

THROUGHOUT THE GREAT WALL

□ Written by DONG YAOHUI □ Translated by WANG JING



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Dongyaohui

Famous expert in the Great Wall issue, the first person that walks through the Great Wall by foot and accompanies foreign leaders to visit the Great wall for many times.

Let's follow him, Go through space and time to come near the Great Wall. Listen to his words about the Great Wall that has ever been told to American President.



不到长城
非好汉

毛泽东

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Overlooking the remaining ramparts zigzagging on the mountain ridge, we would feel our ancestors' expectation for more than two thousand years.

The Great Wall is a milestone in the history of China. It is an important cultural heritage of human beings. Nowadays it is not only an ancient building, but also a symbol of China and the Chinese Nation's specific history and culture, as well as cultural fortune shared by the world. To be acquainted with the Great Wall—the cultural heritage of the world—can be greatly meaningful to the study of human beings' cultural evolution, and be particularly helpful to recognize cultural diversity in the world.



The Great Wall has great and rich historical, artistic and scientific value. It is a wonder in the architectural history. The construction environment and dwellers along it contain rich immaterial culture as well as material culture. Standing in the great wall zigzagging along a strain of lofty and precipitous peaks towards the direction of rising sun, we can enjoy the beautiful scenery that it is dyed golden in the gorgeous rosy cloud of dawn. Splendid!



To feel the material and spirit of the Great Wall

In the history of China, the Great Wall came into being as a result of military conflicts and served as a permanent defense works. The Great Wall often brings us to think about at once the strong ramparts for offense and defense, and flames of war on it. But technically speaking, those things we recall cannot stand for the Great Wall on the whole, since it was an optimizing defense system. Combats and wars scarcely happened on it, and its sections that witnessed the conflicts are still less. Therefore, the Great Wall was rather than a means to prevent warfare.

The Great Wall is an excellent representation of the human civilization.
It stands for wisdom and beauty.



Making use of natural barriers, the construction of the Great Wall neatly connects separate rampart or ramparts, single fortress or fortresses, and also dotted beacon towers, roads and appurtenant works. In the defense system of the Great Wall, ramparts are the main line, and passes are defensive strongholds, which altogether lead the works to the defense in depth. Each section of the Great Wall runs thousands of kilometers or much longer, and sections on the whole make the Great Wall a linear structure, and a huge work.

■ The Great Wall came from the need for life safety

The Great Wall can trace back to the Spring and Autumn Period¹ in 7th century B.C., while constructing ramparts as defense was much earlier. When the primitive men evolved from the stage that they only knew to make several pieces of leaves as skirts to the higher stage that they went out of caves and entered clan society, they began to dig entrenchments and build ramparts around their habitation. That has been proved by a lot of archaeological findings. Banpo in Xi'an is a typical matrilineal village site of clan community, around the habitation of which there is a defensive entrenchment 5 to 6 meters deep and wide. The cob wall found in Longshan cultural dwelling place in Hougang Anyang is some 70 meters long and 2 to 4 meters wide, located to the south and the west of Longshan cultural site. Cob walls also appear in cities of ancient time, such as ancient city sites in Henan Province, Wangchenggang in Dengfeng and Pingliangtai in Dazhu village, Huaiyang.

