



Non-Fiction

Group 1

Huangshan

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Yip, Cheuk Ka Tiffany – 6

In Eastern China, there is a mountain called Huangshan, you can also call it the Yellow Mountains. It is a fascinating national park with breathtaking views. The mountains are huge and super tall, there are stairs on the mountain for you to walk to the top of the mountains. It is so tall that if you hike up by the stairs you would get really tired.

There are funny shaped rocks all over the mountains. Some look like animals and some look like towers; and they have funny names like the Flying-Over Rock, Immortal Pointing the Way, and Monkey Watching the Sea. These rocks get their names from their shapes and historical stories. Apart from the famous rocks, there are oddly-shaped pine trees that grow through hard rocks. They are the homes of the squirrels too.

The stunning scenery of Huangshan has been attracting travellers from all over the world. On cloudy days, the peaks will be covered by a sea of clouds, making the peaks look like islands floating in the sea. When changing seasons, the leaves will change colours too! In Autumn, there are yellow leaves, and in Winter there are no leaves but only white snow. The mountains look different in different season and weathers and times of day.

Huangshan not only attracts tourists and hikers to visit since many years ago, it has also attracts poets, writers, painters and artists coming to get inspirations for their literature and art works. Even film makers love to have the mountains to be part of their movies. For example, Huangshan is featured in a famous movie called the Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.

I wish I can visit Huangshan on my next family trip because I really want to see the sea of clouds and the Monkey Watching the Sea rock with my own eyes.

Huangshan

Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Leung, Lok Hei – 7

Huangshan is very beautiful. It has floating clouds, peaks, pine trees, stone steps and villages. The air is less polluted. It is an ancient mountain that looks unearthly and magical to visitors. It is even more beautiful in winter. With a little imagination, you can paint in the villages.

The peaks are made from granite and they are carved by water. The peaks and stones look like people and animals. The pine trees create a steep slope surrounded by mist. Some of the pine trees are 1500 years old and the most famous plant in Huangshan is the Welcoming Pine.

In Huangshan, there are many villages. Some villages are shaped like parts of an ox. They are also made from stone and built by wealthy merchant families. In the 18th century, Li Bai and Du Fu lived in Huangshan.

If you want to go to the peak, you can take the cable cars or go on foot. The cable car station is far from the entrance. You need to take the bus for 15 minutes to get to the cable car station. The cable cars are very high from the ground. When you take a ride, you can pass through the clouds. It takes you 8 minutes to arrive at the peak.

There are 44 wonders in Huangshan. The mist surrounds the peaks and looks like a sea. The “sea of clouds” is divided into the East Sea, Sky Sea, West Sea, North Sea and South Sea.

So many people go to Huangshan to see the snow and the sunrise at the mountain top. There are 60,000 stone steps and all are made from stone. If you want to hike in Huangshan, bring a hiking stick. If you are lazy or tired, you can hire a sedan chair to carry you up the mountain. Sometimes, you see the porters carry 50 kilograms of luggage up the mountain. They bring foods and necessities for people who live at the peak. There are tour guides everywhere. They tell you the stories about Huangshan.

There is a great hotel named Bai Yun Hotel at the top of Huangshan. If you want to see the galaxy at night, you can camp outside the hotel.

If I have a chance to go to Huangshan, I will go in winter. I will bring gloves, a scarf, food, water, a camera, a coat and a pair of hiking sticks. I will go with my family and friends. I will go by airplane so that I can get there in 5 hours. It is a lot shorter than a 10-hour train ride. I will hike up the mountain to see the snow, the sunrise and the stars in the night sky. If you go to Huangshan on snowy days, do not stand for too long, or your feet will get stuck to the snow!

Non-Fiction

Group 2



The Mountain Under Heaven

HKUGA Primary School, So, Wan Meghan – 11

A Glorious Mountain

“Mountain under Heaven”? Seems about right. Nature is all encompassing and elemental, the beginning of life. A glorious mountain sits at Anhui Province, Southeast China. More than 60,000 stone steps were carved into the sides of each rock, like strapping amour preserving the radiant mountain. A breathtaking geometry of pillar after pillar, all wearing voguish grassy hats. Even mountains are up to the minute! Pine trees sit on the steep peaks, waving along the local breeze set off with a dazzling phenomenon “The Sea of Clouds”. This place is a true fantasy, not even JK. Rowling could have created a more spiritual feast for the eyes. You should be asking, what is this extraordinary nature’s creation? This masterpiece is where history seems to be soaked in each and every rock; the tourists, the poets, the scholars, the backpackers, the desperate—all traveling for days to pay China’s magical mountain, Huangshan, a worthy visit.

Huangshan includes two different meanings—Huangshan mountain and Huangshan city. In a broad sense, Huangshan mountain sits in the north of the city. What’s the most appealing and juicy part of famous sights? I’d say the honorable titles, and names with thrilling stories beneath that send your mouth dangling wide open. This mysterious mountain has been praised in China’s history.

Numerous prominent scholars, artists and even emperors, have paid a visit to this goddess only to be left amazed by its splendor. This mountain maintained a wonderful reputation. On December 12, 1990, this spiritual mountain was included in the World Natural and Cultural Heritage List by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The mountain is widely praised and known in the heyday of Chinese literature, art and history, especially in the mid-16th centuries.

Huangshan was once named Yishan, renamed after the myth of Huangdi (2711 BCE–2598 BCE). Huangdi was a legendary saviour and Chinese sovereign, who was considered as the ancestor of all Chinese. He deeply cared for his people, and determined to do more to lend a hand. In his senior years, Huangdi heard that the present Huangshan is the ideal location to create elixir, a substance held capable at changing base metals into gold. As a result, he travelled there and spent years on the mountain collecting necessary herbs and essentials to brew elixir. His effort finally paid off and he became immortal after taking a sip of the medicine. Therefore, to commemorate Huangdi, Yishan was renamed Huangshan.

The Sea of Clouds

Up here, on this far-reaching mountain, the heavens feel close enough to touch. You have never seen such a gorgeous pattern of clouds like a wavy current in the sea. You have stepped across the threshold. This sea of clouds, in between the human intercourse and sacred, had a story of seraphic glow. The tale begins millennia ago as the dragon of Atlantis, which is formed by sea water, arose from the Chinese oceans. That profound, airless place was where it hid itself from the human world. The dragon provided water for every dehydrated living thing. They absolutely would not survive without it. Down the memory lane, the dragon thought the bestowment would be more effective from plummeting above like an incessant

downpour. The higher the water dragon ascended, the more transparent its body was. Until the load of water inside the dragon converted into thick drizzle, the dragon was incapable to get further up or descend. Its remainings surrounded the tops of Huangshan mountain, creating a sea of clouds. However, the ancient livings who witnessed this phenomenon misunderstood that it was a gateway to interact with the afterlife until the truth was uncovered by modern satellite photography.

