

Fiction

Group 2



The Mysterious Mountains of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Cao, Weiyi – 10

Have you ever wondered about the mysteries beyond the famous Huangshan mountain? Well, most people think about it as a fantasy, a world that contained dragons and mythical creatures, a world that contains the path which leads to heaven, a world that contains a large number of exotic species, a world that stores its own secrets, zipping its own mouth and refusing to tell anyone but to those who found out.

Secrets bloomed on the mountains every few seconds, filling it with exotic species. Some say these mystical mountains contain dinosaurs, who sheltered in the caves when the rest got extinct and died. Others say that the summit shimmers, showering whoever reached it with gold and other glittering valuables. But the truth is, in the mountains, immortals appear. Gods and goddesses appear if you are lucky. They guide you on the road if you are lost, they point out the way or produce a path of their own, one that you never knew about. Only if you are extremely naughty and not one to say your prayers, an immortal will cover your path and fill your head with bad memories and haunt you. At the summit, your dream will come true-but not always.

Many poets visited these mountains in search of their dreams. *Li Bai*, the famous Chinese poet, has been on Huangshan, though I'm not sure if it is recorded. *Li Bai* trudged on the mountain for days, occasionally writing verses for a poem and hoping to meet some immortals or reach the summit, but he never made it and gave up. The journey was just too long. No one knows why people are so greedy and want to reach the immortals, sometimes rob them, reach the summit and get their prize. Most people are like that, poets do that, too and when they give up, the immortals have done their job. Poets also choose to live here as they have a better chance of getting to the top, as you can see, everything is about money and their own greed.

Once you step your first step onto the mountain, you will feel an unearthly feeling, a feeling of magic. When you tell yourself, "I am hallucinating, right?" and you respond "yes, I am" to yourself, then you are dead wrong. Hallucination is often reality, you can feel its force, its energy, making you want to reach the peak. Magical creatures like the phoenix and the dragon, still live in the caves of this mysterious mountain. They sleep, for almost forever until a specific person comes and awakens them, and that person is that creature's master. The master will visit Huangshan every day, feeding its creature and becoming an immortal.

In the floating village above the clouds, the immortals feast and play in the houses, drink beer, and make merry. This village cannot be reached unless one person climbs the hidden stairs. Many have tried but failed to find these ancient steps. Now, the village is unreachable, after all these years the staircase has crumbled, falling into a chasm, so large that it is the very chasm earth would be sucked into. The village has some houses and a palace where the ultimate god lives. That god controls the immortals and therefore the mountain too. He will descend from the village and onto the mountains, Huangshan, his favorite place to be. He then chooses one lucky hiker who will reach the summit and

bring him to the village of the gods, then the immortals celebrate until broad daylight. They drink god-like drinks and eat scrumptious meals. Then, when the sun peeks over the mountains, the immortals walk home sheepishly and flop onto the bed, dreaming their divine dreams and talking in their sleep.

Huangshan is a place that stores its own secrets, its own reality, and its own rules. Huangshan is a fantasy, a world that contained dragons and mythical creatures, a world that contains the path which leads to heaven, a world that contains a large number of exotic species, a world that stores its own secrets, zipping its own mouth and refusing to tell anyone but to those who found out. Huangshan-the most mysterious mountain ever.

The Kungfu Knights of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Chan, Danielle – 10

Once upon a time, there lived a little boy named Li Hua.

It was a silent and tranquil night. Suddenly, a creature pecked at his window. He slowly drew the curtains and saw a giant crane standing right in front of his eyes, flapping its wings. He blinked slowly and opened the windows. The crane flew in and stood at the end of his bed. It had a tall neck, a red bill, beady eyes and beautiful plumage. It began pecking on his toes, as if it wanted him to ride on its back. At first, he was not too sure about it, but out of curiosity, he climbed on and they took off through the tenebrous night.

After a while of travelling, he saw the famous Guest-Greeting Pine, bizarrely-shaped rocks and knew that the crane had brought him to the legendary Huangshan Mountains. He was flying among the soaring peaks, which were embraced by a sea of clouds. They were flying so high above that Li Hua thought he could even touch the moon! As they rose higher and higher up into the sky, the breeze was starting to get colder and colder until they reached a temple, nestled behind a monkey-shaped boulder.

The temple was antique. There was a red brick wall in front with a picture featuring an old raccoon, holding a walking stick. Li Hua got off the crane and stepped inside, finding himself in a dim room, lighted with candles. There, he saw an old raccoon settled on a comfy armchair, watching CCTV NEWS while eating pizza. He looked exactly like the raccoon in the picture. He had a plethora of wrinkles on his forehead. Li Hua instantly realised who he was and blurted out, “Master Raccoon! I saw you in the movie. I’m Li Hua. Nice to meet you!”

“He is back. I have taught him for years and he is back. The ruddy old villain, plotting revenge against our Yellow Emperor!” He continued to whisper and rage mysteriously as if he had not heard Li Hua speak. He slowly turned to him and said, “Come, dear. Come to my garden.” He ushered him through the back door as he saw a huge, lush peach tree. There he also found Master Phoenix and the Fearless Four - Dragon, Grizzly, Leopard and Houzi all from the same movie. He turned towards Master Raccoon and asked, “I am a big fan of Kungfu. Can you teach me some skills?”

Master Raccoon replied unhurriedly, “Master Phoenix can teach you some.” His smile faded away. “Have a peach to upgrade your strength. We may need you to protect the Yellow Emperor in the future.”

He grabbed a luscious peach and handed it to Li Hua. "I should return to my telly." And continued to mutter under his breath something about a 'villain plotting revenge'. Li Hua sat beside the tree and started chatting animatedly with the Masters. After a good talk, he started learning Kungfu with Master Phoenix. Master Phoenix was good-tempered, so learning was hard but joyful for Li Hua. With the help of the Virtual Reality Kungfu training kit, Li Hua soon became as good as the Fearless Four.

One day, when Li Hua was practising Kungfu with the Fearless Four near the Flying-Over Rock at the Bright Summit, suddenly there was a loud roar coming from behind! "ARGHHH!!!" Abruptly, a gigantic ox stormed towards them in sheer fury. He had a head like a horse and a huge, revolting nose. His horns were large and curved. The ox looked like he could beat anything. Master Raccoon came out and shouted, "Curse him, the Demon Ox is back, I knew he would be destined to destroy Huangshan." Master Raccoon's face was now a dark shade of red instead of brown. It was the villain he was talking about all along! The ox surely looked appalling.

Without warning, the Demon Ox charged at Master Leopard. She pounced. She grabbed his horns then forced them apart as they cracked. But that only worsened his temper. She jumped off the ox and he charged again, knocking the leopard out unconscious. He then charged towards Li Hua, since his clothes were red and eye-catching. Li Hua punched him in the face but the powerful ox rushed forward. They had a tight battle. The ox kept on coming back at him, urging him towards the precipitous cliff. He was so frightened that his brain became plain white. Luckily, Master Phoenix came to the rescue by tossing him a yellow pistol and shouted, "Li Hua, shoot it!" Li Hua quickly triggered it. To his great surprise, banana peels shot out of the gun. He quickly pressed another button but it shot out lemon juice. Master Phoenix might have passed him the wrong thing by accident. Fortunately, Li Hua was smart enough to turn it into a powerful weapon. He blasted armfuls of banana peel all over the ground and then fired the lemon juice at the ox's eyes. The ox immediately groaned and winced as he closed his eyes. Li Hua shot out more banana peels and the ox slipped, bouncing off the cliff and disappearing out of sight.

