What is known is that King [Wu Ding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wu_Ding) would cultivate the allegiance of neighbouring tribes by marrying one woman from each of them. Fu Hao (who was one of the emperor's 60 wives) entered the royal household through such a marriage and took advantage of the semi-matriarchal slave society to rise through the ranks.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-allWoman-3) Fu Hao is known to modern scholars mainly from inscriptions on [Shang dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shang_dynasty) [oracle bone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oracle_bone) artifacts unearthed at [Yinxu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yinxu).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-britMus-4)

In these inscriptions she is shown to have led numerous military campaigns. The Tu-Fang had fought against the Shang for generations until they were finally defeated by Fu Hao in a single decisive battle. Further campaigns against the neighbouring [Yi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yi_people), [Qiang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qiang_people) and [Ba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ba_people) followed; the latter is particularly remembered as the earliest recorded large-scale ambush in Chinese history. With up to 13,000 soldiers and important generals Zhi and Hou Gao serving under her, she was the most powerful military leader of her time.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-colorQWorld-5) This highly unusual status is confirmed by the many weapons, including great battle-axes, unearthed from her tomb.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-washUni1-2)

Although the Shang King exercised ultimate control over ritual matters, which were the most important political activity of the day, oracle bone inscriptions show that Wu Ding repeatedly instructed Fu Hao to conduct special rituals and offer sacrifices. This was very unusual for a woman of that time, and shows that the king must have had great confidence in his wife. The sacrificial bronze vessels and tortoise shells inscribed *prepared by Fu Hao* discovered in her tomb further evidence her status as high priestess and oracle caster.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-washUni1-2)

She also controlled her own fiefdom on the borders of the empire, and was the mother of Prince Jie (oracle bone inscriptions show concern for her well-being at the time of the birth). She died before King Wu Ding, and he constructed a tomb for her on the edge of the royal cemetery at his capital [Yin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_(city)). The King later made many sacrifices here in hope for her spiritual assistance in defeating the attacking [Gong](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gong_people&action=edit&redlink=1), who threatened to completely wipe out the Shang.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Hao#cite_note-allWoman-3) The tomb was unearthed by archaeologists in 1976 and is now open to the public.