The 60,000 Stone Steps

Have I mentioned the 60,000 stone steps that carved around the rocks earlier? Well, the establishment of these constructions are unknown...or at least a peculiar legend has it. In bygone days, Athelier had a vision. The impoverished 15-year-old girl, who was born to a poverty family in the town of Huangshan city, was purifying water by the Xinan River when something stirred nearby. A breeze tickled the leaves above a lightless cavern, unveiling a white-robed lady of incomparable beauty standing with hands clammed together. Gosh, it was impossible to disregard. Athelier was afraid—but entranced. She began to pray for somewhat a reason on her mind. No sooner than ten minutes, the female phantasm evaporated from view. Over months, Athelier had several apparitions. During one encounter, the white lady had her arms outstretched, unlike the gesture in Athelier's past apparitions. Athelier was not widely believed. At her 13th return, there was no mysterious lady, there was no dark cavern...but instead a stone staircase leading upwards. With no hesitation, Athelier ascended along, eager to come face to face with the white lady again.

This legend was forgotten by many. Go to your local librarian, ask them about this, they would think you are over imagining. Readers, still remember the first sentence when you start reading this? Huangshan, the mountain under Heaven.

The Yellow Mountains

Kingston International School, Cheung, Chloe – 8

These impressive mountains are located in the Southern Anhui Province in eastern China. With peaks reaching 6,115 feet tall, no wonder visitors around the world, come to see this amazing UNESCO heritage site. Huangshan which literally means Yellow Mountains was named after the legendary emperor Xuanyuan. It was believed he became super natural during his visit. The sharp granite peaks are recognizable from miles away. The mountain range is also covered with pine trees. Giving it a very distinctive look. Depending on the seasons, the scenery can look vastly different, the peaks are covered with snow during winter. The scenery turns an orange hue during autumn. To enjoy the full experience of the Yellow Mountains, it is highly suggested to visit during different seasons. “You don’t need to visit any other mountains after visiting the “Five Great Mountains” and you don’t need to visit the “Five Great Mountains” after visiting the “Yellow Mountains.”” Quoted by Xu Xiake.

Nestled in the wilderness, admirers flock to the mountains each year to see the amazing views . There are several ways to reach the top of the mountain. Hiking is one of them but isn’t a popular choice as most tourists rather take the cable car instead. Even though the hike is extremely strenuous, some visitors believe the journey up is part of the pilgrimage.

Influence on art

These mountains are not only very impressive to look at, they have also inspired many artists’ work. Over 20 000 pieces of poetry were inspired by the Yellow Mountains. Many of Li Bai’s work mentioned the famous mountains. Many painters went on this journey to paint the mountain range too, one of them being a Chinese painter called Liu Haisu. He visited the Yellow Mountains 10 times and created a series of famous paintings. One of the most famous ones being “Cloudy Mountains” It even sparked the “Yellow Mountain Painting Genre” in the 17th century. Shi Tao was also a very famous landscape painter and many of his included the mountains. It’s clear that this area is a very inspirational place even ’till this very modern day. Photographers stay overnight to get a shot of the sunrise.

If you compare the two artists’ works, the first one made by Liu Haisu has more color than Shi Tao’s painting. Even though the artists were painting the same landscape their techniques were very different, the artists liked to include poetry in their paintings.

Li Bai and DuFu

Full Moon

Above the tower, a lone, twice-sized moon.
On the cold river passing night-filled homes,
It scatters restless gold across the waves.
On mats, it shines richer than silken gauze
Empty peaks, silence, among sparse stars, not yet flawed, it drifts. Pine and cinnamon
Spreading in my old garden, all light
All ten thousand miles at once in its light.

Du Fu describes the mountains and the surroundings areas as his old garden. It suggests he is comfortable living and being there. Du Fu said the light is shining so brightly no other forms of light is needed.

Staying the night at a mountain temple

The high tower is a hundred feet tall,
From here one's hand could pluck the stars.
I do not dare to speak in a loud voice,
I fear to disturb the people in heaven.

The title suggests that Li Bai is sleeping on top of the mountains. The Mountains are so high and he fantasizes about plucking the stars. By reading this poem, Li Bai seems to be scared of the gods above as he doesn't dare to speak loudly in case he disturbs them.

Climate

Huangshan has humid (wet) weather. Between May and August, rainfall is abundant. And from early December 'till February, the area is covered with silvery snow.

There are 183 rainy days and 49 snowy days per year, there is just about 50 days of dry weather in the Huangshan mountain. Spring is the best time to visit, because there are less visitors and the weather is very good, it is also when the flowers bloom.

Fauna and flora

There are many plants grown in the Huangshan Mountain region. The Huangshan Azalea, Huangshan Fairy Lady Flower, Youth Flower and the Huangshan Magnolia are just a few examples of plants that are exclusive to the area. The Huangshan Fairy Lady flower normally blooms pink and purple. These plants and flowers can survive in very harsh weather conditions, they are only seen above 1000 metres above sea level. They withstand hot dry summers and very cold winters. And the soil doesn't need to be very fertile either.

There are an ample amount of pine trees and tea leaves grown in this area. With some trees growing up to 100 feet tall, it is incredible that they can grow on these peaks, with some being 1500 years old.

Lastly, for many years, researchers have studied this area to discover new species. In early 2020, scientists identified two new mammal species of shrew, They look very similar to a mole.

It is obvious that many people come on this pilgrimage for many different reasons. But one thing they have in common is the admiration for it. Huangshan will be admired for many generations to come by millions of people around the world, it is vital for us to protect and respect the mountain. It is important to leave little to no traces behind. Even though I have yet to visit, I believe it will be an exciting and an unforgettable experience. I can only imagine, being on top of the peak and feeling a cloud of calmness surrounding me. And hearing the wind whistling through the leaves and soaking up the unspoiled views.

The Story of the Legendary Yellow Mountains

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Wong, Christian Jake – 10

Most people have probably heard of the famous Yellow Mountains (Chinese: Huangshan) that stand in Huangshan City of Southern Anhui. Huangshan City has an area of 9807 square kilometres, roughly the size of 3½ Hong Kong. The city's sole airport is the Huangshan Tunxi International Airport, located in the city's central district Tunxi. There are no direct flights from Hong Kong to Tunxi. The fastest route is probably to take a ferry to Shenzhen Airport and fly from there to Huangshan Airport, which takes 3 hours in total. It takes another 2 hours to drive from the airport to the Mountains. Huangshan is a relatively easy mountain range to climb for experienced hikers. There are 2 main routes to hike up the Yellow Mountains: the western steps (which take 7 hours) and the eastern steps (which take 3 hours). Visitors who are not keen on walking up the mountains may also take the Yungu (meaning the Valley of the Clouds) Cable Car and enjoy the view.