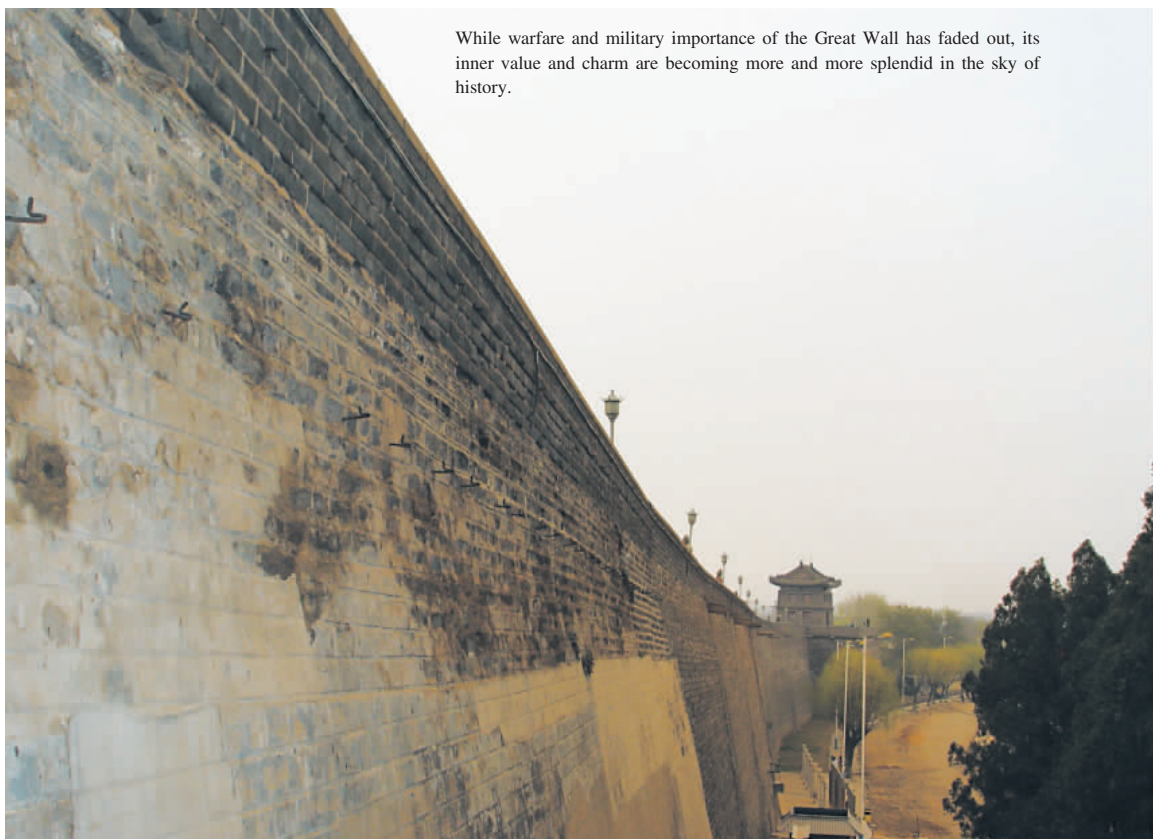
Those entrenchments and ramparts were built only for the defense against beasts and other hostile tribes. The deep entrenchments were impassable to

¹ The Spring and Autumn Period, formerly 722–481 B.C. as covered by *The Spring and Autumn Annals* attributed to Confucius, now generally considered to last 770–476 B.C. .

the deadly animals, and could effectively hold back attacks of the latter. Even if the enemy thought out the solution at last, warriors on the rampart had been ready for the battle in advance.

In 21st century B.C., with percentage of agriculture and animal husbandry in productivity enormously increased, dominant position in society occupied by women was gradually taken over by men. Primitive society disintegrated, and China was pushed forward into slave society. The new period witnessed rapid evolution and maturity of the city defense. It is said that Gun, father of Yu in the Xia Dynasty, was the inventor of the construction techniques of the city wall. When Gun obeyed Yao's order to control flood, he mainly used long dikes. Later he applied the technique to the construction of the city wall. The earliest ancient document records that once people made earth dikes to prevent flood, the function of which is as same as nowadays' flood protection dikes along major rivers.

While warfare and military importance of the Great Wall has faded out, its inner value and charm are becoming more and more splendid in the sky of history.



When Tang of the Shang Dynasty overthrew the Xia Dynasty, slave society of China moved on significantly. Xibo was a capital of the Shang Dynasty that set up between 16th century B.C. and 14th century B.C., and has a long history of more than 3,600 years. The basic shape of the city is rectangular. From north to south it measures 1,700 meters long, and from east to west 1,200 meters. In the Shang Dynasty, the site of capital was changed for many times, and in its last move Pan Geng chose Yin. Today when people visit the Yin site in Xiaotun Village, Anyang, Henan Province, they might imagine their ancestors thousands years ago leading a simple, placid and happy life. During large-scale archaeological excavations, archaeologists have found large numbers of buildings, temples, dwelling places, tombs, etc. along the Huan River within 5 kilometers around both sides. From the southwest to the northeast sides, there is a long entrenchment 750 meters long, and 5 to 10 meters deep, the widest part of which measures 20 meters. The entrenchment is a slope, and earth dug from which was piled up in the inner side of it. It once functioned as the defense for protecting the capital of Yin.

After Emperor Wu of the Zhou Dynasty perished the Shang Dynasty, he awarded large feod and people attached to it to royal family members, rulers of states and subordinates with achievements. Therefore, in this period, besides the royal construction of city walls, constructions by all the states were prosperous, which enabled the states to strengthen and develop their reign center. In the West Zhou period, city walls were mainly made with earth, and plank construction appeared, in which people filled up rectangular wood molds with earth, and then rammed it down. When a layer was made like this, the mold was lifted up and refilled with earth, and then rammed down again. So on and so forth, layers were built to the planned height.