Master Raccoon exclaimed, "I am thoroughly impressed with you. You are now ready to be a knight of the Yellow Emperor."

Li Hua replied, "Thank you for everything, I honour it greatly. But it is time for me to return home. I will come back whenever you need me."

"Your family won't think you have been away for long. Time passes quickly here." Master Phoenix took out a whistle and blew it, a beautiful cloud was in front of him. "Tell the cloud your address, step inside and off you go. Goodbye, Li Hua." He bowed to him solemnly.

"Anhui, Street 109, House 21." Li Hua cried. "Farewell, Master Raccoon, Master Phoenix and all!" His voice slowly faded as he descended into the cloud.

The Tale of the Dragon

Singapore International School, Chan, Yat Fung Evan – 11

Thunder echoed in the valleys around him. The rain lashed his face like a thousand tiny whips. Jun had been travelling for days, perhaps months, since the rainstorm began. Anhui and its surrounding areas were flooded, and millions of lives were lost. His grandfather Hui, a wise and respected monk, told him to set off on a quest to the mountains of Huangshan, and climb the tallest peak. He had no idea what he had to do, but he trusted his grandfather. He looked around and saw numerous jagged peaks standing out like daggers, waiting to kill him. He sighed reluctantly and kept moving.

Jun turned and saw a blanket of clouds below him. He gave a sigh of relief. He had finally arrived at the peak. His exhausted legs gave way and he passed out.

As Jun's eyes slowly came into focus, he saw a tall bearded man. Jun sat up from a bamboo mattress.

"My name is Sun. Is your grandfather Master Hui?" He inquired.

"Yes," Jun said innocently.

"Then come," Sun said "There is no time to be wasted. It hadn't stop raining since the dragon threw its tantrum, creating deadly cruel storms. The path to the Dragon World was blocked off, but you are the chosen one according to Hui's prophecy..."

"Dragon?" Jun could not believe his ears.

"Follow me!" Sun grabbed Jun's hand with a vice-like grip and dragged him outside. The houses were short and mossy. Vines crept along the roofs. He also got to see some of Huangshan's mountains up close: trees were jutting out of the mountains, like flowers in a vase.

Sun finally stopped in front of a temple. While Jun was massaging his red wrists, he scanned his surroundings. There were old proverbs and sayings on pieces of red paper, which were stuck on the black and rice-like coloured walls. A rusty fan spluttered cold air in Jun's face, causing him to blink awkwardly. Jun looked at the centre of the room, and gasped: there was a bluish-black portal, with lightning crackling through it.

"This is the portal which will take you to the Dragon World, assuming you survive," Sun said. "Good luck!"

With his palms sweating and hands shaking, Jun entered the portal. He felt as if he was being whisked up and stretched, torn into two halves. He was barely able to breathe.

A few seconds later, Jun was hurled onto a rocky floor. He shook his head to clear his dizziness, and looked around. A greyish pearl was mounted on top of a pedestal, and a huge dragon was thrashing on the floor, sending a mighty thunderbolt down to Earth every time its tail slammed against the stone floor.

Just then, he heard a voice as deep as the ocean: young man. Jun scanned his surroundings, and found no person. "Where are you?" He asked.

It is me, the dragon who is speaking, the dragon said.

"Please stop sending the storms!" Jun put on his most intimidating expression.

The dragon showed no intention of stopping. It is you, humans, who have brought doom upon yourselves. You see the pearl over there? It reflects the purity of nature near Huangshan. It was once pure white. Once it turns black, I would lose control of myself, and everyone in Huangshan would die! Not just that, but it will spread, and the world would wither and fall apart! The dragon roared. Take the pearl and cleanse it with the most sacred water. Then, you will save the world. Otherwise... the world will meet doomsday.

Jun shivered: the thought of this perilous quest was too much for him. "How would I find sacred water?" He asked. Follow your heart, the dragon sighed.

Suddenly, Jun found himself back in the temple, with the pearl in his hands. He saw Sun, who jumped back with a shocked expression. "You went in the portal a second ago, and now you are beside me!" Sun gasped.

"Sun, do you know where I can find the most sacred water?"

Sun was puzzled, "What do you mean?"

Follow your heart...

Jun sat on top of a large mossy rock, crossed his legs and closed his eyes. Hui told him to meditate when he was confused. When he started to listen, he could hear the faint sound of water flow which gradually turned into the strong sound of a waterfall. He stood up and noticed that Sun was standing beside him. "Can you hear the sound of a waterfall?" Jun said.

"There is no waterfall in this area... Wait, there was once a legend about the sacred Nine Dragons Waterfall, although no one has seen it before." Jun carried the pearl and followed the sound of flowing water he heard.

After walking for hours, he stumbled through an inconspicuous opening in the rocks and found a misty waterfall. Jun submerged the pearl in the pool at the bottom of the waterfall. The pearl glowed, and turned pure white. The rain suddenly stopped and sunlight penetrated through the clouds.

The glowing dragon appeared in front of a surprised Jun. Jun looked at the dragon properly for the first time. Its head was majestic and horse-like, its eyes were deep and rich, and the pupils were crackling with lightning. Its scaly, sapphire-coloured hide ended in a white, flaming tail. The dragon said in its deep voice, You had done well, Earthling. I would not want to suffer the savage state I was in ever again. Spread the message of protecting and loving the environment.

Jun shifted nervously “But how would I spread the message to the billions of people on Earth?” He asked. The dragon answered with these words, if everyone does their part, the world would be a better place. The dragon glowed blindingly and vanished.

Motivated by these wise words, Jun started to spread the message, which was passed from person to person. Protect the environment, or the world might perish.

Heaven's Gateway

Singapore International School, Cheah, Wan En Christabel – 11

“禁止入内”, the sign which meant “No Entry” was at the foot of the quaint limestone road. It seemed strangely out of place compared to the large steps that snaked along the scenic mountains of Huangshan.

The warning might have deterred other tourists from venturing beyond it, but not my intrepid brother. He challenged me for a race along the limestone road as we veered away from the tour group. “Come on, it’ll be fun!” I could still remember what he had said before we sprinted along the peculiar road. I had thought that the detour from our tour group would be safe and fun. I was wrong.

My brother had disappeared in the thick of the fog. And now I was lost.

I glanced around in trepidation. The mountains ahead seemed to look taller and taller above me as I trudged along the rocky path. A wintry zephyr circled past my ears, biting at my rosy face, poking at my numb skin like icy fingers. It was only October, yet this felt like December.

I called out my brother’s name, the sound echoing back after a few seconds. There was no reply.

The air seemed to be getting thinner, and my footsteps became heavier with each passing step as I approached the summit of the mountain. I had thought if I could get to the top of the peak, I would be able to spot my brother. I clambered onto the platform, heaving myself up onto the uneven rocks, the breathtaking view opening in front of me.

The tips of the jagged granite peaks of Huangshan protruded above the white blanket of mist. The ethereal scene looked almost like there was a dragon, gliding and weaving through the clouds, its scales emerging from the sea of mist as it made its way back to its cave. It was almost as if I could touch the clouds, as if I could jump along the peaks like they were nothing but tiny rocks.

Lush greenery covered the crags. Beautifully shaped trees adorned with tiny pinecones that I could barely make out were scattered around the mountain, moss clung to the boulders like they were leeches attaching to one’s skin, and vines meandered down the mountains like water flowing down a creek. I thought I could hear monkeys chittering as they hopped around the branches, birds singing while they fluttered around the peaks, and my mind drifted off to what else could be lurking about the mountains.

As the ochreous sun slid below the mountains, the day started to fade away. The inky stain of night spread along the amber sky and the world around me quickly darkened. The little hope I had left evaporated in an instant. All the tour groups would have gone by now.

I dazedly walked near the side, teetering over the edge. Just as I was about to fall, I felt a strong arm pulling me back. Whipping around, I expected to see an angel of some kind. But no one was there. Instead, a shadow darted down another path. My heart skipped a beat. I scrambled after the dim outline, tripping over my own feet in the semi-darkness. I traversed down a myriad of winding stairs that was engulfed in the ancient pine trees with their curling, crooked branches.

Eventually, I descended upon a gorge with an azure spring reservoir resting between two vertical cliffs. It was there that I heard a familiar voice. A flood of memories came cascading down my mind. Immediately, I knew who it was. Tears rolled down my face, tears from years of regret and grief, from never having the chance to say goodbye.

The assuring voice guided me along the rocky paths until we reached a great expanse of ultramarine sky that was lit up by auroras of translucent colours. I looked up in awe.

The gush of a waterfall filled my ears. I could make out a drape of cerulean silk streaming gracefully down the wrinkled face of the mountain. The cascade was lined with white foam at its edges, the swirling water throwing up bubbles of spray that glittered dimly in the fading light. It was so peaceful, so serene, and all I wanted to do at that moment was stay there.

Where could my brother be? Then I spotted him - his tiny figure sitting on the old stone stairs beside the waterfall. I screamed in joy, running with all my strength to him. He looked up at me with big eyes as I wrapped my arms tightly around him. "I heard mum's voice," he said softly. I then understood why he had ventured down from the limestone road.

Suddenly my brother took my hand, pulling me through the viridescent mass of bushes nearby. It was as if mum told him exactly the way to hurry back. I turned my head, seeing the silhouette of our mum slowly fading away. Too soon. My teardrops were like the waterfall, and I reluctantly mouthed goodbye.

When we came through the other side, I found ourselves back on the tiny limestone road. Looking around in shock, the bright light from the glowing sun blinded me. I looked up at the sky in confusion. "Why is it still daytime?" we asked each other.

To my surprise, the tour group was still beside the same road. We rushed towards them. My brother and I had been gone for almost two hours, yet nobody asked where we had gone, and simply continued the tour along the steps. It was almost as if time had been frozen.

The tour guide continued, "These mountains were named after the revered Emperor Huangdi, as the Yellow Mountains were the place where Huangdi ascended into heaven."

To everyone else, what the tour guide said was perhaps just a legendary tale. But to me, for the rest of my life, my brother and I would remember Huangshan as Heaven's Gateway.

Tale of an Unexpected Discovery

Singapore International School, Cheung, Isabella – 10

Ascending towards 5000 feet high above the ground with threads of silky clouds besides my feet, I looked outside the cable car window and saw a stunning panoramic view of the ancient mountain. Tian Li and I were hiking in the mystical Huangshan (“Yellow Mountain”) in the Anhui province. There is a legend about the Yellow Emperor, the ancestor of Han Chinese, refining “Pills of Immortality” for his life here and that’s how the mountain was named. Huangshan is also well known for its scenery, sunsets, [pine](#) trees, winter snow and the “Sea of Clouds” views.

We got off the cable car and excitedly approached the experienced instructor. He taught us how to put on the safety ropes; how to unchain the clip and hinge them on the next metal bar; what to do if there was an emergency. We snatched our safety ropes and helmets and we began to put them on with every button click leading to a heavier pound of my heart. We cautiously walked up the steep staircase and made our way up to the sacred plank. Passing through this wooden plank to the other end is the Tian Wai Tian (“Sky Over Sky”) where adventurers risked their lives for the fairylike view and magical experience. Just looking at it sent chills down my spine. I took in a deep breath and Tian Li must have noticed because she whispered, “You got this.” I looked at her and smiled, she always believed in me.

Tian Li took one step and motioned for me to go too. I nervously took my first step and followed Tian Li. Then we came across our first “Clip changeover”. I watched Tian Li unlock her clip and clung it on the next bar. “See, nothing to worry about!” she said, a bit too disparagingly. I did the exact same moves that she did, and sighed.

As we walked towards the end I became a little more relaxed. As we got to the next clip change point, Tian Li told me she could do it with her eyes closed. I chuckled along with her, she was kidding right? We removed our clips and Tian Li closed her eyes. I watched her miss the metal bar, I was about to tell her to “open her eyes and try again”, but she leaned back, assuming she had made it. “AHHHHH!” Tian Li yelled as she fell. I was absolutely horrified! She managed to grab on to my leg, but I didn’t chain my clip on yet. It wasn’t long before Tian Li yanked me off the plank. I could barely breathe, I thought of everything I ever loved and prayed. I heard a faint splash, and that was the last thing I heard.

“Wake up, wake up!”, I slowly opened my eyes and saw Tian Li nudging me, we were soaking wet and I was freezing cold. She was relieved to see that I was alright and grinned, “Don’t be so arrogant when life is on the line” I muttered. “Oww!”, I had tripped over a rock and landed in a thorn bush. Tian Li helped me up and picked out some thorns, once the thorns were out, they were filled in with bumps and cuts. Then she grabbed a piece of parchment out of my hair and read, “Wan Yi Cao (Thousands Cure Herb) - Almighty Healing Power” Along with those words was a sketch of the plant and a map with a giant “X” and “You are here” written on it. “Wow! This plant can be the cure for me,” I said. “Come on!”

We journeyed through the thick mist, I thought to myself, *How are we going to survive without any food, drinkable water, and dry clothing? Can they find us?* Just then, I spotted a cave with some vines covering it. “Tian Li, come look at this!” I exclaimed. She jogged over to the cave and we gingerly crept inside. The farther we explored, the darker it got until we reached a wooden door. Tian Li wrapped her hands around the door handle and anxiously turned it. I moved my hand and forced the

door open and then peered inside. My jaw dropped and nearly hit the ground. Inside those doors was the most fascinating sight I had ever seen. Thousands of twinkling lights of different colours were scattered across the walls, it looked as if a furious nebula had attacked this cave.

I walked inside, tilting my head in all directions, looking as if I were hypnotised. Tian Li followed me and had a similar reaction. *This is awesome*, I thought, sitting on the rough floor. *It was all worth it, worth falling off a mountain, worth falling into a thorny bush and getting bumps all over*. Suddenly, my eyes landed on a strange plant that looked familiar. “Wan Yi Cao!” Tian Li and I cried in unison, as if our thoughts were telepathic. We rushed over to the plants and plucked off the leaves. Tian Li split the leaf open and wiped the gooey gel over my bumps and cuts. I reached out to the plants, grabbing more leaves, but instead I pulled out an immense sack. As fate would have it, the sack was filled with heaps of fruits. I seized a handful and devoured it in one gulp.

