

The Terra Cotta Warriors

An Army of Clay

One cool morning in 1974, some Chinese farmers set out with their shovels across their shoulders. They were going to work on the well they had been digging. They spoke and laughed pleasantly among themselves as they walked, but when they reached the site of the well, they became more serious. Each man set his shovel into the soil and began to work quietly. Talking took energy away from the difficult task.

After some time had passed, however, one of the men cried out. "Look at this!" he exclaimed. The others gathered around, intrigued.

"What is it?" asked one of the men.

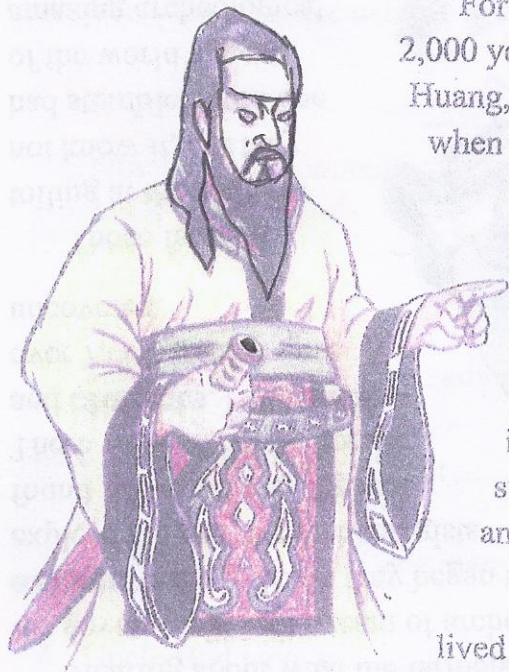
"It is a bit of pottery," answered another.

"Why, it looks like a face," said the first man. "Perhaps it is part of a statue. We had better report this."

Hearing about what the farmers had found, the government sent a team of archeologists to **excavate** the well. As they began to explore the site, the archeologists found life-sized clay figures. There were warriors, horses, and **chariots**. Ultimately, over 7,000 statues were uncovered.

Those farmers toiling at the well did not know it, but they had stumbled onto one of the world's most amazing archeological discoveries. Who made these **elaborate** statues, and why?





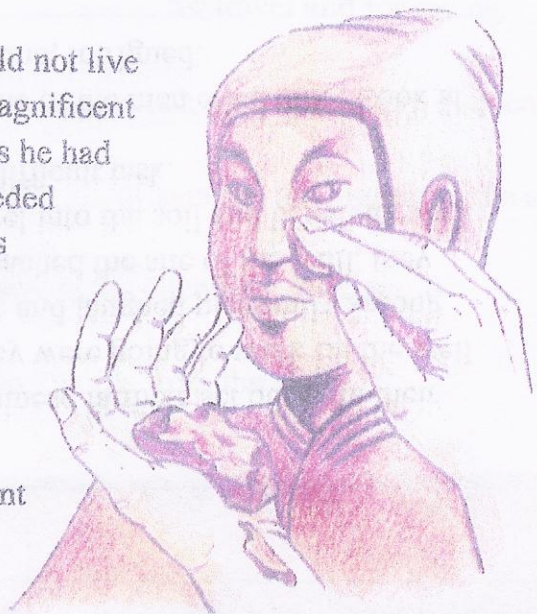
For answers, we must look back more than 2,000 years. At that time, China was ruled by Qin Shi Huang, its first **emperor**, who had become ruler when he was only 13 years old!

Although Qin was not a kind ruler, he was very strong and **effective**. Under his rule, the Great Wall of China was begun. Qin **regulated** trade throughout China and built roads to connect many cities. He improved **communications** by making sure the Chinese used a common language and a uniform system of writing.

Qin was very powerful and wealthy and lived a **lavish** life. He could have anything he wanted. Indeed, the entire country and all within it were under his control. But in spite of his wealth and power, Qin was still a human being, and like all people, he began to grow old. As he aged, he grew fearful of death and began to search for a way to extend his life. He asked his advisors to help him. But even his wisest **counselors** could not stop the march of time.

At last, Qin accepted the fact that he could not live forever. He decided that he would create a magnificent **tomb**. Inside, he would provide all the things he had enjoyed in life. Of course, as emperor, he needed an army. So he had his artists mold thousands of **warriors** from a type of clay called **terracotta**.

This was an amazing project. No two of the soldiers were alike. Each one was an individual, with a face and expression different from the others. The artists even gave the statues different hairstyles.



