



Non-Fiction

Group 1

The Flaming Mountain

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Chen, Jundao – 9

The Flaming Mountain is the most famous scenic spot in Turpan, in northwestern part of China. The mountain is more than 100 kilometers long. The widest point is 10 kilometers and it is 500 meters above sea level. The main peak is 831.7 meters above sea level. Every summer, with the red sun in the sky, the Auburn Mountain under the sun shines. The sand-stones become flashy, the hot air rises, like a burning flame. So everyone in China knows the famed Flame Mountain .

Referring to the Flaming Mountain, I believe that most people know it through the novel “Journey to the West”. The story is that Sun Wukong (Monkey King) made havoc in the sky, kicked over the furnace of taishanglaojun (an elder heavenly statesman), which fell from the sky, and formed the Flaming Mountain in Turpan. When the Tang priest group had to go through the mountain, Sun Wukong went to borrow the plantain fan before overcoming many hardships, and the blazing fire was extinguished three times.

About the Flaming Mountain, there is another version of the Uighur folklore. Legend of the Tianshan Mountain says there is a dragon which preyed on boys and girls. There was an Uighur warrior for the people, and he fought the evil dragon for three days and three nights. Finally, he killed the dragon. The evil dragon became the flaming Mountain after its death, with its blood painting the mountains red in colour. Uighurs called the mountain " Kezi ", meaning red hill. Further, the story goes that the eight sword marks on the dragon become the valley of the eight roads, including Grape Valley, Spit Valley and so on.

According to another legend, the real cause of the formation of the Flaming Mountain is the crustal movement. A friend from Xinjiang said that it is impossible to stay near the Flaming Mountain for a long time in the Summer. I hope I can travel to the Flaming Mountain. I believe to stand there, and then read the novel “Journey to the West”, should be an enticing and unforgettable experience!

Journey to the West

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Guo, Zekai – 6

Journey to the West is really an interesting book, telling many adventurous stories. In China, The fiction “Journey to the West” is well known in Asia, in which the Monkey King, Tang Priest, Pigsy and Monk Sandy are legends. For decades, Journey to the West has been adapted into a variety of local operas, films, television series and comics.

It is an adventure story about a master and his three apprentices. The apprentices have magical powers that protect them from the monsters and the evil spirits. The author had created an imaginary world, and to the eyes of many, "Journey to the West" is the greatest achievement in literature.

Monkey King was born out of a rock. He not only possessed a smart and brave nature, but also extra magical powers that he used to overcome demons and monsters. When encountering all the difficulties he fought on, not retreat. Monkey King is the first hero of "Journey to the West". Pigsy is the epitome of honesty and clumsiness, he is always making a mess out of things and generating a lot of humor in the process.

Pigsy is a comic image of simple nature and honesty. His problems are greed and carefree, and they are the traits of some small characters. But Pigsy is still a good man, not trying to harm anyone, and finally claiming final victory.

Monk Sandy has a good image, but compared to Monkey King and Pigsy, he played an indispensable supporting role. During the trip, when the Master, Monkey King and Pigsy fell apart, he came out to persuade the two brothers to get along well. Sometimes, when they wandered off the group, he accompanied and protected his Master.

Before the Master could find the scriptures he had to overcome 81 obstacles including demons and monsters. These obstacles symbolize the difficulties and challenges that people meet in the course of chasing an ideal. His character is the main reason why “Journey to the West” is so popular with readers at home and abroad.

We can get inspiration from reading the book. It gives us an unforgettable impression. Actually in “Journey to the West” there is purification of the mind so that the entire expedition to find scriptures is actually a way of achieving spiritual goodness. However, honesty and courage are all our friends in the depths of our soul.

And the book “Journey to the West” conveys the message that in human life, it is possible to achieve ideals and goodness. We should be brave and confident to ourselves, no matter how many difficulties we meet. Our colleagues are important to us too. When we are in trouble, they are the people we can rely on. No doubt trust among people is of the greatest importance.

Journey to the West

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Sun, Ruichak – 8

In August 2015, I travelled to Europe with my mother and sister. We went to Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Luxemburg. I like them all, and I found some differences between Europe and China.

In Europe, people use different kinds of languages. People in Netherlands speak Dutch and in Germany they speak German. Many of them can speak several kinds of European languages. They also speak English.

While in China, we speak Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese and other dialects. Nowadays, more and more people can speak English and kids start learning English from kindergarten.

People in those European countries are very kind. During our travel, when we asked for a direction, they would always be kind enough to show us where to go. In China, most people do not want to talk to strangers, especially foreigners.

Dutch people like cycling. There is a traffic light for bicycles only. So there are three types of traffic lights in Netherlands, one for car, one for bicycle and one for people who walk. In China, we only have two types of traffic lights, one for car, the other one for human.

In most European cities, there are small and big churches. In China, there are temples only. In most European cities, the houses are big and spacious. But in some mega cities in China, there are so many high-rise buildings.

When talking about eating, European people like cheese, hamburger, sandwich, pizza, chips, fried chicken and steak. They use knives and forks to eat. In China, people eat rice, noodles, steamed bread and cooked dishes. Chinese use chopsticks to eat food. Also, European people like drinking with ice, even in Winter. In China, people drink hot tea all year round.

There is one thing I don't like in Europe. There are not so many public restrooms in public area, and people need to pay when going to toilet. In China, when people go to toilet, they do not need to pay.

No doubt, I like travelling to European countries. I can see different things and learn different knowledge. I hope I can travel to more western countries in future.

Journey to the West

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Xia, Yuanming - 7

“Journey to the West” is a classic Chinese mythological novel. It was based on traditional folklore. With it there are 100 chapters, this fantasy relates to the adventures of a Tang Dynasty priest Xuanzang and his three disciples, Sun Wukong (the Monkey King), Zhu Wuneng(Pigsy) and Sha Wujing (a water buffalo), as they travelled west in search of Buddhist Sutra.

The first seven chapters recount the birth of the Monkey King and his rebellion against Heaven. Then in chapters eight to twelve, we learn how Xuanzang was born and why he was setting off the arduous journey to search for Buddhist Sutra. The rest of the story describes how they fought against demons and monsters, tramped over the Fiery Mountain, crossed the Milky Way. After overcoming many dangers, they finally arrived at their destination ---- the Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven ---- and found the Sutra. For many Westerners, “*Journey to the West*” was their first encounter with Chinese culture. It binds together the nation’s popular culture in a similar way as *Star Trek* does for the West.

With a dragon-prince in the form of a white horse as his steed, Xuanzang was accompanied on his quest by three disciples, Sun Wukong , Zhu Wuneng and Sha Wujing.

Among all the characters, the Monkey King is my idol. Born from a stone, the Monkey King had many magical powers. Incredibly loyal, strong and fast. He was a magician capable of taking on 72 different forms. He was a great fighter and each of his hairs could be transformed into objects like weapons and animals. He could also travel vast distances in a single somersault. The monkey, nimble and quick-witted, used these skills to defeat all but the most powerful of demons on the journey.

However, the Monkey King’s behavior could be checked by a metal band placed around his head by Guanyin, which could not be removed by the Monkey King himself until the journey ended. Xuanzang could tighten this band by chanting the "Ring Tightening Mantra" whenever he needed to chastise him. Therefore, in this aspect, the Monkey King was under control and he knew very well what he could do.

Besides, The Monkey King’s childlike playfulness was a huge contrast to his cunning mind. This, coupled with his great power, made him a cult hero.

In short, the Monkey King was loyal, brave, smart, unyielding and optimistic. “*Journey to the West*” is always inspiring. As the actor, Zhang Jinlai, who acted as the Monkey King in the TV series said, “If you understand the Monkey King, you understand China. This little monkey has the potential to take the world by storm.” Bold as that statement may be, with roots in Buddhism, folklore, mythology and Taoism, “*Journey to the West*” is the standard-bearer of Chinese culture.

Journey to the West

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Zhong, Yu – 8

The “Journey to the West” was written by Wu Chengen, who was a novelist in the Ming Dynasty. He was living in a very corrupted society. Also, the social system at that time was in a state of confusion.

The “Journey to the West” is mainly about stories of Sun Wukong, Pigsy, Friar Sand and the White Dragon Horse escorting Xuanzang to a journey to the West. What happened on the way to the West and how they saved Xuanzang repeatedly.

In my personal opinion, the five people in the “Journey to the West” represents five levels of Maslow’s needs. Sun Wukong’s need is to realize self value. Pigsy’s need is physiology. Friar Sand’s need is safety. Xuanzang’s need is honor and the White Dragon Horse’s need is a sense of belonging. Therefore, their pursuit of learning is not the same, the natural values are not the same either.

Sun Wukong

He was also called the Monkey King. I like him best. Because he had plenty of valuable fighting spirit. First, he defied the bigwigs to pursue freedom and was a symbol against theocracy. He still maintained a consistent style of wild and intractable traits, which embodied the spirit of the people. Second, he carried forward a strong will to fight and was full of enthusiasm to achieve the preset goal. Third, he had the courage to defy nature. The fighting spirit to conquer evil-doers, the true quality of a hero to stand up to the powerful and assist the weak.

Pigsy

Pigsy was a greedy, lusty and egoistic man. He had a stubborn conservative mentality, which embodied the wishes of the ordinary working people. It also reflected the characteristics of small producers and ordinary citizens.

Friar Sand

Friar Sand possessed the traditional virtues of the Chinese nature: diligent, loyal, hard-working, thoughtful but carefree. He also had the evil root of the people. But his existence is for reconciling internal contradictions.

The “Journey to the West” described in details the hard journey of Xuanzang and his apprentices pursuing an ideal and a goal. As far as I am concerned, in the process of realizing their lofty ideal, we are always full of contradictions and conflicts. Nevertheless, We should overcome all kinds of difficulties to realize our dream.

South Africa

Shanghai Community International School, Scott, Sarai – 7

From 2015–2017, I lived in Ghana (West Africa). During that time, my family and I traveled to many places including South Africa. I like to call my family, “The Travel Family” because we love to travel!

One day, during our South Africa trip, we visited the children’s museum. After leaving there, we were stuck in the rain for a long time trying to find a taxi. We were super wet! After we finally made it home, we ate dinner and then immediately took a bath, put on pajamas, and went to bed.

The next day, it was sunny so we walked outside to go to the playground. After we went to the park, we went to a restaurant for lunch. I had one big double hamburger!

My parents took us to the car rental shop to get a new car because our old rental car was in a car accident. After leaving the park, we returned to our rental car and noticed that someone else hit our car while it was parked. When we saw our new rental car, I said that I like this rental car because it was grey and big. I like big cars more than small cars. My twin sister, Savannah, whispered in my ear, why do we need a van? Mom heard what Savannah said, and she answered because we need a car to drive. We got into our new rental car to drive back home. My dad parked it in a different place. All of a sudden, we heard another storm. Ah!!!

My little sister, Eden, said it just a little storm to my whole family! The storm stopped; we all calmed down and went back to a nice quiet sleep.

After we woke up, we went downstairs to eat breakfast. When we looked into the freezer, our box of pancakes was stuck to the freezer. We tried to pull it out, but it was stuck. “Now what!!” said the whole family.

We then went to a nice restaurant for breakfast. After that, we went to the park and had so much fun at the playground. We saw a lot of dogs at the playground. I am scared of dogs, especially big dogs. I asked my nanny, “why do people need dogs?” She said because they don’t have children.

The dogs had their own place to play and nap. The nanny said that the dogs are sleeping, so we can now walk pass them to leave the park. While leaving, we met another family and they asked us how long are you staying in South Africa? By that time, we only had one more day left.

Non-Fiction

Group 2



A Journey that Continues to Inspire

Kau Yan School, Gittings, Mark Daniel – 10

Why do so many people from all over the world want to follow in the footsteps of Xuanzang, the Buddhist monk who made a long and dangerous journey along the Silk Road from China to India more than 1,000 years ago?

For example, American journalist Richard Bernstein explains in his book “Ultimate Journey” how he was willing to risk arrest by Chinese police because he wanted to “get away from it all” by following the same 10,000 mile journey as Xuanzang. Then there is Chinese filmmaker Sun Shuyun, who describes in her book “Ten Thousand Miles” how frightened she sometimes felt as she travelled all alone through remote parts of China along the same route that Xuanzang took in the monk’s search for Buddhist scriptures from India. The more I read about Xuanzang’s journey, the more amazed I was about how it had inspired so many others to undertake risky journeys of their own.

I think one of the main reasons why so many people are inspired to follow in Xuanzang’s footsteps is because of the famous Chinese novel “Journey to the West”, which is loosely based on the monk’s travels. I was only five years old when my Mum first read a children’s version of the book to me and, even though I’m still too young to go travelling by myself, I can understand why such a colourful story might excite people older than me to set off on adventures of their own.

I’m not alone in being excited by “Journey to the West”. It’s a book that almost every Chinese child knows and, thanks to the popular English translation by British scholar Arthur Waley, it’s also a book that has been widely read in many countries around the world. “Journey to the West” has even been described as one of the three most famous novels in modern Chinese history by author Sally Wriggins, yet another person who took risks to retrace the monk’s route, in her book “The Silk Road Journey with Xuanzang”.

But I think it’s too simple to say “Journey to the West” is the only reason why so many are inspired to follow in Xuanzang’s footsteps. For example, I read about a famous British archaeologist called Sir Alexander Cunningham who used the Chinese monk’s writings on his journey to write a book called “Ancient Geography of India”. Sir Alexander said he relied so heavily on Xuanzang’s work because it was more detailed than any other ancient records about India.

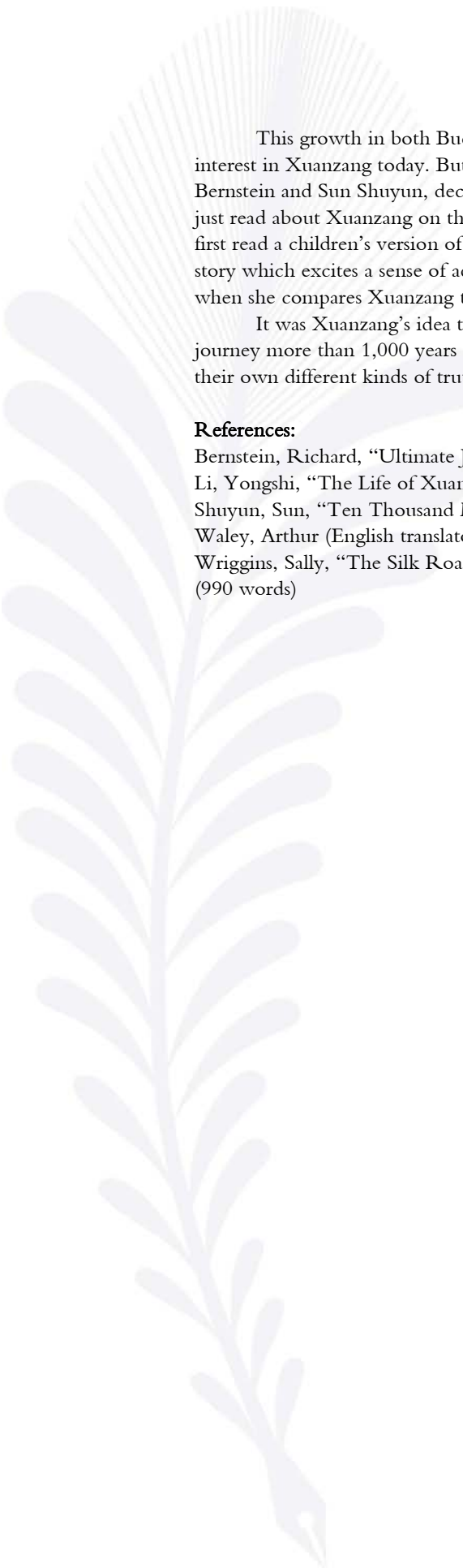
There are at least four different reasons why people choose to retrace the Buddhist monk’s route. In her book, Sally Wriggins calls them Xuanzang’s “four legacies”. One is the literary legacy of the novel “Journey to the West”. Another is the archaeological legacy that encouraged Sir Alexander. In addition to these two legacies, she also mentions the monk’s art and translation legacies.