The Yellow Mountains have resided in Anhui Province of Eastern China for around 100 million years, rising out of the water during the Mesozoic Era. Due to its long existence, historians, artists, poets and geologists have created hundreds of books, poems, documentaries and films about it. It has been constantly praised for its charisma: over 70 peaks surround the highest peak of Huangshan, the Lotus Peak (1,864 metres). This strange mountain formation, accompanied by the sea of peculiar wispy mists resembles blossoming elegant magenta lotuses floating around in a tranquil pond. Sudden sharp summits protrude like huge black needles. Within this mountain range, many colourful varieties of creatures and plants are also nurtured under the wings of Huangshan.

One memorable event from Chinese folklore that most people have heard of is Huangdi the Yellow Emperor brewing tablets and ascending to heaven in the Yellow Mountains. According to myth, Huangdi (full name Gong Sun Xuan Yan) was the first ruler and emperor of China. He was traditionally known as the ancestor of all Han Chinese people. According to an ancient Chinese book of fairy-tales called "The Classic of Mountains and Seas", Huangdi the Yellow Emperor and his ally Yandi the Red Emperor bravely fought a rival tribe called Jiu Li in the Battle of Zhuo Lu. The Jiu Li tribe was led by a ruthless warlord named Chi You, who in contrast to Huangdi the Yellow Emperor, was said to be the ancestor of all Koreans. Chi You and his tribe allegedly summoned spirits, giants and an enchanted fog to fight by his side. It is also said the very first compass, one of China's 4 Great Inventions, was used by the Yellow Emperor's army to navigate their way through Chi You's magical fog. The compass was built in the shape and form of a wheelbarrow that always pointed south.

Huangdi's tribe won the war and Chi You was killed in battle. After the fight, Huangdi's Taoist teachers advised him to find the perfect sacred place to brew the coveted Pills of Immortality. After roaming China, he arrived at Anhui Province. He came to the mountains and chose to brew his magical pills there. The emperor sat on the floors of the cave with a small pot and some herbs. He mixed them together, creating 3 glistening pills which he tossed into his mouth. Allegedly, an eerie glow filled the caverns, and a huge dragon with shiny golden scales appeared out of thin air. Huangdi calmly walked over to the creature and sat on

its back. The beast gave a shriek and flew into the air, its tail swaying to-and-fro majestically. The Chinese living below the mountains gazed in wonder as Huangdi and the beast flew into the clouds and disappeared, never to be seen again. People say the dragon came to bring him to heaven, as the Pills of Immortality turned him into a god. The truth is, no one knows what happened to Huangdi, since it happened so long ago. Historians can only speculate the fate of Huangdi.

Though the mountains had already existed for many years, the famed summits still did not have a name. During the Qin Dynasty, the people called it ‘Mount Yi’, a title meaning ‘the Black Mountains’. In ancient European civilization, black was the colour of evil, witchcraft and magic. Centuries later, during the Tang Dynasty, the emperor changed the mountain’s name again. Named in honour of the great Yellow Emperor of China, it officially became known as Huangshan, meaning ‘the Yellow Mountains’. Yellow was a relatively masculine colour, representing gold, the sun, warmth and men. In modern times, we still call these ancient mountains ‘Huangshan’.

During the 8th century AD, Li Bai, the renowned Tang poet, climbed the Yellow Mountains, hoping he could be inspired by its spectacular scenery to write a poem. The Tang Dynasty was a time when the Tang Chinese Empire was ruled by Tang Xuanzong, a great patron of the arts. This period was rather similar to the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century. It was a time of great development in Chinese poetry, art and literature. Li Bai impressed the emperor at his court in Chang An and earned his nickname “the God of Poetry”. Upon the Lotus Peak, he wrote the following poem:

Huangshan four thousand *ren** tall,
 Lotus Peaks there’re thirty-two.
 Cliffs and pillars big and small,
 Like sacred blossoms in half-bloom.

—Li Bai

**Ren is an ancient Chinese measurement that is equal to the average length of a grown man’s arm.*

Since then, numerous poets have also written more than 20,000 poems about the peaks. But one Chinese magistrate of Taiping named Chen Jiubi didn’t believe in tales of Huangshan’s beauty. During the reign of the second Manchu Qing emperor Kangxi (late 17th to early 18th century), Chen read a description of Huangshan in a travel guide written by a Ming travel writer called Xu Xiake: “This mountain is the most visually stunning one ever. When climbing it, you will find out no other site in the whole wide world is as alluring as Huangshan.” Chen did not trust Xu’s travel guide and thought he was exaggerating. Chen’s friend convinced him to go to Anhui and have a look. He arrived at an unnamed peak to look at the view. Chen Jiubi was amazed at first sight. The view was absolutely breath-taking. The sun was setting so the sky was a golden red colour. From high up, Chen could not see Anhui Province clearly, so the view was a unique blend of wonderful colours, combined together like a rainbow. The landscape was just like a vivid Chinese ink painting. Chen was incredibly impressed. After his visit, he wrote the following words on the wall of a guest hall in the Lion Grove Garden of Suzhou: “Huangshan’s true beauty is so great it cannot be explained with words. It can only be appreciated by the human eye.” The peak Jiubi went to is named “Shi Xin Feng”. The meaning in English is “the peak where one begins to believe”.

In the year 1990, the Yellow Mountains was given the official name Mount Huangshan and inscribed as a UNESCO Cultural and Natural World Heritage Site by the United

Nations for its fascinating past, mesmerising landscape and the many rare and endangered animals that lived in the many peaks, such as the Tibetan macaque and leiothrix birds and the red-billed pheasants, just to name a few. The mountain even has relatives in Switzerland: Mount Jungfrau of the Swiss Alps was named by UNESCO as its sister mountain in 2002.

Throughout the years, there have been many fables and stories surrounding Mount Huangshan, so many that some historians cannot tell fact from legend. But there is one truth for certain: The Yellow Mountains will be standing in Anhui Province until the ends of the earth, surrounded by misty clouds, forever observing the events of human history from above.

Huangshan: China's Natural Treasure

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Yee, Chun Hong Brent Milton – 10

“You don't need to see any more mountains after seeing ‘the Five Mountains’, and you don't need to see the other four mountains after seeing Huangshan.”—Xu Xiake, Ming dynasty traveller and geographer on Huangshan.

Huangshan, located in Anhui province, is one of the most famous, most visited mountains in all of China, boasting sights that rival even the most regal views from Mount Fuji. The mountain is famous for its “four natural wonders”: the bizarre pines, odd rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs. The views from Huangshan are magnificent, with clouds stretching in every direction. Even more impressive are the numerous towering peaks that make up Huangshan, offering an unparalleled view of the mountain's surroundings if the sky is clear. If the weather isn't on your side, though, the pines, peaks and springs are sights in themselves, satisfying even the most unappeasable tourist.

As with everything, though, such a spectacular mountain still had to start somewhere. It was formed in the Mesozoic (100 million years ago) when an ancient sea got lifted up, turning into a mountain. A long time later, in the Quaternary Period, Huangshan was shaped by glaciers, giving it its signature rock formations and soaring vertices. All this happened before humans were around. Even the dinosaurs had a part to play in this story, too! Scientists have found three species of dinosaur in the region, respectively named *Huangshanlong anuiensis* (Huangshan dinosaur), *Anhuilong* (Anhui dinosaur) and *Wannanosaurus* (Wannan lizard), all spread out over an area of 296 square kilometres. To geology and palaeontology buffs: this mountain's a must- go destination.

It's not just the dinosaurs that make Huangshan special- the trees there are also a world apart from anything else. For example, the Huangshan Pine, a type of tree found there, is notable for growing straight out of the rocks horizontally. (They can survive in that position. In fact, one of the most famous pines there is named the Welcoming Guests Pine, and has been growing for more than 1,500 years!) In addition, the “sea of clouds” previously mentioned resembles the South China Sea in that both are white with some rocks or islands dotted everywhere, so some particularly creative tourists have taken to calling the clouds “Huangshan sea”. The backpackers who had that idea deserve some applause—“Huangshan sea” sounds much better than “sea of clouds”.

Of course, the government officials have done everything it takes to protect such an asset, including opening Huangshan's three most famous peaks in fifteen-year cycles, with each peak opening for five years, then closing for ten. Woe to prospecting visitors looking for the “Buddha's Light”, an occasional light phenomenon, though – one peak isn't a lot of space for thousands of globetrotters, all vying for the best spot to go sightseeing. It is also a UNESCO world heritage site, which means that it is internationally protected and recognized as important to understanding humanity's culture. In addition, Huangshan was named the “sister mountain” of Jungfrau in the Alps. As you clearly can see, it is quite the tourist destination.

Apart from the breath-taking views, Huangshan also has a rich history. Numerous high-ranked officials and popular poets have made their way to it for all causes, from the more

casual, such as sightseeing, to the more superstitious like finding pills of immortality. In fact, it was the latter reason that gave Huangshan its name. According to legend, the ancestor of the Chinese, Huangdi, came to Huangshan, which was called Yishan at that time, to find the pills of immortality. In the end, he bathed in one of the springs surrounding the mountain for 49 days and nights, became extremely wrinkled and ascended to Heaven. Contrary to what you might think, he didn't die. Of course, this is just a legend, but to honour Huangdi, the mountain's name was changed to Huangshan by imperial decree in the Qin dynasty. However, the first use of the name "Huangshan" is usually attributed to poet Li Bai, another well-known sightseer. Other famous excursionists include the monk Pumen and the scholar Laoshe, among countless others.

Apparently, Huangshan is like pizza for experts – everyone wants a piece of it. Culturewise, it has influenced more than twenty thousand poems – and one art school! Huangshan also is China's largest natural tea producer, too. If you aren't one for poems, art or tea, Huangshan is still for you; it was the main inspiration for the fictional landscape of *Avatar*, the film. If you decide to travel there, it's not hard to see why: the dizzying heights and cliffs of the mountains, coupled with the low-lying clouds, fully gives you the impression of floating islands, as shown in the film. Science is also a theme at Huangshan. In the 20th century, numerous studies were conducted at Huangshan by both local and overseas scientists about the mountain's lush, thick vegetation and monkeys. (No bananas were stolen over the course of the expedition.) This blend of culture and scenic attractions serves as a magnet for tourists, with numbers reaching more than 2.74 million per year—definitely not a meagre amount!

Huangshan certainly is a spot worth visiting. The magnificent, granite peaks are like no other structures, both natural or artificial. However, majestic as it is, Huangshan is under threat. The double impacts of unregulated tourism and material waste disposed on the mountain have significantly injured the local wildlife and tea industry. By no means is this advocating a ban on visiting Huangshan, though. You can still travel there on holidays, but do not dispose of waste on the slopes—bring it down the mountain before throwing it away. Also, follow the trail. Getting off it can endanger your life and harm the environment, but staying on it ensures a safe and enjoyable experience, both for you and for Nature. So, what are you waiting for? Go to Huangshan. Protect the wildlife. It will definitely be the time of your life—I promise.

Non-Fiction

Group 3



Pilgrimage of Wonder: My Personal Huangshan Discovery

French International School, Fung, Sum Yi Emily – 12

Memories of last year’s magical and thrilling expedition to China’s Huangshan (also known as Yellow Mountain) flash before my eyes as I contemplate Jiang Zhu’s “*Placard of the Immortals*,” an ink-wash painting of the ancient landmark in the Beijing Palace Museum. Those memories serve as my window of understanding as to why Xu Xiake (1587–1641), the acclaimed Ming Dynasty travel writer and geologist, described the mountain as one inspired when he wrote:

“Trips to China’s five great mountains render trips to other mountains unnecessary, and a trip to Huangshan renders the trip to the five great mountains unnecessary.”

Those words were echoed by the legendary Chinese poet Li Bai, who ventured to the mountain five times, discovering his artistic muses in this mystical and remote wonderland.

It was six o’clock one cool September morning when I arrived at Yungu Station, a key waypoint on the journey to Huangshan. Even at such an early hour, the station was vibrant with tourists milling about, looking ahead to a day of wonder and discovery. This stately peak, soaring majestically above southern China’s Anhui Province, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of China’s top-rated scenic destinations.

During the cable-car ride to White Goose Ridge (Bai e Ling) New Station, I listened intently as tour guides enlightened us about Huangshan’s history and major attractions. Legend tells us that the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi), was our mythical ancestor and a Taoist advocate. Inspired by the region’s mystical allure, he believed Huangshan to be ideal for cultivating his body-spirit relationship, and refining his elixir—a magical medicine to prolong one’s lifespan. He later became immortal after taking the potion.