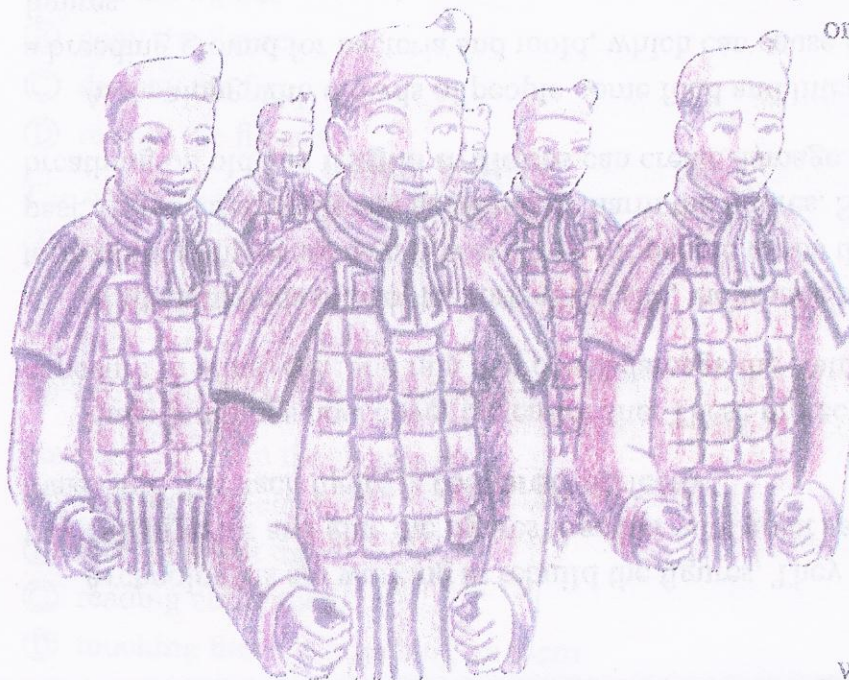
The soldiers were wearing a variety of uniforms showing differences in **rank**. There were foot soldiers, **archers**, and generals. Also, the soldiers varied in height with the tallest being over 6 feet 2 inches tall! All the soldiers were outfitted with real weapons.

Once the soldiers were finished, they were placed in battle formation in front of Qin's burial place. Qin believed that the soldiers would protect him in the afterlife.

In addition to the soldiers, there were terra-cotta acrobats in the tomb. The emperor wanted these for entertainment. There were also many servants to wait on him. Life-sized horses and other animals **crafted** from clay were placed in the tomb along with clay fruits and vegetables. It seems that Emperor Qin thought of everything!

It is difficult to imagine the amount of time, effort, and talent required to create this enormous tomb. Its wonders lay hidden from public view for

many centuries. The statues, once painted in lifelike colors, faded to their natural clay hue. The weapons that once armed the soldiers disappeared. Most likely, they were stolen from the tomb many hundreds of years ago. At some point in time, the wooden roof over the tomb collapsed, and many of the figures were broken.



Archeologists are working to rebuild the figures. They search carefully for tiny **fragments** and glue the figures together with great care. They want to make sure that each figure is **restored** perfectly.

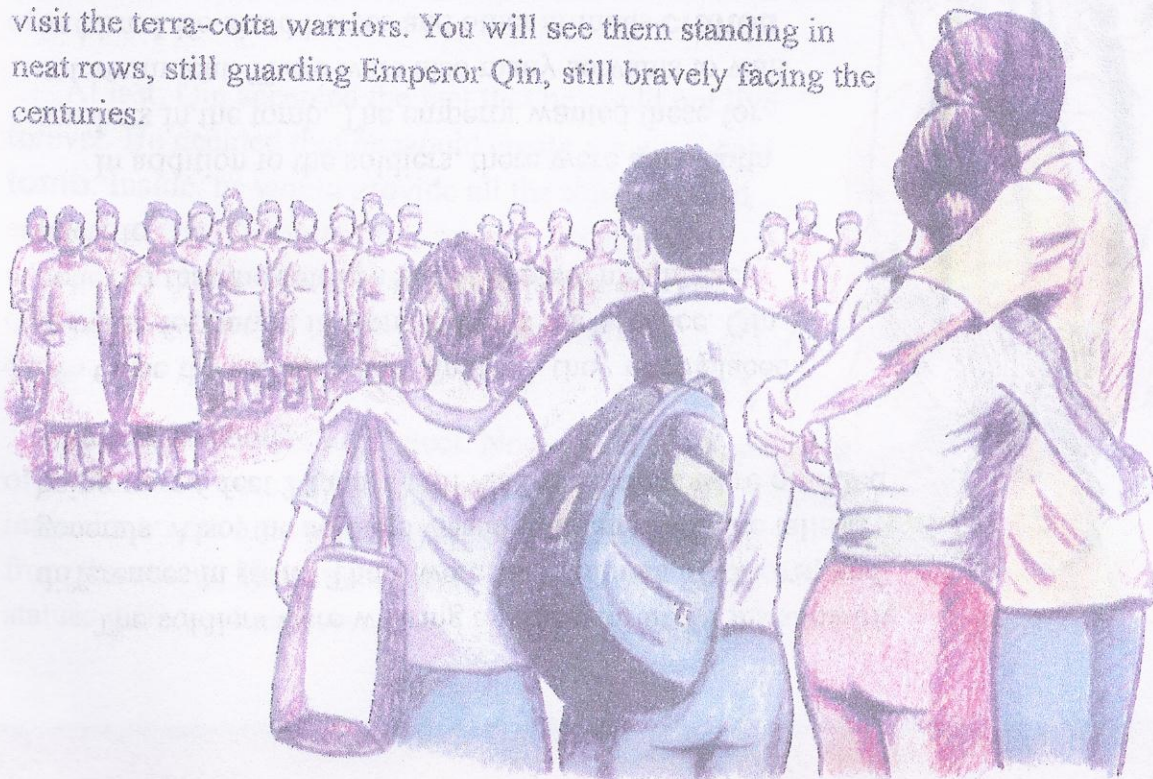
Huge buildings now cover the entire site. These protect the figures from exposure to wind, sun, and rain that could damage the statues.

