

English Lesson

There is a motto in China: You won't be thought of as a great person till you visit the Great Wall of China.

The Great Wall the China is one of the most impressive sights in the world, an awe-inspiring sight in the world, an architecture. It winds its way over the hilly countryside and the steep mountains with a history almost as long and serpentine as its structure.

Who built the Great Wall and Why?

The construction of the Great wall began when multiple walls of rammed earth were constructed by individual feudalistic states during the Chunqiu period. However, it was built not only by the first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, but was also built and rebuilt by many other dynasties as well as government, and by millions of commoners, laborer's and criminals.

Initially, during the Spring and Autumn Period (770BC-221BC), a duke of the Chu state was the first one to give orders to build a wall along the state borders for the period of individual states. There were separate walls and formed merely a smaller version of the Great Wall.

After the unification of China, Emperor Qin Shihuang of the Qin Dynasty ordered the connection and expansion of these separate walls to form a complete military defense line. This defensive line was called the Great Wall of China.

After Emperor Qin's death in 210BC, the dynasty failed to maintain its power and was taken over by the Han Dynasty where the fortifications were lengthened and strengthen, interlinking the Mongolian borders.

The Great Wall continued to be maintained as well as built by most of the Chinese feudal dynasties. These dynasties include the Northern Qi Dynasty, Sui Dynasty, the Song Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty and the Ming Dynasty. After a few ups and downs, China flourished during the Ming Dynasty as most of the Great Wall was built and rebuilt systematically to prevent further northern invasion.

The construction of the long wall continued for over 2,500 years. The emperors only gave commands, but the actual builders of the wall were soldiers and

commoners as well as conscripted peasants and criminals. During the rule of the Han emperors the labourers were forced to work under dire conditions. This gave the wall a reputation of a notorious place of suffering. There were many poems and legends written during the time spoke of people being buried in the nearby mass grave. Some say people were buried within the wall itself. There were no human remains to be found, However the grave pit do point out that many workers must have died due to hunger, accidents and exhaustion.

What were the other purpose of the Great Wall of China?

1) Boosting the economy and the national integration between Han people and nomadic nations

In earlier times, the Central Plain to the north of the Great Wall develop an agrarian economy while the nomadic nation in the south progressed in animal husbandry. The two economies exchanged goods with each other along the Great Wall. The habitants of the north traded cloth and grains in exchange for horses and animal products, such as leather and string, from the nomadic tribes in the south. This boosted not only the economy but also had a positive impact on the cultural exchange as well as national integration.

2) Safeguarding the Silk Road

The Great Wall also served as a protecting or guiding saint of this new international route which opened in 138 BC. Though the Silk Road enabled relations between the Han Dynasty and the western regions, the northern frontier was harassed by the nomads during that time, and safety along the Silk Road was not guaranteed. The Han court thus decided to construct Great Wall sections to ensure stability and peace along the northern boundary. In this way, the Great Wall also guaranteed normal operation of international trade along the silk road.

The Great Wall's Structure - Walls, Watchtowers and Fortresses

The Great Wall was far more than just a wall. It was an integrated military defense system with watchtowers for surveillance, fortresses for commands and walls for protection.

Fortresses were located at intersections along the trade routes where the soldiers and horses along with ladders were stationed. These passes were topped by towers

which were used to track troop movements during battles and to watch others beyond the long wall. They were called the signal towers or watch towers. As the name suggests, signal towers were used for military

communications by using a beacon in the dark or smoke signals during daytime. Apart from these methods, firing guns, beating clappers or raising banners were also used to communicate. The signal tower were built on hilltops for better visibility. The lower levels of the signal towers were used as rooms for soldiers and storage, and also as sheepfolds and stables. The most essential part of the defensive system was the 23-26 feet high wall. These walls were built using tamped earth between wooden boards, stone and brick mixture, or planks and pilings.