Xuanzang’s art legacy has become more important as many of the monuments that he wrote about have been damaged or even destroyed. This means that the monk’s detailed descriptions of how these monuments used to look is now essential reading for art historians. For example, art historians often rely on Xuanzang’s detailed description of the two enormous statues of Buddha at Bamiyan in Afghanistan that were destroyed by the Taliban government in March 2001.

The translation legacy seems to be the one that was most important to Xuanzang. Although most people know about the Buddhist monk because of his 10,000 mile journey, his biographer Li Yongshi never mentioned this journey in his book about the monk called “The Life of Xuanzang”. Xuanzang never mentioned his long journey either, when he dictated a list of his good deeds shortly before his death. Instead the monk listed his gifts to charity, making Buddhist statues and, especially, his translations of the Buddhist scriptures.

Xuanzang brought back 657 Sanskrit texts from India. Together with a translation team, he spent the rest of his life translating these Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Since the original versions of some scriptures were later destroyed in India, because of Xuanzang’s efforts China now has the only surviving copies of these scriptures in the whole world. Modern Buddhist scholar Dan Lusthaus calls Xuanzang the world’s greatest Chinese translator of Indian Buddhist texts.

Today Xuanzang’s fame has spread far beyond archaeologists, art historians, literary and translation experts. He has been featured prominently in many television shows about the Silk Road, and his name is even used as the logo for some travel agencies selling tours along the Silk Road. His name also appears in Buddhist centres all over the world, and on many Buddhist websites.



This growth in both Buddhism and tourism on the Silk Road helps explain why there is so much interest in Xuanzang today. But I don't think it's the only reason why so many people, such as Richard Bernstein and Sun Shuyun, decide to make sometimes risky journeys retracing his route, when they could just read about Xuanzang on the Internet instead. Just as I was excited from the moment when my Mum first read a children's version of "Journey to the West" to me, I think there is something about Xuanzang's story which excites a sense of adventure in many people all over the world. Perhaps Sally Wriggins is right when she compares Xuanzang to "a dead star that keeps releasing energy and light for thousands of years".

It was Xuanzang's idea to search for the truth about Buddhist scriptures that set him off on his long journey more than 1,000 years ago. Maybe the others who now follow in his footsteps are trying to seek out their own different kinds of truth as well.

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(990 words)

New Journeys to the West

Kingston International School, Ho, Shu Lin – 9

One boring Wednesday, my mother dug out an old album and shared her journey from twenty years ago across the Silk Road....

From Xi'an, my mother travelled to Kashgar by train and bus. She stayed in a friendly local family. The first meal was funny. Two strong men carried a whole roasted lamb on a low table. Everyone sat on the floor and around the table. One little boy brought a big plate of Naan bread, another boy carried a basket of grapes. Water was in short supply and sheep's milk was a common drink. She suddenly noticed that she was not sitting on the floor. Instead, she was sitting on a smooth and warm surface. It was a piece of woollen Xinjiang carpet weaved in wonderful patterns.

The next day, under freezing cold conditions, my mother went on a tasting adventure in a local market. Xinjiang Lamb Skewers had a shocking taste because of the spice. Xinjiang people had their special recipe to mix cumin and chili to form the Xinjiang spice. Cumin comes from the aromatic seeds of the plant that grows from the Mediterranean to the Central Asia. This spice is fantastic on grilled lamb and other meats. The Xinjiang spice became famous and was traded worldwide.

In the market, something glossy in bright colours caught my mother's eye. It was a silk rug. She loved the smooth and soft feel. She said that the special pattern and colour combination reflected the happiness of the people. My mother showed me the rug that she bought twenty years ago and it still looked new.

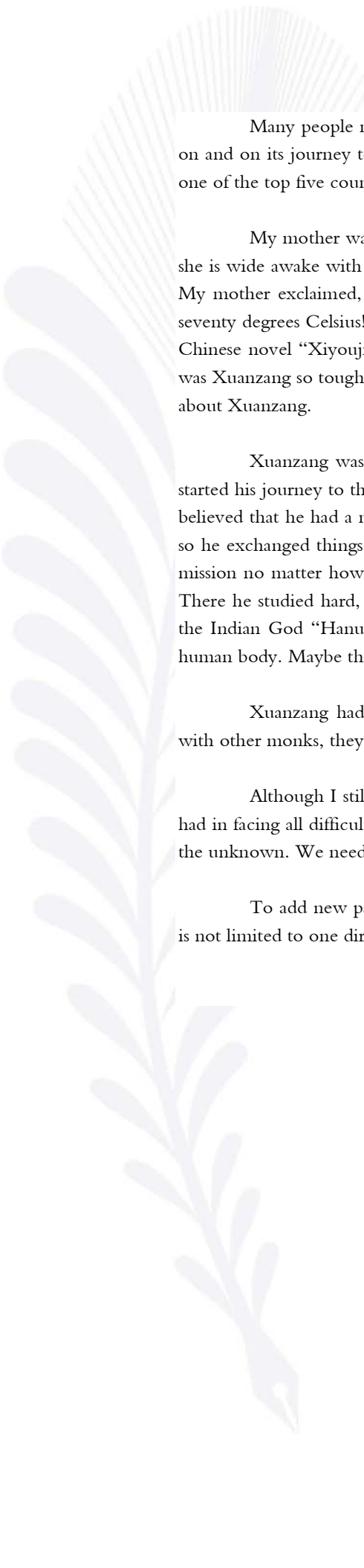
"Silk Road, how did it get its name?" asked my mother while flipping the album. The sceneries of Crescent Spring and Tianchi were stunning but I was distracted while I was more curious to search the history of silk.

In the past, the Kingdom Of Khotan, now called Hotan, existed from 56 to 1006 C.E. It was built on an oasis where the place provided the right environment for silk cultivation. The king of Khotan was clever and he knew the three crucial components of silk. They were silkworm eggs, mulberry seeds and Chinese knowhow. Everytime interesting visitors like Xuanzang passed, they would exchange silk for food and necessities. In this way, Khotan became the first place outside China to start cultivating silk.

The king understood that silkworms are fed with mulberry leaves and they spit out silk to wrap around and over their bodies. The silkworm will turn into a cocoon. It is just like the lifecycle of a butterfly. However, in order to separate the silk from the cocoon, workers use boiling water to remove silk and the silkworm will die.

Silk is amazing and funny. It takes around two thousand five hundred silkworms to produce only a pound of raw silk! A single cocoon has around a thousand yards of silk filaments, that's a lot! Silk filament is very light but very strong. In the olden days, silk was therefore very expensive. Its lustre and fine texture showed off the standard of royalty.

The Silk Road opened in the second century B.C., missionaries and pilgrims began to travel between China, Central Asia and India. It kept on extending and was about 6400 km long which was the longest road on earth in 200 A.D. People walked through the route where trading of commodities began to appear. With the special characteristics of silk, the Silk Road gained the name in the 19th century.



Many people misunderstood silk production started in China and ended in India. In fact, silk went on and on its journey to the west, to Europe and to America. Silk was even produced in Brazil, and it was one of the top five countries in silk manufacturing.

My mother was surprised about what I had found, then showed me another picture. In the picture, she is wide awake with her hair blown up by the wind. The background has some gullies of red sandstones. My mother exclaimed, "It's the most challenging stop along this trip. The temperature could reach up to seventy degrees Celsius! It's Flaming Mountains at Turpan." Flaming Mountains, that led me to think of the Chinese novel "Xiyouji". The author imagined a huge leaf fan for Sun Wukong to put out the heat. Why was Xuanzang so tough to walk through the Silk Road? I have much interest to search for more information about Xuanzang.

Xuanzang was a buddhist monk who was born in 602 C.E. He was only twenty seven when he started his journey to the west. It took him over sixteen years to go to India and back to China. He strongly believed that he had a mission to go there. He was often starving and freezing. It was really hard to survive, so he exchanged things he brought from Chang'an for shelter, clothes and food. He would not give up his mission no matter how hard the journey was. With his determination, he had arrived at Nalanda of India. There he studied hard, discussed openly with other monks and visited some sites associated with the life of the Indian God "Hanuman". The drawing of Hanuman was with a monkey head on a body similar to a human body. Maybe the character of the Monkey King "Sun Wukong" was created because of Hanuman.

Xuanzang had brought back five hundred and twenty cases of Buddhist scriptures, and together with other monks, they had translated the religious text into Chinese.

Although I still do not understand the religion of Buddhism, I really admire the courage Xuanzang had in facing all difficulties and his strong belief in himself to complete the mission. Our lives are for finding the unknown. We need to concentrate on what we want to do, follow our dreams.

To add new pages to my mother's album, I would like to continue the journey to the west which is not limited to one direction.

Journey to the west

Korean International School, Ikuta, Hirotaka – 10

Journey to the west is an epic, famous story that is published in the 16th century. This fantastic novel is one of the four great classical stories of China. There are four main characters in the story. They are Sun Wukong, Xuan Zang, Pigsy and Friar Sand. This fantastic story could be divided into four heroic sections.

The first section describes and tells about the journey of the Monkey King, Sun Wukong. Sun Wukong is a special monkey that was born from a rock, by heaven and earth working together. He became the king of the Fruit and Flower Mountain because he leaped into a water fall courageously and found a beautiful cave. However he had a problem, he wanted to live forever, so he went to a sage's temple and met a sage named Subodhi. He taught Sun Wukong the secret formula and also 72 transformations he goes through a lot of dangerous adventures and he even get's the legendary iron bar at the Dragon Palace where the Dragon King lives. Due to his disobedience at the end of his chapters he was trapped under a mountain for 500 years by the Buddha as a punishment.

The second section describes and tells you about a new main character Xuan Zang, he is a Buddhist monk that will be the hero of the story. His father was murdered by a ferry man, the ferry man took Xuan Zang's mother and his father's office. This section also tells you how Buddha hid his true scriptures, the true scripture is an important key of the story. Buddha was also looking for someone to find the scripture and bring it back to the East.

The third part is the biggest section of all. It tells about the four main characters having a journey to find Buddha's scripture that is hidden in India. When Xuan Zang was riding on his horse following the road called the Silk Road the Silk Road connects China to India. He meets three other characters that is Sun Wukong, Pigsy and Friar Sand, they fight with demons during their way to India, but together they arrived and found Buddha's scriptures.

The last section tells about the four characters going back to China and got awarded for accomplishing the mission.

I learned that it is important not to be selfish and not to be a show off, because Sun Wukong was selfish and was a show off. But I could also learn from him to have courage, help others and to challenge yourself. I think everybody has Sun Wukong in themselves. I think this story is trying to tell you to help others and not to be selfish. I also learned that team work is very important and if you have friends that help and support you, you could do anything!!

The Real Xuan Zang

Korean International School, Joo, Stanley – 10

Introduction of Xuanzang

Xuanzang was born in the Tang dynasty in 602 AD and died in 664 AD. He is famous for bringing Buddhism to China. He was a monk, a scholar and a translator. He inspired Wu Cheng'en to write the novel the Journey to the West.

Early life

Xuanzang was born in Henan and went to the imperial academy (Taixue). He was interested in becoming a Buddhist monk. One of his ancestors was Chen Shi, a minister of the Eastern Han Dynasty. His father was a conservative confucian in the Sui Dynasty. But because the Sui Dynasty was near its end, it led to his father giving up office.

His Journey to India

He went to India to study Buddhism and brought Buddhism to China. However it was not a straight road (metaphor). He had to go along the Silk Road, through the Gobi Desert, the Tien Shan mountains, and Issyk Kul Lake

Finally, he reached India after 14 years. He studied in India for one year. He came back in 645 AD.

Return to China

It was reported that he brought over six hundred Mahayana and Hinayana texts (that includes the Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra), seven statues of the Buddha and more than a hundred saria relics. He also translated the texts. Because of doing everything I mentioned earlier, the Emperor of China ordered a Tang calligrapher called Chu Suiliang to insert two stele stones known as 'The Emperor's Preface to the Sacred Teachings' at the 'Giant Wild Goose Pagoda.'

His Legacy in fiction

Xuanzang's journey inspired Wu Cheng'En to write 'Journey to the West'. Also in the Yuan Dynasty (Mongol Empire), there was a play called Wu Changling. In the west, Xuanzang (Journey to the West) became famous by Arthur waley's translation and by the cult TV series 'Monkey.'

Conclusion

Xuanzang was a great man who did great things. His action had huge amounts of effects (mostly good) on China and The World. His actions and influences will never be forgotten.

The Silk Road: Ancient Trade system of the past

Korean International School, Kinhekar, Pratyay – 9

What is the Silk Road?

The Silk Road was basically many roads connected. It was very big when you know the fact that it takes 2 years to walk fully from China to Rome and back. It started in China and goes across Asia and India all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

Trade system

The Silk Road was across Africa, Asia and Europe. The items they traded were silver, gold, pots, cups etc. China traded many of the utensils like bowls and cups while India traded the different types of spices.

Religion

Religions were a big part of the Silk Road. Many walked months and years to learn the cultures of other nations. The monk Xuanzang came to India to learn Buddhism, Marco Polo came to learn the cultures of all of Asia. You see, the religions which were spread by the Silk Road were Buddhism, Hinduism and even Christianity.

Marco Polo

Marco Polo was also a famous person who also traveled on the Silk Road. Marco Polo was born in 1254 AD and died on the year 1324 AD. He was not only known for traveling the Silk Road, but also for the book he wrote – *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Marco polo's travel to Asia lasted 24 years. He traveled all over Asia and then became a confidant of the Mongol ruler Kublai Khan. He was later captured in a battle between Venice and the rival state of Genoa.

The Monk Xuanzang

One of the many great people who walked across the silk road was the Monk Xuanzang . Monk Xuanzang was born on the year 602 AD and died in 644 AD. He was a Chinese Buddhist scholar. He became famous for his 17-year travel to India in search of Buddhist books. His travel to India was retold with demons and imaginary things as *The Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en nine hundred years after Xuanzang's death.

The Mischievous Sun Wukong

Korean International School, Robinson, Conor – 10

Sun Wukong is a character from Journey to the West and also named Monkey King. He was born on the Fruit and Flowers Mountain and became the king of the mountain. The monkey king also became immortal. His master was Xuan Zang. He was a very mischievous monkey but in the end he became good. He became friends with the new disciples of Xuan Zang and was not mean and grumpy to them although he was a little bit grumpy when they first met.

Sun Wukong was a mischievous monkey and did a lot of naughty things. When the Jade Emperor's mother did not invite him to the annual Peach festival, he took revenge and ate all the peaches in the Heavenly Peach Garden. He rebelled after he was put in charge of the Heavenly Stables and found out it was not a very important post. He decided then to drink all the potions of longevity. When one night, the spirits captured him and brought him to the officials of hell, Sun Wukong crossed out his name from the book of life and death. That is also how Sun Wukong became immortal.