Tian Li and I made a cozy home in the cave. Soon after, the rescue team traced us with the GPS system inside the rope. A few days later, scientists announced that the cave with the healing plants was a groundbreaking discovery that they have been pursuing for years. Turns out the myth about Haungshan’s magical medicine might have some truth in it? This amazing episode reminded me of a favourite movie line: “Life is like a box of chocolates. You’ll never know what you’ll get next”. More than ever to me, life is wonderful. I marched forward with hope and optimism.

The Cultural Stone

Singapore International School, Chew, Ashley – 10

I ran towards the light at the end of the tunnel and squeezed my body between two boulders. I could feel their sharp edges digging into my flesh. I brace myself and pray these rocks would offer me some protection from the flames that were bursting out of the mouth of the fire breathing dragon that was stomping towards me. I could see the flames reflected in its angry, fearsome black jewelled eyes.

I felt a breath of hot air on the nape of my neck...

“Where’s me?” said Boon Charis, tucking his hair behind his ear.

“What do you mean and how long have you been standing there?” I replied, turning around and irritably rubbing my neck that still prickled from Boon’s breath.

“Long enough to read that the main character isn’t me! I must be the main character in every story!”

Boon gestured and poked at the piece of parchment on my desk. I rolled my eyes and slapped my forehead. It was supposed to be a quiet trip to Huang Shan, China with my best friends, Annette, Alexis and Allison.

Boon had insisted that he tag along to protect us. Though, I think Boon needs protection from his egoistic self. He constantly boasts about how awesome he is.

Tomorrow, we will hike Huang Shan’s tall fascinating peaks. We have hired a local guide, Alycia Cao, for this journey.

The golden rays of the morning sun felt nice and warm. I yawned and stretched on the hotel bed and woke everyone up. We had a wonderful local breakfast and made our way to the meeting point, the pavilion near the start of the hike.

Moments later, a girl stood out from the crowd, wearing flamboyant colours with flowing black hair and dark brown eyes.

“My name is Alycia Cao, I am your guide.” She gave us each a map of Huang Shan as she winked and pointed to the majestic mountains behind her. We began our hike. The mountain views were breathtaking. After some exhausting hours of listening to Boon comparing his “awesome good looks” to the wondrous views of Huang Shan, we finally reached the legendary “Fei Lai Shi”, a special stone. Alycia explained to us its history while it sat tilting at an angle, baking under the sun. We were all intrigued.

A dark shadow spilled over us.

We looked up and were awed by the sight of a Chinese dragon hovering over us, its gleaming scales reflecting the golden rays of the sun. We shielded our eyes from the glare and cowered from the magnificent dragon. I caught a glimpse of its black, petrified eyes as I peered through my trembling fingers. Alexis reached out to touch it but Alycia stopped her.

“Cao, you are in grave danger! The cultural stone has been shattered! You must go to Cicily’s Chambe...” Before the dragon could finish her words, she started contorting and hissing, turning into a disgusting writhing coil of purplish blackness and giving off a nauseating stench. Her claws got bigger, her teeth sharper... Alycia’s eyes widened. She shoved at us to leave. We scrambled down the stairs and looked back. Alycia was searching for something in the mess that was once a Chinese dragon. It thrashed and spat.

Alycia ran towards us. In her hands were 6 glowing gemstones. She thrust a stone at each of us and chanted:

*“Let this power protect me forever from harm,
Earth, Fire, Water,
Air, Love and Charm!”*

A strange surge of power coursed through my body. I looked around and saw that everyone looked energized.

Alycia was about to say something when we heard a deafening roar. The glorious, majestic Chinese dragon had turned into a repulsive oily-black western dragon.

“Run!” Allison screamed.

The dragon stormed after us, breathing fire and demolishing everything in its path. Whenever it came near, Boon shrieked like a baby as he struggled to keep up. We reached the bottom of the mountain, scrambling for places to hide. I hid between two giant boulders and felt their sharp edges digging into my flesh. I stayed quiet. I was strangely reminded of the story I was working on last night. The dragon flew back to the peak. Alycia crept out of her hiding place. She scouted the area and signalled to us. Reluctantly, we removed ourselves from our hiding place.

“We did not meet coincidentally... We are the guardians of the Cultural stone. Long ago, our ancestors crafted the stone. It merged different cultures and helped everyone accept one another. The guardians protected it, maintaining peace. They kept it safe from those who did not accept the alliance. The 6 were granted powers...” Alycia paused.

“Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Love and Charm. Ashley is Earth, Annette is Water, Allison is Air, Alycia is Love, Boon is obviously Charm and I am Fire.” Alexis whispered.

“I have a way to tame that dragon...”

Alycia gave us a brief lesson on our powers, we gathered the materials needed while Boon sat there whining. We trudged up the mountain once again and found the dragon napping. Sensing our presence, the dragon woke and roared. Immediately, we sprang into action. Boon hypnotized it with “CHARM” and Alycia calmed it with “LOVE”. Allison created a gigantic air dome to contain it. Annette shot jets of water to extinguish the dragon’s fire while I protected us with an earth shield. Alexis skilfully threw a harness around the dragon’s horns and mouth. It was an unbelievable sight. I was amazed by how seamlessly we worked together. Alexis leapt onto the dragon effortlessly. The dragon flapped its wings in defiance and shot up into the sky. Alexis struggled to ride the humongous beast. We all held our breath. The beast finally landed, steam coming out of its nose. Alexis hopped off and smiled triumphantly.

“Come on! We have our ride to Cicily’s chamber!” Alexis exclaimed.

China's Mystical Mountains of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Chia, Yin Xin Nina

It was huge. Its eyes were slits while its jaws were wide open, showing thousands of dagger-like teeth. Its scales were so shiny it looked like hundreds of pearls glued onto its enormous body. Thoughts galloped through my mind like a thousand horses. "What have I done?"

All my life I had been told stories about China's mystical mountains of Huangshan, how tall it was, what type of "dangerous" creature that lives on the peak. These stories and rumors swarmed in my head like a million annoying flies that would buzz in my head until I could not focus. I had to do it. I had to climb the mountain of Huangshan. I just had to.

I pressed my head on the polished marble door. Nothing could be heard. The stinging wind that was brushing against my pale, cold face. I opened the door and peered out of my room. I narrowed my eyes as I scanned the garden. Nothing but golden marigolds, sweet-scented roses, gigantic pumpkins, blooming purple violets, and towering bean plants, growing in neat straight rows. All clear, I thought. Now was the time. A smile of excitement broke onto my face as I stole one last glare at my house and set off.

The mud squelched under my shoes as I cut the vines dangling down from the trees to prevent them from tangling with me. The winds sliced me deeply, as if it held knives. I shuddered as I continued to move deeper into the forest, the darkness slowly and eventually devouring me whole. I stopped dead in my tracks and stared up at the sky. The stars filled the night as the Moon chased the Sun away. I clipped on my climbing gear as I took my first step on the stone giant.

Two moons passed, and I reached my destination: the peak of China's Magical mountains of Huangshan. I was beyond excited. I ran around the area like a cheerful cat. There were trees as tall as giraffes, grass taller than the trees back home, and flowers swaying gently with the wind and a nest. Sure enough, there was a woven nest so big it could fit about twenty cars if it wanted to. My eyes widened in shock. I camouflaged myself among the ocean of grass. I whipped out my video camera and started filming. There was a dragon among the patch of flowers. It must be the dragon of the mountain of Huangshan. "So all the rumors were true," I thought. "There was a dragon that lived among the mountains of Huangshan" It was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. It had shiny white scales and golden knife-like spikes, it almost resembled one of the statues I had back home. Its eyes were as thin as needles and it was playing in the flooding patch of flowers. Our eyes seemed to meet for a split second, but the dragon continued to roll around like a baby cat.

