

A Biography of Qin Shi Huang: First Emperor of China

Part 2 - by Kallie Szczepanski

This handout is adapted from this website: <https://www.thoughtco.com/qin-shi-huang-first-emperor-china-195679>

The Story So Far...

5 Which adjectives could you employ in order to describe the political situation in ancient China at this stage in its history? Highlight 7 words or phrases.

based on military force + based on diplomacy and discussion +
chaotic + complicated + dangerous + orderly + peaceful +
predictable + uncertain + violent + warlike

Lao Ai's Revolt

Lu Buwei hatched a scheme to **depose** Qin Shi Huang in 240 BCE along with Lao Ai, the queen's partner and the father of two of the King's half-brothers. Together, Lu Buwei and Lao Ai decided to launch a **coup**.

Lao raised an army, aided by the king of nearby Wei, and tried to seize control while Qin Shi Huang was traveling outside the area. The young king **cracked down hard** on the **rebellion**; Lao was executed by having his arms, legs, and neck tied to horses, which were then spurred to run in different directions. His whole family was also **eliminated**, including the king's two half-brothers and all the other relatives to the third degree (uncles, aunts, cousins and so on). The queen, mother of Qin Shi Huang, was spared, but she spent the rest of her life under house arrest.

Words and Meanings 4

6 Match the terms from the text with their meanings.

a depose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a sudden and violent seizure of power from the government
b coup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	got rid of, removed or excluded
c cracked down hard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	revolt, uprising against a leader or government
d rebellion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	took severe measures against someone
e eliminated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	remove from office by force, overthrow

7 Which word is the **odd one out**? Circle it in each group of words below.

- a chaotic, orderly, calm, peaceful, tranquil
- b rebel, obey, revolt, riot, defy the authorities
- c crack down hard on, crush, suppress, put down, support
- d legend, story, fact, myth

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Qin Shi Huang Consolidates Power

Lu Buwei was **banished** after the Lao Ai incident but did not lose all of his influence in Qin. Nevertheless, he lived in constant fear of **execution** by the young king. In 235 BCE, Lu committed suicide by drinking poison. With his death, the 24-year-old king assumed full command over the kingdom of Qin.

Qin Shi Huang grew increasingly **paranoid** and banished all foreign scholars from his court as spies. The king's fears were **well-founded**; in 227, the Yan state sent two **assassins** to his court, but he fought them off with his sword. A musician also tried to kill him by **bludgeoning** him with a lead-weighted **lute**.

Battles with Neighbouring States

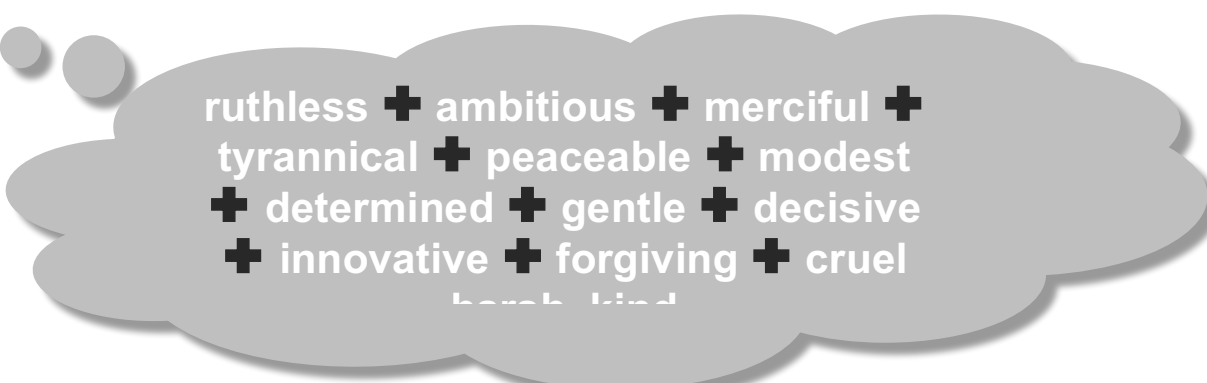
The **assassination** attempts arose in part because of desperation in neighbouring kingdoms. The Qin king had the most powerful army. Consequently, neighbouring rulers trembled at the thought of a Qin invasion. Their fears were justified, for each independent kingdom fell in turn to the ruthless **invasions** of Qin Shi Huang.

Words and Meanings 5

8 Match the terms from the text with their meanings.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| a banished | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | intruding into another country with an army |
| b execution | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | carrying out a sentence of death on a condemned person |
| c paranoid | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | justified, based on evidence |
| d well-founded | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | the act of committing a political murder |
| e assassin | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | stringed musical instrument |
| f bludgeoning | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | exiled, forced to leave the country |
| g lute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | unreasonably anxious, distrustful or suspicious |
| h assassination | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | the person who commits a political murder |
| i invasions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | beating someone viciously with a heavy, blunt instrument |

9 Which adjectives could you use to describe the character of Qin Shi Huang? Highlight 8 of the adjectives in the thought bubble below.



ruthless + ambitious + merciful +
tyrannical + peaceable + modest
+ determined + gentle + decisive
+ innovative + forgiving + cruel