

The Flying Machine by Ray Bradbury

FACTS

The Great Wall of China is the collective name of a series of fortification systems generally built across the historical northern borders of China to protect and consolidate territories of Chinese states and empires against various nomadic groups of the steppe and their polities.

The Great Wall of China is the world's longest wall and biggest ancient architecture. It is 21 106 kilometers long.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered construction of the Great Wall around 221 B.C.

The labor force that built the wall was made up largely of soldiers and convicts. It is said that as many as 400 000 people died during the wall's construction; many of these workers were buried within the wall itself.

In total the Great Wall of China took more than 2 000 years to build – between 770BC and 1633 AD. However, its construction was completed in stages – spanning over several dynasties and leaderships. The most recent portion was built during The Ming Dynasty.

Apart from defense, other purposes of the Great Wall have included border controls, allowing the imposition of duties on goods transported along the Silk Road, regulation or encouragement of trade and the control of immigration and emigration.

The defensive characteristics of the Great Wall were enhanced by the construction of watch towers, troop barracks, garrison stations, signaling capabilities through the means of smoke and fire, and the fact that the path of the Great Wall also served as a transportation corridor.

The Great Wall is not a continuous line: there are side walls, circular walls, and sections with no wall (high mountains or rivers form a barrier instead.) The average height of the Great Wall at Badaling and Juyong Pass is 7.88 meters, and the highest place is 14 meters high.

In December 1987 the Great Wall was placed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO.