



Non-Fiction  
Group 1

# The Tales of the Great Wall

*Annette Lam Kwan Kiu, 8, Marymount Primary School*

The Great Wall of China is not only a display of culture in China, but also one of the marvellous grandeurs of the world.

The Great Wall is also named as “Wan Li Chang Cheng” which starts from Hushan in Liaoning in the east and ends at Jiayuguan Pass in Gansu in the west, stretching approximately 8,851.8 km long across the northern China. The Great Wall was originally built for military function by Yan, Zhao and Qin as a defensive fortification. It began as independent walls for different states. Thanks to Qin Shihuang’s efforts, those independent sections were being unified and further extended as a front line defence. The Great Wall was thus formed.

Besides Qin Dynasty (221 BC – 206 BC), Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) also played an important role in repairing and reinforcing the Great Wall with the use of bricks and stones instead of rammed earth. At Ming Dynasty, the Great Wall (as confirmed by the new survey) was already up to 8,851.8 km in length.

To me, the construction of the Great Wall is a myth. I wonder what people and what strength they needed to build such a Great Wall! It was often said that they were soldiers, common people and criminals and many of them died during its construction. I feel very grieved when I learnt that they were simply buried into the wall after they died. I think, though they were not great heroes, they had devoted their lives in building the wall and we should at least pay some respect to them.

Presently, the Great Wall is no longer for military defence and many sections after repairing have been opened to the public for scenic sight. Badaling is the most famous and spectacular part that attracts lots of attention and receives the majority of visitors. So, it’s no wonder why most of the foreign leaders or government heads visit Badaling when they visit China. Over the years, more than 400 world leaders had visited Badaling e.g. President Voroshilov of USSR, President Ronald Reagan, President George Walker Bush, Queen Elizabeth II, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Emperor Akihito etc.

The question whether “the Great Wall is truly visible from the moon?” does arouse my curiosity. Based on the information I searched from the internet, “...the apparent width of the Great Wall from the moon is the same as that of a human hair viewed from 3.2 km away...” Here, I know what the first astronaut of China, Yang Liwei stated – he had not been able to see the Great Wall from the moon – is definitely true.

The Great Wall is one of the world’s greatest cultural and natural heritages, everyone of us has the responsibility to protect it e.g. people living around or visiting the Great Wall should not take away the bricks or do anything like littering or graffiti to defect it. As a primary student aged 8, I will try my best to convey this message to my classmates, friends, relatives and everyone I meet in my life in a hope to bring the Great Wall to become a legend with an endless life.



Non-Fiction  
Group 2

# The Great Wall of China

*Petrus Fong, 9, Kingston International School*

**T**he Great Wall of China is one of the greatest wonders of the world. It was built more than 2,000 years ago and it plays a very important role in Chinese history. It is the symbol of the spirit of the Chinese nation and the wisdom and tenacity of Chinese ancestors. Because of its valuable contribution to the military, culture, architecture, technology and art in ancient China, it was listed by the UNESCO as a world cultural heritage site in 1987.

## **The historical background of the Great Wall**

During Chunqiu Period and the Warring States Period, the states of Chu, Qin, Qi, Wei, Han, Yan, Zhao constructed walls around their borders for self-defence purpose. After Qin Shi Huang united the whole kingdom, he joined the defence sections of Qin, Yan and Zhao. Later, Emperor Qin added more new sections so the wall became longer and bigger and it was called Great Wall. The wall continued to extend and reinforce during Han, Sui, and Northern Dynasties. The Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties did nothing to the wall. During Ming dynasty, they improved their building skill by using bricks and stones to construct a stronger and more elaborate wall. The wall grew the length of 5,660 kilometres. Over 25,000 watchtowers were constructed on the wall. They built the Liaodong Wall (the agriculture heartland) in order to protect the incursions of Mongol raiders. Towards the end of the Ming Dynasty, Wu Sangui opened the gates of Shanhaiguan Pass (the main pass to prevent Manchus from entering the Chinese heartland) and let the Manchus cross the Great Wall. They seized Beijing and established the Qing Dynasty. The Qing emperors stopped repairing and constructing the Great Wall since all barbarians were under their control.

## **The wriggling dragon**

Building from 3rd century BC to 17th century AD, the Great Wall of China is more than 20,000 kilometres long. It is also called Long Wall of Ten Thousand Li. It extends from Shanhaiguan in the east to Jiayuguan in the west by the way of Hebei, Beijing, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi and Gansu. It looks like a gigantic dragon wriggling its way across

deserts, grasslands, mountains and plateaus. Its main body consists of walls, watchtowers, fortresses, passes and horse tracks. It is made of tampered earth, brick, stone, wood and other materials. It is the perfect masterpiece that can be seen from the moon.

