

C. c.2200 BC: The Founding of the Xia Dynasty

1. The Chinese government created the *Xia Shang Zhou Chronology Project* to study the three most ancient dynasties of China's history, the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.
2. The project resulted in the creation of an official Chinese history stretching back to **approximately 2200 BC**.
3. The beginning of the Xia dynasty occurred when King Shun passed on power *not* to his son but to one of his ministers named Yu (who was *not* a member of his family).
4. Yu was chosen by Shun because he had proven his desire and ability to serve the needs of China's farmers by building dams and canals to deal with the flooding of the Yellow river.
5. The story of King Yu has always been considered important to the Chinese. It shows how they believe in *benevolent despotism*. (A “despot” is a person who has absolute power. A “benevolent” ruler is one who wishes his people well, and strives to serve them.)
6. In **1978**, when Deng Xiaoping granted permission to his people to trade with the world, he was acting as a *benevolent despot*. He did it because of a *tradition stretching back to c.2200 BC*. (Note: from now on in the notes, anchor facts will be specially marked with an anchor symbol “⌘” to show how important they are.)
7. We can now see how Chinese history fits into the timeline from start to finish:

