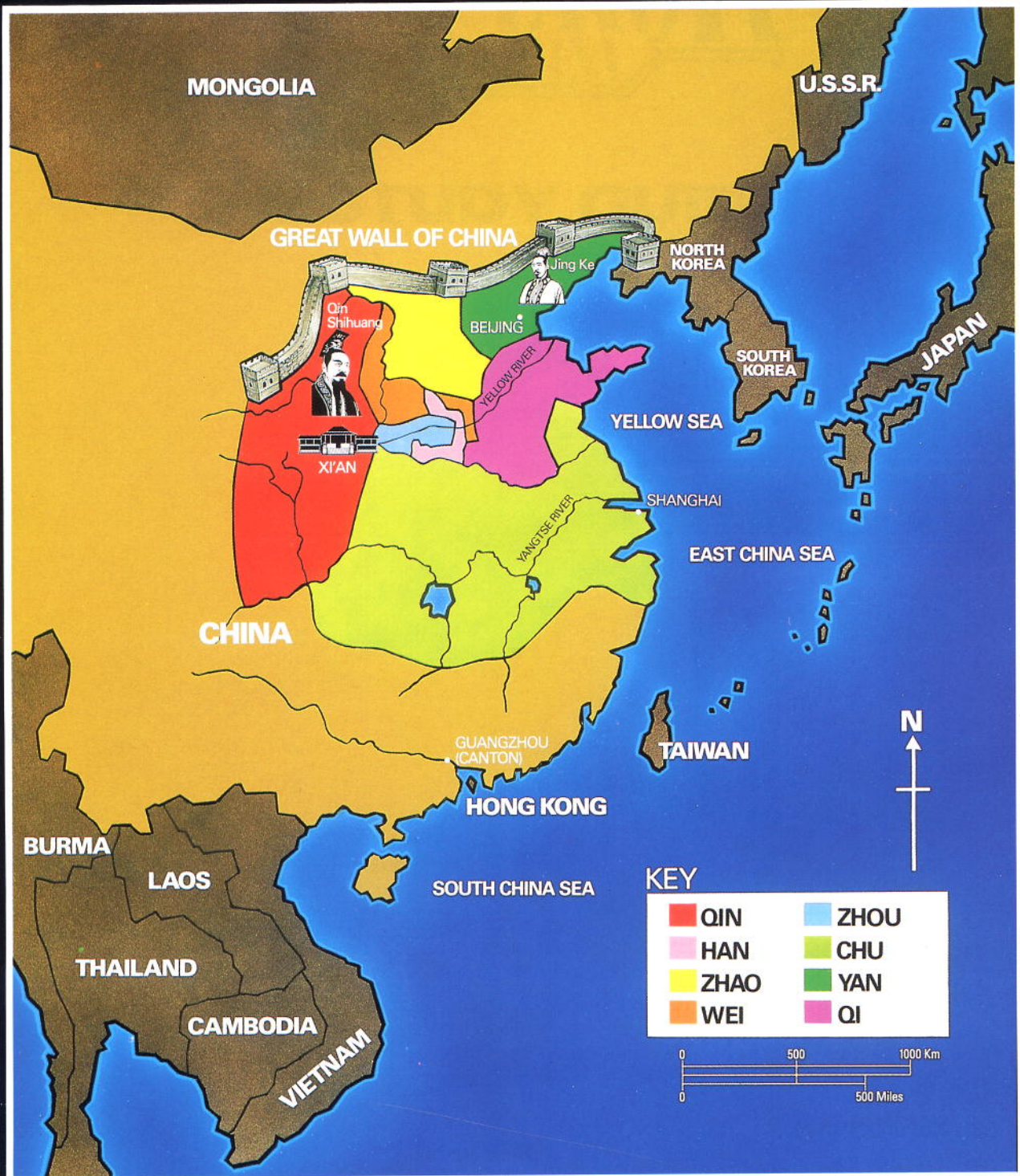


THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA

A STUDY GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Few people realize that it was one man who founded the great nation of China. His name was Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor. He not only gave China its name, but also founded the longest-enduring nation state in the history of the world.

THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA chronicles the period of Qin Shihuang's rule. Much of the story has never been told before, and few Westerners are aware of his incredible achievements.

From the grandiose inner sanctum of Emperor Qin's royal palace, to fierce battles with feudal kings, this 40-minute historical drama recreates the glory and the terror of the Qin Dynasty. The film also includes the first documentary footage of Qin's life-sized terra cotta army, constructed almost 2,200 years ago for his tomb.

As the vast and secret land of China opens more of its doors to western eyes, there is a growing curiosity about the history and traditions of this nation of 1.2 billion people. THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA offers us a unique opportunity to increase our understanding of the nature of ancient Chinese civilization and its achievements. This Study Guide is designed to extend the viewing of the film into an exciting and fruitful learning experience for your students.



THE FILM

The year is 246 B.C. and China is at war. Ying Zheng, the young ruler of Qin, is waging ruthless battles against neighboring states. However, at home revolution is in the air, for in this corrupt and dangerous court of intrigue, the young King's control over the kingdom of Qin is tentative — his reform measures meet with resistance. But the ensuing coup attempt led by his advisors is foiled and the leaders of the rebellion are executed. Having established complete control within his own state, the King presses on with his military campaigns abroad.

After years of battle and an assassination attempt, Qin orders a final assault on the state of Qi, the last nation to fall to his army. In victory, he declares himself Qin Shihuang — “First Emperor.” China is unified for the first time in history.

