

Journal Entry 182 – Thursday, July 1, 2010

I am so glad that I took a vacation! I needed to get away from the monotony of very day life and China has been one heck of a getaway! I love the variety of dishes that I have encountered so far – who would have thought that authentic Chinese cuisine is totally different and tastier than “authentic” Chinese cuisine that is found in the States (and in Mom’s kitchen)? I am putting on weight from eating so much food but these pounds are happy pounds and I am content!

It’s only been three days since I first landed in (Beijing) China but what have I been up to so far?! On the first day I explored the beautiful city of Beijing, I saw the stadium that held the 2008 Olympic Games, I ate a whole lot of food, I did a bunch of shopping and yesterday I decided to head to Xi’an!

Why did I go to Xi’an? Prior to booking my flight to China, I was talking to Sis about my inclination to take a trip to China so that I could explore our heritage. That is when she told me about the famous tomb of China’s first emperor, Emperor Qin that is located in Xi’an (EB: Qin Tomb). I had to check it out so I booked my flight to China and made reservations to head to Xi’an’ ☺

While on tour of the archaeological site, I took copious notes because Sis wants to teach her six grade students about the terracotta soldiers that are found at Emperor Qin’s necropolis once school is back in session from summer vacation. I obliged but I asked her why she couldn’t simply find the information she needed through Google and textbooks. She told me that she wanted to compare the information she found online and in textbooks to the information that the exhibit provides. I’ll be honest – it was a bit

difficult to fully enjoy the experience of the tour when I had to also focus on taking notes. It was a bummer but I will do anything for family!

I am going to transfer my notes onto this journal entry because I don't want to misplace the loose leafs that I took my notes on. I originally took my notes in short hand but I am going to write them out in complete sentences so that Sis can make sense of them. I will also separate the information into categories so Sis won't have a hard time understanding the facts. I'm also going to include side notes and commentary that Sis could use when teaching her students. Here it goes!

Historical Background

- In 247 BCE, a thirteen year old boy by the name of Ying Zheng became king of Qin, which was one of many feudal states in what is now known as present day China (EB: Qin Dynasty; CP pg. 30, pg. 218). → *Ying Zheng was only a couple years older than your incoming six graders!*
- As was customary in all feudal states, a royal tomb was constructed for Ying Zheng once he came into power (CP pg. 31, pg. 220). → *Talk about prestige!*
- The person in charge of the construction plans for Ying Zheng's tomb was originally Lu Buwei, his chancellor. However, "in 237 BCE, Lu Buwei fell from grace and **Li Si**..., one of the ablest men of [Qin's] time" became the new chancellor and took over the construction plans of the tomb (CP pg. 31, pg. 220). → *I wonder what Lu Buwei did that caused him to fall from Ying Zheng's grace! Here's your chance to lecture your students about always doing the right thing and being good, productive citizens.*
- Important: Li Si played an instrumental role during the reign of Emperor Qin. Li Si helped implement "the unification of the empire and" forged "its administrative structures" (CP pg. 31, pg. 220). Li Si "took extraordinary measures to prepare a worthy tomb for his ruler" and "took extraordinary measures to" provide a steady supply of manpower to maintain the imperial necropolis by turning "the area

around the tomb into a government district with its own administrative center” in 231 BCE (CP pg. 31, pg. 220). → *Li Si had a big responsibility! What skills or qualities do you think Li Si possessed that allowed him to accomplish what he did? Are people born with these skills or qualities or do you think people learn these skills or qualities?*

- In 221 BCE when Ying Zheng “unified China under a central government” and thus declared himself “Qin shi huangdi, or the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty”, terracotta soldiers were produced so that they could be included to Qin’s necropolis (CP pg. 30, pg. 218). → *According to Merriam-Webster, a necropolis is “a large elaborate cemetery of an ancient city.” During Qin’s time, Xi’an was known as Xiangyang (CP pg. 31, pg. 221).*
- To glorify Qin’s accomplishments “the design for his tomb... expanded to a much larger scale” and came to include the terracotta army (CP pg. 34, pg. 226; CP pg. 31, pg. 220). → *Qin had one heck of a way of showing off his accomplishments! I wonder how he would feel if he knew he’s still remembered even now! I also wonder what your students would do to show off their accomplishments ☺*

Where are the Terracotta Soldiers?