After the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, step by step,

states fought more for annexing others than for only controlling them. Therefore, the scale of war and its fierceness enlarged. With infantry and cavalry took the place of soldiers on chariots, military force input in a single battle and the related maneuvering range, campaigning duration, strategic and tactic level all increased. The aim of campaign in this period was to seize more territories, crucial strategic places and control power.

In order to effectively guard against strong neighbors' sudden attack, all the states early or late used techniques of building *Liecheng* (serial ramparts) and dikes to construct city defense along the frontier where foreign attacks were latent. Some states gradually set up city walls between separate serial ramparts and sealed off passes. Others expanded the huge dikes along big rivers, and made dikes connected with strategic places, hence the Great Wall defense of hundreds or thousands *li* long came into being.

At the same time, for defending against attacks from the northern nomad, dynasties of Qin, Yan and Zhao also set up “Serial ramparts”, a range of fortresses in



Every brick of the Great Wall has a splendid history and great strength.

border districts, and thus the continuous Great Wall took shape. Later, frequent warfare resulted in more and more constructions of fortified military strongholds and ramparts along the border. A great number of message transferring beacon towers, on the other hand, were built between the Great Wall and military command posts or capitals.

■ The Great Wall guaranteed peace and tranquility

Regimes in all ages in the Central Plains¹ standing for the farming nationality were threatened by the northern nomad in various degrees. From the Stone Age to the Shang and Zhou dynasties, there came into two big economic districts in north and south, i.e., the nomadic economy in the north and the farming economy in the south respectively. The former was in the Mongolia Plateau and desert, keeping moving from time to time. The latter was in the Yellow River and the Yangtse River valleys, always pursuing settlement. Therefore, the disparity between the north and the south not only existed in the economic developing sequence, but also in culture. The two economic modes are interrelated and conflicting. They needed and excluded each other simultaneously. Consequently, the two economic districts kept fusing and developing in the long and incessant struggle.

Before the Great Wall was built, in the vast territory of China, there was boundless grassland in the north where natural conditions fit for stock raising and nationalities of all ages were used to nomadic life. There also were the Central Plains where fertile alluvial plains and foothills naturally fit for farming. Between the stock raising district and

¹ The Central Plains, i.e. the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, comprising most of Henan Province, the western part of Shandong Province, and the southern parts of Hebei and Shanxi provinces.

the farming district there was no insurmountable natural barrier, which was favorable to nationalities' association, but at the same time was prone to produce frictions. Since the highly flexible cavalry appeared after saddle and bridle had been created, the nomad was strengthened and began to give great military pressure on the farming nationality for quite a long time.

Although it could not thoroughly solve the problem of the nomad's intrusion and harassment, the farming regime thought out a defense means that did work, i.e., to build the Great Wall. The lofty ramparts could not totally destroy the enemy cavalry, but were effective to some extent. The Great Wall was a defense work in its construction form. Its function was to

The Great Wall extends and infuses new vigor into history.





The ancient Chinese people created the Great Wall at the cost of arduous work and lives.

protect the nation's interests and the people's safety. From the Qin and Han dynasties to the Ming Dynasty, the Great Wall mainly served as a resistance against the nomad and a protector of the farming civilization.

The first Emperor of the Qin Dynasty¹ had the Great Wall built in the north area, and expelled Xiongnu² to the north of the Yinshan Mountains³. Later, along the Great Wall, there hardly happened massive intrusions by Xiongnu. Hu Hai, the second Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, was fatuous. It was he that broke up his predecessor's dream of having the throne kept forever by his offspring. In his reigning time, the Central Plains was in

1 Qinshihuang, named Ying Zheng (259–210 B.C.), who unified China for the first time in history.

2 Xiongnu or Hun, ancient nomadic people living in the north of China.

3 The Yinshan Mountains, lying along the northern periphery of North China Plain, and natural border between Hans and minority nomads in ancient time.

chaos, and Xiongnu came back. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty dispatched a lot of forces to the north to suppress Xiongnu, which resulted in heavy loss of the intruder and extreme misery of the people. Later on, the Great Wall was built in the districts frequently harassed by Xiongnu. In the meantime, administrative divisions such as Jun-Xian was established, a large number of inlanders were ordered to move to the Great Wall area, and the policy of stationing troops to open up wasteland and garrisoning the frontier was carried out. Because of the tight defense of the Han Dynasty, the cavalry of Xiongnu had no chance to attack at all, and their life might even be threatened.

In the golden ages of the Tang Dynasty, China was one of the strongest countries in the world in culture, politics, economy, diplomacy, etc. Due to

The Great Wall is a cultural heritage of the world and a sign of human civilization. The Great Wall belongs to the whole world.