### **The purposes of the Great Wall**

The main purpose of Great Wall in ancient times was to protect the invasions of the barbarians from the north. Besides the military purpose, the Great Wall used as borders' immigration and emigration control, encouragement in trade, imposing import and export goods tax along the Silk Road and the transportation corridor of the Silk Road. Nowadays, however, barbarians have changed. The purpose of the Great Wall has changed too. Because of its architectural grandeur and historical significance, it attracts several millions of tourists and adventurous explorers all over the world to visit every year. No wonder the people like saying, "One who fails to reach the Great Wall would not be regarded as a hero." The most popular tourist areas are the sections in Beijing like North Pass of Juyonguan (Badaling), West Pass of Jiayuguan, Pass of Shanhaiguan (Number One Pass Under Heaven), and South East of Jinshanling (Mutianyu Great Wall).

### **The cultural influence**

Great Wall plays a significant role for Chinese culture and it preserves foreign barbarians' customs. The most famous legend is about Meng Jiangnu. 800 miles of the walls collapsed as Meng Jiangnu cried grievously for her husband who died while building the wall. Today we can still read the books or watch traditional operas about the legend. Other references like Tch'en Lin's Chinese literature, "Soldier's Ballad" (c. 2,000AD) and Tu Fu' poems (712-770) also reflected the political and social culture at that time. There were many popular Great Wall stories in Ming Period like Yuan Chonghuan, Li Zicheng and Wu Sangui.

Because the emperors forced the people to build the wall, many people migrated to the north. Although the south and north people have many conflicts, their agricultural and nomadic civilizations gradually integrated. Starting from Han Period, the contact between the westerners and Chinese increased through the trade from the Silk Road. It created more opportunity for the people to exchange their political, social and economical ideas. Some civilizations of ancient China are preserved in the tamped-earth sections of towers in Western Han in Gansu Province. The perfect masonry building knowledge of the wall in Ming Dynasty is still preserved today.

### **The Great Wall is under siege**

When we are enjoying the beautiful view and relaxing in the soft breeze at the top of the Great Wall, do you know you are stepping on piles of skeletons at the foot of the wall? Can you feel thousands of Chinese people's tears and sweat pouring down to their cheeks? Actually, the human cost of constructing the Great Wall was huge, especially in Qin Dynasty. Millions of soldiers, prisoners and local people died in building it. It was really a very sad part of our history.

Nowadays the Great Wall is facing some problems. Swarms of tourists are the threats. Each year, about several million people from all over the world visit the Great Wall, bringing in great profit, but at the same time also causing serious damage. You can find hotels, shops and other facilities like cable cars set up in Badaling for the tourists to visit the top of the steepest sections. It looks more like a market than the historical site. Besides that, two-thirds of the wall have been damaged and destroyed without regular maintenance. Moreover, some inconsiderate

tourists throw their rubbish on the wall and even write some rude words there. Some tourists even ignored the law and held all night party secretly on the wall in 2006.

The wall is also ruined by nature. More than 60 km of the wall in Gansu province will be eroded by sandstorms in the next 20 years. The wall in Hebei province collapsed after days of continuous heavy rains. In Yulin province, the desertification problem is very serious. Most parts of the wall are buried by sandstorms. Moreover, the wall is demolished by the profit makers. The people illegally mined for minerals in Inner Mongolia, Gansu Provinces, Ningxia and Shanxi. The rich soil is sold for fertilizer. Many bricks in some areas have been stolen for road construction, housing and reservoir building. In some places, since the reckless industrial expansion, the people dynamited the wall and sell the stones for profit. In many places, when the wall has crumbled, the people served it as a playground for the children. Some sections of the wall were bombed during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Therefore, the gigantic wriggling dragon is disconnecting and just less than 30% has remained in good condition.

### **Preserving the Great Wall**

Actually, the fate of the Great Wall is determined by the attitudes of the emperors or nowadays we call them governors. Recently, more and more people have demanded the Chinese governor to remedy the destroyed parts of the wall. The district officials did the research and reported it to the central governor. The governor also has made laws to protect this valuable historical site. Firstly, hikers are not allowed to explore the unprotected sections of the Great Wall. Secondly, the new regulation prohibits the building of any structure that causes physical and aesthetic damage to the wall and its natural setting. The prohibition extends 500 metres on either side of the wall. Those existing illegal constructions, according to the new regulation, must move within a fixed period of time.

