

#haydarpasamun'24



STUDY GUIDE

Cabinet of Qin Shi Huang



**HAYDARPAŞAMUN'24
HISTORICAL CRISIS COMMITTEE**

Cabinet of Qin Shi Huang

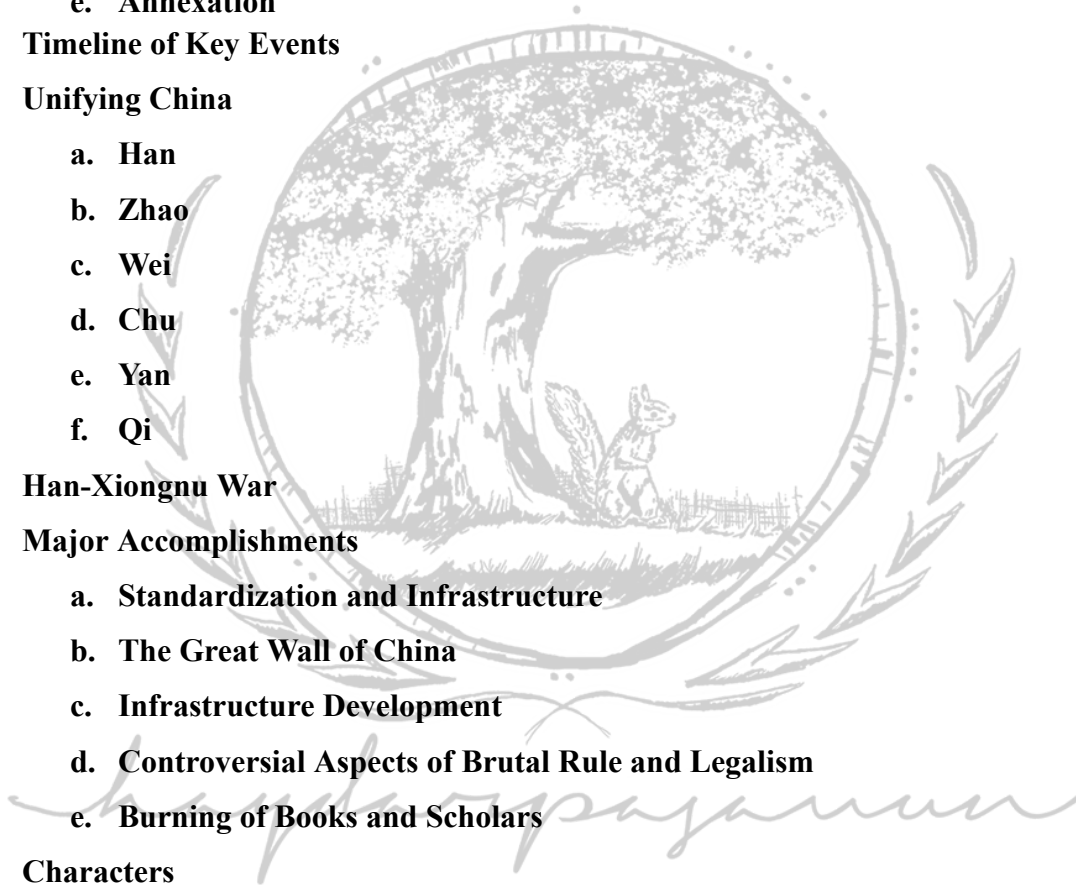
STUDY GUIDE



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Letter From the Heads of Crisis

Esteemed participants of the Cabinet of Qin Shi Huang,

It is an utmost pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the seventh annual session of HaydarpaşaMUN. We Aysu Uludağlı and Ceren Gülüş, as the Heads of the Crisis Team are glad to introduce you to our Historical Crisis Committee: The Cabinet of Qin Shi Huang.

This committee holds a special place in our heart because during the decision process of this cabinet we bonded over jokes about how we mispronounced the names of the leaders related to this topic and developed ideas about how to break the Great Wall. Also we've always wanted to bring a China related committee to life therefore we couldn't be happier that we got the chance to make that dream come true. We would like to thank our hardworking Academic Assistants, Tarık Buğra Şen and Ömer Burak Dakın, for their efforts throughout the preparation process, especially their invaluable research assistance.

If you have any questions about the committee, study guide, crisis procedure or HaydarpaşaMUN'24; please feel free to contact us from:

Aysu Uludağlı
aysuuludagli@gmail.com

Ceren Gülüş
ceren.gulus@gmail.com

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I. Introduction to the Committee

Imagine a period in which hundreds of wars took place, countless soldiers were buried, and many different rulers tried to seize power - the Warring States Era was such a chaotic period.

Imagine that in such a chaotic environment, someone who had become a ruler at the age of 13 did what no other ruler had done for 250 years and unified China and built his own empire.

Moreover, not only that, he has deeply influenced humanity with the ideologies he had put forward and his governance methods he had executed. Qin Shi Huang was an emperor who embodied these traits.

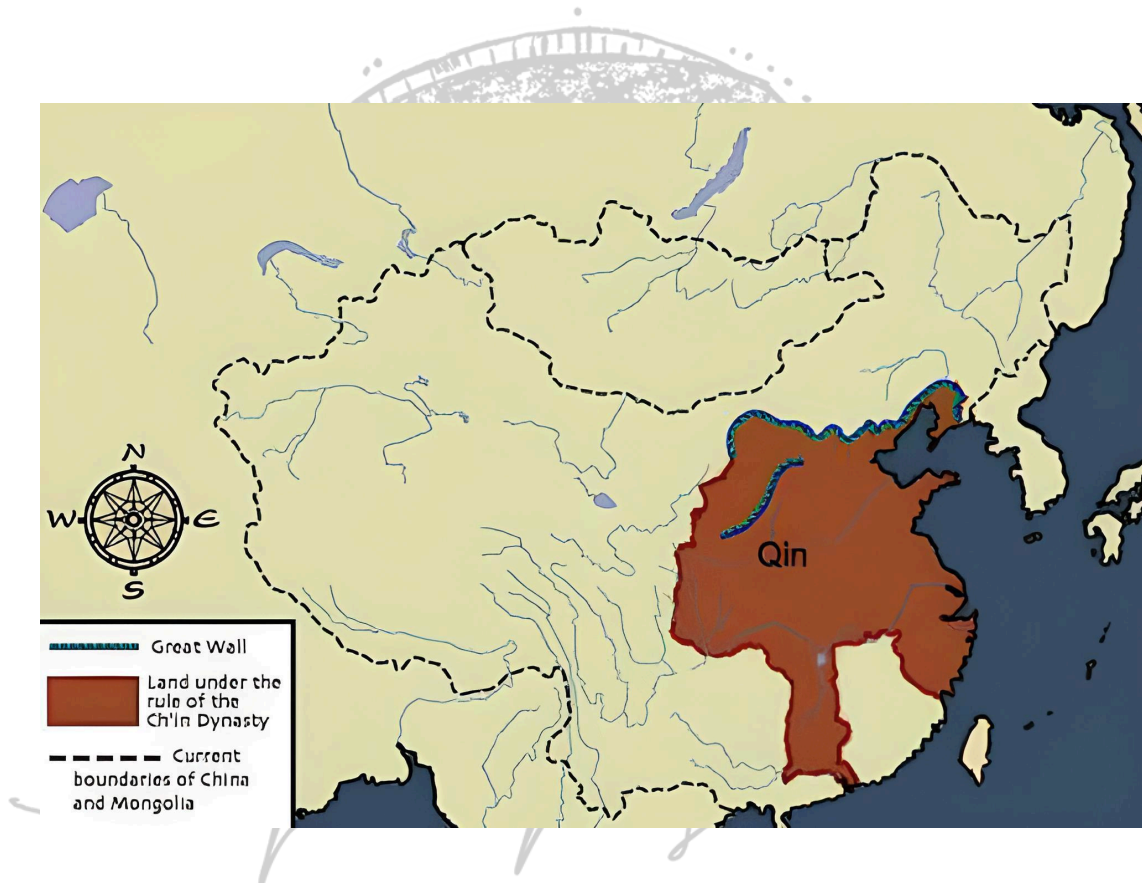
Qin Shi Huang was the founder of the **Qin Dynasty**, making him the first emperor of a unified China. Rather than going with the title of "*king*" similar to the Shang and Zhou rulers before him, he ruled China from 221 to 210 BCE as the first "*emperor*" of the Qin dynasty. The title "*emperor*" saw continuous use by Chinese Monarchs for the next two millenia.