Crack! Something broke. I looked underneath my shoe to see if I accidentally stepped on a branch. Nothing but mud. There was something in the bushes. I reached for my pocket and drew out

a knife. Curiosity dragged me to the bushes as I lifted up my knife. I was a zombie of my temptations. I barely touched the bush when a blurred figure pounced on me, claws just inches away from my skinny arms. I froze in shock. It was the dragon of Huangshan. My face turned as pale as a ghost as the dragon relentlessly continued to dig into my uncovered flesh. I squeezed my eyes shut. I squirmed like a dog on its back, trying to get the dragon off me. I got on my feet and ran like there was no tomorrow. I hid behind one of the green giants and watched the figure zoom past me.

I felt a sharp pain on my back and immediately fell forwards. I scooted around on my arms and the rumor presented itself once more. It was the same dragon. I was on the verge of tears. I wobbled to my feet despite the agony and waved my knife at it, shaking uncontrollably. The monster started approaching me, growling like a car revving up. I shifted back and back. I turned around and saw the breath-taking view. There were vines creeping up every peak, with the peaks of every mountain piercing through the thick blanket of fog. The ombre of sunset was like a cherry on top.

The birds of my decisions flew from all directions. "What should I do next?" There was no time to sit and think. I had to act fast and immediately.

I peered over my shoulder and saw a tree twice the height of me. It was brimming with beautiful blue flowers and juicy purple fruits. I grabbed my gear and shoved the clip onto the sturdiest branch on the tree. The dragon stretched its golden foil-like wings and headed right for me like a bulldozer out of control. I leaped off the cliff of the mountain and held onto a rock. The dragon sent a raging fire right towards the very cliff that I was hanging from. I gasped in horror as I tried to swing from the one rock that I was hanging from to another rock further from the dangerous dragon. I kicked off the rough grey walls and gripped the nearest rock nearby. I found that swinging from rock to rock will not work so I let go of the rock and let myself free fall into the lush green forest. I reached into my ripped pocket and grabbed out my video camera, making sure it was still there.

Now I have proof the rumor is true, I squealed while hopping around like a blissful bunny. I did it.

Heaven

Singapore International School, Fang, Xun Emma – 12

Five thousand years ago, the ancient ancestor of China, Huangdi himself once set foot on Huangshan to forge the elixir of immortality. It is said that when he succeeded, a dragon came and took him to heaven. The legend says that after thousands of years, the dragon still dwells here, in the mist of Huangshan, waiting to pick up the next person worthy of heaven...

Winter breeze brushed through her skin, as Yu gazed at the sunset absently. People around her shivered and began to pack up, and she was left alone. She's never troubled by low temperature; she was born at the coldest night everyone could remember; a midnight, the only night that snowed. They say her icy personality was due to the frost that had pierced through her on her first night on this world. Her name, Yu, means "white fire" in Chinese. She was too independent for a thirteen-year old, mainly caused by her parents. The two of them never loved her like they loved each other, both self-absorbed, wouldn't even realise it when they leave her behind, like they did just now.

Yu sat up abruptly, listening to the swishing of the wind. She thought she saw a figure flitted about in the fog, but it vanished in a blink of eyes. She frowned. Then a great shadow fell on her, the wind howled in her ears, as she shuddered and looked back. A boiling breeze touched her face, the blistering air seemed to pierce her skin, as she widened her eyes and gasped.

A breathtakingly beautiful creature stood before her, its gold eyes focused on her. It was snowy white, yet decorated with scarlet. It breathed heavily and lied down. The creature was at least eighty feet from its nose to the tip of its tail. The shape of it resembled an iceberg with icicles shooting out of it.

"Hi, I'm Yu." She whispered to the dragon.

"Crystal," She decided, her voice barely audible. "I'll call you Crystal. Can I touch you, Crystal?"

The dragon studied her, gold into brown. Then it lowered its head. She took one step closer, and touched its forehead with the tip of her fingers. The touching of it sent a shiver down her body; it was freezing cold. She stroked the dragon's scale gently, not showing any sense of fear.

Then a wonderful idea came to her mind.

"Can you give me a ride, Crystal?" Yu breathed.

It stood up, sending a tremble down the earth, and lowered its head. She climbed onto the dragon's back with difficulty. She bent down, and put her arms around Crystal's neck. The dragon growled, and shot into the air.

The flight was extraordinary. At first, she was nearly suffocated by the mounting air pressure. She grabbed hold of Crystal's neck as tightly as she could. The great pressure pressed her down hard onto the dragon's back. After a moment or so, Crystal finally slowed down, and her curiosity overtook. She raised up her head with difficulty, squinting, and the most spectacular view Yu had ever seen shined before her eyes.

They were flying above the endless sea of clouds and mist. The sky was a shade of pure black, filled with sparkling, shimmering stars. It was as if someone had tossed a handful of diamond dust onto the seemingly smooth black velvet that draped over the sky. Yu teared her eyes away and looked down, through the thick layer of fog, she could see the faint picture of the peaks of Huangshan, peculiarly-shaped, revealing itself in glimpses. She saw a tiny spot of light coming from nowhere. She frowned.

Bewildered, she asked, "Crystal, fly closer to that source of light, please."

Crystal circled down and dropped Yu by a small hut. She crept toward the hut, careful not to make any sound, and peered through the window. The two parents and a little girl were singing a birthday song to a baby. There was nothing on the table except a tiny cupcake, badly cooked. The clothes of the family were ragged and shabby, yet the family were so happy, so grateful, that Yu asked herself why couldn't her family be as good as this one. She ran from the house, a tear forming in her eyes. She jumped onto the dragon's back and mounted into the air.

When they got back to the sky, Yu turned her attention back to the blue-white fog, trying to forget what she just saw. The mist seemed to be fighting among themselves, the two savage tidal waves rose and splashed each other, then fell and turned back in, like a wheel, and hit each other again.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" Yu asked absently.

A little pause.

"Do you think my parents love me? I mean, they're usually kind of indifferent to me. But maybe I took things for granted and didn't notice them actually...caring. What do you think?" The dragon replied with a firm roar.

"Yeah, well..." Yu smiled, "Life isn't perfect. Now, where are you taking me anyway?"

Crystal growled and spiraled downwards. She gave a small shriek, grasping the Crystal's neck yet again. Then the dragon pulled up, and she saw a peculiar image before her. The two cliffs faced each other closely, with only one gap between them. From a distance, it seemed as if it was one enormous peak being split in half. But in the gap, it was plain white, even though the sky was still pitch black. Then she knew; she knew what that gap was for, why she had met Crystal, and the tales and stories she had heard from a child flooded into her head.

For a fraction of a second, Yu hesitated. Through that gap, she could gain everything she had ever wanted, everything she had dreamed of. Will she let go of that chance? But a moment later, she was sick of herself.

"Take me back, Crystal."

The dragon roared.

The Mythical Dragons Of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Guo, Joy – 10

A long time ago, dragons roamed the Earth. Now, they rest in the mountains of Huangshan, not active like before, because many dragon species have become extinct due to a volcanic eruption. Three dragons now remain in three different mountains in Huangshan, hibernating, waiting for their time to return.