This sacred area, formerly known as Yishan, became fodder for legend after it was renamed Huangshan by imperial decree in 747 A.D. Since then, it has evolved into a mecca for Taoists, poets, trekkers, and landscape artists drawn by its “four wonders”: grotesque rocks, peculiar pines, phantasmagoric cloud oceans, and soothing hot springs. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping, then China’s party leader, climbed the mountain, declaring that Huangshan could be one of China’s top tourist destinations. “We must boast about it,” he insisted, “and make it known to the world.”

The cable car juddered to a sudden halt, announcing our arrival at Beginning-to-Believe Peak (Shixin Feng).

The view was stunning! Carpets of fragrant grass together with chatter of magpies swooping around the ridges seemed to be Huangshan’s way of welcoming us. The pinnacles of the precipitous mountain were swathed in veils of ethereal mist.

I took a few tentative steps to the edge of an overhanging rock face, which ended abruptly in a sheer drop of 1,700 meters, a silent yet visually striking testament to Huangshan’s complex geological history. Around 800 million years ago, Huangshan and its environs were submerged beneath the waves of a vast, Precambrian sea. It was the confluence of centuries of tectonic shifts, magma from volcanic eruptions and glacial movements that

carved the 72 peaks over time periods spanning hundreds of human lifetimes, eventually revealing its spellbinding landscape.

I made it clear of the rocky peaks altogether, finding myself on a long, cobbled trail leading to a thatched cottage known as Yunshan Teahouse.

The sight of the teahouse—straight out of a fairy tale, it seemed—transported my imagination back a thousand or more years. Taoists once came here to learn, to seek inspiration, and to pursue enlightenment. They held discussions in dualism (yin-yang), alchemy, feng shui and astrology. Innumerable latticed windows with various patterns—peaches symbolizing longevity, fish for wealth, and bats for luck—encapsulated many Taoist beliefs.

The rumbling of my stomach snapped me out of my reverie! A cup of silky, fragrant Maofeng green tea brewed in Huangshan spring water, paired with a traditional Chinese bun known as Mantou, gave my body and soul refreshment and new energy.

Following an arduous hike, I arrived at Refreshing Terrace (Qingliang Tai), where hundreds of verdant islands were scattered like leafy emeralds in an enchanting ocean of mist. Rays of golden sunlight shone through infinite velvety clouds, little seas of white magic in a vast expanse of blue. Sometimes the lacy white-edged clouds scudded across the busy sky as the wind passed, skimming and billowing as if they were chariots for fairies. Sometimes, they rippled around the mountains like silver skeins of silk. It was simply breathtaking!

Once at Stone Monkey Watching the Sea (Shihou Guanhai), I spotted the monkey-shaped boulder, with its own legend and folklore, perched on the mesa overlooking the North Cloud Sea.

There exists a Chinese folk tale of a clever monkey who possessed the power to shape-shift himself into thirty-six different objects. Having fallen in love with a girl named Zhangzhu, he transformed himself into a dashing young man and proposed to her. Zhangzhu gladly accepted.

On their wedding day, after imbibing a bit too much, the monkey revealed himself. Alarmed and frightened, his new wife fled, plunging him into shame and regret. Days of frantic searching for the girl failed to turn her up. From that moment forward, the monkey kept mournful vigil on a rock facing northeast, waiting for his wife's return. Over time, legend holds, he calcified into the rock that now bears his form, forever alone, forever waiting.

I made it to the last stop of the day, Bright Summit (Guangming Ding) for the most alluring moment before dusk! As the sun cast its rays onto a tableau of distant hills and valleys, the sky's saffron glow turned a bright tangerine orange, stretching far and wide. In seconds, the sky was streaked with red hues, discernible through clouds that resembled enormous wings of gold and blush pink. In silence I sat, enthralled by the beauty. Darkness fell, and the sun passed its baton to the pale sickle moon, as if a fairy had dropped a curtain onto the gorgeous landscape.

“Drrriinnng!” went my alarm clock. It was nine o'clock the next morning. I dragged my feet to the next destination, Hundred-Step Ladder (Baibu Yunti).

The ladder, in a rocky crevice, was flanked by two granite guards—a turtle, and a snake—at the entrance. It is a steep path carved into a rock face descending into the abyss, by far Huangshan's most treacherous section.

As I stood at the bottom of the towering ladder with its rough steps, I was overcome with fear. My legs gave way, my heart was hammering, and a sense of nausea undulated in my stomach. Other hikers occasionally sent rocks tumbling down the steep slope, making me tremble from head to foot. I slowly began my ascent.

After what seemed like years rather than minutes, I made it to the top! I marvelled at the workers' tenacity, skill and courage to carve a long ladder on such a craggy rock face. This fascinating piece of art is undeniably one of the most notable examples of perseverance, daring, and sheer bloody-minded determination in all of human achievement!

Enroute to the Yuping Hotel for the night, I passed the foot of Lotus Peak (Lianhua Feng), along the way. At an elevation of 1,864 meters, this imposing peak is the highest among the three major peaks: Bright Summit, Lotus Peak and Celestial Capital (Tiandu Feng).

During the final day of my tour, I paid a visit to Piaoxue hot spring by cable car. Along the way, I caught sight of the Greeting Pine—Yingbin Song—silhouetted in the distance. Pines on Huangshan are the product of the mountain's climate and its landscape. The pines' sinuous quality adds to their mystique, as the mountainous terrain prevents them from growing upright.

To the Chinese people, these peculiar plants symbolize longevity, resilience and perseverance. The over 800-year-old Greeting Pine is around 10 meters tall, with two horizontal branches growing forward, like a cordial host stretching out his arms in welcome. This pine epitomizes the spirit of hospitality and warmth. To me, it was more of a “fond farewell” pine, as my trip was drawing to a close.

Spring bathing is a terrific way to relax and unwind after days of vigorous exercise. Piaoxue Hot Spring, one of the most popular springs in Huangshan, is well-known for its rich source of different minerals, which help increase metabolism and exfoliate the skin. Prior to becoming immortal, according to legend, Huangdi was believed to have purified himself in this spring for 49 days and lifted by the steamy vapor to heaven! Bathing in the crystal-clear spring, I took in the charming scenery—lush greenery and rocky cliffs—in a tired-happy exhilaration.

The adventure to Huangshan was an exuberant, demanding, yet phenomenal experience, like a fantasy in a land of otherworldly beauty. After the trip, I have truly experienced and appreciated Xu Xiake's praise of Huangshan after walking in his shoes, seeing what his eyes saw, and coming away with a new appreciation for its majesty and capacity to inspire.