He was born in the Zhao state capital Handan, as **Ying Zheng** or **Zhao Zheng**. His parents were King Zhuangxiang of Qin and Lady Zhao. The wealthy merchant Lü Buwei assisted him in taking his father's place as the ruler of Qin, after which he became Zheng, King of Qin. During his reign, his generals greatly expanded the size of the Chinese state: campaigns south of Chu permanently added the Yue lands of Hunan and Guangdong to the Chinese cultural orbit, and campaigns in Inner Asia conquered the

Ordos Loop from the nomadic Xiongnu, although the Xiongnu later rallied under Modu Chanyu.

Qin Shi Huang also worked with his minister Li Si to perform major economic and political reforms aimed at the standardization of the diverse practices of the earlier Chinese states. He is traditionally said to have banned and burned many books and executed scholars. His public works projects included the incorporation of diverse state walls into a single Great Wall of China and a massive new national road system, as well as his city-sized mausoleum guarded by a life-sized Terracotta Army. He ruled until his death in 210 BCE, during his fifth tour of Eastern China.



KEY TERMS

Legalism: Legalism is an ancient Chinese political and philosophical doctrine emphasizing strict laws, authoritarian rule, harsh punishments, and a pessimistic view of human nature.

Traditional Authority: Traditional authority is a governance model where leaders derive their legitimacy from long-standing customs and historical practices within a community or society.

Lineage Solidarity: Lineage solidarity is the unity and cohesion among individuals who share a common ancestry or descent within kinship groups.

Charioteering: Charioteering is the act of driving a chariot, a kind of a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by horses, used in ancient racing and warfare.

Annexation: Annexation is the act of taking control of a country or area next to your own, especially by using force.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Qin Shi Huang's year of birth-259 BC

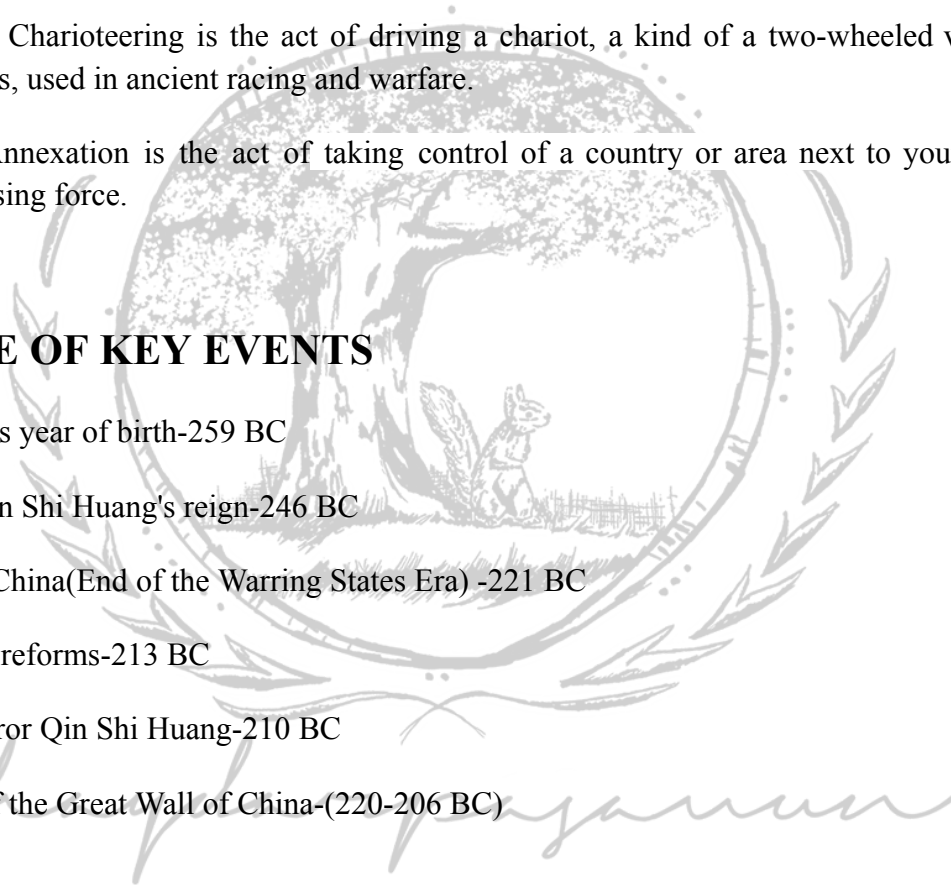
First year of Qin Shi Huang's reign-246 BC