The sun rose, shining on a house on top of a mountain. This light woke Max the mountain boy up, blinded by the golden rays of sunlight. “Yawn, it’s time to wake up,” Max mumbled to himself. “What time is it?” Max glanced at the clock above him and thought, “It’s only six-thirty. I should go on a hiking trip to exercise.” He gobbled down his breakfast, took a basket so he could put fruits inside to bring home, and walked out of the door.

He walked down the corridor of green trees, fascinated by the plethora of flowers and wildlife. Butterflies and hummingbirds flew around him while foxes and squirrels ran around wildly on the floor. “Wow!” thought Max. “I didn’t know there was this much life here! How beautiful!” Even the rocks had small plants growing on them. It was a natural wonderland.

Suddenly, whilst he was observing the fungi on the trees, he heard a distant rumbling sound and felt the ground begin to shake. Animals started to run back into trees and dens, holes and plants, terrified of what was going on. Max had heard stories before of strange occurrences called ‘earthquakes’ which make the earth tremble and the mountains shake and fall down. Was this what was happening now?

Meanwhile, inside one of Huangshan’s mountains, another kind of creature was waking up. A loud voice grunted. “This place is making my skin feel very itchy,” moaned Hyperion the Earth dragon, who was just waking up from a thousand-year nap. Then a large stalactite fell down hitting him right between the eyes. “What on earth is going on here?” he muttered. “Is the mountain collapsing?” With the beating of his enormous wings, Hyperion rose into the air and, having picked up speed, flew into a sheer wall of rock, shattering the side of the mountain. The broken mountain sent a chain reaction to the other mountains, causing them to collapse. One by one, the mountains fell, obliterating into pieces.

Max was now beginning to panic. The mountain he was on was collapsing behind him! He felt pity for the animals, so he grabbed as many animals as he could and put them into his basket. Then with the corner of his eye, he saw a giant explosion of rock and dust from the side of a nearby mountain and a monstrous creature with wings emerged from it. Shocked and terrified, Max did not stand there and do nothing, but ran away from the dragon. He thought it was going to chase them and try to eat them!

“Oh my god!” Max thought. “I thought this was an earthquake! But it seems like it is worse! A man-eating monster that can fly? Oh no!”

He saw a bridge leading to a path downhill, and decided to run that way. While he was running on the bridge, cracks appeared on it due to its old age. Then it collapsed and Max, holding the basket of animals, was sent plunging to his death. But at that moment, to his amazement, he saw the gigantic monster swoop below them and catch them on its back.

“Oof!” Max grunted as his legs collapsed. He tilted the basket on its side, and squirrels and a small deer, and some other animals walked out, and they sat beside him, leaning on the hard and mossy spines of the dragon.

A few minutes later, the dragon realised there was something on his back. “Anybody on board?” he called.

“Sorry, just hitching a ride so some animals and I can live through the drop,” responded Max guiltily.

“No worries, I’ll take you to a safe place,” replied Hyperion.

“Amber, Gust, I need help carrying these animals!” called Hyperion. Soon, a fiery dragon with a harness and a dragon that looked like it was from another world due to its fairy tale-like looks appeared from behind. Hyperion spread out his wings and half of the animals jumped onto Amber, and the other half jumped onto Gust.

The dragons carrying animals took them to a forest, and soon reported back to Hyperion. Max and Hyperion were relieved, and Hyperion flew Max to another mountain where there was a castle, with gigantic wooden doors, a moat, and two hundred rooms. The magnificent castle was undiscovered, because the thick clouds hid it. It was built by Hyperion, alongside the palace for the Legendary Yellow Emperor, who was believed to have discovered the elixir to the immortality pill, and only the people who love nature and paid the price of caring for nature, would be carried to this secret castle that had a forest for a garden.

Max was impressed and his opinion of dragons was better. He originally thought dragons were fierce, cruel and rude, but they were actually very kind and liked to make people feel better and happy. He trained hard, doing a thousand push-ups, sit-ups, and one-foot stands for two hours every day for ten years, and became a well-known professional dragon trainer and rider. Then, ten years ago, he was just a regular mountain boy. But today, here he is, a dragon rider, ready to jump on a dragon at the blow of a whistle.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Han, Elaine – 10

For those who do not believe the secrets of Huangshan, pity them for knowing too little. There is proof – a boy named Yue had solved all the quests and finally reached the hidden door to the secrets in those strange-shaped rocks.

Yue's story began when he and his grandpa went hiking in Huangshan.

When they arrived at Huangshan, Yue's attention was caught by a drawing on the monkey-shaped stone monkey gazing at the sea of mist.

"Grandpa?" asked Yue, "Why is this drawing like an emperor?"

"This happens to other people too," frowned Grandpa, "I discovered that some poems about Huangshan are clues to a secret." Grandpa paused, then continued. "I should have told you a long time ago. The drawing of the emperor was one of the clues. Where he is pointing at lies the door of the secrets."

Yue squinted at the drawing. How was it possible to find out the hidden door when it was smudged? Grandpa must have read his mind, as he recited a poem, "*Which immortals built those paths where only birds can fly? So high, so far away, yet reachable in just a day....brush pen flourished into the Dream Flower Pen, a tree-soft point. Yellow Emperor made Dan inside this Taoist Sphere. Full of beauty – is this Buddha's lotus seat spread here?*"

As they continued, they saw a pine forest, where there was a cottage between two pine trees. Next to the cottage sat a glum elderly man. "Exotic visitors, eh?" asked the man. "Well...we are seeking a secret." said Yue.

The man said, "It all started when Huangdi became immortal. when he rose to heaven, his brother, Gongsun, also wanted to become immortal. Unfortunately, a fortune teller predicted Gongsun would become evil. –Years after, he did become as the predictions were." The man shook his head. "As far as I've known, Gongsun might still be alive. And this story is part of the secret. "

Grandpa recited the poem: "*Which immortals built those paths where only birds can fly? So high, so far away, yet reachable in just a day....*" "I've got a bird," said the elderly man as a big bird with fine feathers flew to Yue. "It's a phoenix!" cried out Yue. "I have kept it for secret seekers like you." said the man. Yue and his Grandpa thanked the elderly man and mounted the phoenix. With a swoosh they were in the sky.

"Grandpa, what's that?" Yue pointed to a peak. "It's the Dream Flower Pen." said Grandpa, "When

Li Bai went to Huangshan and wrote a poem, he threw away his brush in excitement. The brush turned into this peak. Its name means the brush blossomed in a dream."

“Brush pen flourished into Dream Flower Pen, a tree-soft point.” said Yue, “so the ‘Dream Flower Pen’ is the door to the secret.”

When they landed next to the ‘Dream Flower Pen’, Yue’s attention was caught by a key carved on the tree. Curiously, Yue pressed the key. A door appeared on the tree and opened. Within, weak light in the room showed a staircase. When they reached the bottom of the staircase, the light was strengthened. A tall man wearing black robes paced towards Yue and Grandpa. “Grandpa, he must be Gongsun!” said Yue.

“So,” smirked Gongsun, “What have brought you here?”

“Um...” said Yue, “the secret I’ve been seeking...”

“Oh, that secret,” said Gongsun coldly while turning to Grandpa, “you think he deserves that secret, fortune teller?” Yue stared at his grandpa, shocked.