While hundreds of people work at the site, thousands more come to visit the terra-cotta army every day. It is exciting for people to see these artifacts from the past. However, tourists can accidentally harm the figures. Simply touching or breathing on old and **fragile artifacts** can create damage.

Also, along with crowds of people come food and litter. These items provide a breeding ground for bacteria and mold, which can cause great harm to the figures.

Scientists want tourists to be able to see the figures, but they also want to protect this amazing site. As they continue to explore and learn about the figures, they are working to find ways for tourists to visit the figures without causing harm.

Perhaps someday you will be able to travel to China to visit the terra-cotta warriors. You will see them standing in neat rows, still guarding Emperor Qin, still bravely facing the centuries.



Questions About The Terra-Cotta Warriors



Fill in the circle that best answers each question.

1. The clay figures were placed in the emperor's _____.
 - (A) barn
 - (B) tomb
 - (C) palace
 - (D) garden
2. Why did Emperor Qin order his people to make the statues?
 - (A) They were to be placed all around his palace as decoration for a big party.
 - (B) They were to be placed in his tomb to provide for his needs in the afterlife.
 - (C) They were to be part of a museum showing life in China at that time.
 - (D) They were to be given as gifts to his most valued friends.
3. Many of the figures were broken when _____.
 - (A) a great earthquake rocked the building where the figures are now stored
 - (B) the government decided to get rid of the figures
 - (C) the wooden roof covering the figures collapsed
 - (D) vandals found and destroyed the figures
4. Archeologists are trying to _____.
 - (A) sell the figures
 - (B) copy the figures
 - (C) destroy the figures
 - (D) restore the figures
5. The weapons that were with the statues _____.
 - (A) are still in working condition
 - (B) were probably stolen many years ago
 - (C) were broken during the excavation
 - (D) are of no interest to archeologists
6. Tourists can harm the figures by _____.
 - (A) looking at them
 - (B) talking about them
 - (C) reading about them
 - (D) touching them or breathing on them

Write About the Story



Answer the questions using complete sentences.

1. What other kinds of figures were found with the soldiers?

2. What do you think is the most interesting fact about these figures?

3. How would the statues have looked different had you seen them when they were created?

4. Should tourists be allowed to visit these figures? Explain your answer.

Choose the Right Meaning



Find each bolded word in the story and read the sentence in which it is found. Choose the correct meaning for the word.

1. An **emperor** is similar to _____.
 - (A) a king
 - (B) a clown
 - (C) a scientist
 - (D) a carpenter
2. In this story, we learn that **terra cotta** is a kind of _____.
 - (A) oil
 - (B) clay
 - (C) paint
 - (D) metal
3. A **warrior** is about the same as _____.
 - (A) a bricklayer
 - (B) a mechanic
 - (C) a soldier
 - (D) a painter
4. The word **elaborate** means _____.
 - (A) old and damaged
 - (B) fancy and ornate
 - (C) plain and simple
 - (D) brand new
5. A **fragment** is _____.
 - (A) a broken piece
 - (B) a whole object
 - (C) a photograph
 - (D) a blueprint
6. Something that is **fragile** is _____.
 - (A) flexible and stretchy
 - (B) heavy and strong
 - (C) sturdy and thick
 - (D) easily broken
7. Which of these might you **excavate**?
 - (A) your stamp collection
 - (B) a burning building
 - (C) ancient ruins
 - (D) a funny story
8. If a solution to a problem is **effective**, it _____.
 - (A) is obvious
 - (B) is too hard
 - (C) works
 - (D) doesn't work
9. The word **regulated** means _____.
 - (A) made easy
 - (B) found out
 - (C) retrained
 - (D) controlled
10. Which of these things would be likely to be **restored**?
 - (A) an old car
 - (B) a sandwich
 - (C) a broken window
 - (D) a spelling test grade

Which Word Fits?



Complete each sentence using a word from the story.

Word Box

chariots	communication	lavish	counselor	archers
hues	tomb	artifacts	crafted	rank

1. The _____ advised Allan to take algebra and biology.
2. Lacey used bright, vibrant _____ to create her painting of the sunset.
3. In Williamsburg, we saw many _____ from the colonial period.
4. Uncle Bud gave a _____ party to celebrate his daughter's wedding.
5. The _____ of the pharaoh is deep inside the pyramid.
6. Helen bought a lovely basket that was _____ from pine needles.
7. The Romans sometimes used _____ for travel and for racing.
8. E-mail has made _____ much easier and more convenient.
9. My grandfather reached the _____ of general, the highest in the army.
10. The _____ shot their arrows at the oncoming soldiers.

Write your own sentences using two interesting words from the story.