Unification of China(End of the Warring States Era) -221 BC

Administrative reforms-213 BC

Death of Emperor Qin Shi Huang-210 BC

Construction of the Great Wall of China-(220-206 BC)



II. Han-Xiongnu War

It was a series of military attacks by the Chinese Han Dynasty and the Xiongnu State which lasted over two centuries. The Xiongnu contained nomadic tribes and it was mostly associated with the Huns. Although it is regarded as lasting from 133 BC to 89 AD, the conflicts extended back to 200 BC and 188 AD.

In the Warring States Period, before the Qin Dynasty conquered Zhou in 221 BC, the Qin, Zhao and Yan states captured a part of the nomadic territories of the Xiongnu. When Qin Shi Huang unified China as part of the Qin Dynasty, there were already built fortifications in these territories made by the conquered states.

In 215 BC, because of the thought of believing the Xiongnu was a threat for Qin Dynasty's expansion, Commander Meng Tian departed towards Ordos Plateau and set a border there by the order of Qin Shi Huang. And when the time came to next year, this supreme Commander Meng Tian conquered the Ordos Plateau and banished the Xiongnu people from this territory.



There were more conflicts between the Chinese Han Dynasty and Xiongnu, and of course they had a lot of consequences for the Asian territory. But the most important consequence for the Qin Dynasty was the early version of the Great Wall. During his reign, he promoted the complement of the Great Wall, which had separate fortifications against the northern nomadic Xiongnu tribes. In his time, the Great Wall served as a defense line and acted like a barrier for prevention. But it is important to highlight that although the Qin Dynasty initiated the construction, the extensive and iconic structure belonged to the Ming Dynasty.

III. Unifying China

Feudal state system created by the Western Zhou Dynasty went through major changes after 771 BC with the flight of the Zhou court to modern-day Luoyang and the reduction of its relevance and power. The Spring and Autumn period led to a few states gaining power at the loss of many others, the latter no longer able to depend on central authority for protection. During the Warring States period, many rulers claimed the Mandate of Heaven to justify their conquest of other states and widen their influence.

As the feudal rulers of provinces gained more authority, the **Zhou Dynasty** began to fall around the 5th century BCE, and continued slowly collapsing over a period of centuries. As their influence waned, they had to rely on other armies in other allied states rather than their own military force. Over 100 smaller states were made into seven major states which included: Chu, Han, Qin, Wei, Yan, Qi and Zhao. Eventually, the states got stronger than the king, causing the beginning of a period of conflict that is known as the **Warring States Period**. This period lasted around 475 BCE to 221 BCE, when the western state of Qin conquered its neighbors and established the Qin Dynasty. The Qin Dynasty was the first time all of China had been united under an emperor.



Han

Han was conquered by Qin in 230 BCE. Han had borders with the Qin and it suffered from several assaults from the state in the earlier years of the period. When **Qin Shi Huang** sent general **Wang Jian** to attack the state of Zhao, King An of Han thought that

Han would be the next target of Qin. So he immediately sent diplomats to surrender the state without a fight.

Zhao

Zhao was conquered by Qin in 228 BCE. In 232 BCE, the Qin forces split into two groups to attack Fanwu and Langmeng, but lost to the Zhao army commanded by Li Mu. However, the Zhao forces also underwent heavy losses and could only retreat to defend their capital, Handan.