We cannot avoid the natural sandstorm destroying the wall but we can take some responsible actions to preserve and protect it. LET'S TAKE OUR ACTION NOW!

# Danny Way's Way

*Leo Holland, 10, French International School*

“I cannot wait to get this over,” Way thought to himself. And then he rolled over the jump... Here is an amazing story about a man who risked his life to perform one of the most daredevil stunts known to both man and skateboard.

Danny Way is a self-taught Californian extreme skateboarder who has either broken or set at least five world records. He was born on 15th April 1974 and started skateboarding aged 4. Danny gained sponsorship from Hosoi Skateboards and Vision Skateboards aged 6 and later on, aged 11, he won the first competition he entered. In 1997, aged just 22, he dropped from a helicopter onto a vertical ramp and is still the only skateboarder ever to attempt this. He named this the “bomb drop” which then became a skateboarding term.

But dramatic stunts like this don't always have a happy ending. Way has had many crippling injuries in his career including a broken neck in 1994, a dislocated shoulder and seven surgeries between 1999 and 2002!

Now to what really happened in Beijing. On 9th July 2005, Danny Way attempted a stunt only a very select group of daredevils had ever done before. He wanted to jump the Great Wall of China! The jump was to take place at 5:30pm, Beijing time. What added to the pressure? Although many sportsmen have tried the jump, very few have attempted it without motorised help (the last person was a mountain biker in 2002. He died.)

The jump, the Beijing MegaRamp, is the biggest skateboarding structure ever built. It took more than sixty workers several days in fierce heat to construct the ramp and it cost nearly half-a-million US dollars. Danny said, “The structure was not very sound. It was literally moving side to side at least 6 inches, blown by the wind... Before the jump, I tried to have a moment to think about all the good things in my life.” The MegaRamp, measuring 61 feet across and 120 feet high, was built towering over the Great Wall's Juyongguan Gate (a landmark tourist destination). Danny was about to jump. In front of a crowd of several thousand, he hurled himself into the ramp, went into the air, still on the skateboard, cleared the Wall, going close to 50mph, and landed – minus skateboard. Danny, despite an ankle injury from the crash landing, went off to try his second jump. This time he landed it perfectly and was going so fast, he flew up the other side of the ramp, going at least 12 feet high! But of course he still had 3 more jumps, so naturally, being him, he just had to add 360 degree spins on all of them!

Why do we think he did it? He is not only crazy, he did it because of the huge challenge it represented and in the hope of sparking recognition and admiration for skateboarding in China, as it is quite an unheralded sport in the country.

It is interesting that all this took place with the blessing and cooperation of the People's Republic of China and after the jump, the Minister of Culture in China, Mister Wang Jianjur, gave Danny an actual piece of the Great Wall.

Now, eight years later, he is still skateboarding after a 20 plus year career, but nothing beats the amazing feat of bravery that took place at the Great Wall of China.

# The Great Wall of China

*Kiki Shi Qi Huang, 11, Xi'an International School*

**T**he Great Wall of China is a marvellous man-made structure. It is like a dragon resting on the mountain tops of northern China. When you step on the neatly lined bricks, you can feel the great architecture and wisdom of ancient China. The great wall is a masterpiece.

However, have you thought of the price paid to build this structure? Under the steps of the great wall lie hundreds of thousands of bodies. The construction of the great wall started in the Qin Dynasty (around 221 BC). The emperor, at that time, made 1 million citizens (20% of the whole country) working on the project. At that time there were no machines, so every single brick was carried by hand. Now, imagine that one brick weighs about 15 kg. Imagine carrying something that weighs 15 kg up a steep mountain without the help of machinery. Wind, earthquakes, even just a tiny slip could bring them down (“Qin Dynasty Great Wall,” [Travelchinaguide.com](http://Travelchinaguide.com) Dec. 2, 2012).

As I said, the building project started at the beginning of the Qin Dynasty. The emperor, Qin Shi Huang, wanted to protect his newly formed empire from the Xiongnu armies that often invaded it. He ordered the short walls built by other kingdoms to be joined with sections of his walls to form Qin’s great wall.

The Han dynasty, Southern and Northern dynasties, Sui dynasty, and Jin dynasty all helped a little with the construction, mainly to defend themselves from the invaders from up north. They pretty much added a little here and there on Qin’s great wall. After all those dynasties, a great big chunk of wall was added on to Qin’s great wall.