Huangshan Mountains

Hong Kong International School, Zhou, Emily – 14

After years of collecting herbs on the foggy Yishan mountains, The Yellow Emperor had finally found the solution. As he watched the black pill, memories of his life came flooding back to him. He hadn't thought about it in years. Was he genuinely willing to give up mortality for immortality? He packed his belongings and headed out of his cave. Outside, the brumal day had dawned crisp and clear with a bitterness that hinted at the end of the winter. The fresh, brisk wind of winter pierced through his body. It was quite unlike the warm, misty, summers that he had gotten accustomed to over the years. He looked back at his cave and savoured it, for he knew it would be the last look. Heading up the frozen stone steps of the Lotus Peak, he admired the blanket of snow that covered the precipitous granite peaks and the snow that had fallen on the verdant trees, making them seem as if they were from a winter paradise. Somehow, the mountains seemed more peaceful, more beautiful during the winter. He remembered the moment he fell in love with the place, and he felt a sharp pang of regret. Was he leaving all this behind? A gift from the world, all for him. Nature seemed as if it were begging him to stay, showing him all the mystical panoramas it could forge. He reached the summit, and the snow crunched beneath his feet. The relentless sun stared brightly at him, and it burned his eyes. Even so, he stared back, refusing to avert his eyes from what could be his last view of the sun. He held out his pill to the sunlight. Something told him that he had finished his time on earth as a mortal. He had spent the last few years of his life contentedly; there was nothing left for him. He had no idea what would happen once he took the pill, but he knew this was it. The Emperor held put the pill into his mouth, then swallowed.

The Yellow Emperor (Huangdi), whose real name was Xuanyuan, is a supposedly mythical figure who once ruled China from 2698–2598 BCE. People recognise him as a cultural hero. We also believe that all Han Chinese descend from him. Ancient Chinese scholars wrote of him in texts as a real historical figure who became a legend, but modern scholars argue that he was a mythical figure recorded into historical texts as a real man. Emperor Xuanyuan is depicted as a divine progenitor, a deity, and a Taoist cultivator. Which one is the truth? He may have been some of everything. While many theories may arise concerning the Yellow Emperor's real identity, it is essential to know that the mountains are named after him, Huangshan. Before, the mountains were called "Yishan", and after Emperor Xuanyuan did alchemy there, it was renamed to Huangshan. After taking the pill, Xuanyuan either died or became immortal. It is said that he left behind only his cap and clothing to be buried. Did he die? Or did he finally succeed in his endeavours and become immortal? Only nature can tell us the answer.

To have Huangshan on this earth is indeed a vast gift from nature, to whom we should give our thanks. The mountains were formed in the Mesozoic Era, approximately one-hundred million years ago when the world did not yet know what humans were. The landscape was shaped by the glaciers in the Quaternary Period, resulting in the creation of the seventy-two paradisiacal mountains of Huangshan. Of these seventy-two, three unique peaks stand out for being the most captivating. The first of the three is Celestial Peak, considered the most beautiful because of its empyrean view. It stands at 1,829 metres above sea level. The scenery there is so fictitious that it is believed to be the immortals' capital and heaven's city.

Lotus Peak is the tallest mountain among the diverse peaks. The soaring mountain stands at 1,864 metres. Inscriptions have been found on the cliffs that date back to ancient times. Bright Top is the second tallest peak, known for its breathtaking scenery of rolling clouds and sunsets. It stands at 1,860 metres. There are about 60,000 granite steps carved into the mountains' sides. It is said that these steps are more than 1,500 years old. Many scenic sites and physical features on the mountains have been named, and these names have narratives behind them. One such legend tells of a man who did not believe the tales of Huangshan's beauty and went to the mountains to see for himself. He immediately realised why people talked so passionately of its beauty. One of the peaks he is said to have visited was named Shixin, which means "start to believe". Standing atop the mountains, above the clouds, one can feel the soft gusts of wind flowing, and the calmness and elegance of the ethereal panorama. At sunrise, we can see the light peeking through the trees, and at sunset, it blends in with the rare phenomena called the Buddha's Light.

A place like Huangshan can't be the way it is perceived without its myths and legends. Generation after generation, dozens of stories have been told about Huangshan. Although they include magic and supernatural themes, the stories are what makes Huangshan what it is. A legend states that the Eight Immortals would gather there annually. One year, however, seven of them arrived on time, while the last one, Xiangzi, was late. An immortal named Guolao suggested that Xiangzi must have been captured by the scenery of Huangshan mountains on his way. Guolao flew into the sky to look for Xiangzi. Just as he had expected, Xiangzi was sightseeing on Huangshan Mountain. He was enjoying himself so much that he had forgotten about the gathering. Guolao tried every possible way to persuade Xiangzi to leave. Xiangzi was reluctant to go, and eventually created a stone replica of himself, setting it in the place he stayed, in case he ever forgot the way to Huangshan mountain. The stone became known as the Immortal Showing the Way. Another famous myth said that there lived an intelligent monkey who had been learning and practising magic arts in the mountains for three-thousand six-hundred years. This monkey had the power to transform himself into thirty-six different objects, including a human being. While exploring Taiping County, he met a lovely girl called Zhangzhu and fell in love with her. He turned himself into a handsome, talented young man and went to Zhangzhu's home, calling himself Sun Junwu. After expressing his sincerity and willingness to marry Zhangzhu, she and her parents accepted the proposal. But on their wedding day, Junwu got too drunk and showed his true form as a monkey in his sleep. Upon discovering this, Zhangzhu was deeply shocked and fled. When he woke up, he realised what had happened and felt guilty and regretful. He looked all over for Zhangzhu, but she was nowhere to be found. The monkey missed her, but there was nothing he could do. Since then, he spent days and nights watching the home of Zhangzhu. Centuries after centuries, he finally became the stone monkey we see today. This famous site is called Stone Monkey Watching the Sea. He watches over the sea of clouds, hoping that Zhangzhu would come back to him one day.

The Huangshan mountains' unworldly view has enchanted many people, ranging from mythical immortals to ancient Chinese poets, calligraphers, and artists. It was ideal for ancient Chinese literati to visit these mountains. Of these literati were two famous poets named Li Bai and Du Fu, who lived during the Tang dynasty. Li Bai was born on May 19, 701 AD, and is known as one of China's best Romantic poets and a poetic genius. He led a remarkable life, travelling all around China while inebriated. Du Fu, born February 12, 712 AD, is known as China's Shakespeare and the Chinese Virgil. His life was filled with unrest and turmoil, due to the breakout of the An Lu-shan rebellion in 755 AD. He spent nine years of his life building

his career in poetry. Together, Li Bai and Du Fu travelled to Huangshan, and upon seeing the magnificent spectacle, they wrote poems of what they saw. “Dawn Vista on the Huangshan” is Li Bai’s poem. After so many poets and artists have revealed Huangshan’s loveliness, we cannot help but admire what nature has given to us. Because of the mountains’ mystifying view and mytho-historic ties, they seem so unearthly and out of this world. But the mysterious mist and cryptic mountains reveal so little that we are left to create our figments of imagination and fictional legends, but one thing that we know for sure is that the tales and descriptions of Huangshan will go down in history.

