



THE GIANT WILD GOOSE PAGODA

The first step
to
researching
the pagoda

- Firstly I will gather sources to get an understanding of what information is available about The Giant Wild Goose Pagoda and its history, also its significance to the people of China and the Emperors.
- I will be looking at various sources such as videos, journals and books that would give me a broad amount of information on this topic.
- When I first heard of this pagoda, I learned that it had a strong connection to Empress Wu Zetian therefore I was intrigued to learn more about this monument and why it was so important during Wu Zetian's reign.

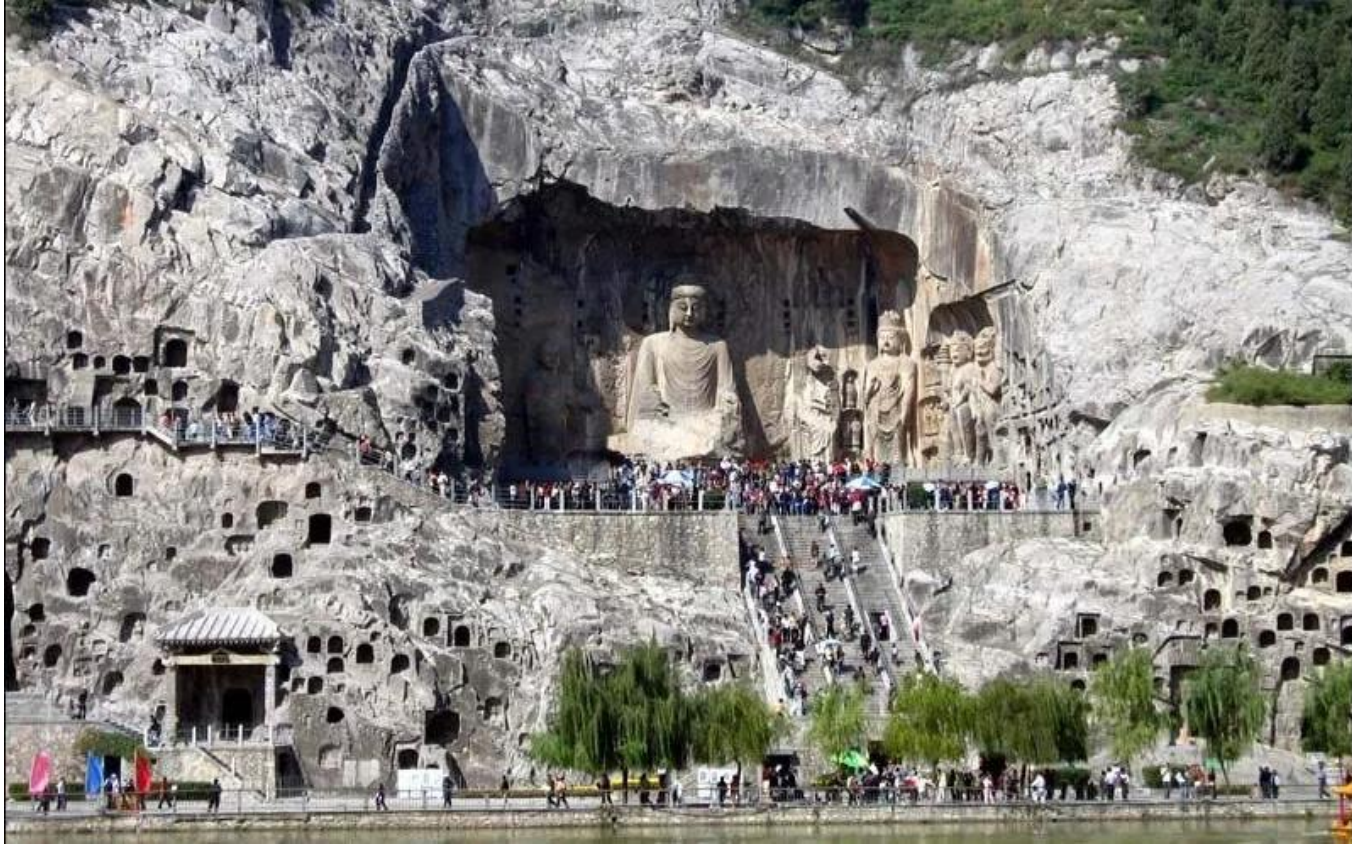
What was the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda used for?

- I researched the pagoda's recent history and past history to see what its importance is to China's past and present. Sources state that Wu Zetian was already a Buddhist and would build pagodas to show that she supported this religion as most of her people followed this religion too.
- Yet some say she used the religion to manipulate to gain more of a following and respect from the people in her Empire.
- The Giant (or Big) Wild Goose Pagoda is today a big tourist spot in Xi'an and is seen by tourists not only from China but from abroad too. Many other attractions have been built in the surrounding area to make it more enjoyable for their visitors.

Who Is Wu Zetian?

- There are many dark stories of this Emperor as there is a lack for evidence to her reign. Many ancient historians took a disliking to her and would tell untrue stories about her after her death.
- This makes it very confusing to understand what could be true and what was false, luckily archaeologists are researching her life and are getting to understand the true Wu Zetian.
- Many sources would tell different versions of different stories which makes it difficult to understand the true characteristics of Wu Zetian and her methods of ruling.
- I found compared to journals, and books written about her by historians, videos looking into the archaeology of the Tang dynasty and the life of Wu Zetian were more convincing to understand her character.
- Because of this I looked into more archaeological sources as I felt I was given more of an accurate history.

The Buildings Importance to Wu Zetian



These holes seen in this picture above are called the Longmen caves, also called grottos. The largest Buddha statue in this picture, the face is said to be carved following Wu Zetian's own facial features. This is another must see that was created during Wu Zetian's reign surrounding the Buddhist faith.

- Chang'an was a large Empire, she needed to gain the people within and outside the city walls' trust, to do this she built perhaps one of the biggest structures in the world at that time.
- It was seen clearly in the city scape; people could see it from miles away because of its incredible height.
- The Giant Wild Goose Pagoda has suffered through two earthquakes and has lost three floors, therefore the building you see in Xi'an today is three stories shorter than the original.
- Wu Zetian spent time as a nun when she was younger therefore shows religion was a big part of her life since she was young, doesn't make it surprising that she would create incredible eye-catching monuments surrounding Buddhism.



How is it significant today?

- There are two things which stand out to me and makes me enjoy studying about Wu Zetian, they are two things which are very forward thinking in my opinion. She was very before her time, had an advanced way of thinking even.
- Firstly, archaeological evidence, for example figurines of women riding horses, this shows that women had way more freedom during Wu Zetian's rule than in previous Chinese history.
- Secondly, she was acquaintances with many international ambassadors, and had a strong relationship with countries outside of Asia which is astonishing for this time.



Conclusion

Although this was a very confusing topic it has also opened my eyes and I think strengthened how I gather information. It has been an enjoyable topic to study and has sparked an interest in me which I hoped studying about Wu Zetian, the monument she built and her impact on Chinese society would do. I hope more information about the Tang Dynasty will come to the forefront so I can learn more about this time that fascinates me.

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