The Great Wall we see today, however, was built mainly by the Ming dynasty. This ambitious building project took over 100 years to complete. Every single emperor in this dynasty was busy working on this project. They could spare no effort for other projects when they were constantly invaded by northern nomadic tribes. The design of Ming dynasty’s Wall was well thought out and planned. For example, the wall in Beijing was built in a style of double lines, inner and outer, to improve its defence capabilities. Also, watch towers, signal towers, and fortresses were built as additional reinforcements (“Ming Dynasty Great Wall,” [Travelguidechina.com](http://www.travelchinaguide.com/china_great_wall/history/ming/), [http://www.travelchinaguide.com/china\\_great\\_wall/history/ming/](http://www.travelchinaguide.com/china_great_wall/history/ming/), Nov. 25 2012.)

During this long building project, many people made up stories about the Great Wall. Let's take a look at the sad legend of Meng Jiang Nu as an example.

Once upon a time in the Qin dynasty there lived two old, childless couples, one the Meng family, the other was the Jiang family. One year, Mr. Meng planted a gourd in his yard. The gourd vine grew over to Mr. Jiang's yard and bore a gourd there. When the gourd was ripe enough to eat, the two families started arguing about who should have the gourd. When they finally agreed that they should split the gourd and did, they saw a baby girl inside it. They were so happy that they named the baby Meng Jiang Nu (Meng for the Meng family, Jiang for the Jiang family, and Nu as in "woman"). They raised her together.

When Meng Jiang Nu was old enough to get married, she decided on a young man named Fan Xiliang. Just on their wedding day, a few soldiers came and took Xiliang away to build the Great Wall. The life of a labourer on the Great Wall was full of starvation and depression. When a year passed without any news from Xiliang, Meng Jiang Nu went to search for him. But when she arrived at the Great Wall, she was told that Xiliang died building the wall. Upon hearing this, she started wailing loudly and hit the wall. A big part of the wall fell over, uncovering countless bodies of labourers. Finally, she found her husband's body among the others. She clung to the body and wept.

The Qin emperor was furious when he was told that Meng Jiang Nu had broken the wall. But when he saw Meng Jiang Nu, he was so enchanted with her beauty that he was determined to marry her. She agreed on three conditions - first, to give her husband a grand funeral, second, to have the court mourn for her husband, and third, to go to the seashore. The emperor agreed despite the fact that he hated mourning for commoners. When Meng Jiang Nu got her third wish, she scolded the emperor and jumped into the ocean. Nobody saw her again ("The Great Wall Stories and Legends," Greatwallchina.info, <http://www.greatwallchina.info/The-Great-Wall-Stories-and-Legends.htm>, Dec. 8, 2012).

Even though the story of Meng Jiang Nu is only a legend, surely similar stories happened. The Great Wall of China protected its people, but did it also prevent the Chinese from invading the northern tribes? Was it really worth all those lives?

When you walk on the steps of the Great Wall, do you think about the skeletons beneath you? We greatly admire the Great Wall today, but maybe 2,000 years ago, in the spot where you are standing right now, somebody was weeping over their son's or husband's body. Therefore, we must give thanks to those who worked on and sacrificed themselves for building the Great Wall of China.

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# “SOS” from The Great Wall of China

*Kimberly Ninson Leung, 10, St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School*

**T**he Great Wall of China is China's pride. It is a symbol of our heritage, and shows the rest of the world the true greatness of the nation of the dragon. How important is the Great Wall to the Chinese people? It is China's most ancient and treasured man-made structure, and numerous tourists from all over the world travel all the way to China just to see the grand boulders. However, it is sad to see that our number one national monument is not being properly taken care of, and it is now starting to crumble.

It sounds unbelievable but from the 1950s through the 70s, the Great Wall was severely destroyed on purpose — Chairman Mao Zi Dong announced that everything from the old society was bad and should be rid of, including valuable books and buildings. The government did not care if this ancient structure was a national treasure. Since the people had to obey their government, they said farewell to many sections of the Great Wall. During the same period and even later, the poor rural people in China also did a lot of damage to our pride monument — they knocked down portions of the Wall as they needed the free rocks to build their homes! May be they had to sacrifice their heritage to take care of their own lives. In recent years, the Chinese government has also tried to repair the damages, but the works were often done by those who did not know the right methods to fix them. Some parts of the Great Wall can never be rebuilt anymore — the world has lost a part of its history and culture forever!