A Scenery Place for Relaxation

Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Chau, Hyatt – 14

Living in a city, sometimes, is demanding. It is not easy to have a break from the daily busy routine. Last year, I was lucky enough to win the plane tickets to go to China to visit Huangshan. Huangshan is a famous place which is also called the Yellow Mountain, it is a mountain located at southern Anhui Province in eastern China. In the past, Yellow Mountain was once called Yishan, simply meaning black mountain, being one of the highest mountains in the world which is higher than 1800m, the dark shape of the mountain gives a monstrous image to tourists, and it was a mysterious place. Yishan was changed into Huangshan due to the legend about Huangdi. Huangdi, known as Yellow Emperor, is a legendary man and a great king. He is considered as the father of all Chinese people. There is a legend about Huangdi heard that the present of Yellow Mountain is an ideal place for making elixir. Therefore, he went there undoubtedly and spent years on the mountain for collecting necessary herbs and making elixir. His efforts finally paid off and he became immortal after taking the pill. Therefore, to commemorate Huangdi, Yishan was renamed Huangshan.

Huangshan, being acclaimed as one of the greatest mountains in China, is a popular UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as one of the most visited scenic destinations.

The four wonders of the fantastic mountain that show the power of natural beauty, which are Imaginatively-Named Pine, Flying-Over Rock, Seas of cloud and the Spring of Youth. Nowadays the Yellow Mountain has attracted thousands of travellers to enjoy its spectacular brew and the heavenly feeling of every there.

The pines in Huangshan grow over an altitude of 800 m. Among the thousands of pines, they are named according to their legends that passed from traditions. Guest-Greeting Pine which is the symbol of Mt. Huangshan, the high tree grows like a man standing by the path and stretching out his hand to welcome others. It now becomes a well-known symbol of the hospitality and peace loving character of the Chinese nation. Farewell Pine is also famous for its shape which is like saying farewell to the guests. Huangshan consists of 72 peaks too, and most of them are individually named according to their shapes or stories. The name of Huangshan Mountain itself is from a legend, which have already written about.

The famous sight, Stone Monkey Watching the Sea, is about a legend. “Sea” here refers to the cloud sea, Taiping is a county right at the direction the monkey is staring at. It is said that an intelligent monkey in Huangshan Mountain has been learning and practicing magic arts for 3600 years. According to book he had the power to transform himself into 36 different objects, including human being. One day, he met a pretty girl called Zhangzhu and fell in love with her, so he turned into a handsome and talented young man, approaching to Zhangzhu’s home and claiming himself as Sun Junwu.

After dating with Zhangzhu, he expressed his desire of marrying Zhangzhu. Zhangzhu and her parents accepted the proposal. But on their wedding day, Sun got too drunk and showed his true form as a monkey in sleep. After that, Zhangzhu was terribly shocked and annoyed so she slipped away. When Sun woke up, he realized what had happened and was in deep regret. The monkey missed Zhangzhu so much but there was nothing he could do. Since then, he spent days and nights watching the home of her. Day after day, year after year, he finally became a stone monkey that we can see today. Is it a story of romance and tragedy?

In Yellow Mountain, the peaks are very popular among tourists. The tallest and best-known peaks are Bright Summit Peak and Celestial Capital Peak. People visit Yellow Mountain for the most famous rock, Immortal Pointing the Way as well. Immortal Pointing the Way is a pointy standing rock by the old Cloud Valley path. It looks like a man in a cloak holding up a hand in a didactic stance. In the old days, there was a brilliant child failed an imperial exam, he felt so depressed about it and he went to Yellow Mountain to find immortals for inspiration, and this is the story for this famous spot.

The most wonderful of the wonders in Huangshan, definitely is the seas of clouds. It is a splendid view to which nothing can compare. When the Seas of Cloud rises to a suitable height, the mountains nearby seem to drift and rise and fall in the sea. It's just like some fantastic view in Heaven. This looks like numerous islands in the sea, appearing in the waves. The Fairy Walking On Stilts in West Sea Scenic Area appears to be walking on the clouds. On the cloud sea to the southwest of Bright Top, a huge of "turtles" swimming amongst steep ridges and peaks. At sunrise or sunset, when rosy clouds may appear, radiant golden light glitters in the sky and mountains are covered with the dazzling coats of many colors. The oddly-shaped rocks of Huangshan can appear more complicated and mystical with the flowing of the clouds.

The hot springs of Huangshan are listed as one of the Four Wonders of the Yellow Mountains, The springs have restorative properties and ideally positioned to minister to tired mountain climbers. They are well-developed, with villas surrounding the whole area. The hot springs are called the Tang Springs in ancient times. According to Song Shengyou's Huangshan Map, Huangdi, the earliest ancestor of the Chinese nation, bathed there. The spring water smoothed away his wrinkles and Huangdi became younger again. The hot springs are famous for this and called the Springs of Youth.

Apart from the Yellow Mountain, there are distinctive Huizhou styled ancient villages scattered at the foot of the mountain. Those villages themselves are precious historic and cultural heritages, and a good symbol of local traditional culture and history. As the remarkable example of Huizhou ancient villages, Xidi ancient village which was listed as World Cultural Heritage with nearby Hongcun Village. With two rivers flowing through, Xidi is a time-honored pristine village with about 1,000 year's history. It has over 200 ancient residences of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and important ancestral halls, archway, all decorated with exquisite brick, wooden and precious stone carvings. Xidi ancient village is a time-honored village with a history of 960 years.

The rise of Xidi Village was closely tied to the fortunes of the Hu Family, who was the offspring of the Emperor Li Ye in the Tang Dynasty. By 1465, during the Ming Dynasty, Hu family had made great fortune in business as merchants, and they began to build many compound villages houses, ancestral halls, pathways, and bridges there. In the middle of the 17th century, some members in Hu Family sought for official careers and boosted the development of the village. From the 18th century to 19th century, Xidi reached its highest glory with 600 prosperous households at that time. Those villages can show excellent models of Huizhou architecture, and we can enjoy the stunning natural sightseeing at the same time.

