

Conspiracy of Terracotta Warriors



China is known to have countless historical attractions, such as, the infamous Great Wall and Forbidden City in Beijing. However, the Terracotta Army must not be excluded from one's list of must-sees when travelling, as it is one of the top attractions in China. Gaining its significance due to the hundreds of detailed life-size models, representing the army that triumphed over all other Chinese armies in the Warring States Period and ushered the united imperial China era 2,200 years ago, it is considered one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world, and one of the greatest discoveries of the 20th century.

Many believe that the Terracotta Warriors are the greatest collection of terracotta sculptures in the world. However, the name should be changed to Terracotta *Worriers*, as it will better describe the designer – Qin Shihuang, the first Emperor of China, the reason and purpose behind these monuments.

Background Information

A quick review before we submerge into an ocean of information: The Qin Tomb Terracotta Warriors and Horses (秦陵兵马俑 in Chinese), feature hundreds of life-size models of soldiers, horses and chariots in battle array. It was constructed in 246-206 BC., and with the tomb of Emperor Qin Shihuang, it took 720 thousand builders.

But, one may ask, why were the Terracotta Warriors made? First Emperor Qin, from whom China gets its name, ordered the creation of this army of terracotta statues, to be buried with him. Supposedly, it is said that it was a show of his glory, to remember the army that triumphed over the other Warring States to unite China, and because it was believed that objects like statues could be animated in the afterlife, and Qin Shihuang required an after-death army. However, the real reason of why these statues were made remains unknown, as there is no record in history showing why it was built.

Laid underground for more than 2000 years, farmers digging a well in 1974 uncovered what is now considered one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world. The first part of the Terracotta Army site to be discovered was named Vault One. In 1976, two other vaults were uncovered about 20 meters away, and were named Vault Two and Vault Three. In December 1987, UNESCO selected the Tomb of the First Emperor (including the Terracotta Army Vaults) as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

Thousands of life-size, vivid terracotta warriors in battle formation were revealed in the course of excavation of the earth and timber vaults - a whole army that would accompany their emperor into immortality. The horsemen, the longbow bearers, the archers, and the senior officers and generals were positioned in a grand ancient army formation, in strict accordance with the ancient directives on the Art of War. Every figure differs in facial features and expression, clothing, hairstyle, and gestures, providing abundant artifacts for the study of the military, cultural, and

economic history of that period. Imagine if you were the designer, the number of soldiers you would need to make would be much more than your following on social media.

Many of the figures originally held real weapons of the time, such as bronze swords, longbows, arrows, spears, dagger-axes, and other long-shafted weapons. The weapons were treated to make them resistant to rust and corrosion, so that even after being buried for over 2,000 years they were still sharp.

The museum mainly consists of three vaults and an exhibition hall: Vault One, Vault Two, Vault Three, and The Exhibition Hall of the Bronze Chariots. The vaults are arrayed as the buried army was in strict accordance with the ancient directives on the Art of War: facing east towards the ancient enemies of Qin State (and towards the entrance), with Vault One on the right flank, Vault Two on the left flank, and Vault Three a command post at the rear.



The entrance to the Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses in Xi'an.

Vault One is the largest and most impressive — the size of an airplane hangar. It is believed to contain over 6,000 terracotta figures of soldiers and horses, but less than 2,000 are on display. All soldiers and horses face east in a rectangular array. The vanguard appears to be three rows of infantry who stand at the easternmost end of the army. Close behind is the main force of armored soldiers holding weapons, accompanied by 38 horse-driven chariots.



Terracotta Warriors in Vault One.

Excavation and restoration is still ongoing at vaults two and three. Excavated in 1976, Vault Two stands about 20 meters north to Vault One. As the highlight of the whole mausoleum, it uncovers the mystery of the ancient army array. It consists of four units, measuring 94m east to west and 84m south to north and 5m deep, forming a 6000m² built-up area. The first unit contains rows of kneeling and standing archers; the second one is a chariot war array; the third unit consists of mixed forces with infantry, chariot and trooper standing in rectangular array; and the last one includes troopers holding weapons.



Incomplete and broken Terracotta Warriors in Vault 2.

Vault Three is the smallest one. There are only 68 terracotta figures, many of which are without heads. It's obvious that Vault Three represents the command post, as all the figures are officials.

The two bronze charriages at the Exhibition of Bronze Chariots displayed in the hall were discovered 20 meters from the west side of the Tomb of Qin Shihuang in December 1980, and were elaborately restored before exhibition. The charriages have about 3,400 parts each and were driven by four horses.



One of the bronze chariots displayed in the Exhibition.