In the ensuing two years, Zhao was struck by two natural disasters — an earthquake and a severe famine. In 229 BCE, Qin took advantage of the situation to launch a pincer attack from the north and south on Handan, the Zhao capital. Three Qin armies embarked from Shangdi, Jingxing and Henei, respectively led by Wang Jian, Qiang Lei and Yang Duan He, to coordinate the attack on Handan. On the Zhao side, Li Mu and Sima Shang were put in command of the Zhao army. Li Mu ordered his troops to build defensive structures and avoid direct encounter with the enemy. The Qin forces were unable to advance further and both sides reached a stalemate.

The Qin state bribed Guo Kai, a Zhao minister, to cause disagreement between King Qian of Zhao and Li Mu. The king doubted Li Mu's loyalty and ordered Li Mu to hand over his command of the Zhao army to his deputies, Zhao Cong and Yan Ju. When Li Mu refused to obey the order, the king became more suspicious of him and ordered his men to take Li Mu by surprise and arrest him. Li Mu was executed in prison later on King Qian's order. In 228 BCE, after learning that Li Mu had been replaced, the Qin forces attacked, defeated the Zhao army and conquered Dongyang. Zhao Cong was killed in action while Yan Ju escaped after his defeat. Seven months later, Qin forces occupied Handan and captured King Qian, conquering Zhao.

Wei

Wei was conquered by Qin in 225 BCE. Qin invaded Wei by besieging the capital Daliang. But after they realized that the city walls were thought to break into, they came up with a new strategy which included using the power of a local river that was linked to the **Yellow River**. The river was used to flood the city walls, causing massive devastation to the city. After realizing the situation, the King Jia of Wei came out of the capital and surrendered the city to the Qin army to avoid further loss.

Chu

Chu was conquered by Qin in 223 BCE. During the first invasion, 200,000 Qin troops led by general Li Xin were defeated by 500,000 Chu troops in Huaiyang. Chu commander Xiang Yan gave Qin victories to lure them. But then counterattacked and burned 2 Qin camps.

Wang Jian was recalled to lead a second invasion with 600,000 troops against Chu. After their victory, the Chu forces were content to sit back and defend against what they thought would be a siege of Chu. However, Wang Jian decided to weaken Chu's resolve and tricked the Chu army by appearing to be idle in his fortifications whilst secretly training his troops to fight in Chu territory. After a year, the Chu defenders decided to disband because of apparent lack of action from the Qin. Wang Jian invaded at that point, with full force, and overran Huaiyang and the remaining Chu forces. Chu lost the initiative and could only sustain local guerrilla-style resistance until it was fully conquered with the destruction of Shouchun and the death of its last leader, Lord Changping, in 223 BCE.

Yan

Yan was conquered by Qin in 222 BCE. In 228 BCE, after the conquest of Zhao, Wang Jian led the Qin army stationed at Zhongshan to prepare for an attack on Yan. Ju Wu, a Yan minister, proposed to King Xi of Yan to be allies with Dai, Qi and Chu, and make peace with the Xiongnu in the north, in order to counter the Qin invasion. However, Crown Prince Dan felt that the alliance strategy was not likely to succeed, so he sent an assassin, Jing Ke, to assassinate Ying Zheng, the King of Qin. Jing Ke pretended to be a delegate from Yan to Qin and brought along with him a map of Dukang and the head of Fan Wuji, a Qin turncoat general. Jing Ke failed and died in his attempt to assassinate Ying Zheng.

In 226 BCE, after the assassination attempt, Ying Zheng got furious and used the assassination attempt as a cause to order Wang Jian and Meng Wu to lead the Qin army to attack Yan. The Qin forces defeated the Yan army and Yan's reinforcements from Dai in battle on the eastern bank of the Yi River and pressed on to conquer Ji, the Yan capital. King Xi of Yan, Crown Prince Dan and the surviving Yan forces retreated to the Liaodong Peninsula. A Qin army led by Li Xin pursued the retreating Yan forces to the Yan River and defeated the Yan army. Then, King Xi executed Crown Prince Dan and sent his head to Qin as an "apology" for the assassination attempt. Qin accepted the "apology" and did not attack or assault Yan for the next three years. Until in 222 BCE, Qin forces led by Wang Ben and Li Xin invaded the Liaodong Peninsula and destroyed the remaining Yan forces and captured King Xi, conquering Yan.

Qi

Qi was conquered by Qin in 221 BCE, as the final state to conquer before the establishment of the Qin Dynasty. After the conquest of other states the Qi king knew that they would be the next target. So, Qi surrendered all of its cities without a fight, completing the unification of the Qin Dynasty.

After the unification, standardization of weights, measures and currencies were required to prevent confusion in situations where measurements were needed.

IV. Major Accomplishments

- **Standardization and Infrastructure:**

Qin Shi Huang and Li Si standardized the Chinese weights and measures to unify China economically. The different currencies of the states were standardized to the Ban liang coin. And most importantly the Chinese script was unified. Under Li Si, the seal script of the state of Qin became the official standard, and the Qin script itself was simplified through removal of variant forms. This did away with all the regional scripts to form a universal written language for all of China, despite the diversity of spoken local tongues.

These innovations were crucial factors in overcoming cultural barriers between states.

- **The Great Wall of China:**

The Chinese were already familiar with the techniques of wall-building and fortifications by the time of the Spring and Autumn period between the 8th and 5th centuries BCE. During this time and the following Warring States period, the states of **Qin, Wei, Zhao, Qi, Han, Yan, and Zhongshan** all constructed extensive fortifications to defend their own borders. Built to withstand the attack of small arms such as swords and spears, these walls were made mostly of stone or by stamping earth and gravel between board frames.

One of the first mentions of a wall built against northern invaders is found in a poem, dated from the seventh century BCE. The poem is about a king, now known as King Xuan (r. 827 – 782 BCE) of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 – 771 BCE), who ordered General Nan Zhong to construct a wall in the northern regions to resist the Xianyun. The Xianyun, whose base of power was in the Ordos region, were regarded as part of the chariot-riding Rong tribes, and their assaults to the the early Zhou capital region of

Haojing were mostly likely the reason for the construction. Nan Zhong's campaign was recorded as a great victory. Unfortunately, just a few years later in 771 BCE another branch of the Rong people, the Quanrong, responded to a summons by the Marquess of Shen by over-running the Zhou defenses and laying waste to the capital. This terrible event killed King Xuan's successor King You, forced the court to move the capital east to Chengzhou a year later, and thus escorted in the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BC). The fall of Western Zhou redistributed power to the states that had acknowledged Zhou's nominal rulership.

The rule of the Eastern Zhou dynasty was marked by bloody anarchy between states. With smaller states being annexed and larger states waging constant war over one another, many rulers came to feel the need to construct walls to protect their borders. One of the earliest textual references to such a wall was the State of Chu's wall of 656 BCE, with 1,400 meters of length (4,600 feet). However the Chu border fortifications consisted of many individual mountain fortresses; they do not constitute a lengthy, single wall. The State of Qi also had fortified borders up to 441 BCE, and the existing portions in Shandong province had been named the Great Wall of Qi. The State of Wei built two walls, the western one completed in 361 BC and the eastern in 356 BC, with the extant western wall found in Hancheng, Shaanxi. Even non-Chinese people built walls, such as the Di state of Zhongshan and the Yiqu Rong, whose walls were intended to defend against the State of Qin.

Of these walls, those of the northern states Yan, Zhao, and Qin were connected by Qin Shi Huang when he united the Chinese states in 221 BC. The walls, known as *Changcheng*, actually meaning "long walls", but mostly regarded as "Great Wall", were mostly constructed of tamped earth, with some parts built with stones. Where natural barriers like ravines and rivers were enough for defense, the walls were built sparingly, but long fortified lines were laid where such advantageous terrains did not exist. Often in addition to the wall, the defensive system consisted of garrisons and beacon towers inside the wall, and watchtowers outside at regular intervals.



Map of the Warring States and their walls.