To consolidate his vast conquests, Qin institutes sweeping reforms. He unifies the system of measures and currency, standardizes the written language, and lays out a radiating system of roads and canals for transportation. Yet, life in the new empire is harsh. More than 700,000 slaves are organized into huge labor gangs to join together the Great Wall of China, and hundreds of thousands more are drafted to work on Qin's 270 palaces and his burial tomb. Thousands of books are burned in a scourge against freedom of thought; scholars who voice opposition are buried alive.

After several attempts on his life, Qin Shihuang becomes obsessed with death and has his alchemists prepare a potion that would make him immortal. The elixirs he ingests to achieve everlasting life contain poisonous chemicals such as mercury, lead and arsenic. When Qin eventually dies, Eunuch Zhao Gao and Prime Minister Li Si secretly forge a new will. They engineer the suicide of Qin's oldest son, and enthrone a younger — and weaker — son.

Qin's Dynasty, predicted to last “ten thousand generations,” survives his own death by only four years. Yet the Imperial system he created does, in fact, endure for more than 2,000 years, proving to be one of the world's most durable political structures.

The story ends in contemporary China where Qin's “guardian army” is slowly being excavated. In 1974, well-diggers in China's Shaanxi Province stumbled upon a huge subterranean vault — the forgotten tomb of Emperor Qin. Within the underground chamber, archaeologists discovered an extraordinary treasure: an army of 7,000 life-sized terra cotta men, horses and chariots. The uniform rows of clay soldiers, each with a distinctly different face, appear life-like, poised in time, as if they are waiting for a signal from the Emperor himself.

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THEMES TO WATCH FOR IN THE FILM

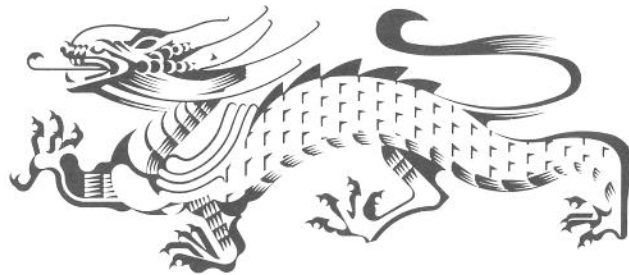
Historically, China has been a donor civilization, enriching the culture of the whole world with her science and technology, her arts and her philosophy. The achievements of the First Emperor symbolize the heights reached in his own time by those whom he called "The Black-haired People."

In only 36 years of rule, Qin Shihuang achieved what few others have accomplished, and, if historical comparisons are to be made, such people as Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and Julius Caesar come to mind. Qin Shihuang was a man of "firsts," and in a real sense, the maker of China.

The following themes to watch for in the film are but a few of Qin Shihuang's "firsts."

■ The Dragon Motif

The dragon motif is seen throughout the film. In Chinese mythology, the "lung," or dragon, is essentially a benevolent divinity and is held in high regard. The dragon is the rain-bringer, the master of waters, clouds, rivers, lakes, and seas. Extremely versatile, it can make itself as tiny as a silkworm or become big enough to overshadow the whole world. The dragon's appearance is made up of the horns of a stag, the head of a camel, the eyes of a demon, the scales of a fish, the claws of an eagle, the feet of a tiger, the ears of a bull, and the long whiskers of a cat.



Although dragons are traditionally associated with Chinese emperors, for the First Emperor these potent divinities had a special appeal.

During the time of Qin Shihuang, a theory existed called the "Five Elements" or the "Five Phases." According to this theory, fire, water, earth, wood, and metal succeeded each other in an endless cycle, each destroying its predecessor to give a dominant character to its age. The wise ruler harnessed the dominant element and used it along with its associated color and number to legitimize his reign.

Qin Shihuang chose water as his element. He likened himself to the dragon, the "master of the waters," a super-human, a demi-god. Since water was considered a cold and harsh element, he determined his law would also be harsh and repressive and his rule, severe. Qin Shihuang came to be known as "The Dragon," or "The Emperor of the Dragon Throne."

■ Qin Dynasty Warfare

Following five centuries of war, the seven states of central China were united after 25 years of constant battle. Li Si, the First Emperor's chief advisor, described Qin's leadership:

"For four generations now, Qin has won victory. Its armies are the strongest in the world and its authority sways the other feudal lords. It did not reach this position by benevolence or righteousness, but by taking advantage of its opportunities."

The sophistication of the Qin war machine is evident from the findings at Qin Shihuang's tomb.

Prior to the Qin Dynasty, the principal weapon of war was the war chariot, a heavy vehicle, clumsy on rough terrain. Qin introduced mounted cavalymen, armed with crossbows and swords, for greater mobility. In fact, the arrangement of the terra cotta soldiers suggests a formal arrangement similar to that of nineteenth-century western armies. The main body of the force was composed of infantry, while a smaller, more mobile force of mounted troops was detached to act separately, and a command unit oversaw the whole operation.

Qin Shihuang's soldiers were equipped with excellently designed weapons. Most of the weapons, including swords, crossbows, halberds, spears and pikes, were made of cast bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, and the surface treated with chrome — a method not discovered by Europeans until the 1930s.

It is clear that Qin's war machine was the result of centuries of technological development, as well as shrewd leadership. In addition, rank was awarded according to accomplishment and not according to social status. Failure or insubordination in the army was severely punished.

■ Qin's Chinese Script

In 221 B.C., Ying Zheng declared himself "Qin Shihuang," the "First Emperor" of China. The seven warring states — Qin, Yan, Qi, Zhao, Han, Wei, and Chu — were united, albeit at great human cost.

The imposition of a greater degree of cultural unity became Qin Shihuang's primary task. Each state had developed its own form of artistic expression, folklore, metallurgy, coinage, agriculture, measures, and notably, its own script. This lack of systematic script made any common literary heritage impossible, and impeded the work of Qin's Imperial government.