- The terracotta soldiers can be found in Emperor Qin’s necropolis in modern day Xi’an, China (EB: Qin Tomb). → *Show your students where Xi’an is on a map*
- The soldiers are found in “a cluster of four separate pits” (CP pg. 32, pg. 222). → *We’re not talking about arm pits here!*
- Pit number one “contains the main army in battle formation with more than 6,000 figures of warriors and horses” (CP pg. 32, pg. 222).
- Pit number two contains “various cavalry and infantry units as well as war chariots” (CP pg. 32, pg. 222).
- Pit number three “is the command post, with high-ranking officers and subordinates and a war chariot drawn by four horses” (CP pg. 32, pg. 222).

- Pit number four “did not contain any figures and was probably left unfinished by its builders” (CP pg. 32, pg. 223).
- The pits sit “1,225 meters east of the outer wall” of Emperor Qin’s tomb (CP pg. 32, pg. 222). → *How far is 1,225 meters?*

Production of the Terracotta Soldiers

- The production of the terracotta soldiers began in 221 BCE and stopped after Emperor Qin’s death in 210 BCE (CP pg. 31, pg. 220; CP pg. 30, pg. 218).
- During those 11 years, more than 7,000 figurines were produced, averaging 700 figures per year (CP pg. 36, pg. 230). → *Wow, that’s a lot of terracotta soldiers produced! Here’s a question you could ask your students: If the soldiers were placed side by side in a straight line, how many miles do you think it would take to walk from the first soldier to the last soldier? The circumference of a terracotta soldier’s torso ranged from “85 to 107 centimeters” (CP pg. 36, pg. 231). Here’s another tidbit of fun information: “the overall height of the standing soldiers... varies between 180 to 195 centimeters” – that means that “the soldiers... [were] large, but life size” (CP pg. 36, pg. 231).*
- The terracotta soldiers were made by “staff members from state factories and workers from local workshops” who were potters, not sculptors (CP pg. 35, pg. 228-29). → *Maybe it would be a good idea for you to explain the difference between a potter and a sculptor?*
- Each terracotta soldier was “incised with a stylus or stamped before firing” so that each foreman and his workers were held accountable for production quality (CP pg. 35, pg. 229). → *It is believed that there was “a workforce of about a thousand men” who made the terracotta soldiers (CP pg. 36, pg. 230).*
- It is unknown where the manufacturing of the terracotta soldiers took place since “none of the workshops and kilns have been located” (CP pg. 35, pg. 228).

- There are assumptions that the figures were “formed, fired, and painted near the pits” of the tomb to “avoid costly and hazardous transportation of the semi-finished or finished products” (CP pg. 35, pg. 228).
- During the production of the terracotta soldiers, “there were no long assembly lines with many workers, each performing one small operation. Rather,” there were teams consisting of “perhaps ten workers” who were under the supervision of a foreman. This team then acted as a “self-contained assembly lines that saw [each] figure through all the production stages” (CP 36, pg. 230-31). → *Sort of like little groups that are formed within a classroom!*
- The terracotta soldiers “consists of seven major parts: a plinth, the feet, the legs below the garment, the torso, the arms, the hands, and the head” (CP pg. 36, pg. 230). → *So many body parts make up one soldier!*
- Each individual potter would then take each body part and “fit them together” using wet clay (CP pg. 36, pg. 230). This type of production is called modular production.
- Modular production was “a well-observed sequence of steps in the production process” that allowed work to go smoothly (CP pg. 35, pg. 228). → *A smooth production means more terracotta soldiers can be made!*
- “Once the basic form of the figures was completed, the workers took additional clay to shape details such as those on the shoes and the armor. The greatest care was lavished on the heads. The workers attached or reworked by hand the headgear, hair, ears, eyebrows, eyes, mustaches, and lips” (CP pg. 36, pg. 231). → *The terracotta soldiers are like “Mr. Potato” heads – you assemble all the different pieces together to make one figure!*
- “The figures were kiln fired between 900 and 1050 degrees centigrade” (CP pg. 33, pg. 24).
- The clay that was used to make the soldiers is called “terracotta”, because once the clay goes into the kiln, it becomes “backed earth” (CP pg. 33, pg. 24).

Equipment

- “Clay, firewood, lacquer, and pigments” as well as tubes for the fabrication of “cylindrical parts, such as torsos and arms” were used in the production of the terracotta soldiers (CP pg. 35, pg. 228; CP pg. 36, pg. 230).

Why Were the Terracotta Soldiers Made?