Sun Wukong's weapon is the Golden Banded Staff (Ruyi Jingu Bang). He took it from the Dragon King in the Eastern seas after someone told him that the dragon king holds lots of weapons in his palace. The Dragon King got the staff from Heaven to hold the sea in place. Sun Wukong also has lots of powers like he can do seventy-two types of shape-shifting. One time he turned into a temple because he needed to escape from the Heavenly General that was trying to capture him. Another time he turned into a beautiful girl because he wanted to capture a demon that liked pursuing girls. He could do all sorts of other things as well. For example, he could also travel thousands of kilometres in one somersault.

He was much too mischievous so the Buddha crushed him under the Five Elements Mountain for 500 years. Lots of years later, a person named Xuan Zang was going to India to get some important Buddha scriptures. He found Sun Wukong under the mountain and rescued him. Sun Wukong then became his disciple and bodyguard. On the way, they met other demons that became Xuan Zang's bodyguards as well. One of their names was Piggy, the demon that pursued girls. Sun Wukong turned himself to a beautiful village girl and when the demon came, he gave him a good beating and forced him to be Xuan Zang's second disciple. Sandy, the other disciple, was a demon which lives in the the Flowing Sand river and he captured Xuan zang. Guanyin, the goddess which sent Xuan Zang to India, came to rescue Xuan Zang and Sandy became his third disciple.

The Journey To India was very bad because Xuan Zang, Piggy, monkey king and Sandy encountered lots of terrifying and ugly demons on the way and needed lots of help from Guanyin. In the end, Sun Wukong became the god of Conquest as a reward for his courage.

Journey to the West

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Wang, Xuanyue -10

After reading “Journey to the West”, I was deeply moved. I was particularly impressed by the unbelievable experiences of the Tang priest, and his three apprentices.

“Journey to the West”, written by ChengEn Wu, is one of the four greatest and most famous classical Chinese novels. Through a way of unconstrained style, the book shows the four individuals encounter various difficulties and obstacles, and finally overcome all of these. What's more, in front of them, no matter what happens, they will never give up and make every effort to achieve their goals.


At the beginning of the book, there was a mountain named Hua Guo Shan. One fine day, a large rock of this mountain exploded and a monkey jumped out. Once born, he had the confidence to be the king of monkeys. Eventually, he made it. He found a comfortable place, which was so perfect for monkey that all the monkeys let the rock monkey be their king. As far as I am concerned, I admire him. With a willing heart, he will fight for his dream and never give up. Indeed, every student should have a goal, and go out of their way to realise it.

From “Journey to the West”, I have a better understanding of tolerance. In chapter 12, one noon, Xuanzang felt hungry and asked Wukong to find some food while the rest of them rested there. When Wukong was absent, a girl walked to Xuanzang, saying, " my husband is working in the field. I am taking lunch to him. Since you look very pleasant you can have some." A pig is a pig. Bajie reached for the food. Wukong watched on from a cloud that the girl was actually a devil. He immediately jumped down and killed her. Due to naivety, Xuanzang blamed Wukong. Wukong showed him the pot containing toads and stones instead of food. However, Xuanzang was still in doubt!

After three times like that, Xuanzang drove Wukong out, nevertheless, when the rest of three encountered further troubles, Wukong, regardless of the past, still lent a helping hand. By knowing this story, I think that we student should also learn to forgive, which will broaden our horizon.

Moreover, the story Wukong borrowed a fan from Princess Iron Fan impresses me the most and makes me feel intelligence is essential. In the story, it was already late Autumn but it got hotter and hotter as they walked on. Puzzled, they decided to turn to the locals and found out the reason. An old man said, "Thirty kilometers ahead there is a Flaming Mountain. Literally, it is covered with flames so it is hot all year round here. To go to the West you must cross it. About 1500 meter to the southwest, there was a Ba Jiao Dong, literally Plantain Cave, on Cui Yun Shan, literally Green Cloud Mountain. In the cave lived an Iron-fan Goddess. She was in possession of a plantain fan with which one could put out the fire, bring wind and rain."

In no time Wukong jumped onto a cloud and disappeared in the distance. However, she was Bull Demon King's wife and also Red Boy's mother who had been taken away by Guanyin, the Goddess of Peace. So Red Boy's parents hated Son Wokong because of this. So it was impossible for the Princess to lend the fan to Wokong. Anyway, Wukong decided to try his luck. When reported that Wukong wanted to use her fan she went red in the face and said, " Evil Monkey! How can he ask for a favor after what he has done to my son? I will make him pay his price! " As she was talking she went out, sword in hand, and waved at Wukong but the monkey managed to dodge away. Wukong then came up with many ideas, such as stealing the fan, pretending to be Bull Demon King, and shrinking his body to go into her tummy. As a



result, his trick came off and he succeeded. Wukong went to Flaming Mountain with the fan and waved it three times. As expected the flames went out. From my mind, I can say nothing but admiration. So clever does Wukong that he will find many ways to deal with problems. When we come across any trouble, we should find some different ways to overcome it.

Even though the Tang priest had experienced all kinds of tribulations, they did not hold back. They were extremely persistent, fearless and determined which touch me very much. In the past, although I had the lofty ideal of being a scientist, I could not endure hardship and hard work. I often procrastinated and gave up easily. I just wanted to enjoy myself. In the years to come, I must get rid of these silly and childish habits, and strenuously develop the habit of tenacity. Persevering with an enterprising spirit, I will do everything, and work hard towards my goals!

The Diet of a Monkey

Zhuhai International School, Pai, Stephanie – 10

There are many types of monkeys— Spider Monkeys, Squirrel Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys, Proboscis Monkeys, Pocket Monkeys, Rhesus Monkeys, Cotton Eared Marmosets, Gibbons, Howler Monkeys, Snow Monkeys, Mandrills, Baboons, Blue Monkeys, Capuchin Monkeys, and so many more!

Monkeys love eating ripe fruits and seeds, but their diet mostly depends on the species of monkey.

Spider Monkeys eat fruit. But the interesting thing is they don't just nibble on these fruits. They swallow it whole! They eat bananas, berries, apples, sapodilla, and almost any other kind of fruit they can find.

Squirrel Monkeys eat frogs, insects, fruits, leaves and twigs. They also drink nectar if they can find any, as a treat.

Vervet Monkeys eat lots of different types of food. Fruits, figs, plants, flowers, leaves and also bird eggs and young chicks that they find in nests. Bugs and insects are also another something that they enjoy.

Proboscis Monkeys eat other species of monkeys. But if they cannot find any other monkeys, then they will eat mangrove shoots and leaves. Sometimes they will eat bugs or insects if they can find any.

Pocket Monkeys like to eat tree sap and gum. But if they cannot find enough tree sap or gum, then their bodies can also handle plants, fruits, and insects.

Rhesus Monkeys eat pine needles, roots, small bugs and leaves. They are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and meat.

Cotton Eared Marmosets eat spiders, tree sap, bird eggs and vertebrates from smaller animals. They will eat what they can find, but they are very picky when food is plentiful.

Gibbons eat lots of fruit. They also eat figs, twigs, leaves, insects, and flowers. Sometimes they will eat bird eggs.

Howler Monkeys eat fruits, nuts, leaves and plants. If they happen to break into a village, they will eat chickens, chicks, and eggs.

Snow Monkeys eat fruits, leaves, twigs, plants, bugs, fungi, and sometimes fish.

Mandrills eat a lot of food. Fruits, figs, insects, tree bark, eggs, and other monkeys. Sometimes they will hunt down small antelope.

Baboons eat plants and leaves, as well as bugs and small animals.

Blue Monkeys eat fruits, figs, bugs and leaves. Sometimes they will eat flowers and twigs, even tree bark.

Capuchin Monkeys eat seeds, bugs, nuts, eggs, leaves and fruit. Most live by the water so they also like to eat crabs.

There are hundreds more species of monkeys, which mean hundreds of other diets! But just remember one thing—they don't only eat bananas!

Non-Fiction

Group 3



The Manufacturer of the World

German Swiss International School, Lam, Aristobulus – 11

“Dad, what is that apartment complex doing here? It’s China, not Italy,” I asked my father incredulously.

“That’s not an apartment complex, that’s Huawei’s new Research and Development Centre. They made it all Westernised to look modern. This took millions of dollars but it’s all worth it, eh? More orders for phone parts!” My father, the CEO of an OEM factory for Huawei, chuckled.

Only then did I discover the reality of Chinese manufacturing. Of course, I had already seen the *Made in China* stamp on almost anything I bought, but to experience this phenomenon in person felt different. It seemed that Chinese state-backed companies had almost unlimited funding.

First, a history lesson. China was once the “manufacturer of the world”. Though, back then, it was with agriculture, not phones. Eastern China, especially the Pearl River Delta, was perfect for planning— China’s geography, with its vast, spanning coastline, enabled traders to reach the rest of Asia and even Eastern China during the Ming Dynasty. That was 200 years before Europe arose from its Dark Ages and the Age of Exploration began. Europe paled in comparison then. The disunity that plagued its politics rendered Europe unable to fund large expeditions to the outside world.

Fast-forward 400 years: the exact opposite was taking place. China’s Qing Dynasty was riddled with corruption and Western powers came to exploit this. The Opium War and the Eight-Nation Alliance invasion into Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion proved disastrous to China’s economy. Furthermore, it showed a fundamental weakness in China’s government, unable to retaliate against stronger foreign states. Social unrest in China was at large, and the Qing dynasty was on the verge of collapsing.

Therein lies the reason why China soared to prominence in manufacturing: the poverty of the Qing people propelled them to do whatever it took to get food and basic life necessities.

Foreign companies jumped at the chance to lower their manufacturing costs to be more competitive. To find low-cost, unskilled labour, transnational companies flocked to China, and thanks to containerization, their shipping costs were negligible.

So how does the industry look in the present day? Spectacular. Products that are being manufactured range from the flagship pair of shoes in your favourite clothing store to next-generation innovative phones.

The Internationale Funkausstellung Berlin (IFA), which is one of Germany’s oldest industrial shows, demonstrated China’s manufacturing prowess. Many OEM companies display their products there. Most, if not all, are from China, and the majority originated from Shenzhen.

Several Chinese firms, due to their close proximity with foreign companies, are able to learn from them and create their own brands like Huawei, OnePlus, Oppo, Xiaomi, Anker and many more. These companies also receive state-backed funding in an attempt to gain an even footing with foreign competitors. Nowadays, these brands are all recognizable worldwide. OnePlus sold a huge amount of phones to overseas enthusiasts with their first flagship OnePlus One. Huawei phones can be seen to be reviewed in a lot of technology channels throughout YouTube.

Yet China’s manufacturing prowess can also be the greatest flaw in its economy. The manufacturing industry is propelling the economy and granting it prosperity; on paper, it sounds really good, but is actually going to destroy China’s secondary industry. The prosperity has made cost of living in cities soar, and housing is increasingly hard to get.

Many companies have made the conclusion that China is just not worth the cost and have moved to other countries like the Philippines. Its appeal has slowly decreased as it was alleged that China intended to steal patented inventions and use their patented inventions, later shutting them out using protectionism.

So is there any way that China can regain the manufacturing prowess they once had? No, definitely not. A lot of Chinese startups have made huge disruptions in the market. Smaller companies came into dominance in their own isolated market.

China cannot sustain its own economy with only manufacturing, as with any economy trying to do so. Short-term plans like lowering import tariffs and increasing manufacturing robotization will not work. Other areas with lower manufacturing costs and jobs that require robotization are being set up in the US, like Tesla and SpaceX. Backwards vertical integration between headquarters and manufacturing departments means that communications are much more efficient and the origin country's government will be likely to introduce financial support for those who bring the manufacturing back to their own country.

Of course, that's not even including the numerous protectionist trends in America, China's largest trade partner. The current president of the United States has made it clear that he wants domestic manufacturing processes. Since his party has a majority in Congress, it is extremely likely that this will be enforced.

Thinking back to what I had learned about China's industrial journey to the West, it was so mind-blowing as I stood face-to-face with the facility. *It is happening right now.* It is the evolution of a whole country. It is the embodiment of China's technological development. To the untrained eye, it is simply a huge factory, but looking deeper one would find that it is the R&D centre of the second largest manufacturer of Android phones and the biggest technology company in China. It represents the possibility of the modernization of China as a whole, of a future separate from manufacturing. Huawei now sells products in the mainland while gaining positive recognition in the West— its journey to the West has certainly proved a success.

New Journey

HKUGA College, Dam, Minh Han -14

Many of us have been raised on this tale of an impulsive stone monkey who overpowers Taoist deities, a lethargic and gluttonous pig demon, an overly obedient sand demon and a dragon who turned into a horse and an extremely compassionate Buddhist monk on a mission to retrieve the Buddha's three heavenly scrolls called the Tripitaka and bring them back to China for preaching. I mean, he's the Buddha, he could have just brought them to China by himself! The whole novel is a hundred chapters long probably just because someone was just too busy doing nothing. However, if this mythical story took place in the modern world, the five characters would have been in a lot more trouble.

Xuanzang, or Tripitaka in English (if you're confused, he was renamed after the heavenly scrolls when he was chosen for the quest), was a monk in a Buddhist temple during the late-Sui and early-Tang dynasty. According to the novel, he was a relative of the Emperor who was abandoned by his mother. At the same time, he was the incarnation of a disciple of the Buddha called the Golden Cicada. Tripitaka, being a devout Buddhist, was sent by the Buddha to retrieve the said heavenly scrolls. He was also informed that four protectors would guide him on his way.

The first was a dragon prince who was sentenced to death for burning down his father's palace. If he were human and living right now, I'm pretty sure the situation would have been far worse. Instead of setting the house on fire, consider the fire as a family argument. The family members would bicker with each other like kindergarten children, the dragon prince might magnify the entire incident and numerous lawsuits would come charging in their way. Literally. It would be really hard for the Bodhisattva Guan Yin to save the dragon prince from the court cases to come.

The second was Sun Wukong, or Monkey for short. We have all come to know about the mischievous monkey who called himself the Great Sage Equal of Heaven. His incomparable strength, his endless transformations and his trickery can even force the Jade Emperor to seek help from the Buddha by himself. However, if he were living in the 21st century, he would have been somewhat like a leader of the triads, leading his army of men while taking down the government. With his great wit, capturing him would be next to impossible. He would also be way too satisfied with his life to ever imagine being on a pilgrimage, and accompanying some monk who recites lullaby-like mantras would be out of the question.


The third protector is Zhu Wuneng, or Pigsy for short. Nope, I did not make this name up. As known from the name, he is a pig, just an exceptionally voracious and indolent one. However, he used to be a General of the heavens who was kicked out of Heaven and accidentally incarnated into a piglet (probably because of the Jade Emperor's horrible motor skills) for flirting with the moon goddess. To sum him up, he's a womanising pig. He would have been tangled in way more issues than hunger if he were existing at this moment, he could be sued for sexual harassment. The moon goddess Chang'e could always send him to jail for flirting with her if what he said was slightly improper (cough cough), and he would stand no chance against the lawyers.

The fourth and final protector is Sha Wujing, or Sandy. Once a deity like Pigsy, he was banished to the mortal world just for breaking a simple ol' vase. He became a man-eating sand demon and lived in a river of flowing sand. How did he even deserve that punishment? At least he's not a cannibal, since he isn't human, yet he'd be living a mediocre life consisting of a diet of lungs, eyeballs and bone marrow. Not bad for covering his guilt, if he had any.

See, it would have been next to impossible to gather the group together if they were alive right now. Even if they did get together under circumstances beyond the bounds of possibility, it wouldn't be the ubiquitous demons that they face that would perturb them.