According to the "Record of the Historian" (*The Shiji*, by Sima Qian, 91 B.C.), in the very year of China's unification, Qin ensured that the script was also "unified." Archaeological finds indicate that this standardization was primarily a simplification of the complexities of the earlier script, and the suppression of variant forms of the same words. A dictionary of the newly-standardized forms consisted of 3,300 characters.

The effects of this standardization cannot be over-estimated. The 3,300 characters have provided the standard for all further evolution of written Chinese script. However, it is ironic that an emperor so dedicated to written communication that he was the first to systematize script in China, should later be the first to order a "Burning of the Books."

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■ Qin's Code of Law

The First Emperor, Qin Shihuang, was a student of "Legalism" — he believed that man was by nature evil, and that harsh law was the most effective regulator of human behavior. The State was the highest "good," and the Emperor, vested with the supreme power of an absolute ruler, was a god-like, dragon-like figure.

Basing it upon such Legalist tenets, Qin Shihuang established the first Code of Law with a centralized bureaucracy. In this code, the presumption for criminals, or even those denounced as criminals, was not "innocent until proven guilty," but the opposite. Torture was permitted in Qin's jails to extract confessions, and punishments were physically severe.

For the crimes of premeditated murder, treason, or incest, the convicted was beheaded, torn apart by chariots, or cut in two at the waist. The principle of joint responsibility was applied, and lighter punishments such as forced labor imposed upon the criminal's family. If found guilty of infanticide, the criminal was often sentenced to forced labor on the Great Wall and mutilated to show shame — the nose cut off, tattooed on the cheek or forehead, or a limb amputated. Lesser crimes of theft were punishable with specified periods of forced labor, flogging, banishment, castration, or fines.

Just as they are in our own society, murder, infanticide, and injuring a fellow citizen were considered serious crimes during Shihuang's rule. All in all, the laws of the Qin period were considered strict rather than unduly harsh. Unfortunately, there were too many convictions of people who unwittingly broke the complicated Code of Law. These people considered their punishment unjust, and many of them finally rebelled.

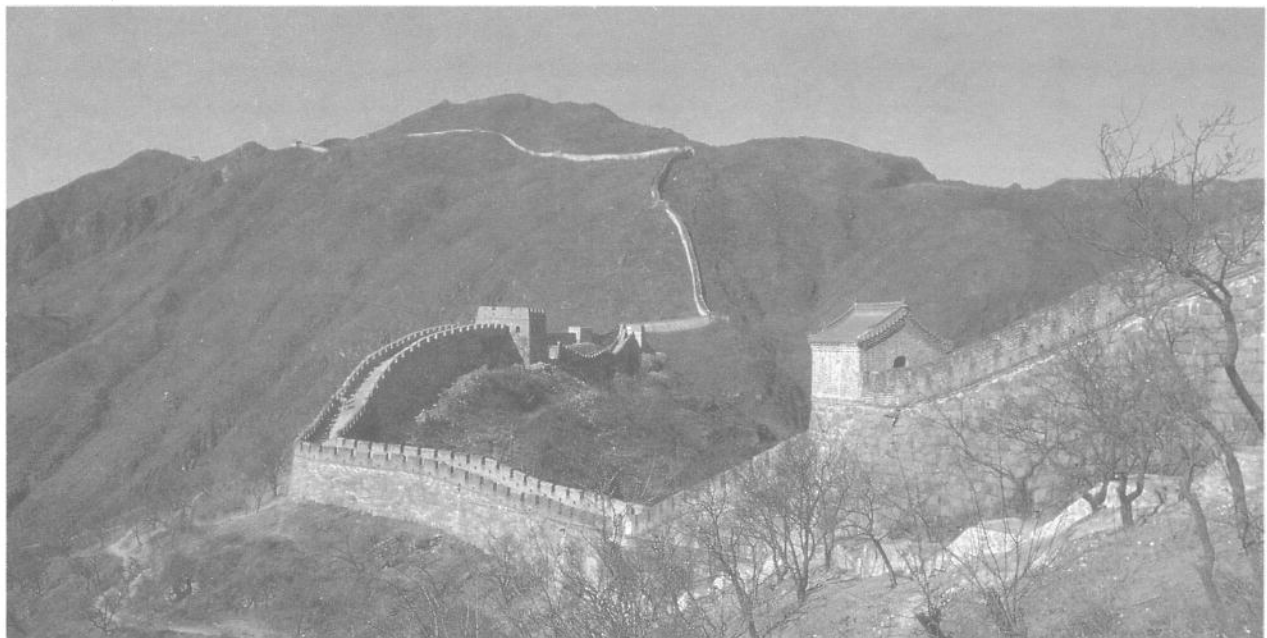
■ The Great Wall

During the Warring States period, prior to Qin's reign as the First Emperor, seven states had constructed walls to protect their northern borders from the nomadic Steppe tribes. When Qin Shihuang ordered the building of the Great Wall, it was both a consolidation of earlier walls and an extension.

In 221 B.C., the huge task of erecting the Wall was given to General Meng Tian, along with a work force of more than 300,000 soldiers and thousands of convicts, sentenced to labor punishment. The task took ten years and covered 4,100 kilometers.

The men worked through brutally cold winters and blazing summers, building over quicksand, marshes, semi-deserts, and on mountains up to 6,000 feet above sea level. The men had to simultaneously construct the roads to transport supplies and equipment to the work sites, build the Wall, and fight off the "barbarians" from the north. There was little rest as General Tian urged the men to work faster and faster. The death toll was enormous; many of the workers were buried within the Wall itself.

The Wall is an incredible engineering feat, but the suffering caused by its construction was not forgotten. The Great Wall of China came to be known as "The Wall of Tears" and "The Longest Graveyard in the World."