Perhaps these tragedies could not have been avoided, but other damages are simply caused by people's selfishness. Chinese citizens have very little sense of civic responsibility. For example, travellers often carve their names onto the bricks of the Great Wall to leave a mark that they have been to the site, and sadly, most are Chinese names. Apart from that, a lot of businesses have been set up around and along the Great Wall, such as souvenir stalls and food markets, while large events such as fashion catwalks and movie filming attract even larger crowds. It is said that just 550 kilometres out of the 25,000 kilometres of the Great Wall is still in good condition; the rest of it is depressing to look at.

The Chinese government is now trying to improve the condition of our national symbol. The Great Wall Society organises a 35-day educational tour along the Great Wall, and

encourages Chinese citizens to participate in the Adopt-a-Wall-scheme to get donations for conservation projects. In recent years, Chinese tourists are starting to realise how seriously their Great Wall is deteriorating and are slowly beginning to feel that they too have a responsibility to protect it. If the Government and the citizens all gather to help the Great Wall, it will have a chance to get back in shape. But how?

I think it is crucial that Chinese people understand it is not enough to read about their history in books; they must see the importance of preserving it, including the art pieces and traditional habits. Schools on the Mainland can bring their students to see the most severely damaged parts of the Great Wall for themselves instead of touring the most beautiful sections, and the teachers should explain to their students how they should contribute to the conservation works. The Government must remove or at least limit the number of shops and food stalls and must supervise film-making activities to prevent the Great Wall from being wrecked more. It should open other sections of the site for tourists to balance the wear and tear caused by the visitors, who will be bursting with excitement to see the “new” parts of the Wall. At the same time, the Government can make more money while they attract more travellers.

If the Chinese government and the Chinese people do not cooperate and try to save The Great Wall in time, it will soon be in complete ruin. Then people will no longer be able to appreciate this breath-taking structure, and a part of our cultural heritage goes down the drain.

So let us all contribute to this SOS mission — now!



Non-Fiction  
Group 3

# The Great Wall that Failed

*Vanessa Yuen Kwan Ma, 14, Diocesan Girls' School*

From [www.greatwall-of-china.com](http://www.greatwall-of-china.com): The Great Wall of China is a series of stone and earthen fortifications... to protect — Effectively, it's a territorial protective mechanism. The essence of this however, lies with the last two words — protective mechanism. And just as a chemistry mixture takes on the characteristics of its parts, so does a country replicate certain aspects of the people that make it. Case in point: All humans have security mechanisms.

Our security mechanisms are never quite the same, but for ease of analysis, a few big generic categories do exist...

Firstly, the elegant, upper class lady. She searches to build up their reputes as their form of security, falling back on whatever creates their “best impression”. There are two ways in which such calculated exteriors are achieved:

Lysander from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an expert at wooing his love, Hermia, with his sugar-coated, passionate, amorous language. In Act 1 Scene 2, he stages a stichomythia with her on the ideals of true love—unaffected by age, external opinion, status and natural phenomenon. The real world sees manipulators and playboys who worm their way into, out of, and around a situation whenever needed—the kid who can always squirm out of detention even after being caught red-handed? The guy who dates and leaves a girl in a week, the string of broken hearts for him like a spool of thread rocketing down a mountain—never-ending with rapid growth? The fact is that if we were to strip away the ability of verbal exploitation from this group of people, we'd be left with possibly someone as raw and as helpless as any other: flawed, desperate, and uncertain of the future. At the crux of developing such manipulative skills as a security mechanism is a person in need of certainty; in some way or the other they must be able to guarantee themselves what they want to the least possible probability of failure, be it with girls, examinations, power, or their social circle.

According to [Urban Dictionary.com](http://UrbanDictionary.com), phonies are defined as people that are “all bark but no bite”. In another sense, it's called portraying false humility. The outspoken girls who make airy announcements claiming “oh no, I didn't get an A,” when the rest of the class failed, and “WHAT, HE LIKES ME? DON'T SPREAD RUMORS!” and inform everyone within a ten-metre radius? All the guys frustrated online about girls playing hard-to-get? Fundamentally

such acts all stem from insecurities due to self worth, and a craving for attention. The Lysander above managed to appeal to Hermia because she felt insecure of her outer beauty and needed him to assert her worth; and when she couldn't get such a fulfilment, she ranted and screamed and threw tantrums in the hopes that he would, shown when they entered the woods in Act 3. Cutting out the exaggeration, such a mechanism aims to assert self worth through claiming inferiority, asking for counter arguers to the statement.

