince Fu Hao

☐ Prince Mu Xin

4. Explain in your own words how the Shang used oracle bones.

Pupil's own response, such as: The Shang used oracle bones to predict the future. Shang priests would etch onto animal bones and then heat them up which would cause cracks to appear. The priests would then read and interpret the cracks.

5. '...but [Lady Fu Hao] also became an important figure in her death'.

Explain what is meant by the extract above.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that the sentence above means that her death and the discovery of her tomb is so important because it has taught us so much about her and the Shang Dynasty.

6. What was found at Anyang? Tick **one**.

☐ oracle bones

☐ King Wu Ding's tomb

☒ **Lady Fu Hao's tomb**

☐ ancient ruins

7. **Find** and **copy** a word which means **enemy**.

rival

8. Why was it particularly significant that Lady Fu Hao defeated the Tu-Fang tribe?

Pupil's own response, such as: It is particularly significant that Lady Fu Hao defeated the Tu-Fang tribe because they were a rival of the Shang whom no other leader had managed to defeat and she was a woman who would not usually have the role of a military leader.

9. How do you think the archaeologists who discovered Lady Fu Hao's tomb would have felt? Explain your answer using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that the archaeologists who discovered Lady Fu Hao's tomb would have been excited, surprised and astounded because it says in the text that she had become a mythical figure whom historians did not believe existed. However, this tomb proved that she did exist and it also taught them so much more about the Shang Dynasty.

10. What sort of person do you think Lady Fu Hao would have been? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: I think that Lady Fu Hao must have been a very determined person because she managed to obtain and succeed in roles that were traditionally only for men which must have been a very difficult thing to do at this time.