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

There is no doubt that most students now come from a visually oriented culture. Their curiosity is aroused more by seeing than by reading. Film offers a heightened sense of the "feel" of an era and helps students to achieve a better understanding of what life was like in former times. A few sweeps of the camera reveal a mosaic of inter-related facets of the physical environment, the economic conditions, aesthetics, and the social behavior of any given situation.

Showing a film to a captive audience in class ensures that all the students have an equal exposure to the material. Furthermore, since watching the film is a group experience, it is natural for a class to react to it and interact together. Film provides an excellent stimulant for class discussion.

Six classroom activities are suggested on the following pages, using the screening of *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA* as a collective experience. These suggestions are meant only as a guide; classroom discussion may well lead to other avenues of significant and pertinent study which you may choose to follow.

The activities have not been designated a grade level, leaving you, the teacher, to decide which are appropriate for your students. Each activity is accompanied by attitudinal and/or knowledge objectives.

■ Understanding the Camera

OBJECTIVES

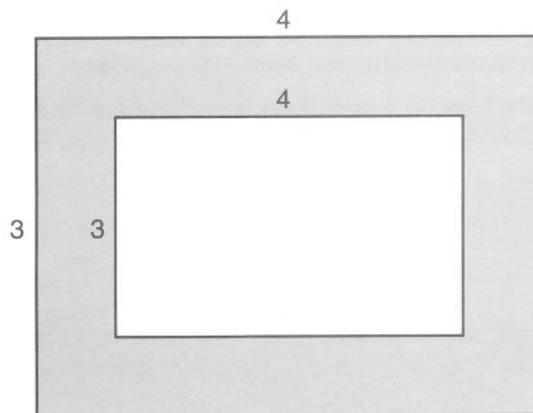
To understand how filming works and how "reality" is constructed

To explore the visual language of film in a variety of ways

To develop a willingness to cooperate in group undertakings

The format of a film affects the way in which a film is "shot." For example, in the IMAX format, the camera is best suited to long shots as opposed to the television camera which is best suited to close-ups.

Students can experiment and practise with camera point of view without using a real camera; all they need is a home-made viewfinder. To make this, they should take a piece of heavy paper and cut a rectangle into the middle, creating a frame with a 3:4 ratio. Simply by looking through the viewfinder, they will be able to search out and select "shots."



Have some students perform a simple scene in front of the class, while others use their viewfinders to "shoot" the performance. Students should take turns performing and recording the presentation. To get a "long shot" of the group, students should stand at a distance from the performers and hold the viewfinder close to one eye. As they move the viewfinder away from their eye, they will obtain a "medium" shot, and as they move it farther away, they will get a "close-up" of one person in the group. Have students stand on chairs and focus their viewfinders down on the group.

This gives them a "high-angle" shot. Ask students what effect is achieved through this style of shot. Have students take a "low-angle" shot by getting on the floor and focusing their viewfinders straight up at the group. Ask students how this position gives the group the appearance of power.

By moving the viewfinder from left to right and then from right to left, students will learn how to “pan”; by moving straight towards the group, students will learn how to “dolly”; and by following along with someone who is moving, they will learn to “track.”

Finally, have the students point their viewfinders down to shoot the feet of the group and then move the viewfinders upward. This will give an example of “tilting” the camera.

Students can watch for examples of each of these camera movements in the film *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA*.

■ An “Image Scan” of the Film

OBJECTIVES

To develop a sensitivity to the opinions of others

To learn to differentiate between one’s own existing values and those created by the filmmaker

An audience accepts the reality that a filmmaker has created. In this way, the lives and emotions of the film’s characters can have a powerful effect on the audience. The first response is primarily an emotional one, rather than intellectual, and this response varies with the individual’s personality, values, and background.

An “Image Scan” is designed to help teachers and students deal with the emotional responses before delving into a film’s intellectual implications or its technical aspects. Listening to individual image scans can help students understand that we can all see the same film and yet respond differently.

Following the viewing of *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA*, ask students to note which images or sounds from the film were most memorable. As images and sounds are recalled, they prompt other images and sounds by association, and students begin to discuss the movie and how it was perceived by others in the class.

Direct the discussion with one or more of the following questions:

What emotions did the film arouse in you?

To what extent did the film confirm your experience? Intensify it? Extend it?

What impact did the large format of the IMAX film have on you? What changes take place in an audience’s perception of a film as a result of the size of the screen?

This kind of exchange sets the stage for discussing other elements that are basic to the film, such as the THEMES presented earlier in this guide.

■ Reviewing *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA*

OBJECTIVES

To learn the location, major achievements, customs, and beliefs of an ancient civilization

To learn the value of critical thinking

To develop writing skills

Writing a film review is not a simple task. As Jay Scott, film critic for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, said: “The evaluation process is one of reacting and trying to order that reaction. Then what you try to do is analyze the emotion and find out what created it.”

Ask students to focus their review of *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA* on one or more of the following elements.

A brief summary of the content or “story” of the film, identifying the main conflict, mentioning the setting, and giving some overall assessment of the film in terms of its major strengths or weaknesses, particularly with regard to viewer interest and believability. The theme of the film — the point the film attempts to make — should also be mentioned.

A discussion of the film direction. Does the film seem to flow well? Does the audience know why the characters are doing what they are doing? Is it visually pleasing? Is the pace appropriate? Is the music suitable? Does the visual impact match the requirements of the story? Do the directors elicit the intended reaction from the audience?

References to the script and scriptwriter. Is the film well written? Is it a good story? Does it have unity? Is it melodramatic? Does it capture the interest of the audience? Does it say something new?

Comments on the special effects, camera work, soundtrack, editing, color, and so on. Mention should be made of the pictorial qualities of the film.