The bronze horses vary from 65 cm to 67 cm high and 120 cm long, weighing 1,234 kg in total. The carriages were so well-made, and so vivid, that they boast being the best-preserved and having the highest rank among the earliest known bronze relics in China. These chariots are the biggest pieces of ancient bronzeware ever found in the world.

Designer of the Terracotta Warriors and horses

Qin Shihuang Di (the first emperor) reigned for eleven years over the first large empire in the region. He was born the son of a king in a kingdom that already had plans for the conquest of every other Warring State and had been preparing for conquest for years by mobilizing the masses for massive construction projects, conscripting the people for the army, and producing the most advanced weaponry that they could. Military might and conquest was their major goal aside from the continued rule of their king. The State of Qin rulers believed in a political philosophy called Legalism, which justified strict centralized control and using the people to strengthen Qin. He and his top officials followed the dictates of this philosophy by first conquering the region (in which they conquered every other region of the former Zhou Empire and some surrounding peoples as well) and then conscripting everyone for their projects of construction and foreign conquests, as they believed that part of strengthening his rule was to force everyone to simply obey and not speak out against him, by decreeing even how people could write, what they could believe, and what they should do. The society was centralized to the point that every dissenter against the rule of the court was destroyed or sent for forced labor, and most literature was destroyed. Even Qin Shihuang's own son was demoted and sent to construct the Great Wall because he dissented against him. He succeeded in molding the people to become more similar, to build massively, and to conquer more territory. The absolute power that they wanted for themselves corrupted them, and the dynasty quickly ended in foolish policies and the people rebelled.

During their rule, they made the first Great Wall on their northern borders that was a high wall and a fortification to keep out northern tribes like the Xiongnu. They built countless roads and canals for the transport of troops and supplies, as well as the Qin Mausoleum and Terracotta Army. The Qin court succeeded in unifying the empire and retaining control for 15 years; they standardized the writing system, money, and measurements and built a lot of infrastructure that helped the big region prosper later; and by destroying the ideas and teachers who they were against, they established the dominant philosophies of their big region.

He killed many scholars and officials, and imposed his harsh rule. It wasn't hard to see why many people hated Qin Shihuang; hence there were many assassination attempts against him. He wanted to live forever, and rumors say he may have taken poisonous substances from Daoists to try to gain immortality.

The Qin Dynasty ended in suicide and death. But during their short reign starting from their wars for conquests, they destroyed more than half of the population (estimated to have dropped from 40 to 18 million within their reign) and much of the culture, literature and scholarship of the Zhou era. In carrying out their plans, they caused enormous misery and destruction. There was a

standardized written language for the whole empire that was promulgated by Li Si. This writing system became the common literary language for the whole region afterwards until the modern era. By standardizing aspects like writing and religion, they laid the foundation for later empires. But, the conspiracy is that there was no explanation as to why the Terracotta Warriors was built.

Conspiracy of Terracotta Warriors

At the beginning of this text, it is mentioned that a lot of historians believe the construction of Terracotta Warriors is due to the following reasons:

- As a show of Qin Shihuang's glory,
- To remember the army that triumphed over the other Warring States to unite China, and
- Because it was believed that objects like statues can be animated in the afterlife, and Qin Shihuang required an after-death army.

But, it's hard to believe these statements with such little evidence. When doing research on the Terracotta Warriors as well as Qin Shihuang and Qin Dynasty, it is hard for one to agree with the reasons above.

As a show of Qin Shihuang's glory

He could have had a tomb made of gold, or filled to the brim with jewelry to do show this power.

To remember the army that triumphed over the other Warring States to unite China

Then the warriors wouldn't need to be life-size and also wouldn't need to be scattered in different locations. At least, real weapons shouldn't be held.

Because it was believed that objects like statues can be animated in the afterlife, and Qin Shihuang required an after-death army

This sounds more reasonable but China has already been united, thus why would he require an after-death army?

Up until now one may be very curious about this information. Besides the Terracotta Warriors, Qin Shihuang also did few remarkable historical events:

- A. The burning of books and burying of scholars (Chinese: 焚書坑儒) refers to the supposed burning of texts in 213 BC and burial alive of 460 Confucian scholars in 210 BC by the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty of ancient China. The event caused the loss of many philosophical treatises of the Hundred Schools of Thought.
- B. The Great Wall of China is a series of fortifications made of many materials, generally built along an east-to-west line across the historical northern borders of China to protect the Chinese states and empires against the invasions of the various nomadic groups of the Eurasian Steppe. Several walls were being built as early as the 7th century BC; these, later joined together and made bigger and stronger, are now collectively referred to as the

Great Wall. The Great Wall has on and off been rebuilt/enhanced; the majority of the existing wall is from the Ming Dynasty.