- The terracotta soldiers were made based on the belief that a spiritual realm (afterlife) existed for **eternity**. The afterlife was where those who have passed on from the physical realm (CP pg. 31, pg. 221; Chinese Tombs & Ancient Views of the Afterlife, slide 3). → *If an afterlife exists, does that mean that there are ghost?! What a spooky thought!*
- Evidence of the belief in an afterlife can be found in the construction of elaborate tombs that are filled with items such as “fine vessels, precious stones and rarities” – these items were included in the tombs of the dead so that the spirit of the deceased could use these items in the afterlife (CP pg. 31, pg. 221). → *This fact reminds me of all those times we grew up seeing mom and dad make food offerings to our ancestors!*
- So the terracotta soldiers, which were painted with lacquer, carried weapons that were “used by real warriors” so that they would look as realistic as possible, were to “guard the emperor”, his palace and possessions “in the afterworld” “for eternity” (CP pg. 33, pg. 225; CP pg. 30, pg. 218; CP pg. 37, 233).

The Terracotta Soldiers: Then and Now

- It is believed that Emperor Qin’s tomb may have been “dug up” and “looted long ago” by **General Xiang Yu** in 206 BCE (CP pg. 32, pg. 222; CP pg. 31, pg. 221). → *What does it mean to “loot”?*
- General Xiang Yu also “set... [the] necropolis on fire” (CP pg. 33, pg. 224).
- The fire burnt the structural support beams of the pits, which caused surrounding earth to “slid[e] down and [smash] all the terra-cotta figures” (CP pg. 33, pg. 224).
- “Chinese archaeologists are still excavating” Emperor Qin’s “massive tomb” (CP pg. 30, pg. 218) however, “because the problems of conservation remain

unsolved, excavation work now proceeds at a slow pace” (CP pg. 31, pg. 220). →
What does excavation and conservation mean?

Whew! I am finally done transferring my notes! Rewriting them and adding in comments and questions took quite awhile! I hope Sis finds all of this information helpful!

I couldn't help but try to find similarities between the practice of producing the terracotta soldiers and my daily practice of memorizing Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. For one, when I visited the exhibit, I noticed that the soldiers were packed in tight quarters. It made me wonder whether or not the foremen and potters worked in tight quarters, especially since they worked in mini assembly units. Also, if there were a thousand men working together, I can only imagine that space is limited. If the foremen and potters did work in tight quarters then in terms of space, my daily practice is parallel to the practice of producing the terracotta soldiers because I work in the small confines of my room. I also noticed a similarity between the ideals involved between the two practices – both center around the theme of death. The construction of Emperor Qin's royal tomb and terracotta soldiers are based on the belief of life after death whereas Lincoln's speech was written in response to the numerous lives lost during the American Civil War. Both also share a parallel in remembrance of the dead.

There is a great difference, however, between the two practices. For one, the production of the terracotta soldiers involve a laborious, physical act. The bodies of potters are, I would imagine, moving about as they used tubes to fabricate “cylindrical parts, such as torsos and arms” (CP pg. 36, pg. 230) to create modular body parts that they would then have to fasten together with wet clay (CP 36, pg. 230). Potters also had

to use their fingers to mold details onto the “head gear, hair, ears, eyebrows, eyes, mustaches,... lips” “shoe and armor” of each 7,000+ terracotta soldier (CP pg. 36, 231). My daily practice, on the other hand, is not laborious. I am simply sitting at my desk, in a chair while using my brain to memorize a speech. From time to time, I recite the passages in my mind or out loud so that I can hear and better memorize what I am reading. Furthermore, I am completing my daily practice in solitude whereas the foremen and potters worked together to create one product. Lastly, the social context from the time of the Qin dynasty to now is totally different, not to mention the continents are different. The potters lived during a time of monarchal rule in China whereas I live during a time of democracy in America.

I also tried to find parallels between the practice of producing the terracotta soldiers and my daily practice in terms of how they influence the communities we are in. I am not sure how the construction of Emperor Qin’s elaborate tomb and terracotta soldiers would have sat with his subjects since there are always a wide range of public opinion but I can imagine some people feeling angry that manpower and resources is being wasted for the tomb of one man, others feeling indifferent or feeling a sense of joy that they have work (from producing the terracotta soldiers, etc). I don’t know how Emperor Qin’s building ambitions would have transformed the community but I know for sure that overall, “the pattern of empire [that Qin] established lasted for more than two millennia into the present century” (CP pg. 30, pg. 219). As for my own practice, I know that my reflection upon the words that are spoken in the Gettysburg address have made me more grateful for the people and things I have in life. I have noticed that I am less quick to anger because as cliché as it sounds, things can instantly change and the people you have

in your life now could be gone in an instant. I hope that my kind acts and temperance will have a positive and lasting effect on the people around me 😊

Wow, it's getting late. I am going to get some rest because tomorrow I am heading out to the Great Wall of China, which is also one of Emperor Qin's creations!