Firstly, going on religious missions is difficult nowadays. The religions that have emerged after the Tang dynasty in China are numerous, not to mention that many people are now strictly atheist. I'm not saying it's "a horrendous act against God (or gods)" to have no religion, but science and technology has caused the world to have their views on things mainly based on reasoning, putting older beliefs in a tight spot. This would make preaching so much harder and Tripitaka would certainly reach the conclusion that it's better to let his hair grow out.

Secondly, most of the places they have gone to in the novel are now very different. According to historical records, Tripitaka was in modern day Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and the Indian



subcontinent. Kyrgyzstan has been enduring ethnic conflicts, revolts, economic troubles, transitional governments and political conflicts; Islam is the main religion of Uzbekistan and previously war-torn Afghanistan and Pakistan was even created in the name of Islam! What's more, the official religion of India, the birthplace of Buddhism, is Hinduism! You know, the one where people worship some god with an elephant head (I'm just being honest). I can imagine Tripitaka jaw-dropping at the sight of the world he would be in.

Thirdly, Buddhism just isn't that popular anymore. Despite the fact that Buddhism originated from India, only 0.7% of the current Indian population is Buddhist. On the global level, only 7% of people are Buddhist. Even though it is the fourth most popular religion, its popularity declined during the Middle Ages (much like a human being). Just ask yourself, how many Buddhists do you know? Not many. If the five were here now, they might even throw away their cassocks!

The Journey to the West in the modern days really isn't much more than a pipe dream. No one even knows if the Tripitaka has ever existed! Really, the only thing we humble mortals can do is just sit down in a quiet corner to read all 100 chapters of the novel or watch one of the countless remakes of it.

The Road to the world

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Cheung, Ching Po – 13

A journey to the west was probably only a dream of many Chinese people before the development of the Silk Road. The Silk Road, once, an important path to another world, is still revealing its historical values to us nowadays. A trip to exploring this valuable place is not easy, but I was one of the lucky persons who could spend a few days there with my Grandpa when I was small.

As a kid, it was a big place for me. I was astounded to see the beautiful scenery, and I was proud of having a small and colourful purse given by my Grandpa as a souvenir which he bought for me there. Studying about the Chinese's journey to the west at the Silk Roads is, of course, more fascinating than reading the novel *Journey to the West*, though I still remember the three main characters: Tang Sanzang, Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie, and their adventures are indeed my favourite bedtime story. Now, on the Silk Road, no more myths or legendary, vivid and friendly characters but the traces of horses galloping and camels walking for trading can still be found.

The Silk Road is famous for transporting silk in the ancient world which is also the prime time for road trading development in the past. Silk, a piece of fine, light and luxurious cloth, was a symbol of wealth, political and social power. Silk was rather popular among nomads for its lightness as lining for bedding and clothing. Thus, silk was used for gifts for nomads who were strong and ready to attack China with their power, and it was part of diplomatic policies and strategies of the emperors of China to use silk for getting a more stable situation.

Travelling for trading was never easy in the past. The Silk Road was definitely a dangerous place. The caravans were often attacked by small Central Asian tribes. It caused loss of property or even life. However, the bad weather even made things even worse.

Zhang Qian, was a Chinese explorer during the Han dynasty and he was sent by the Han dynasty to the West as the emperor wanted to form an alliance to fight against their enemy, the Huns. However, during his trips, he and his caravans were captured by the Huns but they managed to escape successfully at last.


Later, Zhang Qian reached his destination eventually, Da Yuezhi who had strong armies but they did not want to make an alliance at all, so his main mission failed after encountering all sorts of troubles and constraints. However, he was successful to help China connect with other countries and brought back China with new knowledge of religion, art, philosophies and numerous new things like spices and other products which were new to Chinese. Thanks to Zhang Qian's effort, the economic and cultural connections with the foreign countries in the Central Asia of China was established which helped to widen the horizon of Chinese, as they did not have the chance to see the outside world before that.

Zhang Qian successfully reached the West. It was then more common for people to have their trading on the Silk Road. Major products traded were silk cloth, tea, salt, sugar, porcelain, spices and expensive luxury goods. Merchants travelled for a long trip in large caravans that helped in defending from bandits. However, people who travelled would still have to risk their properties and lives with unknown threats.

Merchants and tradesmen generated trade and commerce between different foreign countries in the Central Asia. It was considered as a way of exchanging ideas, culture, inventions and also the exchange or fusion of cultures between the western world.

While trading was booming, some people were interested in visiting other places like the origin of Buddhism. With much courage of Xuanzang, Buddhism was first brought back from the Silk Road. In 602, Xuanzang was born in Tang Dynasty. In 629, he decided to visit India and study Buddhism at its source. However, he did not go to the India with any official permissions, so he tried to avoid being arrested by the officers in Western Gansu. Luckily, Turpan's king eventually provided money and passports for safe passage through other kingdoms. Xuanzang spent fifteen years in India visiting holy sites, studying about Buddhism. In 644, Xuanzang bought a vast collection of Buddhist statues, relics and knowledge of texts that wrote on bamboo and wooden tablets about Buddhism via Kashgar. During Xuanzang's late life, he translated part of his collection of Buddhist texts.

Later in the 16th century during the Ming dynasty, *Journey to the West*, the Chinese novel was published. It is one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literatures also it is translated and spread to the English-speaking countries now known as *Monkey*, Arthur Waley. *Journey to the West* is an extended account of Xuanzang's who travelled to the Western regions. It strongly reflected the spread of Buddhism affairs and the elements of tales. *Journey to the West* is some kind of reflective of Chinese attitudes today. Silk Road is not only a trade route that only concerned exchange and firms. It is the cultural, political and religion revival. A place that raised up the Chinese with sentiment and kindness. From the Han to the Tang Dynasty, Chinese had a positive relation with the west. It established the cultural, knowledge, firms, religion



and military exchange now. So China had quickly developed and the education of people was also upgraded with a better knowledge of the outside world.

With the rise of trading between Asian countries and Romans in the second century, the rise of Hans dynasty in China and their first journey to the west and the trading between Chinese and Russians and British in the 18th and 19th century, China was changed from a closed economy to a welcoming place which the merchants and ambassadors could find themselves were very much welcomed.

Now, China is developed into an international trading country with a vast diplomatic network, linking the economic and cultural affairs with the world.

No one is indeed not overwhelmed by the courage and intelligence of our ancestors who did lay down a peaceful connection with outsiders and the pillars of trading with other countries as well. The modern China now has become even more international, and its huge market is one of the biggest ones in the world, which attracts various companies to invest and to produce their products here. We should therefore learn from the perseverance of our ancestors and the visions they had in mind to develop our Motherland, China in the way that trading with others with mutual benefits and peace.

The New Journey to the West

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Chung, Hin Cheung – 13

Chinese' journey to the west is a long lasting story which tells us many things of the adventures of our ancestors. After my grandfather had passed away, it took me a lot of courage to go to his room and tidy up his stuffs. My grandpa was always proud of the adventures he had when he was young. He told me about his trip to the famous Silk Road. He, liked many of us, had heard of the stories about Silk Road and read the novel, *Journey to the West*. However, the story he told me was about the history of this road which is about legends and adventures.

ZhangQian is the main character on The Silk Road. He was sent by Emperor Wu to take with him silk ,fictile ,Chinese Culture, tea and luxury goods in exchange for fruit and books from other countries. The trading between China and other countries was started and that has been continuing up till now. Since the trading between China and other countries was working very well after the birth of the Silk Road, many Chinese did welcome others into their world. They set counters at borders and for anyone who wanted to visit China for trading. They must got the permission issued by the Chinese government or court, and the permission was usually written on bamboos to get the exact day and place on them to make sure the merchants were not trying to attack the locals. This complicated border restriction manifested the intelligence and administrative system our ancestors had.

Through the pathway of the Silk Roads, Chinese could not wait to see the more of the outside world. Trade between China and the Asia countries like India and the Middle East grew rapidly and then the ones to the farther world also started. From some historical documentary, it is said that the silks made by hand in China was being used by the rich and powerful in Carthage and other places in the Mediterranean two millennia ago. After the famous adventure and the journey to the west of Zhang Qian in Han Dynasty, more Chinese ambassadors were sent to the west for trading or for learning more about other countries.

The Silk Road was famous for helping Chinese get more fine horses called Heavenly Horses (Ferghana horses) from Ferghana which allowed the troops of the Han Dynasty to win in wars, and later defended themselves against Xiongnu. This kind of "blood-sweating" horses were so popular in China because of its size and speed which could not be found in China, so the Silk Road became the main gateway for importing these first class horses.

Marco Polo travelled to China in 14th century through the Silk Road, and he mentioned about the passport given by the Chinese government for his trip in China. China was always considered to be a safe place for many merchants at that time with this passport system. The passports were made of pieces of bamboo with words written on them recording the destinations of the merchants, as well as the time they entered the border and the day they would leave the country

The Silk Road was indeed the journey to the west, and for us, it is a road to remember the history of our ancestors. Our ancestors were so strong to brave the sandstorm and extreme weather to get to other countries for trade, and it was not an easy way as properties or lives could be lost. However, our ancestors showed us their courage, and because of their hard work, Chinese people were given the chance to see more about other places. P

Nowadays, Chinese is developed in a faster pace. With its rise in economic influence in the world, many from the west or even other countries want a share in Chinese market which is a huge one. Though, the Silk Road is no longer the only way for Chinese to go to the countries like Iraq, India and Persia. The Silk Road now includes Europe and Somalia, and it is still an important place for us to recall the brave acts of our ancestors who allowed us to see the outside world.

Tourists can still find traces of trading activities along the Silk Road, and in Xian, there is an exhibition of Terracotta Army which can tell you more about the great side of Han Dynasty. There are also some temples on the Silk Road which tell us about the booming activities on Silk Road in Tang Dynasty. The Chinese monk Xuanzang passed through the Silk Road to go to India for learning more about Buddhism during Tang Dynasty, and his traces are still manifested through the existence of temples in China and on the Silk Road.

The past always gives us a lesson to learn to prepare for our future. The past of the Silk Road is pointing to the future of Chinese trading activities. The Chinese way of trading is fair and intelligent which guarantee the safety of the merchants and people. Maybe it is time for us to reflect on our system in the modern world and to see if we could learn from the great system in ancient China. It is never too late to learn from our ancestors who opened a gate to the west for us.

China is more involved in international trading now, and it is showing to the world that the Chinese way of trading is always fair, negotiable and efficient.

Journey to the west

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Kong, David – 13

One night, as quiet as usual I was sitting on the sofa, I was all by myself and closed my eyes to take a rest, thinking about what the television was showing, it's just unentertaining at all. All of a sudden, I heard a familiar name of a film called the "Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons". It was a common boring movie for lots of the others, but it made me think of something happened a long time ago. Which was called the Silk Road and also the book that my grandfather read to me when I was just a little boy which has the same name with the movie "Journey to the west".

I've noticed, in a Chinese History lesson that, there are some important things for the Chinese Buddhist, they brought back The Book of Han. The book described Buddhism originating in India, the spread of Buddhism became a lot quicker. The first Buddhism book was brought back by the Kushan monk Lokakṣema, and Zhang Qian noted, 'this country is hot and humid. The people ride elephants into battle.' Although Ban Yong explained that they revered the Buddha, and neither killed nor fought, he recorded nothing about the excellent texts, virtuous Law, and meritorious teachings and guidance. As for myself, here is what I have heard: This kingdom is even more flourishing than China. The seasons are in harmony. Sainly beings descend and congregate there. Great Worthies arise there. Strange and extraordinary marvels occur such that human reason is suspended. By examining and exposing the emotions, one can reach beyond the highest heavens.

The silk, the main core of the Silk Road which had brought the east and west together for the first time. It is very important for the diplomatic of China and the other countries like Xiongnu they caused a lot of problems to the Chinese for a very long period of time. But after the trade of The Silk Road, the Xiongnu didn't border the Chinese for centuries. This shows the importance of silk at that time.

Actually, the Silk Road was also a road for cultural exchange. Chinese merchants brought back to China with spices and herbs which could not be found in China, and that changed the way of cooking of Chinese people and their living styles as well. As silk was a very popular material in other countries, Chinese merchants could use it for getting something luxurious in return. Precious stones like gems were included on the trading list of Chinese merchants.

The business of the Silk Road was affected by the economy of different dynasties of China. In Han Dynasty, a man called Zhang Qian was sent to the west by the emperor. He represented China to greet the west for the very first time, and since then, the trading between China and the west continued on the Silk Road.

Now there are different ways to trade with the other countries around the globe. Nowadays Chinese sell lots of goods like coal, cars and also clothes for factories. The world is in peace right now so the trade isn't for diplomatic but, for the friendship and unity of the world.

As time changes, and the way to transport goods to other countries are also different. Like the planes, ships they made the trade easier and faster. That help the international economy with their speed. The economy wasn't that good as they used camels, horses or even on foot. Like the story, *Journey to the West*, the main characters, went to the west was their dream, and that might be also the dream of many Chinese at that time.

It seems that the modern China is very much different from the ancient one. However, the wisdom of our ancestors is always helping us to go further. No one knows what will happen next, like our ancestors they might have also come across with unexpected threats or risk on the Silk Road, but they were determined and they had faith in their hearts which supported them to the road of trading and also success. They opened the way for us to go to other countries, and we should also open ourselves to open more gates for our next generation.

Now trading with other countries is much easier, and China with its strong economy has become the big brother in Asia which is having a leading role in trading. China is willing to open itself to the world and welcoming them to see more of our products as well as our culture. Though the transportation and communication between countries are faster than before, Chinese way of trading which emphasize honestly, fairness, negotiation and friendship will never change. The fact is we have also inherited the blood of our ancestors who were once brave enough to weather the bad conditions in trading on the Silk Road and going to the West, so we would also be outstanding in the modern business world.

The Journey Begins

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Lee, Tsz Long – 13

It was all like a dream when I got on the train to Sichuan to start my new adventure last year. It was hard to believe that what I had learnt in school was right in front of me. I went on a trip which impressed me with the magnificent treasures hidden in our Chinese history.

Having some knowledge of Chinese trading in the past, I was excited to know more when I got off the train. Sichuan was one of the main spots for Chinese to do their trading with other countries. In order to make it done, they had the famous pathway, The Silk Road, as their way to see the brave new world.

In the ancient time, during the Han Dynasty, the emissary, Zhang Qian, was sent by the emperor to the west to negotiate with the Yuezhi people for help in defeating the Xiongnu, and that induced the birth of The Silk Road. The Silk Road was a trade route that covers many places and links up China with the new world like Eastern Europe. It covers the northern borders of China, India, and Persia and Eastern Europe, that is Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea in the modern world. From the name, "The Silk Road", it is easy for us to understand the road is mainly for the trading of luxury goods like silk. Once the world had seen such a fine material for clothing and beddings, silk was welcomed by almost everyone in the east, as well as the west.

Chinese' journey to the west did not stop at the time when Zhang Qian visited other countries. With the help of the Silk Roads, the journey to the west encouraged trading and exporting products to other parts of the world. Teas, salt, sugar, spices and porcelain are the common stuffs in the Silk Road. Other goods like cotton, ivory, wool, gold, and silver were also on the list of trading between China and the west.

The silk trade was welcomed and promoted by the Han Dynasty which ruled from 206 BC to 220 AD. Later, the Yuan Dynasty increased the silk trade even more, as they were used to receiving silk rolls as gifts from China before to convince them not to attack the borders before they reigned in power.

To help Zhang Qian with his brave journey, the Chinese emperor put into a lot of money and effort to secure his way to the west. In 1 BC, 30,000 rolls of silk and 370 items of clothing were given to Xiongnu for getting more peace at the border.

