

我登萬里長城的經驗

A Personal Account of DRBA's Trip to the Great Wall of China

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This account is about our excursion to the Great Wall, a part of an important and historic trip that DRBA made to China, from September 4 to September 18, 2006. On September 9, we visited the Great Wall in Beijing.

I would like to provide a brief background of the Great Wall of China. It was built around 214 B.C.E. during the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.E.), for the purpose of protecting China from invaders. In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the wall was strengthened and raised in height to about 33 feet. During that time, observation platforms, towers, gates, new defense methods, and service structures were also added to form an architectural complex that was militarily and administratively useful.

The Great Wall of China was built by soldiers, civilians, farmers and prisoners, primarily during three dynasties: the Qin, the Han, and the Ming. Each dynasty's building style added its own flavor and advanced the techniques learned from the previous.

The wall now extends about 5,500 miles, making it the longest man-made structure in the world, and can be seen from the Moon, depending on weather conditions. In 1987, UNESCO declared the Great Wall a World Heritage site.

Returning from our diversion, I must first mention that my Mom and I both suffer from acrophobia or fear of heights. My acrophobia is so beyond control that riding up an escalator to the third story of a building feels like scaling a cliff.

The story begins when we got off the bus. I took a look at the Great Wall and said to my Mom that it did not seem

這個報告是關於我們去萬里長城的旅行，它是法總今年從九月四日到九月十八日去中國的重要行程之一。我們在九月九日參觀了北京的萬里長城。

我想先簡單地介紹一下萬里長城的歷史。萬里長城是差不多在西元214年的秦朝(西元221-207年)時建的，目的是要阻止外族入侵中國邊界。在明朝(1368-1644)的時候，長城加蓋到33英尺高，也變的更堅固了。同時，爲了建造一個對軍事與行政上都有益的建築，長城還新蓋了觀望台、樓塔、城門、勤務建築物 and 新的防禦措施。

萬里長城是由秦朝、漢朝和明朝時的軍人、百姓、農夫和囚犯所建的。這三個朝代都在長城裡各加進了自己的味道，並附帶前人建築技巧的進展。

長城現在大概有5500英里長，是全世界最長的人造建築。如果天氣好的話，從月亮上都看的到長城。聯合國教育科學及文化組織在1987年宣布萬里長城爲一項世界遺跡。

回到主題來，我必須先提到我和我的媽媽都患有懼高症。我的懼高症非常嚴重，嚴重到手扶梯搭到三樓時就像攀登一座懸崖似的令人恐懼。

這個故事是從我們下公車的那一剎那時開始的。我看了長城一眼，就和媽媽說它看起來並沒有非常的高，可是我徹底的錯了！

但是，我那勇敢的精神使我下定決心要爬上我們的「任務之塔」(請看上圖)。



我和媽媽開始攀爬長城，有了值得讚賞進展。當我們登到半途時，我開始非常的害怕。我們現在已經在很高的高度了。走著走著，我腳下的台階突然粉碎，使得我更加害怕。我可以看到走在前面的三位法師和其他團員已經快到「任務之塔」的頂端了，真不知道他們是怎麼爬得那麼快的。莫名其妙的是，我居然從右側壁牆上往外看了一眼。俗話說：「好奇心會殺死貓」，真的，好奇心導致我的雙眼瞟過一座非常陡的斜坡，我的勇氣也在瞬間消失。雖然我們大家約好在樓塔上見面，也就算是完成任務，但我已經不知道自己是否能繼續爬下去了。

突然，我感覺到有人碰到我的背，我被驚嚇地大叫了一聲，因為長城階梯的險峻，讓我覺得即使被一根羽毛碰到，都有會跌落下去的可能。就在此刻，我又想到建造長城時殉職工人的屍骨都埋在我的腳底下，滿腔這個想法，差點沒把我給嚇死（我回家後為寫此文，特別去追查，才知道其實那些死人的骨骸並不是埋在長城底下，因為腐爛的屍體會減弱建築的構造）！

言歸正傳，我小心翼翼地向前看那些已經在欣賞環境全貌的團員，而我卻有困難繼續爬下去。令我高興的是，我看到一些人開始往下走了，這讓我安心了許多。媽媽和我立刻下決定要跟他們一起往回走，所以就停止前進等他們。可是那段等待的時間，感覺起來好漫長，我因為害怕而坐下來。當他們終於經過我們時，我們努力緊跟他們的腳步，不過他們走得實在是太快了。往上爬和往下走一樣的困難，我又開始害怕了。為了增快我的速度，我必須創造一個方法，



very high. I was wrong indeed!

My courageous mind, however, spurred the decision that we were going to climb to our 'mission' tower – please refer to the picture on last page.

My Mom and I began our climb. Commendable progress thus far. By the time we were halfway toward our 'mission' tower, I began to feel extremely scared. We were now in high country. It didn't help when the step that I placed my foot on crumbled under my weight. I could see that way ahead of me, some members of our group, including about three Dharma Masters, were almost atop the 'mission' tower. I wondered how they could climb so fast. Of all things, I looked over the ledge to my right. Talk about "curiosity killing a cat"... well, this time, curiosity allowed the sight of an alarmingly steep drop, with my courageous mind and everything else dropping along. I was no longer sure I could climb. We had planned to meet the group at that tower, with mission accomplished and all.

Suddenly, I felt someone touch my back. I screamed bloody murder! The steepness of the steps made me feel that I might hurl over with even a featherweight of a touch. At this precise moment, thoughts of the numerous people who died building the Great Wall also came flooding in my mind – their bones were lying under my feet. I totally freaked out! (By the way, it was not until I had returned home and was doing light research for this article that I unearthed the fact that bones of the perished were not buried under the walls - the decomposed bodies would have weakened the construction.)

Back to the story... I glanced warily upward toward the rest of the group who were already enjoying a panoramic view of the surroundings. I had difficulty continuing.

Much to my delight, I saw some members beginning to descend. That's all the support I needed. My Mom and I instantly made a happy decision of descending along with them. We waited for them. It seemed like ages. Full of fear, I sat down. When they passed us by, we tried very hard to follow. They were too fast. Descending felt just as impossible as ascending. Fear gripped me all over again. I had to devise this method to hasten my movements. It went like this:

Step 1 – sit down on the step

Step 2 – stretch your legs and place them on the second step below

Step 3 – lower yourself onto the step below you

Step 4 – repeat

In short, picture a caterpillar inching slowly downward.

It was like this all the way to altitudes low enough where I could stand and walk normally. You see, I had harbored hopes that climbing the Great Wall would heal my acrophobia, to an extent

那個方法如下：

- 第一步- 坐在台階上
- 第二步- 伸展你的雙腳，然後把它們放到下一個台階上
- 第三步- 把身體移到下一個台階上
- 第四步- 重複以上的動作

簡單的說，想像一隻毛毛蟲緩慢地寸步向下爬。



我像這樣「爬城」，直到高度低到我可以正常的站立和行走。我本來抱著希望利用這次登長城的機會來克服我的懼高症，至少我可以輕鬆地搭手扶梯到任何建築的三樓，可惜，沒成功。

現在回憶起來，我雖沒有治好懼高症，但是這次中國之旅，身為團員的一份子，特別是和法總的法師同行，帶給我一股無以倫比的驕傲與深深的感恩，是我永生難忘的。

that I could comfortably ride an escalator to the third story of any building – it did not.

In retrospect, even though my fear of heights has not diminished, traveling to China, especially with DRBA's Dharma Masters, and being part of the delegation at large, has brought forth a sense of unparalleled pride and deepest appreciation, that will forever last.