Two reviews of *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA*, from different newspapers and magazines, have been included in this guide (see pp. 13/14). Students can compare the professional reviews with their own, and discuss whether or not they agree with these assessments of the film.

■ A Map Study

Note: This exercise uses the map entitled “China in the Qin Period (246-210 B.C.)” which is on the cover of this guide.

OBJECTIVES

To develop an appreciation of the qualities needed to build a civilization

To understand the achievements of a past civilization

To develop mapping skills

There were many cradles of civilization; China is one of them. The response of an ancient civilization to its environment contributed to the cultural and technological innovation — in the form of the development of a calendar, methods of transportation and navigation, and processes of mathematics, astronomy and metallurgy. The factors that best explain the growth and development of the ancient Chinese civilization therefore require examination in terms of geographical advantages and limitations.

An effective way to study the Qin Dynasty is to use a map showing the growth of the Qin Empire and a detailed map of China’s geographical features. Explore with the students the geographical reasons that help explain Qin’s growth. The discussion may be directed through one or more of the following tasks.

On the map included with this guide, locate the eight Warring States that existed before Qin Shihuang’s unification of China.

On a detailed map of China, locate the major rivers, ports and cities of China.

In *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA* an assassination attempt is made on Qin by Jing Ke, the general from the State of Yan. Locate the Warring State of Yan on the map and explain why that province was of strategic importance to Qin.

After exhausting the geographical factors for the expansion of the Qin Dynasty, the map study may be turned to Qin’s methods of physically unifying the great Empire of China.

On the map, trace the routes of expansion of the Qin Dynasty.

On the map, trace the Great Wall, the northern border of the Qin Empire.

Finally, compare the China of the Qin Dynasty to the borders of China today — what are the differences?

■ The Time Line

OBJECTIVES

To develop an appreciation for the position of our civilization in the history of human civilization

To appreciate the fact that civilizations developed through history in parallel periods of time at different places

To understand that European civilization is one civilization among others

A graphic time line accompanies this guide, showing the periods when different classical empires existed in China, Europe and in the Americas. None of these empires or the civilizations associated with them is ours, although we find our origin in at least one of them.

Ask students the following questions:

Among the ancient empires listed, which is the oldest? Which one lasted the longest?

What was going on in Rome, Athens, and the Americas while Qin was building his empire?

From which ancient civilization(s) does present-day North American society descend?

■ Parallels to China Today

OBJECTIVES

To become aware of the historical background of the modern age

To understand the ways in which contemporary thought has been fashioned by past civilizations

To develop a sensitivity to human needs and social problems

To study the ways in which the past has helped shape the present

In any discussion of ancient civilizations, probably the greatest emphasis must be placed on the development of modern times, and class time should be taken to review significant current affairs.

In the introduction to the book *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA* (written in conjunction with the film), R.W.L. Guisso wrote a particularly poignant piece:

"As this book was going to press in the early summer of 1989, events as remarkable as those recorded in these pages were again taking place in China. Extraordinarily noble crowds of people in Beijing's Tiananmen Square were calling for unprecedented, yet basic, human rights in the most unique and dramatic way.

The students of Tiananmen Square seemed to be writing history in a manner as large as their First Emperor Qin Shihuang did more than two thousand years ago — as this time they engaged and galvanized a watching world using the 20th century's electronic media.

The leadership of The People's Republic appeared to be retreating to the same secrecy as the First Emperor himself had employed in the face of unparalleled threats... In a quite unexpected way then, THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA presents a most uncannily relevant portrait of the nature of China and its approach to people and government — then and now."

Two newspaper articles on the 1989 events in Tiananmen Square have been included in this guide (see pp. 15/16). In the light of these, and the film *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA*, discuss the validity of Guisso's statement:

Why is *THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA* a "portrait" of China's approach to people and government today? What parallels support this portrait?

The events of the past are significant human experiences and are applicable to the social problems of today. Historic forces have shaped human lives. Our own age has been marked by a certain reluctance to change with new developments, such as space travel and nuclear power. Consider the question — are we any more or less reluctant to change, as a nation, than China?

ACTIVITY PROPS

■ Fast Facts about the Film

A co-production of the National Film Board of Canada, the China Xi'an Film Studio and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

- Principal photography took place in China's Shaanxi Province between October 30, 1988 and February 13, 1989.
- Includes the first foreign film footage of the archaeological dig of Qin Shihuang's underground terra cotta army.

Crew

At peak production 368 Chinese and 9 Canadians were working on the film including:

- 39 costume designers
- 35 makeup artists
- 30 prop builders
- 22 art designers
- 40 lighting technicians
- 50 horse trainers

Sets

- 11 studio sets
- 20 location shoots
- Labor on sets took the equivalent of 4,200 working days.
- A royal palace 129 meters long and 23 meters high (approximately 7 stories) was constructed on the studio lot.
- Built out of concrete, stone and wood, the palace has 7 interior chambers.
- Over 1,000 people worked on the palace (91,500 person hours).
- 12 steel statues — 7.3 meters high, weighing 2.2-2.5 tonnes each — were built for the palace entrance.

Props and Costumes

- THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA is the largest production Xi'an Studio has ever undertaken. Over 37 factories were employed by the studio to make the props and costumes. Some worked exclusively for this film production. For example, it took one factory a month to print the silk used in the film and another factory a month just to make the shoes. Museum specialists have helped to ensure that all aspects of the film, from props to script, are historically accurate.
- At peak production, 1,100 people were employed behind the scenes.

