

Historical Notes



Emperor Jianwen was the second Ming Emperor, appointed by his grandfather. He ruled from the time he was twelve to fourteen or fifteen.

Historians dispute the fate Emperor Jianwen and Empress. Some books claim they burned in the fires and their bodies never found. Others believe the two escaped the palace disguised as monks.

General Li did exist. He served Emperor Jianwen, and it was he who opened the door to let in the Emperor's uncle, the Prince of Yan.

The Imperial Palace burned down due to fires that were mysteriously started during the invasion by the Prince of Yan. It is unknown who started the fires.

The Prince of Yan, Emperor Jianwen's uncle, became the third Ming Emperor, and moved the Imperial Palace to Beijing. There he built the new Forbidden City and Imperial Palace, which exists today.

Qi Tan (real name: Qi Tai) did exist as the Minister of War under Emperor Jianwen.

Historians believe he was executed by the Prince of Yan, along with every person on the father and mother's side of the family.

Zheng He did exist. His career started under Emperor Jianwen, but he was made admiral under the Prince of Yan, who became Emperor Yongle, and he is revered as China's greatest admiral. Under his leadership, China's armada was considered the best fleet in the world for many hundreds of years after his death. Historians debate whether or not Zheng He was the first to circumnavigate the globe and find North America, preceding the discoveries by Magellan and Columbus by decades. In 2006, a Chinese map of the world dating back to the early was found and historians think it might be Zheng He's.

Mohaishou is a statue located in the Yungang grottoes outside the Datong volcanoes. It is located in Cave 8, and has three heads, eight arms (not the six the author chose for the book) and rides a bull.