Grandpa sighed, “Yue – I think it’s time you know that I predicted the destiny of Gongsun,” Grandpa continued, “What you have been told is not the entire truth – on the day Huangdi became immortal, Huangshan was alive. Huangdi could have the right to become the master of all the powerful creatures turned from pine and peaks, but he gave it up. Only the righteous mind can resist this temptation, and Gongsun had been corrupted by his eagerness for power.”

He continued, “But I knew that I could not reveal it to you till time comes. Either you or Gongsun will be the master of Huangshan, but one of you will die.” Grandpa paused, and said, “It’s the time we meet the real master.”

A portal opened in front of them. “Climb in, to meet your destiny,” said Grandpa. Huangdi stepped in, glaring at Yue. Yue shrugged, and stepped into the portal.

When Yue and Gongsun settled down, the silence was broken by a rumble. The peaks shook everywhere like they were going to collapse. Some pine trees grew arms and stood up by their roots roaring furiously. The stone monkey gazing at the sea of mist stood up, growing golden fur. The “Dream Flower Pen” became Li Bai holding a gigantic brush, floating in the sky.

Yue and Gongsun climbed on two gigantic dragons. The two dragons flew up to the mid-air, chasing each other swiftly. Yue stood up and commanded the dragon to destroy Gongsun.

It was quite a battle: Yue would never forget the slashing between the two dragons. He barely sat up because he had to take grasp of the dragon when it did backflips. Just when Yue thought that the battle would never end, Gongsun slipped from the dragon and fell into the sea of mist.

Yue slowly stood up. All the enchanted things faced Yue and bowed. Yue took a deep breath, and said, “I’ve got a command. Return to normal, and never turn back. Let Huangshan be a peaceful place.” Then he went back into the portal. “So...” said Grandpa waiting on the other side, “how did it go?”

When they went out of there, there was no trace of movement of any trees and peaks. Yue smiled and said, “Good enough for a return journey.”

The sun was red, and the sky was the mix of orange and yellow. What a beautiful sunset, emphasizing one word: Peace.

The Trip to Huangshan

Singapore International School, Ho, Kurtis – 10

“Huangshan, the Yellow Mountain,” Cheng murmured as he read the text on his computer.

Cheng was in his home, researching for his presentation for the upcoming day. It was past midnight now, and because he had lazed around like a sloth the past two weeks, he had to rush his work in less than a day.

Two weeks ago, his teacher set an assignment for Cheng’s class, and it was to research an exotic place they had never been to before. Cheng chose Huangshan, since he thought it would be quite interesting. So, once he got back home from school, he went to his computer immediately and started researching, but after only a few minutes, he gave up.

“What a terrible place I chose,” he thought. “Huangshan is so boring!”

From that day on, because he got sick of researching, he didn't do his research about Huangshan, and he regretted it now.

“If only I could go to Huangshan now,” he said to himself, “It would be a miracle!”

After saying that, he felt dizzy. He felt like the whole world was spinning violently. He couldn’t see anything except a massive, mysterious, and gloomy portal. He realised he was getting sucked into the portal. But where did the portal lead to? He didn’t know.

A split second later, he blacked out.

“W-Where am I? How did I get here? And.....who are you?” Cheng woke up in a place he couldn’t recognize. As he remembered that he came from a portal, he looked around. He looked up at the sun, and thought it looked like noon, and there was a tall man standing next to him, wearing traditional chinese clothes. He stood up, rubbed his eyes and looked closer, but it wasn’t a man at all. It was a statue of a man. Cheng was confused. “Where in the world am I?” he thought.

He then heard a voice say, “Who are you? Are you lost?”

Cheng looked towards the voice, and he saw a man who looked like he was from China and in his thirties, wearing dirty, broken clothes, with lots of holes in it.

“I’m Bo, a villager who lives in the village at the peak of Huangshan Mountain. You are currently in Huangshan Mountain. next to the statue of Han Xiangxi.” the man explained.

“Wait. I’m in Huangshan? This is a great chance for me to learn about this place! Then, my presentation will be a breeze!” Cheng thought.

Then, Cheng replied, “ My name is Cheng, and I am lost.”

After hearing that, Bo offered Cheng to follow him to his house.

They walked for a few minutes through the rocky, rough, and foggy mountains, and arrived at a small village that looked old and broken. They walked into Bo’s house, which was very dirty, and had shattered windows and furniture. Cheng felt very lucky to live in his cozy, big, and warm house, and not to live in this pulverised one. But, he knew he had to be respectful, so he didn’t speak a word about it.

“Take a seat,” Bo said. “Why are you here alone, Cheng?”

Cheng thought that Bo would not believe that he came from a portal, so he lied, “I am here because I want to learn more about Huangshan. My parents are at work now, so I came here myself.”

Then, Cheng added, “I know this is sudden, but about that statue you met me at, what is that statue and why was it built?” Cheng thought this was a good chance to learn something about Huangshan.

“That statue I met you at is the statue of Immortal Leading the Way, but nobody knows why it was built,” Bo said. “But, there is a myth saying that it was built when it was time for the annual gathering of the Eight Immortals. One of them arrived late, and that was Han Xiang Xi. Another member of the Eight Immortals was Zhang Guo Lao, and he thought that Han Xiang Xi had been fascinated by the view of the Huangshan Mountain, so Zhang went to go find Han. As expected, Zhang found Han sightseeing on Huangshan Mountain. After being persuaded to go by Zhang, Han was reluctant to go. So, he turned a stone into a statue of himself, in case he forgot the way there the next time.

“So who are the Eight Immortals?” Cheng asked.

“They are characters in Chinese myths and they are: He Xian'gu, Han Xiang Zi, Lan Caihe, Li Tieguai, Lü Dongbin, Zhongli Quan, Cao Guojiu and Zhang Guo Lao. They represent males, females, the old, the young, the wealthy, the poor, the noble, and the humble chinese people,” Bo said.

Cheng thought, “Wow, Bo knows a lot about Huangshan. I have to ask him more about this place!”

So, they talked until it was sunset. Cheng looked out the broken window and admired the view outside. The red-orange sky was just breathtaking. But then, he remembered one thing- how was he ever going to get back home? He didn’t want to live in this old village.

Just then, Cheng felt dizzy. Again. He saw the same massive, mysterious, and gloomy portal he saw before at his house, but unlike before, he heard Bo's voices saying, "Cheng? Cheng? Are you there?"

Just like before, he blacked out.

He woke up again, in his house, in his room, in his chair. It was still midnight, which was weird, because he and Bo talked for a bit less than five hours. Was what happened just now a dream? Was what Bo said about Huangshan true? But despite having many questions not answered, he decided to type everything he learnt from Bo into his script. All he could do was hope.

He finished typing at 7 o' clock in the morning, and was ready for school. An hour later, he arrived at school, completely worn out, and he wanted sleep. But, despite that, he still completed his presentation.

Two weeks later, Cheng got his results for the presentation. He was astonished. He smiled as he thought about Bo, his trip to Huangshan, and how he wouldn't get high marks if a miracle had not happened.

The Secret Village

Singapore International School, Hui, Yi Cheng Ashley – 11

Thum! Thum! Thum!

An old lady was already in the cable car. Athena seriously doubted this lady would be able to climb the Yellow Mountain.

“What brings you to the Yellow Mountain, my dear?” the old lady asked.