Trading with the west or outsiders required lots of courage and effort. The Silk Road had even helped Chinese to start their trading with Romans, though the distance between ancient Rome and ancient China was about 4,000 miles by land, however the distance could not hinder the business between them. In order to buy the silk from Chinese, Romans in return, offered us with their precious gold and gems which could not be found in China.

The Silk Roads had fulfilled the dream of Chinese and the west. People no longer were limited to see and to possess their local products anymore. It was a way to the west and to the world, and this provided our ancestors with a new horizon of knowing more about the outside world which was once remained rather mysterious and legendary to them.

Journey to the west is not just the title of the famous novel in China, and our ancestors were eager to see the world of new technology and interesting items. The Silk Road never only existed in the ancient world, but it is a monument of victory over the extreme weather and human limitations of our ancestors.

Learning from the experience and strength of our ancestors, it seems that our modern China has another way round to do their trading. The up-to-date and sophisticated logistic network in China is essential for promoting trading inside the country, and it also links up the Chinese speaking world in Asia. Trading with other countries started to grow since the 1980s under the opening policy of Deng Xiaoping, and it helped the world to see the new China after the closed market during Cultural Revolution.

China, a country with more than five thousand years of history, always learn from the world, and we should learn from our ancestors to take a brave journey to the west to see and the experience the entire new world, while we are also telling the world that the spirits of our fearless ancestors live on in this very new era. While people from other countries are taking their journey to the east to learn from our cultures and costumes which they find exotic and mysterious to them.

Chinese should be proud of their trading development nowadays and they have a comprehensive network to link up almost every province with the outside world. Online trading is now very common inside and outside China which enables Chinese people to buy the products they wish for from other countries. Chinese students also join in this global world. Many Chinese students choose to study in the west like in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. They then go back China to work after their graduation. They are very much like our ancestors who are brave to see the new world and develop our own countries with their precious experience and visions.

We should learn from our adventurous and chivalrous ancestors to have more courage to develop our country with our new horizon and knowledge which we attain from the new modern world. Journey to the west never ends.



The Brave Journey

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Mak, Ming To – 13

Maybe not many of us has been to Xinjiang. I was given the chance to go there four years ago, and my quest for Chinese History began then.

I started to walk on the Silk Road. After walking for 4 hours, I saw a big road sign which was written that I was on an open highway and there was also a small sign which meant I had around 100 kilometers to walk to get to the boundary of China. After 4 hours, I saw there was a big building. It was made of sandstone and some other kinds of hard rocks. I used my hands to try to touch. I could feel that the building was hard enough and I thought that it was a part of the Great Wall. Then, I tried to walk along it. However, I decided to give up as I have to finish my aim not more than 6 months. Therefore, I continued to walk.

After I walked for a week. I finally saw a road sign that I had the last chance to get enough materials for this trip. Therefore, I stayed at that place for few days and I can't come back to get anything.

I shouted 'Rome! I am coming.' Then I stepped on the trip. I walked about 4 kilometers every day, then I built a camp and cook some food to eat.

After 3 days, when I was walking on my road. I saw a big building which was made of sandstone. Then, I used my hand to touch the wall. I found that the ancient Chinese is intelligent and smart! They knew how to build a hard wall to prevent Xiongnu and other foreign tribes. After that, I continued to go on my way.

After 2 days, I saw a sandstorm far away. Luckily, it didn't swirl on me! However, I saw something very valuable, 'it is a skeleton which can be used to give the archaeologist to investigate the past human activity!'

Then, I take a glass bottle to save it up. But, when I wanted to go on again. I saw a grave 100 metres away from the skeleton. The grave was written 'This lonely merchant was died because he saw a group of bandits. They took all of his belongings, the products for trading like the Silk and the spices. What a bad ending of this merchant!'

After I see the grave, the night came. The weather was freezing and quiet, you couldn't hear anything but the sound produced by the wind. When I wanted to sleep, I heard some mysterious and weird sound from the grave. I was very frightened first, but I got over it because I knew that it is the wind. I dreamed 'the merchants who came this road is very brave and courageous like me. They had an ambition to trade with the Roman, but they had a risk that maybe they can't see their family members one day or on the trip. Therefore, I was really proud of them that they had this endurance.

This Silk Road was founded by Han Dynasty which is around 138BC. The founder was named ChangXian. He went to the west twice and he got lot of information about the Rome, India, Arab and also the Persia. However, he had a very hard life as he was caught by the foreign tribes for twice and he was unfree for 12 years. After his finding of the way, more people exchanged with the western and Chinese and the Westerns' did many cultural exchange. However, it declined as many wars and other countries didn't cooperate with China. Therefore, Silk Road declined.

Silk Road represents the spirit of the brave merchant and the intelligent Chinese, some they died, but some alive. But this is the truth, everyone will die one day. So, Silk Road should be highly used.

New Journey From The West

Korean International School, Sun, Apollo – 13

Last summer, my family emigrated to the Hawaiian Island – Oahu. We boarded the Star of Honolulu on a beautiful Sunday at the Hong Kong International Cruise Terminal. Every day of our voyage, I could see dolphins and whales jumping and swimming along the cruise ship. On the 14th day of our journey, the magnificent Oahu island finally came into view. I could see seagulls flying in the air waving at us. As the cruise ship was moving further into the pier, we could see the Pearl Harbor Memorial and the navy base. We were thrilled to start our new life on this wonderful island. At the same time, my mother was offered a teaching job at the University of Hawaii at Oahu. My sister and I were looking forward to meeting with the native Hawaiian people and watching the Hula dance. Dad also suggested that we made some welcoming gifts for the Hawaiian children. Grandpa and Grandma were excited too, it was their very first journey to the west. They wondered if the west is a lot different from the east. We were not sure about the customs of the native people and the local food.

Dad told me the Pearl Harbor Memorial marked the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. My heart saddened after hearing dad's comment. I planned to visit the Memorial someday. We disembarked at the Aloha Tower Pier no. 4. A chauffeured limo picked us up and drove us to our new home. There were over thousands soldier's name on the memorial and some red flowers lay next to the plaque. I also saw some navy officers prayed to them. There is a battleship called "USS Missouri" next to the Memorial. There were many dead bodies in the battleship and they could not be pulled out. According to one of the naval officers, the retrieving of the sunken battle ship might adversely affect the surrounding environment.

Our new home was a two storey single family house located on the Hilario Street near the Honolulu Park. It was huge when compared to what we had in Hong Kong. We lived in a cramped apartment in Hong Kong. Although our old home had three bedrooms, it was nothing when compared to the new house. Dad bought the house a year ago, when he was on business trip in Honolulu. He thought it would be ideal for kids and our grandparents. On the first floor of the house was a 1000 square feet living room, a study room, two full bathrooms and a spacious kitchen. There was also a three cars garage and a backyard with several pear trees. My sister and I were thrilled to live in the spacious house. We checked out all the rooms and spaces. On the second floor of the house, there were six bedrooms overlooking the Hilo bay. I had the bedroom with extra close space. My sister was not happy about it. My bedroom size was 4 times bigger of the one in Hong Kong. I wonder why people have so much space in the West. Space is not issue in here. My sister and I spent days to explore every corner of our new home. Grandpa and Grandma started to grow produce at the backyard. I never came across the backyard back at the home. We had lots of skyscrapers instead. In the west, backyard is a place where people barbecue, have fun, grow their own fruit and trees. Maybe I could celebrate my 14th birthday at our own backyard.

We had our very first Hawaiian meal at a local restaurant. Dad asked the waiter to recommend some traditional food. Our waiter's name was Joey. He had worked in the restaurant for five years. He recommended us to try poi, Lualau, Kalua Pig and Lomi salmon. Poi is a thick paste made for taro root that is either steamed or baked or pounded. My sister and I looked at the greyish purple paste in our bowl without much appetite. Mom tried some and said it did not have much taste. The local people eat poi as a traditional filler starch dish. It does not make you fill very full. Poi did not look too appealing. That was so much about poi. The Lau Lau bought everyone's appetite back. In Hawaiian, Lau Lau means leaves, because it was made of layers of taro leaves wrapped around pig or fish. The entire package was then cooked in an underground oven for an extended period to make the meat tender. Mom said she would build her underground oven at the backyard. The Kalua Pig tasted a lot like our Chinese roasted sucking pig. The Hawaiian people baked their pig flat while we roast our pig in a vertical position in Hong Kong. By having the pig in a vertical position, most of the fat will drip into the collecting tray underneath the head. It is a lot healthier our way. To our surprise, the rice is also very popular on the island. A bowl of rice comes with each dish we ordered. The waiter explained that around 30 % of the local population are of the Asian ethnicity. Pineapples are local produce which grown on red volcanic mud. It is super sweet with a tingle of tropic flavor. Macadamia nuts is another favorite snack on the island. The nuts are full of minerals and vitamins. The locals make many healthcare products from the Macadamia nuts, such as lotion and lip balm.

My sister was crazy about the coconut flavor lip balms. She decided to get a few and send them back to Hong Kong as Christmas presents for her friends.

My sister and I go to the Oahu Public school which is only 10 minutes walking distance from our home. The school is a one storey tribal house located on a piece of grassland by the foot of Diamond Head. It is a huge tribal house with 20 large rooms lined with bamboo mats. All of us students enter the school barefoot. That is something very different from what we used to do back home.

Every morning, we sang the national anthem and chant a prayer in Hawaiian language. As my sister and I are the new students in class, the friendly teachers offered us help, took us to tour the school grounds and let us know what to expect. We learn subjects such as science, the Hawaiian heritage and culture, Math, English, craft and music class. I have learnt that the Hawaiian people worship many gods and goodness. They believed that the gods and the goodness made the islands, the volcanoes, and the mountains. Our school lunch always comes with a generous slice of pineapple. The main dishes are sweet and sour pork, spam sushi or the Kalua Pig. We have rice every day at school. It seemed that they have a passion for rice. All the students will sit under the Palm tree and listen to the teachers playing some Hawaiian songs on their Ukulele.

The school trips are the best part of my school life. Back home, we have school trips once a year. In Oahu, we have school trips once a week! Yes, every week. One week we will be in Hanalei Bay snorkeling and looking for the rainbow fish. The next week, we will visit the volcano national park and look at the craters. We also have a chance to look at how real lava flows in the Science Museum. Last Christmas, the school took us on a whale watching trip. We left the Hilo Bay on a supertanker, travelled two hours out into the Pacific Ocean to visit the humpbacks. They were huge. The air coming from their blowholes is so smelly and fishy. I have never imagined how big a whale can be. We saw six humpback whales and a few dolphins on the trip. My sister and I felt exhilarated about the trip. Oahu is an island full of wild creatures and greenery. We also visit the Fern Grotto on the south side of the island. These are the experiences we had never had in Hong Kong. There is so much to learn about and explore. We don't just sit at our desks and memorize facts and numbers anymore. Nature has become our classroom. Sea turtles, sea stars and Leis are our companions. We loved Oahu.

Journey to the West

Korean International School, Wong, Heidi – 12

One day, my family which includes my Mum, Dad, little Brother and I, were getting ready to go to Lantau Island. It was a big day for our family because we have been waiting for a very long time. “Man I have been waiting for this day to come for long and it has finally came!” shouted my little brother called Nicolas. He was the most excited of because we will be with his friends for the upcoming day and night. He was running around and going crazy. He started getting annoying so mum had to make him do something to help the family. I was busy in my room packing for the trip. I packed pyjamas, underwear, t-shirt, pants, shoes, socks, shirts and things to entertain me.

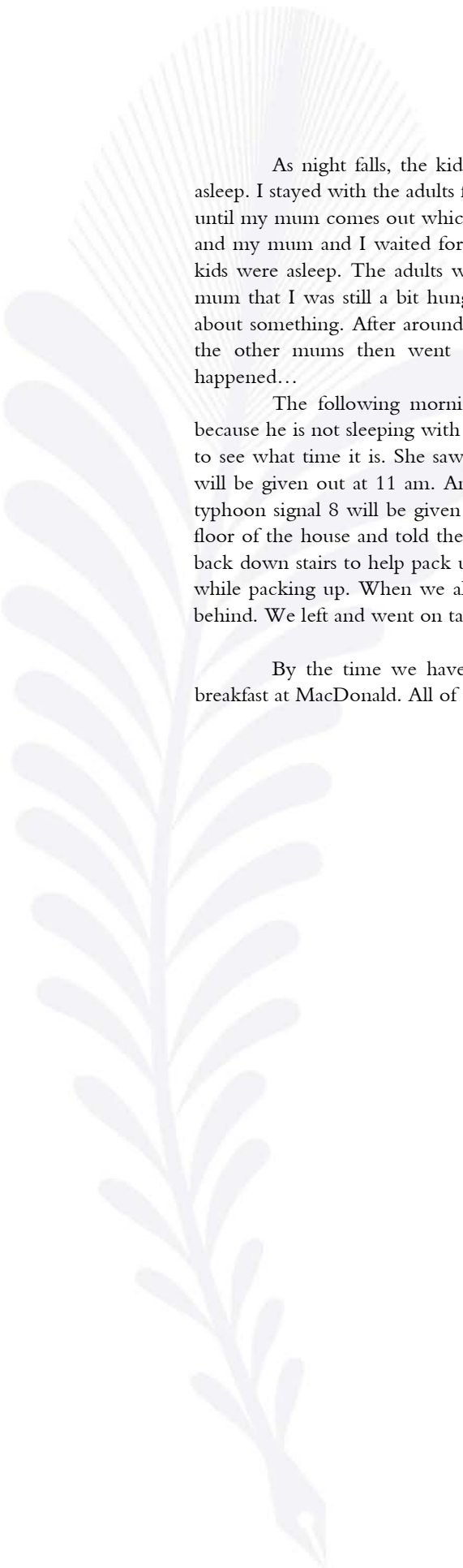
An hour later, we finished packing everything into our bags. Everyone had got something to take to the trip. We are going to the west of Hong Kong, to Lantau island, and find some clams in the sand. We have went to that place before but we were invited by Nicolas friend to go find clams and stayed the night in a house for the night instead of going home so we could play longer.

We went there by taking the MTR then on a bus to our destination. It took around an hour or so to arrive. When we are there, we struggled finding the house that we will be staying in but luckily one of the mums came back and help us. She was very nice and she waited for us to change and bring us to the place where we will be finding the clams. It is very important because what we find is what we will eat tonight. While everyone was searching for clams, I had a look around. I was able to see lots of people that is working with a plow trying to find some. I was also able to see the sea far away from where we currently were. I could smell the salt from the seawater and the sour mixed with smell from the sweaty people. I sat on a chair that no one was sitting on and bent down to touch the sand that felt like mud. The water felt warm since it was a hot day, sadly the hot water did not help me cool down. In the meantime, someone walked past me while I, for some reason, have my mouth open, and he splashed the water and went into my mouth. I immediately spit it out, I was able to taste the saltiness in just a few drops of water. In the distance I could hear waves splashing against the shore, birds chirping, and people talking. My mum then walked up to me and said “don't just sit around, do something.” I can't ignore my mum so I did what I am supposed to do and went in search.

We had been in the cove for 3 hours and everyone that was invited to come has arrived. In those hours lots of cool thing happened, people finding big clams, me finding so many creatures that live in the water that we are working in. However 3 hours after 3o'clock, the sun is starting to set and the sea water is coming back to shore. When everyone started to leave, they have found some baby crabs walking around. A dad picked up two of them back to the house. There was already someone in the house because we will be living there for the night and we would need to bath. Everyone waiting to bath in the same time is not a good idea, so some of Nicolas friend went to the house and had a bath first.

