

# *The Qin Dynasty*

Source: <https://china.mrdonn.org/qin.html>

The Qin Dynasty only lasted for 15 years. Yet it is one of the most famous dynasties in ancient Chinese history. Emperor Qin ran his dynasty with absolute control. Punishment for those who disagreed with him was swift and harsh. You could be put to death simply by suggesting another way to do things. There was only Qin's way.

**Qin was the first man to control all of China.** He died of natural causes, but during his brief rule, he called himself First Emperor of China. And the name "China" stuck.

**Qin was a legalist.** A legalist believes that people are basically bad. That's why it is necessary to control every minute of their life. Otherwise, they'll do bad things, which could hurt others.

**Qin developed a system of bureaucracy** so that he could control every minute of people's lives. He divided his empire into 36 provinces. Each had two government officials in charge of it. There had to be 2 so they could keep an eye on each other. Then he broke the provinces into smaller districts. Each district had two people in charge of it. And so it went. Each unit getting smaller and smaller, and each unit reporting to the one above it. People at all levels were paid very well.

**Qin developed a spy system:** It was not enough to have two people in charge of each little piece, so that they could keep an eye on each other. Qin also developed a spy system, so that all people kept an eye on each other. Spies were rewarded very well.

**Qin had great power.** His system of organization gave him complete control. He used that control to make the huge changes he felt China desperately needed to protect herself.

## **Changes:**

**The Great Wall:** Qin set people to work building the Great Wall. He believed the country needed better protection. Just as cities had wall built around them, he wanted a wall built around China.

**He greatly weakened the nobles:** Qin took land away from the nobles so they would lose most of their control and wealth. He did not want the nobles to band together to remove Qin from power. Anyone who fought this change was either buried alive or put to work building the Great Wall.

**He greatly weakened the teachers and scholars:** Censorship was introduced. Qin burned what he called useless books. If a book was not about agriculture, medicine, or prophecy, it was burned. Scholars who refused to allow their books to be burned were either burned alive or sent to work on the wall. Qin did not want his people wasting time. He wanted nearly all the people to grow food.

**He gave most peasants one of two jobs:** Either a peasant was assigned to grow food or to harvest silk. If they tried to do anything else besides their assigned job, they were put to death or sent to work on the wall. If people were slow or lazy, they were put to death or sent to work on the wall.

**He built public works projects:** Qin put some people to work building bridges, roads, canals, and systems of flood control. The people he assigned to do this work either did the work they were assigned to do quickly and well, or they were killed or sent to work on the wall.

**He created a law code:** His law code applied to everyone. He created a huge law enforcement group, to enforce those laws.

**He created a system of standardization:** Qin introduced one system of weights and measures, one system of money, the same written language, the same laws - all systems of standardization to be used all over China. No one argued with him.

**Qin did not believe that he was cruel.** His systems of protection, standardization, and job assignment probably saved millions of lives from flood and famine and war. Qin thought of himself as an outstanding leader. He used to say, "A thousand may die so that millions may live."

**Qin had planned that his son would take over one day.** After Qin died of natural causes, his son tried to rule the county. A peasant led a revolt against Qin's government officials. People all over the country joined in the revolt. The revolt was successful. That peasant became the new emperor. He called his dynasty the [Han Dynasty](#).

### **Notes from pages 274-275 in the social studies textbook:**

From page 274:

Qin was a \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom located in \_\_\_\_\_ China.

King Zheng came to power in \_\_\_\_\_ BC, (and he) thirsted for more \_\_\_\_\_.

King Zheng and the Qin forces \_\_\_\_\_ their last enemy in \_\_\_\_\_ BC.

The Qin ruler, King Zheng, decided that he needed a different title, so he declared himself \_\_\_\_\_, or "First Emperor".

From page 275:

The many different Chinese kingdoms built \_\_\_\_\_ to protect themselves from other \_\_\_\_\_. Shi Huangdi had these walls \_\_\_\_\_ down to make \_\_\_\_\_ more difficult.

The \_\_\_\_\_ was a long \_\_\_\_\_ running east and \_\_\_\_\_ along the northern \_\_\_\_\_ of China. The purpose of the wall was to :