Last but not least, apart from feasting on nature beauties, there were more than 20000 poems created by poets in the past. Huangshan has been held in high esteem in China's history, especially since the Tang Dynasty. Mountain in their poems, paintings, and articles. It has been an important source of inspiration for Chinese writers and artists ever since. In ancient times, the poet Li Ba and the Buddhist monk Pumen climbed the mountain. Poet Li Bai combined the outstanding natural beauty of Huangshan in his poetry named Dawn Vista On Huangshan.

Huangshan City has its power to boast its tremendous tourism resources. Two sites are listed as world heritages; Huangshan has been honored as a “National Treasure”. As the old tells, “When one has visited the five mountains in central China, he will not be tempted to see any other mountains, but once he has seen the views of Huangshan, the five mountains seem attractive no longer.” Apart from the extraordinary Huangshan, there are also many other places of interest cultural relics inside the city. Like stars twinkling in the sky by the moon, they make a good match with the natural landscapes in the Huangshan. If you have time, remember to visit such a wonder, and you find peace and joy in your journey.

The fantastic scenery of Huangshan reminds us we are the offspring of the Dragon. During these times of difficulties, we can look up at the sky and remember the heaven that gives us hope and encourages us to do our best wherever what will come up in our life with uncertainties. However, we still have hope and our strengths, we can get the energy from such a beautiful world of our Mother Earth.



Non-Fiction

Group 4

Unveiling the Mystery Behind The Magical Mountains

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section), Ng, Natalie – 16

A common Chinese saying, which originated from the words of famed travel writer and geographer Xu Xiake, goes, “One who has returned from Huangshan thinks nothing of other high mountains.” Located in the south of Anhui Province, it is a renowned attraction and has charmed many around the world due to its scenic landscape and unparalleled history.

Huangshan has had a strong influence on China’s literary and artistic scene. Its painting-like scenery exemplifies the qualities that cause ancient figures to be exceedingly attracted to nature. In “Principles of Chinese Paintings”, the author George Rowley dives into the historical background of China in order to gain a better understanding of what constitutes the foundations of traditional ink-based paintings, which focus on conveying a certain state of mind. He mentions that in general, locations which represent the quintessential and untrammelled form of landscape with some degree of seclusion beckoned to poets and painters in ancient dynasties. Such can also be applied to the many artistic interpretations of the scenery of Huangshan. When compared to the Western artistic style, Chinese landscape paintings emphasise expressiveness over artistic techniques, so a more abstract approach is commonly used as the goal is never to exactly recreate a scene. As the authenticity of the emotion portrayed in works of art is predominantly stressed on, artists generally dwelled in places that fueled their artistic expression. A majority of figures wanted to convey their life philosophy of someone who yearns to be away from the corrupt imperial civilisation and reside in nature, where they can pursue a lifestyle of simplicity with peace of mind. Besides, it is a common belief in Buddhism that nature helps bring out the empty-mind state during meditation, which facilitates one’s imagination. Since the Huangshan scenic area embodies both of these qualities, its popularity among ancient literati and scholars such as Wu Long Han and Qian Qianyi from the Song and Qing Dynasty respectively comes as no surprise as it sparks their desire to create.

Huangshan also stands out among the many wonders of the world due to its distinctive geographic features. Its name directly translates into “Yellow Mountain”, which is believed to be derived from the civilisation of China’s first widely recognised tribe leader Huangdi. The name change symbolises that the natural landscape of Huangshan has become a site of national pride after it began its ascent to fame. In addition, it is known for its scenic landscape that resembles the fantastical and imaginary world due to its jagged rock peaks and peculiarly-shaped pine trees. Along with hot springs and seas of clouds that give off the illusion of floating, the four factors mentioned constitute the “Four Wonders”. Though its scenery may seem odd upon first glance, it is the epitome of the atypical but attractive aesthetic that holds a profusion of cultural significance in China. Another feature that contributes to Huangshan’s diverse beauty is its ever-changing nature, as it goes through drastic changes throughout the seasons, which adds a sense of temporality to the site.

Huangshan also has an extensive connection with religion that could be dated as far as the establishment of the nation. Written records can be traced back to old Taoist literary materials from the Tang to Ming Dynasties. It also went under the influence of Buddhism during the Liu and Song civilisation, and more than a hundred temples have been built in

successive generations. Huangshan has also been mentioned to be where some have helped emperors develop alchemies in hopes of achieving eternal life and hence maintaining absolute power over the country for a prolonged period of time. The idea of such an elixir, also known as “Waidan”, stems from the religious belief of the ancient Chinese towards medical science by combining doctrines and psychological practices to achieve body-spirit cultivation. In addition, there has been wide speculation that historical figures such as Huangdi and Fuqiu Gong had cultivated there to ascend to immortality, and peaks have been named after such folk stories to honour such legendary Chinese sovereigns and culture heroes who contributed to the rise of China.

There are a number of myths and legends surrounding the wondrous sights of Huangshan, which adds to its mystery. Some of these folk stories aim to explain the origins behind exotic plant species. For instance, Huangshan is home to a kind of “Dragon Beard Grass”, which is believed to bear connections with Emperor Xuan Yuan Huangdi. Once upon a time, Huangdi consumed the elixir that he had successfully formulated and was ready to rise to immortality. He felt conflicted as he would miss his people, who adored and respected him as a leader. However, the time soon came when it was inevitable for him to part with them in order to ascend to heaven. He bid them farewell while they shouted in unison in an attempt to follow him. Some even took extreme measures and rushed up to tug Huangdi’s beard while his feet gradually left the ground, causing his beard to part. It was blown to lands miles away by the gale, landing on the mountain peaks and cliffs of Huangshan. Places where his beard landed grew long poles of green grass and the species was directly named after such a tale, as the Yellow Emperor was recognised by the Chinese as the Dragon Son of God.

The “Drunken Rock” also is associated with the famed poet Li Bai, who has visited Huangshan several times in his lifetime. It was reported that when he came across the Spring of Mingxing, he witnessed the wondrous sight of the gentle waterfall caressing the strings of a stone lute. The sound was melodic and mellow, which fascinated him. Li Bai took a seat on a massive rock under the spring, singing wildly while drinking wine. Before he left, he poured the leftover wine on the stone, which also ended up in a drunken state. To this day, the story still stands and the characters “Drunken Immortal Spring” are engraved on the stone wall near the Mingxing spring. Some visitors have even said that if one observes closely, the fragrance of wine can be distinguished.

In conclusion, Huangshan has earned the title of “China’s Magical Mountains” and has become an inspiration to many ancient artistic figures and holds the same fascination till today due to its timeless picturesque landscape.