A second example is the autistic child from Jodi Picoult's book *House Rules*. The kid Jacob has autism, and a very telling trait of this disorder is that he tends to shirk behind words and quotes of famous literature or songs in order to convey feelings, thoughts which an autistic person has issues with expressing directly. Scroll down any random teenager's newsfeed, and it wouldn't be surprising to find that nearly 50% of all new and popular facebook statuses are ones which incorporate in some way literary allusions. Being arguably the most typical form of a security mechanism, it stems from the fear of baring true, raw emotion, as such feelings and revelations are easily likened to that of an open cut—if someone touches it, it's easily hurt, gets inflamed, and stings like no tomorrow. However, as they understand that expression is the key to connecting and relating with others, they search for ways around the truth, and crouch under the exemplaries given to us through popular culture and media, expressing themselves while putting a fancy veil on reality. The issue lies with not being able to truly connect, for the experiences aren't personal—they're generic; and those with such a mechanism live lives in a crowd of unanimous cries of agreement, but are in fact loneliest of all.

Thirdly, the toiling grandma. This is possibly the most rudimentary security mannerism of all, and also the one which seems hardest to crack. Many a time we hear recounts on how old ladies and men, to seek purpose in life—even after their bodies have entered the stage of decay—would resort to giving themselves work in order to drive their focus away from their own insecurities (which may range from anything their ability to their social status). To illustrate, I'm a person who harbours this security mechanism. Recognising that I cannot rely on the ways of the world to stay constant, I generate my own hope through the tasks that I submit my all to, be it homework, debates or competitions, and expect to reap my own rewards. I seek to help others and give advice; however at the crux of this whole issue is a very simple assumption that I am able to work, and I am my work. Take away my work, and my personal value would read as "nothing".

There is no denying that social expectations and others' perception of our worth spur us to meet certain bars that are preset for us. In order to fit in, to save our hearts from being hurt, to stop information about our deepest darkest selves to be bared for the world to see, we put on facades. More importantly is the mindset that is deeply ingrained into us ever since the appearance of an increasingly competitive society. That we need to feel confident about our abilities, accomplish more than whatever and which ever random person in the world has been able to achieve in their little episode on Earth. For a more tangible perspective, National Public Radio once had a student contributing to the forum, claiming "It seems that all students try to get into the university with the highest ranking, regardless of whether they are interested in this university and in this major". This quote not only demonstrates how students are compelled to reach "the next highest bar", but also throws into light the "true selves" that are buried away as a sacrifice for our facade—to appease unquenchable desires to create new records and write more sparkly histories, regardless of the origin of its seed as social culture or expectations of self, interest and individualism are forgone.

Safety mechanisms aren't forever. In the article quoted right at the start of this essay, it continues to say that "little of it [the Great Wall] remains". Through war, rain, harsh use and a

variety of other factors, China's once glorious territorial protection structure fell to the ground. In the same way, our facades aren't perfect, and because at the crux of all of it is human want and universal desires which mankind share, it's quite easy to see through the right person at all the wrong times—my essay itself is evidence of such. However, the importance of this result isn't in the fact that it fails to protect as much as we aim for it to, but rather the “little” that never dies -the side effects:

- with the elegant ladies, they develop intensely insatiable competitive mindsets
- with the autistic kids, they fail to emotionally connect
- with the working grandmothers, they develop near no self esteem for who they are.

When crucial bricks are knocked on the wall to Diagon Alley, it changes. In a non-magical world, it collapses. The irony lies in that the better our facades seem to be, and the more protection they seem to guarantee, the more momentum we gather when we fall, and the harder it is to nurse the pain and get back up again. The fall of the Great Wall not only symbolised the fall of China's security mechanism, but also the intense work needed for China to overcome other barriers that the Wall once stood up against—continental powers before and during WWI.

To conclude, I propose we rethink our facades. Are they really the best way to ensure survival in our world, or do they simply create more loopholes and generate flimsy shields against wars which our Great Walls cannot fight? Do they truly make us happy, or do they sacrifice the identity we sculpt for ourselves? I've met friends who manage to put down their insecurities and face life and questions in the most straightforward and crude way possible, uncensored truth dripping from every single answer, even when it comes to personal issues such as religion or abortion; they're the people who never need worry about any lie or twisted truth they factor into their modelled exteriors simply because they don't have one.

The question I ask of all of us here is surprisingly simple. Is the best security mechanism simply a lack thereof?