King Zheng of Qin conquered the last of his opponents and unified China as the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty ("Qin Shihuang") in 221 BC. Intending to impose centralized rule and prevent the resurgence of feudal lords, he ordered the destruction of the sections of the walls that divided his empire among the former states. To position the empire against the Xiongnu people from the north, however, he ordered the building of new walls to connect the remaining fortifications along the empire's northern frontier. Stones from the mountains were used over mountain ranges, while rammed earth was used for construction in the plains. There are no surviving historical records indicating the exact length and course of the Qin walls. Most of the ancient walls have eroded away over the centuries, and very few sections remain today. The human cost of the construction is unknown, but it has been estimated by some authors that hundreds of thousands, if not up to a million, workers died building the Qin wall. Later, the Han, the Sui, and the Northern dynasties all repaired, rebuilt, or expanded sections of the Great Wall at great cost to defend themselves against northern invaders. The Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, who ruled Northern China throughout most of the 10th–13th centuries, constructed defensive walls in the 12th century but those were located much to the north of the Great Wall as we know it, within China's province of Inner Mongolia and in Mongolia itself.

Just by roughly calculating the number of people who died in these two events, it may now be classified as disaster. Qin Shihuang, the ruler who had absolute power, also knew that he had killed thousands to millions of innocents. But, there is no single reason why he should kill the scholars and push the construction laborers to death for the Great Wall.

Having said that, it seems as if the building of the Terracotta Warriors was to protect him after death. He needed a full troop to protect him, because he killed too many people.

Qin Dynasty believed in Daoism, which regards life as the most valuable thing and pursues immortality. Life can be prolonged through meditation and exercise. To achieve this, Daoism stresses the need for a peaceful and harmonious environment as a very important external condition. Since Qin Shihuang somehow did a number of decisions which was totally opposite to Daoism, he was worried about his life after death.

Chinese believes that the law of cause and effect underlies the workings of all phenomena. Positive thoughts, words and actions create positive effects in the lives of individuals, leading to happiness. Negative thoughts, words and actions on the other hand - those that in some way undermine the dignity of life - lead to unhappiness. This is the general principle of Chinese and its religions.

If this assumption is correct, then it can answer why (1) the Warriors are built miles away from his tomb, and (2) Why the Warriors are facing Qin Shihuang rather than to the enemies (outward).

Daoism (the national religious of Qin), Confucianism and Chinese folk religion stem from similar roots, so they share a perspective on life after death. Actually, some people even say

religions like Daoism and Confucianism are not spiritual in orientation; rather they are ethical systems for how to run society and behave in good conduct. It could be said that Confucianism focuses on social and moral guidelines, while Daoism emphasizes the individual, mystical side of life.

Even though spirits, ancestors and deities are believed to exist, Daoism and others in its religious family emphasize living in the here and now much more than what will happen when we die. Upon dying, the Dao says that a person transforms from yang to yin, or from being to non-being. Death and ceasing to be are merely part of the reality of life.

Daoism focuses on transformation rather than death, but the after-world does have blissful and suffering states. For instance, Daoists who have followed the “way” during life are more likely to become important ancestors in the afterlife, helping humans on earth. Those who have failed to live the deeper life will be banished to the nine stages of Hell, a place of purgatory and agony.

Because all opposites are relative and interdependent, Daoism emphasizes living in harmony with the flow of reality. An important philosophical concept is wu-wei, or non-action. It is believed that actions and decisions can be avoided, made very simple or even almost invisible in order to allow for the natural flow to persist. It’s only when we struggle and fight that suffering begins. It follows that ideas about death, dying and passing into the after-world aren’t frightening topics for Daoists. The most important point is for a person is to avoid any wrongdoing during his life. If you don’t want to walk the shadow of Qin Shihuang, scare of after-death life, try not to do anything wrong or hurt anyone during your life. After all this information, the following can be concluded:

Great victories involves lost of life

Great constructions involve great destructions

All in all, the conclusion to this research can refer to the Daoism symbol - the “yin yang”. Its meaning and symbol date back to ancient China and represent the belief that everything in the universe consists of two forces that are opposing but complementary. In a nutshell, Chinese Yin Yang symbols represent perfect balance. Seemingly, the whole of Chinese philosophy stems from the concept of Yin and Yang - opposites interacting and supposedly the seed of all things. For example, evil results from an imbalance in Yin and Yang, and good comes from the two being in harmonic balance. The evil deeds performed by Qin Shihuang overpowered the Yin, hence creating an imbalance. Hopefully the world will have a perfect balance, where everyone respects each other and all wars stop. Then, there will not be other Terracotta Warriors (or Terracotta *Worriers*) in the world.

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