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The Taj Mahal is located in Agra, a city in the Uttar Pradesh region of northern India. This beautiful building is regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The name Taj Mahal means “crown of palaces”.

The Taj Mahal was built by Emperor Shah Jahan, who was also known as ‘King of the World’. It was built as the final resting place for Mumtaz Mahal, his third and favourite wife. Her name meant ‘chosen one of the palace’. She was so beautiful that poets said "The moon, hid its face in shame before her."

They were very happy together and had fourteen children in total. On a warm evening in April 1631, Mumtaz Mahal gave birth to their fourteenth child. However, soon afterwards complications arose and she took a turn for the worse. As she lay dying, Mumtaz secured a promise from her husband. He promised to build for her the largest, most beautiful mausoleum. More beautiful than any the world had seen before.

A mausoleum is a building that contains burial chambers (tombs) for the deceased; they can be large or small and are often created in honour of influential people.

Shah Jahan, although devoted to his wife, was known as a cruel leader, who killed his brothers to make sure that he became Emperor! Eventually, in 1657, he was overthrown by one of his sons, and he spent the last 9 years of life locked up in a tower overlooking the Taj Mahal. When he died, he was buried next to Mumtaz inside the Taj Mahal.

The Taj Mahal was built entirely out of white marble, which was brought in from all over India and Asia. It is decorated with 28 different varieties of precious and semi-precious stones. Construction of the Taj Mahal took around 21 years, beginning in 1632 and finishing around 1653. Over 1,000 elephants and 22,000 workers were used in its construction. After the Taj Mahal was completed, Shah Jahan had the hands of the workers chopped off so they could not recreate something as beautiful ever again!

One of the Taj Mahal’s most recognizable features is a large white dome that is often called an ‘onion dome’ due to its shape. It has a height of around 35 metres and is surrounded by 4 smaller domes. The full height of the Taj Mahal is 171 metres.