While everyone takes turn to bath, some mum went to cook dinner so the kids don't need to wait. Everyone was very busy working on things. Some people kitchen, some of them are helping the children bath, there are some people that are in their rooms getting things or resting. Dinner was in the second floor of the house. There was a long table for all the clean children to sit down and eat.

In the house, I was able to see children eating, the TV is on, people cooking and a lot of other things that are happening. I could smell the yummy food on the table in the second floor. I could hear talking and the air con which was on for the whole day. I got hungry so I went back upstairs and when I went up to the second floor I could feel the smooth and cold railing for the stairs. When I got to the second floor my dad handed me a bowl of spaghetti to eat. I said thank you and eat it right away. I could taste the yummy food that is in my mouth. It was so yummy that I had to eat more. While everyone is eating upstairs some of the mum went down stairs to the clams that should be ready for cooking. They got some of the clams and try it out by cooking it. The clams was good for everyone to eat, so they cooked more and bring it up stairs for everyone to eat the clams that we found. My mum helped cook some of the clams that we found and I help her serve the food. I made sure that everyone have eaten at least 2 clams. While we were eating the clams some kids which did not want to eat went to the sofa and played with the crab. Playing with the crab alone is very dangerous, so I stayed with them to make sure that they are safe since I got hurt once. The adults thank me for doing that.



As night falls, the kids get put to sleep and the adults start to gather to talk while the kids were asleep. I stayed with the adults for a while since I didn't feel sleepy. I stayed downstairs with my dad and wait until my mum comes out which means that my little brother is asleep. Then after that my dad went to sleep and my mum and I waited for the other mums and go up. When we went up the TV was on and all the kids were asleep. The adults were talking with each other. I sat there for some time but I had to tell my mum that I was still a bit hungry so I made cup noodles to eat. After I finished eating, we started talking about something. After around two hours of talking, me and my mum went back down said goodnight to the other mums then went back to our own rooms and slept until the morning when something happened...

The following morning, most people that sleeps on the first floor is awoken by Nicolas cries because he is not sleeping with my mum. After keeping Nic stop crying, my mum went to check her phone to see what time it is. She saw a notification from the Hong Kong Observatory app that typhoon signal 8 will be given out at 11 am. And right now it is 8 in the morning. "Go upstairs and tell the everyone that typhoon signal 8 will be given out soon" said my mum, without replying I ran up the stairs to the second floor of the house and told them what my mum told me to tell them, after I told everyone I went rushing back down stairs to help pack up. In just a few minutes everyone was awake and running around the home while packing up. When we all finished packing up I went to double check and make sure nothing is left behind. We left and went on taxis in groups of 4 or 5.

By the time we have left it was already typhoon signal 8. Everyone was safe and went to eat breakfast at MacDonald. All of us sat together needed to use 2 long table and we had a great time.

New Journeys to the West

Sha Tin College, Wong, Ivan – 13

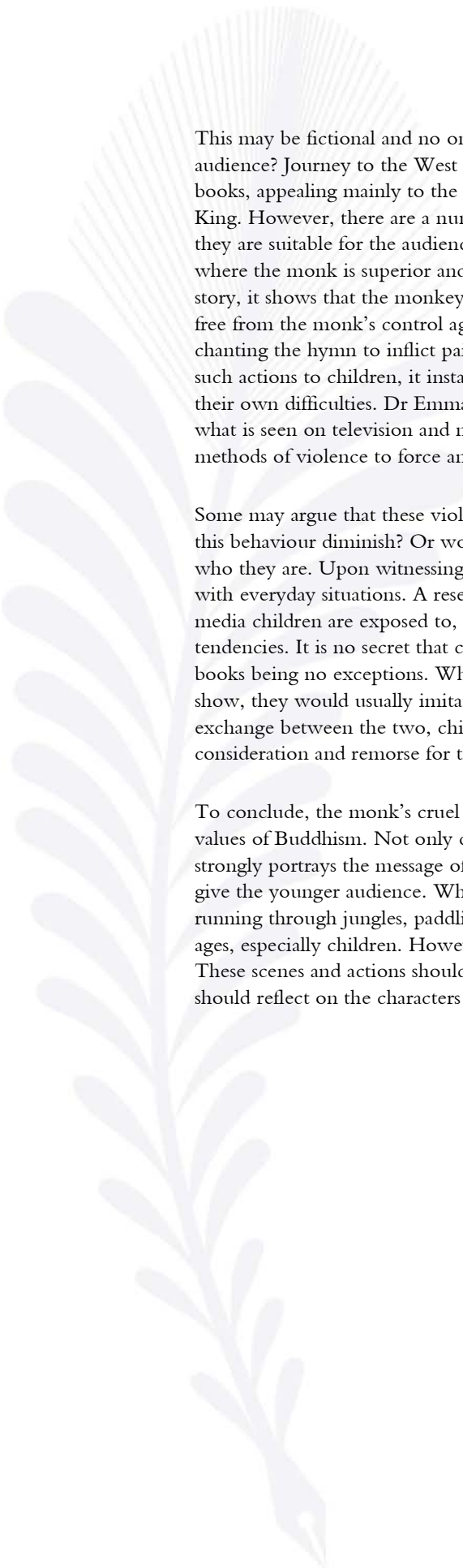
Was it Morally Correct and just for a Buddhist Monk to Physically Punish the Monkey King? How does this Translate in a Children's Story?

Ever since the publication of *The Journey To The West*, it has become widely popular among audience of all ages. *Journey To The West*, a traditional ancient story in the Chinese culture, passed down through generations is about a monk, named Xuanzang, venturing to India along with three guardians, The Monkey King, Zhu Bajie and Sha Wujing. Xuanzang was not just any ordinary monk, people and demons believed the monk's flesh was healthy and spiritual. Hence, many would attempt to hunt him down as if he was a delicacy. On the other hand, the three guardians protected the monk, fending off these enemies and creatures. Majority of the story is about how the three battle against enemies and their carefully concocted plans to rescue Xuanzang. One interesting feature of the story was when Guanyin, the goddess of compassion, mercy and kindness placed the golden headband onto the Monkey King's head. It was not any ordinary headband, it was actually more of a torture device; tightened and unable to be removed whenever a specific hymn is chanted, causing aches and pains to the Monkey King. This hymn only worked when chanted by Xuanzang himself, he used it as a tool to gain the monkey's attention, enforcing obedience. Now, this begs the question, when the monk chanted the hymn meaning to inflict harm on the Monkey King, coming from a religious monk, was it against the views of Buddhism? Different versions of the story reflect different variations of the monk using the hymns to impose pain on the Monkey King, was it borderline torture? How do these actions and scenes affect the viewers, especially the younger audience?

The main values of Buddhism revolve around not harming any living creatures, in treating others well you will be treated well too. A collection of sayings in Buddhism *Dhammapada* 129 states, "All living things fear being beaten with clubs. All living things fear being put to death. Putting oneself in the place of the other, Let no one kill nor cause another to kill." This also explains their reasoning for being vegetarians, to not kill the living for sustenance. Another important value for Buddhists is to help those who are suffering, such as beggars. Ultimately, if one does not hold those values, there will be dire consequences. For any sort of harmful action, for instance stepping on a plant, asking people for money etc. An equal amount of unfortunate events will come back in your way. What goes around comes around, speak of which, Buddhists refer to this as Karma. Karma is a system in Buddhism where it is implied, if, you do good you get good. In other words, if you carry out more good deeds than bad during your lifetime, you will be granted a promising rebirth in the next life. Conversely, if harm is caused and missions are broken, there would be consequences and a rather degrading reincarnation. This is a clear incentive as to why they are indirectly taught to be a model Buddhist.

In the story, the monk is portrayed as a calm and collected buddhist, loyal and religious. Standing by the morals and standards of his religion. On the other hand, every time the Monkey King misbehaves or runs away, the monk would chant a hymn forcing the return of the Monkey King begging for the pain and torture to cease. Xuanzang has unquestionably done some actions that have shown to be entirely opposite to the values and missions of Buddhism. Chanting and inflicting pain upon the Monkey King being one of them. Clearly, Xuanzang does not seem to be playing by the rules of his beloved religion. As a matter of fact, torturing the Monkey King seems more of an easy way out of his problems rather than reasoning or consulting them.

The monk's actions shown in the story are in no way justified, he was more so simply abusing his power. While chanting the hymn, the Monkey King is put under immense pain and discomfort, hence he is forced to listen to the monk with no free will. Evidently, Xuanzang exploits his powers as he has no real authority to slave drive the Monkey King; leaving him no choice but to follow his demands. Not only are his behaviours unjust as a human but mostly definitely as a Buddhist monk. In addition, it is clear that the monk's action are not humane. As stated, monks strongly believed in not hurting living creatures in any way. Not to mention, not very grateful either since the Monkey King is basically his bodyguard.



This may be fictional and no one is actually being harmed, but how does all this abuse translate to its audience? Journey to the West is a widely translated story. Varying from movies to television shows and books, appealing mainly to the younger demographic with its mischievous fun loving character, the Monkey King. However, there are a number of scenes where the actions displayed are questionable as to whether they are suitable for the audience or not. In many situations the monk tortures the monkey, it is translated where the monk is superior and his actions are always justified since he is the leader of the group. In the story, it shows that the monkey king would misbehave or disobey the monk or at times even attempt to run free from the monk's control against his wishes. The monk would then be portrayed as a saint like character, chanting the hymn to inflict pain via the golden headband; giving him no choice but to obey. When shown such actions to children, it instantly influences them to result in turning to violence when challenged with their own difficulties. Dr Emma Raizman from Cleveland Clinic reports that over 80% of children imitate what is seen on television and media. Although they would not chant hymns, they would use their own methods of violence to force an individual's obedience. This is one major factor that should be.

Some may argue that these violent actions or imitations may only affect children at a younger age, would this behaviour diminish? Or would it become a part of their nurturing, instilled as part of their personality; who they are. Upon witnessing aggressive behaviour it may affect one's judgement or method in dealing with everyday situations. A research completed at Montclair State University explains that the more violent media children are exposed to, the more likely they are to having aggressive thoughts, behaviors and tendencies. It is no secret that children are easily influenced by role models and their environment, TV and books being no exceptions. When children witness how the monk causes pain to the Monkey King in the show, they would usually imitate as the character is portrayed as doing the 'right' thing. Witnessing the exchange between the two, children would be quick to consider it correct and ideal behaviour, with no consideration and remorse for the pain induced.

To conclude, the monk's cruel actions towards the Monkey King for one clearly is against the beliefs and values of Buddhism. Not only does the monk not rightfully illustrate the Buddhist religion; his character strongly portrays the message of "violence solves all problems". Nevertheless, it is not the ideal message to give the younger audience. When we think about the story, the adventure of surviving through challenges, running through jungles, paddling across the ocean, it has great entertainment value engaging readers of all ages, especially children. However, there are parts where it undoubtedly becomes a negative influence. These scenes and actions should be viewed with caution and parental guidance. Children along with parents should reflect on the characters and their actions before deciding if it is acceptable behavior.

New Journeys To The West

St Paul's Convent School, Lam, Lai Ting Lydia – 14

There are a lot of interpretations about the Journey to the West. Some of these interpretations may illustrate the book as a promotion to the well-known Buddha Dharma, and some may think that it is an adventure story with some sickening monsters flashing in and out of the exciting story. However, I have a different interpretation. In the Journey to the West, various characters play a divergent and significant role which brings out the theme of dystopia, a socially undesirable and politically frightening society.

The implications of the characters' action

Firstly, in many people's eyes, Xuanzang is a kind monk. He devoutly promotes sutra and loves. However, his kindness and piety are too obsessed that he cannot distinguish right or wrong and always put himself in dangerous and fatal situations. For example, when Xuanzang, the Monkey King, the Talking Pig and the Friar Sand settle down in the mountain, Xuanzang orders the Monkey King to find some food to eat. When the Monkey King leaves, they spot a girl with a bowl of rice. Later, the Monkey King kills the girl and tells them she is disguised by the White-bone Demon. However, Xuanzang does not believe what the Monkey King says and gives it the incantation of the golden hoop. Even when Xuanzang is shown to know truth, he only believes in himself and ignore others. Hence, this character actually satirizes people who are narcissist, self-centred and being very naive even though they are in the lion's mouth.


Secondly, the Monkey King gives us an impression of a frisky and kittenish hero. In the story, the Monkey King often causes havoc at the heavenly palace and challenges the Jade Emperor and Buddha. Also, he disagrees to every judgement made by them too. These undoubtedly make the baronages and the Jade Emperor overwhelmed by the mess. Yet, the Monkey King has leadership ability. As the Monkey King is a reincarnation of gallantry, it kills all the bogeys in their journey. Besides, he is the leader of all resourceful decisions. For example, when Xuanzang, the monkey king, the talking pig and the friar come across the monsters, the Monkey King is the one who comes up with the solutions and leads the team to follow suit all the time.

As a whole, Xuanzang manifests the brutal and absolute king while the Monkey King metaphorizes the rebellion against the oppression and cataclysm.

The worship of the beasts

In the Journey to the West, all the beasts want to eat children in order to own a forever lasting life. Have you ever wondered how they know that work? The answer is pretty shocking: from the gods and goddesses. Immortals devour ginseng fruit which helps them grow like children and their purposes are exactly the same as the beasts. Therefore, the beasts and the immortals are definitely equivalent. However, Xuanzang praises and worships the gods and goddesses. Then, what is the difference between revering the beasts and worshipping the gods or the goddesses?

In conclusion, Xuanzang does not only worship the better looking and grow no more or less like human beings gods and goddesses but also praise and uphold those Satans and fiends. Therefore, it seems no noble creatures are found in the novel.



The hypocrisy of Xuanzang

When Xuanzang, the Monkey King, the Talking Pig and the Friar Sand make themselves to the Ladies Kingdom, they drink the water from the Mother River. However, the water is not wanted, a feral will be given when being drunk. Therefore, they are so anxious and ask for the abortion agents. In the sutra, not even slaughter is permitted, then how comes Xuanzang, a monk, is asking for the pills for the murder of the foetuses? Aren't the lives of the foetuses are so precious too? Thus, Xuanzang is a hypocrite that his actions do not match with his words.

In a nutshell, these characters embody the dark and the unfairness of the world where the characters live in. The actions of the characters also bring out the theme of dystopia vividly. Therefore, the Journey to the West is a book that shows the social undesirability and political despair.

Journey To The West : Common Sense Edition

The ISF Academy, Lin, Sophia – 11

Think about it. The Monkey King waited under the mountain for **five hundred years**. He must have had back pains. There is just *no way* he wouldn't have had a stab in the butt, or just *pain* in general.

Some people may argue he was powerful, '*He wouldn't have pain!*' Here's what I say back... '*Let's put you under a mountain that binds all your magic so you can't use it for 500 years, and see how you turn out!*' Then you'd carefully think about, and nod slowly. You'd be astonished at the idea of me being able to get hold of an idea so incredible: The Monkey King definitely had back pains growing up.

Now, the Monkey King is an all-powerful, immortal, strong... monkey. It sounds weird, but *hey!* This book is one of the four great classical novels in Chinese Literature, or is it?

Now, yes, normally, SunWuKong, (the Monkey King) would have no trouble breaking out of this mountain, but *nooooooo*. The Buddha turned his hand into a mountain and wrote down a *magical phrase on the mountain*, so he couldn't get out. Which makes me wonder... without his magic, and strength, was SunWuKong really anything? (P.S. I say no.)

Okay, it's getting really annoying to have to write *SunWuKong* or *The Monkey King* every time I address him, so I'm just going to call him Sunny, okay? Great.