Props

- 3,200 weapons
- 200 cross-bows
- 200 shields
- 40 chariots
- 250 bronze and lacquer vessels and furniture. Some props used are actual artifacts from the Qin dynasty.
- 350 meters of carpet
- a miniature model of the terra cotta army (7,000 soldiers, horses and chariots)

Costumes

- 500 hats
- 657 wigs
- 150 costumes of the emperor's court
- 1,500 peasant costumes
- 1,300 soldier costumes
- 150 slave costumes
- 3,200 pairs of shoes and boots
- 2,000 pairs of socks
- 2,300 helmets
- 1,000 suits of armor

Epic Battle Scenes

In order to get everyone to the location, 66 trucks, 12 buses and 15 vans were needed. The battle scenes consisted of:

- 1,600 extras
- 150 drivers
- 180 horses
- 30 battle chariots
- In one shot where the Emperor celebrated his final victory, more than 1,300 musicians were assembled in front of the palace.

THE TORONTO STAR
Wednesday, August 16, 1989

First Emperor Of China spectacular on wide screen

If you're wondering how good a wide-screen Imax movie is likely to be, a useful phrase to keep in mind is "Places, not people."

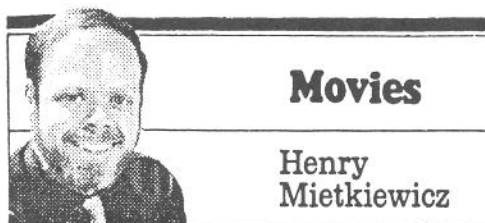
The best Imax spectaculars (*Grand Canyon-The Hidden Secrets*) emphasize scenic splendor, while the most disappointing (*Behold Hawaii*) are built around human characters.

Now comes the surprising and breathtaking exception, *The First Emperor Of China*, which opens today at the Ontario Place Cinesphere on a double bill with *Speed* (about the history of high-speed transportation) and continues until Labor Day.

Cinesphere movies are usually free with admission to the lakefront park, but, as in previous summers, a \$2 fee is charged during the run of the Canadian National Exhibition.

A 40-minute co-production of the National Film Board, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Xi'an Film Studio of China, *The First Emperor Of China* succeeds by giving natural, panoramic breadth to people and their creations.

Instead of focusing on mountain vistas or



The First Emperor Of China

Directed by Tony Ianzelo and Liu Hao Xue. A co-production of the National Film Board, the Xi'an Film Studio of China and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Until Sept. 4 at the Ontario Place Cinesphere, 955 Lakeshore Blvd. W., 965-7711. **PG**

towering waterfalls, directors Tony Ianzelo and Liu Hao Xue restage a 2,200-year-old war by spreading hundreds of Chinese soldiers over a battlefield that stretches as far as the eye can see.

Even in more intimate moments, the emperor and his courtiers are surrounded by intricate carvings, elaborate tapestries and lavish costumes whose smallest details are ably captured by the Imax cameras.

The title refers to Qin Shihuang, who declared himself emperor in 221 B.C. after ruthlessly conquering China's six powerful,

warring states. Despite his military ferocity, Qin was shrewd enough to ensure unification of his empire by imposing a common system of weights, measures, money and language.

Imax awes us with the majestic scale of the Great Wall of China, whose construction Qin initiated, and an astounding burial tomb that was uncovered in 1974 and contains 7,000 life-size clay statues of Qin's advisers, warriors, horses and weaponry.

Rounding out the production is the precise but passionate voice of Christopher Plummer. His narration, which succinctly paraphrases speeches of the Chinese actors, spares us the clumsiness of dubbing or the annoying need to read subtitles.

Anyone uneasy about seeing a movie co-produced by the regime whose soldiers slaughtered pro-democracy students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square last spring should be aware the project was completed long before the killings occurred.

Ironically, though, *The First Emperor* shows us how Qin successfully stifled criticism of his most brutal and authoritarian measures by having 460 leading intellectuals buried alive.

The more things change. . .

A lavish cinematic portrait of an innovator and tyrant

BY STEPHEN GODFREY
The Globe and Mail

HULL

THE FIRST Emperor of China, the controversial new IMAX-OMNIMAX film that is a \$6.7-million Chinese-Canadian co-production, was finally screened for the press this week — although Canadians will have to wait a few days longer than planned to see it.

Like everything else about the new Canadian Museum of Civilization, whose CinéPlus theatre the lavish 40-minute film was intended to inaugurate, the First Emperor of China is late in being shown to the public, but — unlike everything else about the museum — not because it wasn't ready. Minister of Communications Marcel Masse decided to bump the film from yesterday's official opening of the museum in light of the recent political violence in China. The film will now be shown at the museum starting July 4.

Although no one associated with Department of Communications connected the film's postponement to its content, *The First Emperor* — a co-production of China's Xian Film Studios, the National Film Board and the Canadian Museum of Civilization following nearly eight years of planning and negotiations — does appear to link achievement with suppression. Although attempting to be resolutely ambivalent toward Emperor Qin Shihuang, who lived from BC 259 to 210 and is remembered both as an innovator and a tyrant, the man's achievements and the details of his life far overshadow the tyranny depicted.

Qin is shown initiating large-scale public works projects, which included better roads, transport

canals and a unified Great Wall of China, and conquering six warring states to produce a decade-long peace and unify China for 2,000 years. He also is given quite a touching death scene (his alchemists, attempting to give him eternal life, produced the opposite effect by prescribing a medication of mercury pills), and the film rightly regards with awe his underground tomb, discovered only 15 years ago, consisting of 7,000 individual life-size terra cotta soldiers representing his army.

Against all that are two short sequences that show his intolerance, and have been compared by some observers to the recent suppression in Tiananmen Square. In one, Emperor Qin presides over a massive book-burning to discourage freedom of thought, a move which prompted the outrage of the scholars and intellectuals of his time. "But Qin had a solution for that," says narrator Christopher Plummer at his most mellifluous. "He buried 460 of them alive. The criticism stopped."

We see scholars trying to scramble out of a pit as soldiers spear them and shuffle in dirt. It's a gruesome sight, but it's brief. In the context of the film, it's a minor cavil with a man who is seen to have been such a skilful leader (and have enough energy left over for 3,000 concubines).

The First Emperor of China is a thorough if somewhat stolid costume epic, with some magnificent crowd sequences tied together by the intrigues from Qin's complicated life. The very first scene shows the sheer scale of the project; soldiers on horseback move across the huge screen and then one notices hundreds more snaking into the distance as far as the eye can see. Directors Tony Ianzelo and Liu Hao Xue had the use of as many as 2,000 extras (many of them recruited from the People's Liberation Army). The film's most impressive sequence is a victory celebration by the Emperor at his palace. It is an overpowering meeting of sight and sound, as 1,300 richly costumed musicians in beat drums, crash cymbals and strike gongs in unison.

But the effect of the film is muted by its surprisingly washed-out colors and low contrasts. Some of this stems from the fact that the film, originally conceived for an IMAX screen (the largest rectangular screen in the world), was expanded and distorted to fill the dome-like shape of the OMNIMAX screen. As well, the weather did not co-operate with the filmmakers, and many of the outdoor scenes are drab and grey. The sheer size of the image also works against some sequences; a horse galloping across the screen in closeup looks more like a huge mudslide, as lines and details are simply lost in the overwhelming scale.

As is the case with many projects of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the film's role within a museum setting is open for debate. The museum's director, George MacDonald, says it is the first in a series of films about world cultures that will "help us regain those distant landscapes" through the IMAX credo of "It's almost like being there." But the story and every shot of the film on storyboard was finalized before the museum even became involved, so despite putting up about one third of the cost, the museum had no say in what might be emphasized or explained, or anything else touching on the museum's special role as an educator.

Nor has there been any attempt to elaborate what is in the film by accompanying demonstrations or exhibitions — although there is a book connected with the film that sells for \$20 in softcover and \$30 in hardcover. Add that to the \$4.50 that everyone — children, adults, and senior citizens alike — will have to pay just to see the film in addition to entrance fees to the museum, and one understands why the new CinéPlus theatre is being referred to by some staff members as "the cash register." Given the financial pressures on a museum which, two days before opening, still looked more like a war zone than a cultural centre, that cash register is going to have to keep very busy.

Ungoverning China

■ Two June 1989 Newspaper Articles on China

Crushing of Protest Weakens Ability Of Any Successor Leadership to Rule

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

Special to The New York Times

BEIJING, June 4 — Whoever wins the power struggle now under way in the Communist Party will find the challenge of ruling China incomparably greater after this weekend.

By ordering troops to fire on unarmed crowds, the leadership has created an event that almost surely will haunt the Government for years to come. It is likely to be seen not only as a sign of the party's remoteness from popular opinion, but as a powerful rallying cry for change.

In South Korea, the Government suppressed a popular uprising in the south-

It's difficult to
imagine a more
damaging action.

ern city of Kwangju in 1980, killing hundreds, and the incident became an increasing burden on the authorities. "Kwangju" became a byword for the insensitivities and intolerance of the regime, and it still casts a shadow over the Korean political process.

The Stuff of Legend

The massacre at Tiananmen Square this weekend seems likely to become China's Kwangju, a part of the folklore of resistance that will magnify the shortcomings of the Government and stain its prestige.

It would have been difficult for the Beijing authorities to devise a more comprehensive method of undermining their own support. The student movement for democracy, until it was violently crushed, achieved unparalleled support throughout the nation, drawing more than a million people to the streets of the capital at one point and hundreds of thousands more throughout the nation.

"No movement in Chinese history has had such support," a physician said today as he took a break from treating students with bullet wounds. "This is different from all previous movements."

In addition, repressing students is a particularly dangerous business in China because of a traditional respect for students and scholars. Students also have a long record of being in the vanguard of the nation, so repression of students is regarded by many as almost unpatriotic.

Right to Rule Undermined

A few weeks ago, it would have been difficult enough for the Communist Party to regain a moral legitimacy, the "mandate of heaven" that ever since imperial days has been the justification for political power in China. But now, after troops have killed students, it will be doubly difficult for any leader to rebuild that reservoir of good will that is at the foundation of political power in China.

It is still far from clear who the next leader will be. Prime Minister Li Peng has gained some ground in the power struggle, but he still is widely regarded as little more than the mouthpiece of several old officials who are not well-liked because of their perceived hostility toward the nation's program of economic and political restructuring.

Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party General Secretary and Mr. Li's rival, has dropped from sight and is believed to have been stripped of his power though not of his post. One man who is often mentioned as a likely replacement for Mr. Zhao is Qiao Shi, a Politburo member whose attitudes toward political and economic issues are scarcely known.

Aversion to Unrest

The temptation facing any new leader will be to try to buy support, perhaps with new subsidies for food or housing. The risk of such attempts to buy support is that these will simply involve more spending and faster growth of the money supply. That would add to inflationary pressures, which is one of the nation's greatest single causes of political instability.

There are other economic difficulties that will face a next leader, and they are likely to compound the tension between the need for austerity to deal with inflation and the need for spending to increase political support.

Strikes seem to be a growing possibility, and they could begin in connection with the killings on Tiananmen Square. There is a deep fear in the Chinese leadership of industrial strikes; already in Shanghai, a small strike began today to show support for the democracy movement in the capital.

Foreign investment and tourism are also certain to fall, after a period in which scenes of unrest in China are beamed to the West. It will take time for foreign investors to regain the image of China as a stable place.

Diplomatic difficulties may also be-

come more complex as a result of the suppression of the student demonstrators. President Bush has deplored the use of violence in China, and such criticisms are likely to be deeply resented within the Chinese Foreign Ministry. If there is further suppression, the Bush Administration will be required, for political reasons, to take some further action.

