

0. YING ZHENG - Story Preface

1. YING ZHENG

2. HARSH LAWS

3. TERRA COTTA SOLDIERS



This map—created by Maximilian Dörrbecker (Chumwa) based on several different map sources—depicts the Great Wall of China in its various stages of construction. Online via Wikimedia Commons; license: [CC BY-SA 2.5](#). Click on the image for a full-page view.

Who was Ying Zheng? A thirteen-year-old prince, he ascended the throne of Qin (Ch'in) in 247 BC, after his father died. Within twelve years his armies had crushed most of the neighboring states. He had one overriding goal: To unify the country. It had never been done before.

China was a land of contrasts then as it is now. From arid desert to waterfalls, from "stone forests" to fragile flowers alongside the Great Wall, the country and the landscape are diverse. Its ancient music was beautifully haunting.

In the 3rd century BC, diverse and independent war lords were unwilling to recognize one supreme ruler. To unify seven disparate states, Zheng had to use extraordinary force. He obviously made many enemies along the way.

For the first time one state (Qin) exacted obeisance from its neighbors. For the first time one man (Zheng) was in charge. For the first time the walls of the former independent states were linked together - and extended - to form the Great Wall. (Follow the link to see it from space.) And, for the first time, China had an emperor.

To commemorate his achievements, Ying Zheng took a new name. Believing his deeds (don't miss this video documentary) surpassed the accomplishments of other ancient rulers (the San-Huang and Wu-Di) he used both of those names (Huang-Di) to create a new title: Emperor. Adding the name of his state, Ying Zheng became Qin Shi Huang-Di (pronounced "chin sher hwang- dee"). It means "The First Emperor," a title that lasted 2,000 years.

As supreme feudal ruler, Shi Huangdi founded the Chinese imperial system and standardized Chinese writing, laws, coinage, weights and measures. He also imposed harsh laws and cruel punishment for those who disobeyed him.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/YING-ZHENG-First-Empperor-of-China>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/YING-ZHENG-First-Empperor-of-China>

Media Stream



Plum Blossom - Flower

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### View of the Great Wall

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### Jiuzhaigou Waterfalls

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### Stone Forests

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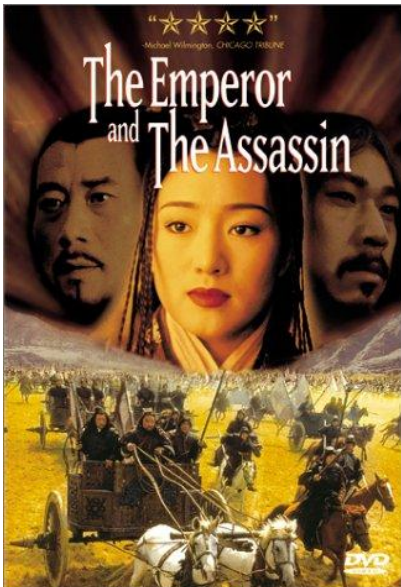
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### Great Wall Scene

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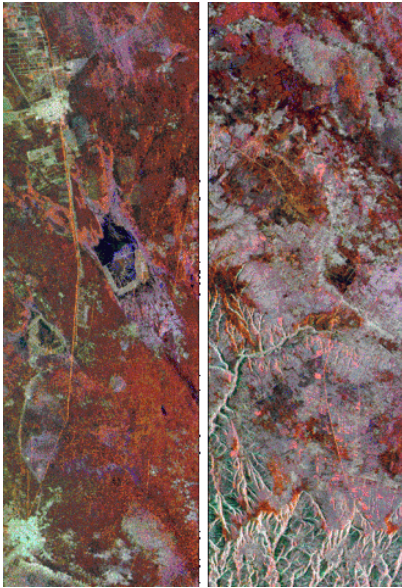


### The Emperor and the Assassin

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## View of the Great Wall from Space

Image online courtesy, NASA.

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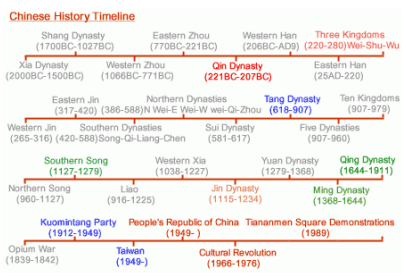
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/View-of-the-Great-Wall-from-Space>



## Ying Zheng

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## Chinese History Timeline

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## Linking the Great Wall

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