So, because I am a brilliant person, I will point out everything (almost) (possibly) (ok just like two) in *Journey to The West* wrong for you and it will be called : *If Journey to The West Had Common Sense*. (To which you gasp, completely flabbergasted, and say, '*Common Sense?? What's that?*' Then I'd hand you this short piece of non-(ish)fiction. **Warning:** *Do not read this if you are new to the world of sarcasm.*)

Number 2: I know that in the story the monk goes for a journey to the west to clear his sins, but he *was* warned that it was deadly, *dangerous*, **and you could quite possibly die**. But of course, he just does it anyway, without a second thought. Words cannot express how weird that is. You are not experienced, not equipped, or well briefed on what to do when something wrong happens, but you're going off to the land of unknown with a monkey, pig, and a water monster to protect you. **clap clap clap** Oh, and a horse. Why? Just... why? In the modern world, (in case you didn't know) most people care about their health and most people don't really want to die. Emphasis on "most."

Number 3: I get that it's actually a piece of fiction and the creativity and imagination inside this book is very, very creative, but one moment I don't get was why the monkey king was born from a *rock*. How do you name yourself king of the monkeys (King Sunny the Magnificent!) when you were born from a *rock*? Like, how do you keep your street cred when everyone knows you were born from a rock? And what about parents? Did he just... pop out? I don't—

But here ends the roughly 500 word masterpiece I have given you. Before you go away, and go about with all your normal stuff, I have just one thing to say to you: ***You're welcome.***

Journey to the West: The True Story

The ISF Academy, Ng, Anthony – 12

The Journey to the West is one of the most well-recognized tales around the world. It tells the story of a monk called Xuanzang, who is on a journey to spread Buddhism to India, along with a monkey named Sun WuKong, a pig named Zhu BaJie and a man named Sha WuJing. However, do you know the true story of the Journey to the West? It is quite a peculiar one.

In the year 602, a monk named Xuanzang was born in Chen He village. As a young child, he was engrossed in Buddhism and started studying it in various schools. At the age of 20, he was already a wise and well-learned monk. However, Xuanzang was unsatisfied with the knowledge available to him and decided that he wanted to gain a true understanding of Buddhism. At that time, India was one of the greatest countries that studied Buddhism, so Xuanzang gathered a few other monks and set out on an expedition. Unfortunately, they weren't allowed to leave without permission, meaning they had to use the only other solution: To sneak out of the country.

Travelling by night and hiding during the day, Xuanzang and many other monks began their treacherous journey to India through what we now call the Silk Road. Passing through the Taklamakan Desert was troublesome. Food and water were scarce, and the everlasting heat was slowly killing them. Although they were almost half way to India, they had already lost many of their companions, and there were still many challenges in their path. These included menacing bandits, vicious wild animals and powerful leaders who sometimes wanted to keep them in their kingdom, rather than to allow them to travel on.

By the time they reached India, many people there have heard of their journey. The people welcomed them, and Xuanzang and the monks remaining had many adventures, such as going to the home of the Buddha and then to Nalanda, the first university in which loved many of the greatest thinkers and teachers of that time. They were impressed that Xuanzang had outwitted bandits who had tried to rob and kill him, survived deadly typhoons, and won a Great Debate in front of thousands of wise Indian men.

The return trip was difficult nevertheless, they made it back to China. Still, there was a problem. Since Xuanzang and the other monks had left without permission, they were considered outlaws. The intelligent Xuanzang thought of the idea to write a letter to the emperor, telling him about what he had learned on the trip. Astonished by his learning, the emperor welcomed them back.

The rest of Xuanzang's life was spent teaching others about Buddhism, and translating manuscripts he got from India. You may have thought that the original story of the Journey to the West would be boring, but even without magic or special powers, a story still can be enjoyable.

Non-Fiction

Group 4



The Story of Hsüan Tsang

Island School, Daswani, Rohan – 15

Years ago, a mediocre, run-of-the-mill family from China was sent on a journey to fetch some scriptures. However, their mission was nothing near as bland. The mother, pregnant and father, deceased. Immediately after the boy was born, he was tied to a plank with a letter penned in blood and pushed into a river. Here is the story of that boy, "Hsüan Tsang."

At that time, long ago, most monks usually looked very serious. But this boy grew up to be uniquely different, even though he was quite dignified, he always wore a little smile. No matter what happened, this young boy never lost this glimmer of inner happiness. And on happy occasions, he had the brightest smile and the warmest laughter of all.

His sixth birthday was the day he found out about his parents. His master sat him down and explained it to him. The boy understood, and a tear wept down his face; yet, he still retained his smile. He was thrilled to know the truth, and He was so happy for all that was terrible was left behind him.

Sometimes his friends asked him why he was so happy that he always smiled. He chuckled and said, "You wouldn't believe me if I told you! And if you think I lied, it would be a dishonour to my master." His wise old master knew that this glowing source of happiness could not be wiped from Hsüan Tsang's face and so, he made the happiest monk his favourite assistant.

The summer after the boy turned seventeen, the wise old master and his followers went to the city. The king permitted them to live in his garden for the spring. As summertime approached, the monks were preparing to return to the forest. Considering the health of the old leader, the king went to him and said, "My friend, you are now very old. You are growing weaker. What good does it do to go on a treacherous walk back to the forest? Send your followers back, and you stay here."

The master then called his assistant to him and said, "You are now the leader of the monks. I am too old and too weak. I will stay here with the king." So, the monks returned home, and the master remained. Hsüan Tsang continued his meditations in the forest. He attained so much peace and wisdom that he grew even happier than he was before. However, Hsüan missed his master; Hsüan wanted to share his new knowledge. So, he returned to the city for a visit.

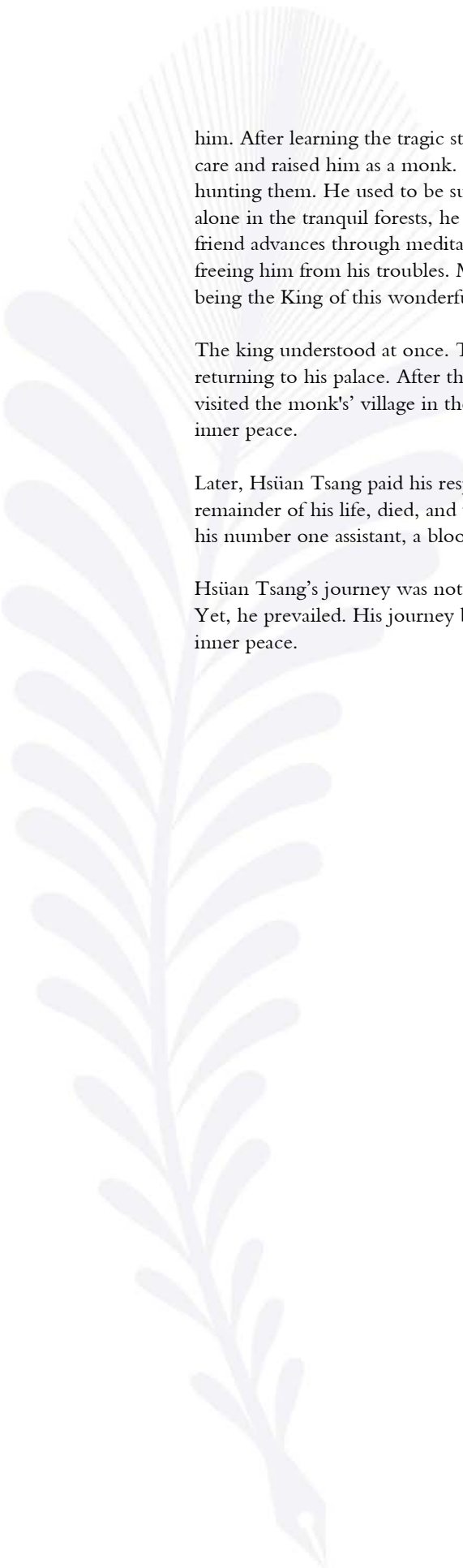
He trekked back to his old place of solitude, with all of his belongings on his back, and when he arrived, he sat on a rug at the feet of his master. They didn't speak very much, mainly because the old monk was sick. However, every so often the assistant would say, "Thank You, Thank you so much!"

The king then entered the room to pay his respects to the chief monk. However, the assistant just kept saying, "Thank You, Thank you so much!" He didn't even stop to greet the king and show his due respect. This lack of respect disturbed the king, and the king thought, "With all my concerns, looking after the kingdom, the citizens, I take my time out for a visit to a monk which I provide shelter for, and they don't even respect me enough even to recognise me. How insulting!" He responded to the elder of the two monks, "Venerable chief, I think your friend must be lightheaded. Does he lie here so unacquainted all the time?"

The head monk replied, "O king, have patience, he is a far better man than what you see. He just has a few traumatic memories. Wait, and I shall tell you the source of his happiness.

"Oh, enough with this measling stories, I've had enough with it." "All you peasants ever want is just rubbish for yourselves," The king said.

"Please listen, not many know it. Immediately after the boy was born, he was tied to a plank with a letter written in blood and pushed into a river. After being driven into the river, Hsüan Tsang endured a treacherous life. Before I found him, he was held by a family of three; they raised him till he was five, but all they did was torment him. They laughed at him, tossed him around and treated him as a slave. When he was six, Hsüan Tsang ran away with a blood letter detailing what happened to his parents. That's when I found



him. After learning the tragic story of Hsüan Tsang's parents from the blood letter. I took the boy under my care and raised him as a monk. Both of his parents must be deceased by now. A group of Mongols was hunting them. He used to be surrounded by fear, nobody stood up for him or protected him. But, now, alone in the tranquil forests, he does not need to fear anything. Unshackled from the burdens of fear, my friend advances through meditation to find such inner peace, that he cannot stop praising the Lord for freeing him from his troubles. Maybe you can find this inner peace too; you must have a lot of stress from being the King of this wonderful place. Let me teach you a few things..."

The king understood at once. The king stayed with the monks for a while to received advice before returning to his palace. After this day, the king started visiting the monks more frequently. The king even visited the monk's' village in the lovely forest to receive more advice, and the king eventually found his inner peace.

Later, Hsüan Tsang paid his respects to his master and returned home. The old monk lived out the remainder of his life, died, and was reborn in a high heaven world. But, the old monk had something left for his number one assistant, a blood letter, detailing a mysterious journey to the west...

Hsüan Tsang's journey was not easy, he felt discombobulated with all the different rituals throughout Asia. Yet, he prevailed. His journey brought his life new meaning. His new friends helped him further pursue inner peace.

New Journey From The West

Korean International School, Catacutan, Kayle – 15

It is finally summer break and I have decided to take a trip to distress all the pressure and tension from school. It took me a few days to choose where to go because I would love to go to Italy to try some Italian cuisine and maybe go swim with sharks in Cat Island, Bahamas. But instead I have decided to go to the Western part of Europe; Paris, France.

It's 5 am and my flight is at 9 am. So I need to get ready and pack up and leave. I grab my clothes, camera, wallet, phone, ID and passport. And take a quick shower. After I shower I go downstairs to the dining room to eat breakfast. I grab a piece of bread and toss it in the toaster then topped it off with strawberry jam and some avocado spread.

It's already 7:16 am and it will approximately take an hour to arrive in the airport depending on traffic. I'll be travelling to the airport by car. My dad is going to drive me there with my mom. I place my suitcase in the car's trunk and I go in the sit inside the car with my dad while we wait for my mom to get ready. After at least 10 minutes she comes out and we start the engine and drive to the Hong Kong International airport.

We arrive there in about one and a half hours. I bid good-bye to my parents and gave them hugs, and then I go through security and the immigration. I book my chair and check in my suitcase. I decided to go buy some caramel macchiato to get an energy boost because I woke up too early and I'm still partly dead.

At 8:49 my plane number was called, I quickly get up and queue for my plane. I get in and settle down. It was already 8:59 and I was so thrilled to go but then the speaker announced that we will be having a 20 minute delay. But it was ok, the delay got shortened and we took off. I plug in my headsets and listen to music looking out the window.

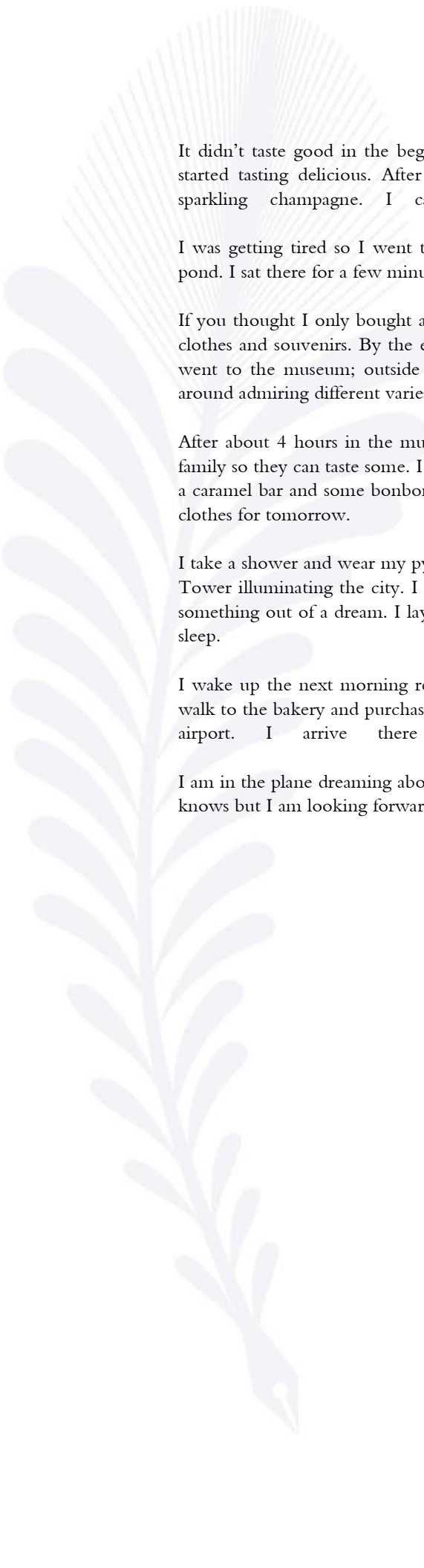
I am currently 39,000 feet above the ground. As the sun is started to set the sky slowly became a purple orange colour, leaving a heavenly sunset view. The seatbelt sign was off and the stewardess started to serve us dinner. Giving us the choice of 3 meals; Fish fillet fried rice, a fruit salad or a ham and egg sandwich. I ordered the fish fillet fried rice with water. I turn to look outside and see the moon and stars illuminated the night sky.

It is the next morning and I have just arrived in the France International Airport. I have collected my luggage and went through all the immigration. As soon as I stepped out of the airport doors. I was hit with a strong breeze; it felt like all my stress went away. I called a cab and took off. I arrived the hotel checked in, unpacked my bags then quickly grabbed my purse and my camera and went out to explore.

I arrive my first place, the Eiffel Tower. I place my camera down and set the timer on and started to take photographs. After a few shots, I walk around the place and this rich, mouth-watering aroma pulls me. I follow it and it leads me to a bakery. My stomach grumbles loudly, I am quite hungry I haven't eaten anything since I got off the plane. I go in and ask for their most recommended treat and they offer an almond scone and a strawberry jam filled croissant. I purchase them both and walk back to my hotel.

I have taken a shower and I on the bed, watching television scanning through the channels to find something interesting while eating my pastries. After a few minutes I realize that the sun has set and it's getting late. I slip into my pyjamas and get ready to go to bed. I lay down peacefully as my eyes started to get heavy and my mind slowly drifted off.