China's next leader will also be in a more precarious position than before because in the last two weeks the army has demonstrated some independence, as have the old Communist Party advisers. They may give the next leaders less room for initiative than before.

Much of a future leader's ability to get results will depend on his moral legitimacy, and that may be difficult without a reappraisal of the student demonstrations. There is a troubling analogy with the early years of Nationalist Party rule over the unified Chinese mainland. The Nationalists, under Chiang Kai-shek, tried to establish order, and they became infamous for their harsh treatment of intellectuals and leftists.

The perception that the Nationalists were pointlessly cruel became an albatross for the Nationalists, and slowly undermined the public assessment of their right to rule as well as their ability to control strikes and other forms of unrest.

Crackdown in Beijing: Now the Shock Waves

For Students in U.S., Rage and Grief

By FOX BUTTERFIELD

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, June 4 — Chinese students in the United States reacted with outrage today to the army's killing of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing, saying in a letter to President Bush that the Chinese Communist Party had turned into an "evil fascist dictatorship."

The students, members of China's elite and in many cases the children of Communist Party officials, called on Mr. Bush and Congress to withdraw the American Ambassador from Beijing, James R. Lilley; to bar further American investment in China, and to cut off military exchanges between the two countries.

"This is an unprecedented massacre, an atrocity," said Pei Min Xin, a graduate student at Harvard University from Shanghai. Mr. Pei is a member of a new group, the Chinese Students Autonomous Association, that plans to hold demonstrations in front of the White House on Monday and to present President Bush with a letter of protest.

'Never Before'

"Never before in Chinese history has the army killed peaceful students," Mr. Pei said.

"Chiang Kai-shek wasn't so bad," he said. "The Japanese didn't do it in World War II. Even the most notorious figure in Chinese history, the first Em-

'Chiang Kai-shek wasn't so bad,' says an outraged Chinese man.

peror, only buried 400 scholars alive, and his name is synonymous with despotism." Mr. Pei was referring to the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, who ruled more than 2,000 years ago.

Mr. Pei and other Chinese students in Boston, New York and San Francisco said they would work to organize an independent student organization whose goal would be to overthrow the Communist Government.

Such an openly proclaimed policy would have been unthinkable only a few weeks ago, and it indicated how the events in Beijing have changed the Chinese political equation, at least for students abroad. There are an estimated 27,000 Chinese students in the United States.

Old Guard's Role Seen

One student in New York, who asked that his name not be used, said that his father and mother, both ranking Com-

munist officials, felt betrayed by the killings and had told him by telephone today that they planned immediately to resign from the party.

According to accounts that many students said they heard by telephone from relatives and friends in Beijing, the violent crackdown seemed to reflect the enhanced power of Yang Shangkun, the 82-year-old state President and a leader of the party's old-guard conservatives.

Mr. Yang, the only octogenarian left on the party Politburo and a veteran of the Long March of the 1930's, is also vice chairman of the party's powerful Central Military Commission. Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader, is not a member of the Politburo, but he is chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Yang Family's Strength

Although it is unclear which army units were involved in the killings, several students said today that their friends in China had told them that the troops belonged to the 27th Army. That would be significant because the long-time political commissar of the 27th Army, Chi Haotian, is now the army's Chief of Staff.

Mr. Chi is also widely believed to be a son-in-law of Mr. Yang.

In addition, Mr. Yang's younger brother, Yang Baibing, is the chief of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army, a pivotal position.

Some analysts said they believed that President Yang was installed in his post by senior conservatives as a watchdog because of his relative good health despite his age. President Yang is thought to be skeptical of the economic changes instituted over the last decade by Mr. Deng.

Possible Rivalry With Deng

While Mr. Yang worked under Mr. Deng in the 1950's and 1960's — he was director of the General Office of the Party Central Committee when Mr. Deng was the Communist Party's General Secretary — there could be a rivalry between the men, both personal and ideological.

The analysts noted that Mao Zedong called the 27th Army to Beijing from Central China in 1972 at a time when Marshal Lin Biao challenged Mao or control. In recent years, the 27th Army had been stationed in Inner Mongolia, facing Soviet troops.

Mr. Chi was political commissar of the 27th Army in the 1970's, when it was summoned to the capital. In 1976, after Mao's death, Mr. Chi played a pivotal role in seizing newspaper, radio and television offices in Beijing to thwart Mao's followers, the so-called Gang of Four.

Mr. Chi's career had been in decline in recent years, but in 1987 he was unexpectedly named Chief of Staff of

the army, perhaps because of his ties to Mr. Yang.

A question being asked by some American analysts, as well as by Chinese students in the United States, was whether the army's crackdown in Beijing would mean increased power for Mr. Yang and his relatives, who might constitute a powerful new faction in Chinese politics.

But for Chinese students in the United States, the political intrigue behind the army's brutal repression was for now secondary to the horrifying accounts of violence that were filtering in.

Three students in Boston and New York, speaking separately, said that their relatives in Beijing, all of them leaders of the pro-democracy movement, told them by telephone that one of the most brutal moments came when soldiers surrounded a last group of several thousand demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

According to those accounts, which were impossible to verify, the students realized that they were trapped and negotiated a withdrawal with army officers.

THE FIRST
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China and The Great Ancient Civilizations of Europe and The Americas

The Qin Dynasty 246 B.C.-206 B.C.

This comparative time-line chart shows the Qin dynasty as the founding dynasty of Imperial China, the world's most durable political structure. The chart also shows how the Imperial Chinese civilization relates to other well-known ancient civilizations in the West, in order to place Qin's reign in a historical perspective.

To accompany the
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