- **Infrastructure Development:**

In 214 BC the Emperor began the project of a major canal allowing water transport between north and south China, originally for military supplies. The canal was 34 kilometers in length and linked two of China's major waterways, the Xiang River flowing into the Yangtze and the Li Jiang flowing into the Pearl River. The canal aided Qin's expansion to the south-west. It is considered one of the three great feats of ancient Chinese engineering, along with the Great Wall and the Sichuan Dujiangyan Irrigation System. This canal helped send half a million Chinese troops to conquer the lands to the south.

Besides the canal network, Qin Shi Huang also worked on road networks to improve communication and transportation.



V. Controversial Aspects of Brutal Rule and Legalism:

"Use power to curb power."

Since the creation of the first man, the stage of history has witnessed numerous rulers, some as cruel and conceited as the devil, others as forgiving as an angel, all with different characters, but all of them have one thing in common: **Power**.

If it has not been easy to be powerful since the dawn of time, it has not been easy to hold the reins of power. What wars have been fought, what blood has been spilled and countless communities have been destroyed for the sake of power. Power is an inherently subjective concept; it can be used in many senses: willpower, authority, dominance, self-restraint, psychological superiority...

The source of power is as crucial as the acquisition and maintenance of power. The source of power sheds light on many things about the ruler who wields it; it reveals his ambitions, his personality. Some rulers derive their power from *nationalism*, some from *lineage solidarity*, and some from *cruelty*. Whatever the source of power is, a ruler who takes actions consciously will eventually achieve his ambitions, even if he is as cruel as the devil. Those are the real 'emperors'.

Qin Shi Huang was a real emperor. He ruled his people with cruelty throughout his reign until his death. He associated the source of his power with ruthlessness, he made his people too incapable to overthrow him, he forced thousands of people to work for him in poor conditions. He believed that in order to develop a country, sacrifices had to be made. His belief was controversial but he was right about a thing: **Justice**. Although he was a cruel ruler, he never compromised on justice. He saw justice as a tool to elevate his country. In this direction, he never hesitated to impose the harshest punishments on wrongdoers. This attitude both strengthened his authority and contributed to his gaining respect.

"Great souls have Will; feeble ones have only wishes."

To become the first emperor of the glorious China, to become notorious, to leave marks in history that will deeply affect humanity...

Human beings have had power since the creation of the world. This power was sometimes so much that it could split the world in half, and sometimes so little that it could not hurt an ant. Regardless of the level of power, power has always changed hands and passed from hand to hand. The people who played a role in the change during this period of time left us traces to show how powerful they were. The effects of the traces they left increased in direct proportion to the power they had. Some of these traces carried ideological views, while others included

spiritual values. Among these effects, the ones that have affected humanity and civilization the most are certainly the ideological ones.

A thought can sometimes be more deadly than most weapons. One of these deadly thoughts that we can find examples of since human beings started using their minds is the ideology of “**Legalism**” imposed by the emperor Qin Shi Huang on his own people.

Briefly, legalism is a philosophy that asserts that law is sufficient to ensure social order. It proclaims that a *just society* can be created by regulating the relations between individuals. Based on this definition, we can infer that the emperor Qin Shi Huang used this ideology to prevent the danger of the disintegration in his military forces, which he saw as the main strength of his empire. Besides that, since legalism, from its ideological core, emphasizes the power of law and advocates the ideals of a just society, it forms the basis of the civil constitution and the structure of society today.

- **Burning of Books and Scholars:**

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for one day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Qin Shi Huang was an emperor who valued knowledge. He was aware that knowledge was a sacred power incomparable to his own power. He foresaw that this sacred power might one day be used against him. He was worried that different ideas might weaken his empire. He implemented radical policies to control the flow of knowledge in his empire, in other words, he decided to take the shortest and most reasonable way and destroy the sources of knowledge. In particular, the burning of books and the burial of scholars alive are the most well-known acts of his radical policies.

He knew that **books** were the source of many different philosophies and political opinions, so he burned countless books, leaving only those that praised the Qin Dynasty and supported his ideology.

He also saw scholars and sages, who were another source of knowledge for the society, as people who opposed his hegemony and supported different ideas, so he executed some of them by burning them alive and exiled the rest of them. Thus, he prevented any danger from intellectuals who had knowledge and different ideas.

"Take responsibility for what one has done, dare to act and dare to bear responsibility, have the courage to take the blame for what one does."