I wake up bright and early. Today I felt like doing something fun; I decided to go to the mall and go window-shopping. I do my morning routine and go out calling a cab taking me to the nearest mall. My cab driver takes me to a mall called "Beaugrenelle Paris". I walk around, checking stuff out. I was walking but then a something caught my eyes. It was a knitted sweater with a cat outline on it. I just went and bought it without hesitation. And happily strolled around and got hungry. I see a France cuisine restaurant. I get in and sat down. They gave me menu and I look through the pages. After a few minutes of choosing I order the beef burgundy with the side of a lobster bisque.



It didn't taste good in the beginning because I'm not used to France cuisine but after a while everything started tasting delicious. After the meal I decided to order a slice of lemon meringue pie served with sparkling champagne. I call the waiter for the receipt and resume to walk around.

I was getting tired so I went to the park and just sat of the benches watching the ducks waddling in the pond. I sat there for a few minutes and decided to go back to my hotel.

If you thought I only bought a sweater you were wrong. There were so many distractions likes' cosmetics, clothes and souvenirs. By the end of the day I was carrying 8 bags filled with things. I rested for a bit and went to the museum; outside I see the statue of 'The Thinker' I take some pictures and go in. I walk around admiring different varies of artworks, ranging from big clay status to small portraits.

After about 4 hours in the museum I thought that I should buy some sweets to bring back home for my family so they can taste some. I go to the grocery store to pick some snacks. I chose this "carambar" which is a caramel bar and some bonbons. I purchase them and go back to my hotel room and started preparing my clothes for tomorrow.

I take a shower and wear my pyjamas and look out the window, seeing Paris with bright lights and the Eiffel Tower illuminating the city. I grab my camera and take a stunning picture of Paris nightlife. It looked like something out of a dream. I lay on my bed staring out the window and I few moments later I drifted off to sleep.

I wake up the next morning realizing that today was my flight back home. I get ready and check out and walk to the bakery and purchase 5 boxes of pastries to bring home and share. I call a cab and we drive to the airport. I arrive there and go through the usually process in the airport.

I am in the plane dreaming about my next holiday spot. Where should I go? Mexico, Brazil, London? Who knows but I am looking forward to it. I plug in my headsets and go to sleep.

Journey To the West

Shanghai Singapore Internatinoal School, Parma, Dhyana – 15

The story starts in the year of 1592, when Sun Wun Kong had erased the names of the other monkeys and himself from the book of life and death. This meant that he had no chance of getting killed or getting harmed by any weapons. He starts to think that he had become really strong, so he starts to defeat the other warriors and starts to capture their territories, however in the end he gets caught. After few years Tan San Zang has an incident. His father gets killed and his mother is taken away by the thieves. His mother sends Tan San Zang away from that place by making him go the otherside of the river. After few years Tan San Zang gets strong enough to bring his mother back from the thieves and takes revenge on his father's death. He successfully gets revenge.

As Tan San Zang had become more powerful, he successfully rescued Sun Wun Kong. Then, they went on a trip to India together where they also met Zhu Ba Jie and Sha Wu Jing. They became Sun Wun Kong's disciples. They faced many difficulties on their way to India. They had to fight many demons on the way. Most of the warriors tried to get Sun Wun Kong, although he was the strongest among the people. He still faced many difficulties on the way to India. They finally get to the Western Heavens and bring back the scriptures to China. In the end, Tan San Zang and his disciples attain Buddhism.

After that, time passes very well and every single monkey has the best time of his life. Suddenly, the life of the monkeys starts turning around and the population of the monkeys starts increasing. It increases so much that there is not enough space for all of the monkeys. There is also not enough food for all of the monkeys so they were starving and suffering. Sadly, none of them could get rid of their life because they couldn't erase the name of everyone from the life and death book. This meant that they could not die, but had to just suffer. This problem started increasing even more as the population of the monkeys increased. The monkeys started looking for a solution to solve the problem. Unfortunately, they could not find any solution for the great problem. They had to live this way for the rest of the lives and they couldn't even sacrifice their life. So, they had to suffer this way.

As the time passed, the monkeys start having a change in their bodies. They became less monkey and more human. They started walking on 2 legs and had less of a monkey body. After several different stages, they turned into a human structure. Even after this big problem, the birth-rate didn't drop and the number of monkeys suffering kept increasing. The problems got worse and worse. One day Sun Wun Kong's great great grandson was born. This was the happiest moment for all the monkeys because they thought that this new born baby would grow up and find a solution for their problems. The baby was named Huang Sun Kong. The people thought he would bring new life for the others.

He was born really strong compared to the normal babies. He had a lot of strength when he was born. His parents gave him their finger to hold. He held it so tightly that when they tried to leave his finger they could not. He used to kick his legs. They were so strong that if he kicked you, you would have pain where he had kicked. Slowly he started growing up. He was given special training to make him capable of finding the solution for the problem for the others.

His father and grandfather were not that strong or capable of doing anything. They were born disabled, but his great great grand grandfather Sun Wun Kong was the strongest among everyone. He took on the responsibility to train Huang. He started his training from a very small age, around 5 years old. He was taught to do everything by himself. There was a twist in the story. Huang was not told about the current situation of the others and that they were suffering. He was kept away from them so that he wouldn't find out about them and become less strong by looking at the pain that was suffered by the others.

He was told that he had to learn everything because he had to protect his people and to become the next emperor. Therefore, he needed to be capable. However, one day when he was hanging out with his friends he went into an area that he was not allowed in. It was the area where the people with the extreme pain lived. He went there and saw all the people and he received a major shock. He ran back home and asked Sun Wun Kong about what he had seen. Sun Wun Kong had no choice but to tell him the truth. Huang was so hurt by all this that he left his house and went somewhere for few days. Nobody could find him.

After few days he came back and the first thing he asked Sun Wun was for a solution to this problem. Sun Wun said that the only solution was to go back to the Western Heavens and find the book of life and death. Once he had the book, he needed to write the names of all the people back in it again so that the ones in pain could just leave their body and go to the heaven. Huang said that he was ready to go to Western Heavens, but Sun Wun said that it is not that easy. He told him that he needed to prepare more. Huang started his training really hard after that. He learned to climb mountains and all the survival things that would be needed on the trip.

The day finally arrived when Huang and few more people were chosen to go to the Western Heavens. They were all prepared with their weapons, food, and other things. However, there was a problem coming their way. The enemies of Sun Wun had found out about everything. Their warriors great great grandson had been prepared to leave at the same time as Huang. He wanted to stop him and prevent him from getting to the book of life and death.

It was said that Huang was even stronger and more powerful then Sun Wun Kong. The enemies were a bit scared that they would have a hard time capturing Sun Wun especially since Huang was even stronger than him. This would be a hard thing for them to do. However, on the otherhand Huang was so confident that he would get the book. He knew no one would stop him from doing this.

The enemies great great grandson Chuang and Huang both left at the same time to head towards the Western Heavens. They both ended up at the same place after a bit of traveling. They both faced each other and looked at each other as if they were going to slice the other person in half at any moment. They were so mad at each other. They both ended up having a serious fight with each other on a very dangerous cliff.

They both argued and blamed each others grand parents for what they did to each others families. The argument went on and on. They each told each other what their families really said and did. They realized that it was a misunderstanding between the two families and the whole cast.

After knowing that it was all a misunderstanding Chuang and Huang became friends. They both forgave each other. Chuang even decided to go with Huang to help him find the book of life and death. They both went to the Western Heavens and got the book after many adventures and difficulties. In the end, they succeeded in gettin the book. They returned it to Huang's family. They both went back to Huang's family. After getitin there, Huang and Chuang gave the book to Sun Wun Kong, who wrote back all the names of everyone so they could become free of their pain.

Everybody was so happy that the hatred between these two familes was finally over. However, there was a twist to come. Chuang's family and the whole cast had abandoned Chuang and kicked him out of the cast for supporting their enemies family. Chuang tried to explain that this all was just a misunderstanding but no one was ready to listen to him. The first problem had been solved, but another problem had arisen. Everyone in Huang's family accepted Chuang as their own son and decided to let him stay with them until his own family agreed to have him back. They kept trying to convince the enemies that all the past things were a misunderstanding and that Chuang had not betrayed them. And, of course as always happens new problems arose and were solved throughout the rest of time.

Non-Fiction

Group 5



A Journey Beyond the West

St. Paul's Convent School (Secondary Section), Yiu, Verena – 16

*Yearning thudded against his chest
Dangers of the voyage bothered him the least
He said he would rather die going to the West
Than just live by staying in the East*

He is Xuanzang, Tripitaka, Tang Seng, a Buddhist monk from the Tang Dynasty. Many of us have probably heard about him in the popular Chinese classic “Journey to the West.” On that note, the tale “Journey to the West” speaks of is not a strict conveyer of historic facts and events; it is a playful and entertaining rationalization of what happened to Xuanzang on his voyage. The magical legend and the actual history converge on the same protagonist and his journey to the West, but diverge in many details as well. What intrigues me is this: How similar are the two tales? How different are the two tales?

On Xuanzang's Initiative

“Journey to the West” describes Xuanzang as young, naïve and exhibiting excessive, indiscriminate compassion to everyone. The novel had the young part right, but Xuanzang was already a wise and learned scholar by the time he embarked on his journey to the West. In fact, he gave lectures to monks in assemblies when he was 13 and was ordained as a bhiksu (full monk) when he was 20. As a Buddhist philosopher, Xuanzang realized that the more he studied, the more lacking the Buddhist texts were in China. Language barriers hindered accurate translation and one scripture could lead to different interpretations. Xuanzang yearned for spiritual enlightenment, and his pursuit for religious truth eventually prompted him to venture the West for the original Holy Scriptures. Contrary to “Journey to the West,” the real Xuanzang did not travel due to Tang Taizong's request to perform a so-called “Great Mass.” In fact, Tang China and the Göktürks were at war during the time he embarked on his journey and his crossing of the border was disapproved by the government. Xuanzang tried to apply for “guo shuo” (which referred to passports at that time) but was rejected. Determined to make it to the West, Xuanzang sneaked out of Chang An with the help of a Buddhist abbot.

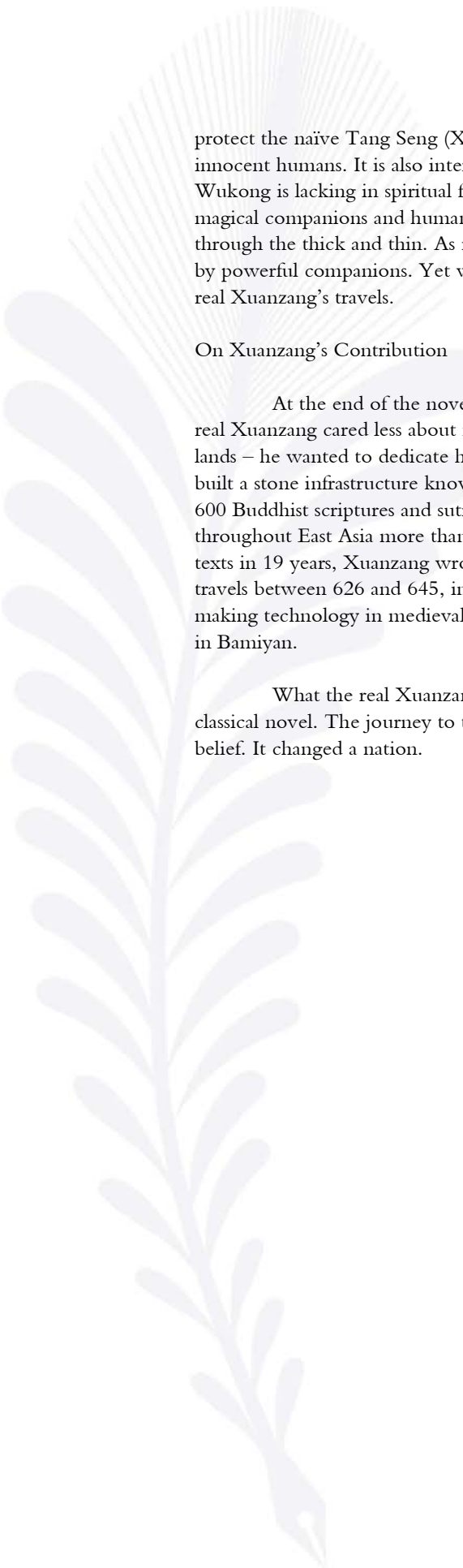
On Xuanzang's Challenges

Supporters are vital because the journey to the west is unknown and precarious to Xuanzang. In the novel, Xuanzang had to battle with demons and defy supernatural forces. Monsters try to eat him because one bite of Tang Seng's flesh is rumored to give immortality. In reality, Xuanzang encountered a plethora of challenges that was nonetheless, life-threatening. First it was the weather: the vast Gobi Desert was scorching hot in the day and freezing cold at night. Then Xuanzang trespassed five sentry towers that were ordered to shoot and kill all travelers without “guo shuo”; Xuanzang was almost shot to death by arrows as he evaded his enemies. Temptations were prevalent, too. Indian kings convinced Xuanzang to stay and contribute in Buddhist temples, supplying him with food and precious gifts. In the novel, Xuanzang received a marriage proposal from a beautiful queen, to rule a land inhabited only by women, and enjoyed riches for the rest of his life. In both the novel and history, Xuanzang refused all temptations for a comfortable life, and carried on with his voyage. Xuanzang's determination and tenacity are preserved in both contexts.

On Xuanzang's Supporters

Xuanzang had received support from Buddhist believers and guides commanded by Indian kings, but the novel perhaps has more interesting supporters to offer.

Magical companions are desirable in the novel because human species is alone. The lack creates them. In the novel, Xuanzang had three supernatural disciples on his journey to the West, namely, Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie and Sha Wujing. Sha Wujing is actually inspired by reality. In the “Biography of Master Tripitaka of the great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty” written by Xuanzang's disciples, there was a night in the Gobi Desert when Xuanzang was physically drained and could only lay in the sand. In his dreams, a giant urged him to get up and keep going. The character Sha Wujing was modeled after the encouraging giant in Xuanzang's dream. For instance, Sun Wukong, the monkey king, was created to



protect the naïve Tang Seng (Xuanzang) because he could see through demons that disguised themselves as innocent humans. It is also interesting to note that “Wukong” meant “Awakened to Emptiness.” Sun Wukong is lacking in spiritual fulfillment and needs Tang Seng’s support to achieve such. In the novel, magical companions and human species form bidirectional reliance on each other, bringing them together through the thick and thin. As readers, we feel much more assured that the lonely monk is well backed up by powerful companions. Yet we should never neglect the independence and courage that first ignited the real Xuanzang’s travels.

On Xuanzang’s Contribution

At the end of the novel, Xuanzang was appointed to be the “Buddha of Sandalwood Merit.” The real Xuanzang cared less about recognition and power: he refused to become a court advisor on the western lands – he wanted to dedicate himself to translating the texts he brought back from India. Tang Gaozong built a stone infrastructure known as the “Big Wild Goose Pagoda” to house Xuanzang’s collection of over 600 Buddhist scriptures and sutras. The *Heart Sutra* with its line that Xuanzang translated has been chanted throughout East Asia more than a thousand years. In addition to his monumental translation work of 74 texts in 19 years, Xuanzang wrote the book “Great Tang Records on the Western Region.” It recorded his travels between 626 and 645, including meetings of kings from various kingdoms, contributes to the sugar-making technology in medieval China and India and is the earliest textual evidence for Buddhist sculptures in Bamiyan.

What the real Xuanzang has left behind, is much more than just a name and an inspiration for a classical novel. The journey to the West was not just any journey. It changed a monk’s life. It changed a belief. It changed a nation.