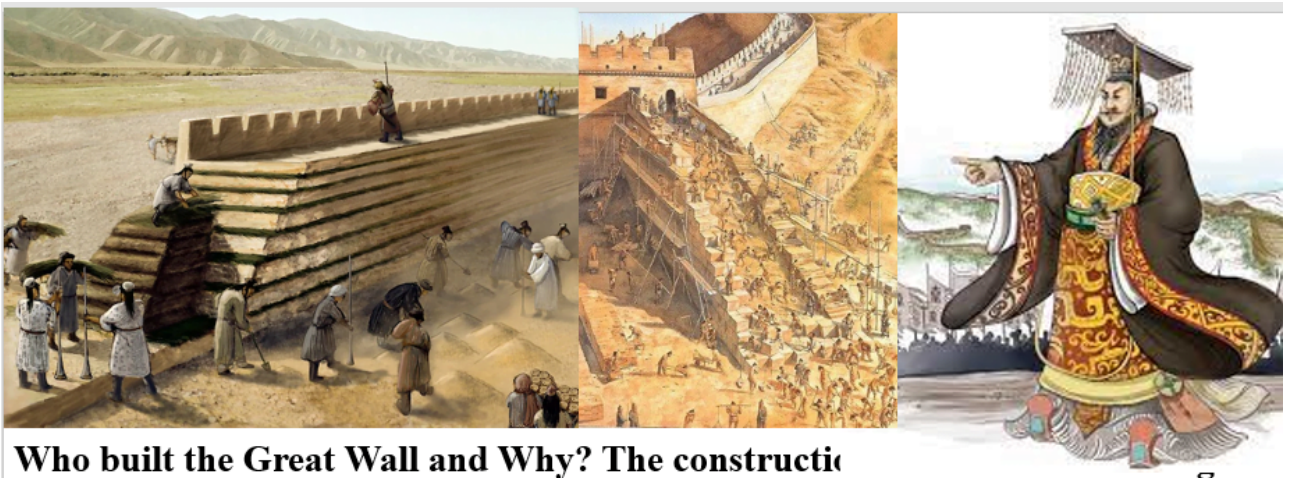
Great Wall Culture

The Great Wall is a potent Chinese cultural icon. Its watchtowers and fortresses depict China's cultural of grand projects, determined resistance and national pride. It also showcases its extravagant architecture and art.

The Great Wall was granted the status of a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987 for being one of the largest man-made structures. The Great Wall of China was originally built keep people out of China, but it now welcomes millions of visitors each year. This influx of tourists has resulted in the deterioration of the wall, which has led to preservation imitative by the Chinese government



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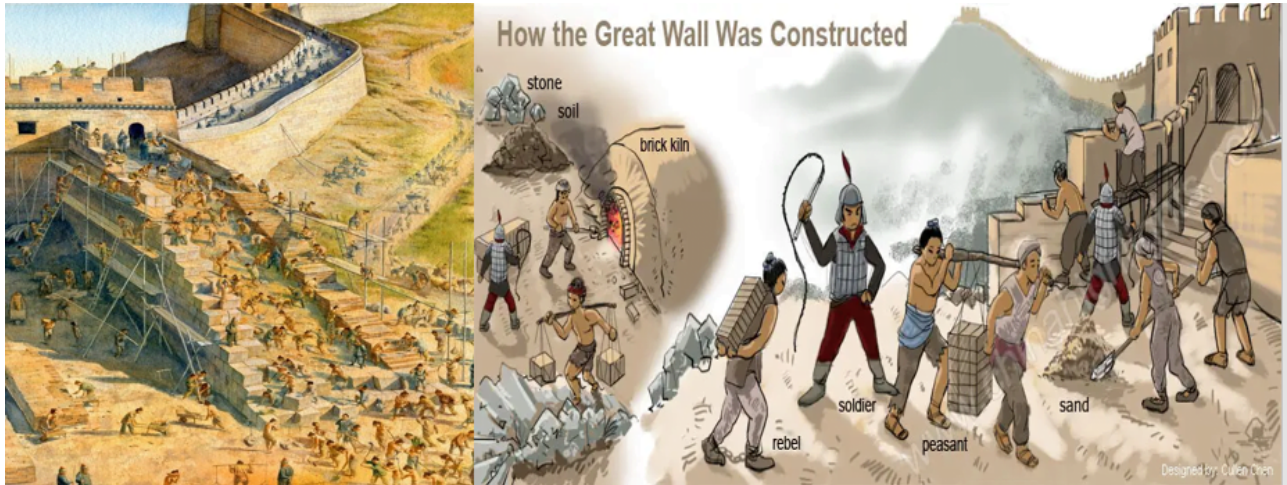
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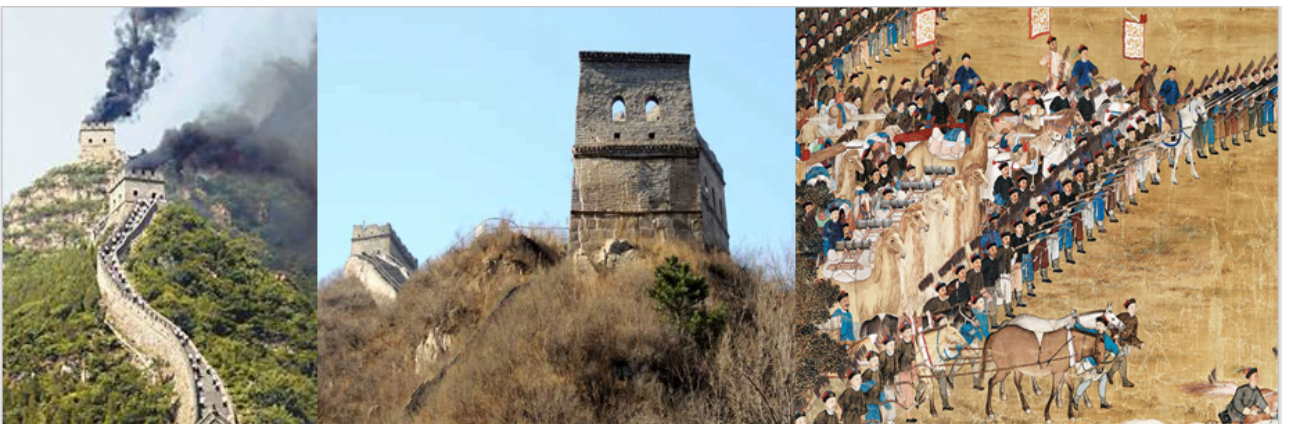
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