The motives behind his actions were often motivated by a desire to consolidate power and establish ideological unity in his newly unified empire, centralizing political control and eliminating potential sources of opposition. In this way, he would suppress different ideologies and build his own authority. By destroying the sources of information, he intended to eliminate intellectual and ideological rivalries. He saw different opinions as potential threats to the stability of his empire and aimed to ensure a more obedient society by eliminating alternative points of view. Qin Shi Huang, whose authority was based on tradition, applied Legalist principles to govern the empire.

These Legalist principles left a lasting impact on Chinese intellectual history. The burning of many books, especially those on Confucianism and other philosophical traditions, led to a significant loss of cultural and intellectual heritage. However, despite these repressive measures, some texts managed to survive through oral communication or secret copies.

CHARACTERS

Li Si: He was a prominent figure in ancient China and he was a key advisor and prime minister to Qin Shi Huang.

Meng Tian: He was the commander in chief of the Qin army and led the construction of the Great Wall of China.

Wang Jian: He was an experienced general who played a crucial role in bringing an end to the Warring States.

Lu Sheng: He was a popular legist who provided justice in the Qin Dynasty.

Feng Jian: As the Minister of Economy during the Qin Dynasty, he contributed to the economic growth of the dynasty.

Li Mu: He was another general of the Qin army, being a part of the force that conquered Zhao. Later, he played a significant role in suppressing the uprisings of the Wei and Chu states.

Zhao Gao: Zhao Gao was a political figure who communicated with the foreign states, especially Huns.

Xin Zizhi: A general in the Qin army, Xin Zizhi played a crucial role in the conquest of the Wei and Chu states by the Qin forces.



Wei Qing: A general in the Qin army, ensured the necessary security for the construction of the Great Wall of China.

Huo Qubing: The nephew of Wei Qing, Huo Qubing, contributed to the security needed for the construction of the Great Wall of China.

Wei Liao: He was an author, who wrote about the military. His works taught military strategies to the entire dynasty.

Bai Qi: He was one of the four greatest generals of the Warring States Period, and he was known as Ren Tu, which means human butcher, because of being responsible for over a million deaths.

Fan Sui: He was a naturalist and a wise person in the dynasty. His life experiences were an important source of advice for everyone.

Bonus Sections:

"Death is only the beginning."

Death...Humankind are created as mortal beings. Therefore, it is irrational to fear death. Death will overcome you eventually. It will appear out of the blue, your soul will leave your body and you will face what you have done. It is inexorable, even if you are the first emperor of China.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang has been a greedy ruler during his life. He has been craving for more power and never felt that he had enough. His greed and ambition led him to seek immortality. Even though he was a powerful emperor, he was afraid of losing his power, in other words, he was afraid of dying. He continued his pursuit for immortality throughout his life, trying various methods and consulting countless scholars. After many years, he realized that his pursuit would not lead him to anything tangible so he tried different ways to retain his power. One of the most well-known ways is the *Terracotta Soldiers* at his tomb.

The Terracotta Soldiers were built to protect the emperor's tomb and to show that he had a powerful army in the afterlife. The life-size clay sculptures, each one different from the other, hold an important place in China's ancient history and give us important information about Chinese history.

"A child's life is like a piece of paper on which every passerby leaves a mark."

China has been home to some of the most influential people in history. They are significant personalities who have had a profound impact on world history, especially on the history of Chinese civilization, and have contributed to the social, cultural and political evolution of China

in different eras. The most famous of these people are **Confucius**, **Emperor Wu** and **Emperor Qin Shi Huang**.

Confucius was an ancient Chinese philosopher. He developed the teachings of Confucianism and set out philosophical principles on social order, ethics, morality and governance. Compared to Emperor Qin Shi Huang, he put forward more humanistic and socially beneficial ideas. He stood out with his own social structure and moral code.

Emperor Wu, like Emperor Qin Shi Huang, pursued an expansionist foreign policy and expanded the borders of the empire. By adopting Confucianism as the state ideology, he achieved significant political and cultural developments. Unlike Emperor Qin Shi Huang, he emphasized Confucian principles more.



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Haydar Pazarcı