

0. TERRA COTTA SOLDIERS - Story Preface

1. YING ZHENG

2. HARSH LAWS

3. TERRA COTTA SOLDIERS



This image depicts some of the thousands of terra cotta soldiers at the First Emperor's tomb. Jmhullotm who has made the photo available via Wikimedia Commons, [describes what we see](#): "Pit one, which is 230 metres (750 ft) long and 62 metres (203 ft) wide, contains the main army of more than 6,000 figures. Pit one has 11 corridors, most of which are more than 3 metres (9.8 ft) wide and paved with small bricks with a wooden ceiling supported by large beams and posts. This design was also used for the tombs of nobles and would have resembled palace hallways when built. The wooden ceilings were covered with reed mats and layers of clay for waterproofing, and then mounded with more soil raising them about 2 to 3 metres (6 ft 7 in to 9 ft 10 in) above the surrounding ground level when completed. License: [CC BY 3.0](#). Click on the image for a larger view.

For more than two thousand years, no one knew [an entire army](#) of terra cotta soldiers - in [battle formation](#) - were underground near the former imperial capital of [Xi-an](#). These [treasures](#) were [rediscovered](#) in 1974 when farmers, digging a well, found three vaults filled with some of the most exciting archeological finds of the 20th century.

More than 6,000 soldiers plus a few [horses](#) and chariots were in the [first pit](#). Initially archeologists thought each terra cotta [figure](#) was unique, most likely patterned after real people.

The second vault contained about 1,400 soldiers and cavalry while a [third pit](#) contained 68 officers. Experts now believe each figure was made from a variety of molds which were assembled and covered with clay. Final details for each were carved.

By filling his mausoleum with soldiers, [the emperor](#) took great care to protect himself in the afterlife. His actions in [burning books](#), however, greatly damaged the pursuit of knowledge both while he was alive and later. Even the books he ordered saved were eventually destroyed in the chaos following his death in 210 BC.

Ancient sources tell us that life for workers during the Qin (Ch'in) dynasty was filled with misery. "The ditches were filled with corpses" of workers and "piled-up skeletons supported one another."

Although the First Emperor said his dynasty would last 10,000 years, it ended (sparked by a worker's rebellion) shortly after his death. But the Great Wall (which took the lives of countless laborers) and the Terra Cotta [soldiers](#) (standing at attention twenty-three centuries later) remind us of a time when the word of one man resulted in the misery of so many.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/TERRA-COTTA-SOLDIERS-First-Emperor-of-China>

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/TERRA-COTTA-SOLDIERS-First-Emperor-of-China>

Media Stream



Army of Terracotta Soldiers

Image online courtesy, Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Army-of-Terracotta-Soldiers>



View of the Terra Cotta Soldiers in Battle Formation

Image online, courtesy the Chinese American Cultural Bridge Center website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/View-of-the-Terra-Cotta-Soldiers-in-Battle-Formation>



Map of China

Image online courtesy the University of Texas, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

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Terra Cotta Soldiers - A National Treasure

Image online courtesy, Wikimedia Commons.

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View of the Terracotta Soldiers

Image online courtesy, [china-mike](http://china-mike.com) website.

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Horses with the Terra Cotta Soldiers

Image online courtesy, dreamstime.com website.

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Overview of the Terra Cotta Solders

Image online courtesy, yilongwei.com website.

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Terra Cotta Soldier and horse

Image online courtesy, Wikimedia Commons.

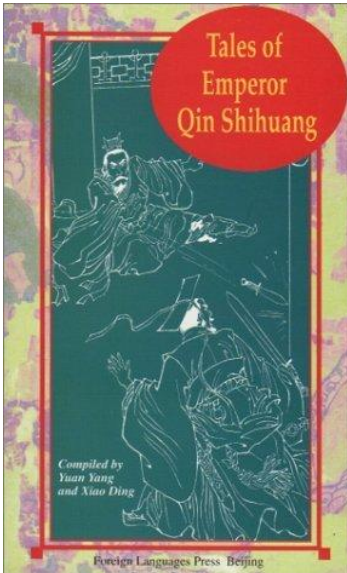
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Terra Cotta Soldiers - Officers

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Tales of Emperor Qin Shihuang

Image online courtesy, amazon.com website.

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