“Well, um, I’m an archaeologist, and I’m here to explore the mountains, you know, find hidden secrets of the mountain,” Athena muttered unenthusiastically.

“You don’t seem too pleased about that.”

“I was supposed to go to Xi An, to find Qin Shi Huang’s supposed palace, and it has been my dream to discover it ever since I was young,” sighed Athena. “And now I’m being sent to find a boring old mountain!” Athena glanced out the mountains.

Well, honey, just think positive.” Athena smiled half-heartedly.

“The cable car has arrived. Please exit the compartment.” The cold metallic voice spoke.

“Well, dearie, I hope we cross paths again, and good luck with your adventure!” the old lady called out and Athena waved goodbye.

After she left, Athena set out for her adventure. She climbed peak after peak, searching every single spot yet there was nothing. Disappointed, she rested on a nearby railing.

“I don’t get why they sent me here. I just don’t get it- AHHHHHHH!” suddenly she was tumbling, falling in the open-air.....

Thud. *Stupid railing.* Athena cursed. She was surprised she was still alive, given she just fell from *a thousand-meter mountain.*

Something caught her attention.

It was a cave, about a short walk’s distance away. It was shiny, Perhaps she could hide there when it got dark. Athena dragged herself into the pitch-black cave with all her might.

A pair of blue eyes glinted in the darkness.

“H-Hello? Who are you!”

The eyes flickered.

It got closer... Closer... And even closer...

“AHHHHHHHHH!!!!”

Then it went dark.

Athena’s eyes fluttered open.

The first thing she saw was a pair of blue eyes staring at her, which made her sit up in fright.

The blue eyes were gone. Now she saw a kind old man with many different containers and strange-looking herbs. Was he trying to drug her? Athena shivered in horror.

“Wh-where am I? And who are you? Stay back!” Athena panicked.

The old man stepped back, hands raised up in the air to show that he meant no harm.

“Relax, I’m the doctor in this village, you passed out at the entrance, someone found you there. Those herbs are for your bruises and scars, the containers have the medicine that will help you.” the old man explained.

Athena sighed in relief.

“Sorry, I just woke up and panicked. Um, question, what village is this?”

The old man chuckled.

“You’re in Huang Ping Xiao Zhen,” the doctor smiled.

“Weird.... I don’t remember this village on the Huangshan map.....” the old man’s face darkened.

“There’s a reason why our village is hidden from the world...” he muttered.

Then he cleared his throat. “Anyways, the village leader wants to meet you,” he said. “So let’s hurry up. You seem fine now.”

For a moment it seemed Athena only just realized how beautiful her surroundings were. There was a waterfall, the birds were chirping, the sky was filled with dreamy clouds, and she could see the Yellow Mountain from where she was sitting. Her mouth fell open.

“Wait. Are we ON the Yellow Mountain? Like ABOVE the mountain????” Realization struck her.

“We are. It is just impossible to see this mountain from below, so no one knows we live here.” the old doctor replied, walking towards a little shack. It was made of wood and bamboo, but Athena couldn’t help but feel that it was very modern.

“We’re here.”

“You!” Athena gasped as she saw the village leader. He was well-built and tall. He turned around, his blue clear eyes cut into hers.

“Me,” the man said grimly. “I’m sorry if I scared you in the cave. I want to know how you found us and why you are here.” his gaze was strong and intimidating. “I’m Ben by the way,” he added.

“Ummmmmm... I’m an archaeologist. I came exploring, my company sent me to the Yellow Mountain...I fell down the mountain and just found this cave. Can someone tell me what’s happening please?” Athena asked.

Silence.

“Like why this village is hidden? What do you have in this village that you need to hide from the world?”

“We have the treasure that you archaeologists want. Things from the past from our ancestors. Books from the past. Knowledge. But human greed can destroy everything. People are selfish. If we let people know, our village will fade away. This will become some tourist attraction. I will not let that happen.”

“I agree. But what is going to happen to me?”

“What do you mean?”

“Am I supposed to go home? I am an archaeologist. I know your secret. Are you just going to let me go?”

“There’s another option: I let you go with this secret and you keep it. But, forgive me, I don’t trust you.”

“Reasonable enough.” Athena shrugged. “Well, since I’m here, may I tour the village, it’s beautiful. Also, I want to see what treasures there are.” there was a twinkle in her eyes.

The wonders she uncovered were more surprising than she expected. Within only a few weeks she had found Li Bai’s poems, books of knowledge from the olden days, and many more from an archaeologist’s dream.

By the time she was supposed to return to her company, she became more and more nervous. Was she going to be stuck in this village forever? If she left she would miss this place. But she didn't want to be trapped in this village! Just then, Ben appeared.

"You're free to go, Athena." Ben smiled "You've earned my trust. Good luck."

Athena hurriedly packed her bags and glanced at the little paradise sadly. She would miss that place. Wiping tears away, she walked away.

I'll be back, she promised to them. Athena smiled.

"Time for my new adventure." she grinned.

The Secret of the Huangshan

Singapore International School, Law, Hilda – 10

“Thump!”

A heavy and strong stomp hit the cold hard ground. It was not another beast that tried to seize her to death or another danger that tried to stop her mission, but it was the unwavering stomp from Li An.

In the moments of silence, Li An wanted to admire the breath-taking scenery a little more before she would barely escape from the next threat. She could see the soft and fluffy and cotton candy-like clouds that sat in the sky, the seventy-two green and black peaks that stood below and beyond her and the red glowing sun that made a red to yellow ombre across the sky. Li An just couldn't get enough of the mystical and magical feeling of Huangshan.

Li An glared over the horizons of the Lotus Peak with cold breaths drawn out of her lungs. Although it was chilly out there, Li An was scorching hot in her heart. She rubbed the pain off her hands from the last encounter with the three-eyed leopard who was guarding the 3000 year-old ancient honeycomb--the second last ingredient for the elixir of life. “No,” she strictly reminded herself, “No, I am not giving up. There is a reason why Huangshan was renamed after Huangdi, because he found the substances to make the elixir of life here. Everyone knows the elixir of life is a mission of almost impossible and no one has ever made it. Yet Emperor Han needs it badly for life-saving from terminal illness. Emperor Han is truly a great king beloved by his people and he can't die too young. His son is just too young to continue the thorne. I must find the last substance here to make the life potion for Emperor Han.”

To get ready for the next challenge, Li An swiped her hair to the side of the ears, re-tied her high hair bun and tightened her black waist belt which was awarded to her by Emperor Han for the outstanding martial arts skills showcased at her teenage age. As a daughter of Han Empire's Great General, Li An had practised martial arts since the age of 4 and won numerous martial arts competitions throughout her childhood. With the family's military background, Li An was ambitious and a risk taker yet was also sacrificial. She was one of the few willing to take up this challenge knowing her counterparts had sacrificed in the mission of the elixir of life.

Far ahead, Li An spotted a bottle of mercury lying on the ground. That was the last and final ingredient needed for the elixir of life! Her eyebrows raised and she gasped as she ran forward to the bottle. Just before Li An picked up the bottle, the thankful and delighted look quickly turned into suspicion with her eyes squinting and fingers rubbing her chin. She took out her sword and steadily backed a few steps away. Suddenly, the piece of ground in front of her cracked and an enormous pine tree erupted from

the ground. If she had not backed away the few steps, Li An would have been stabbed to death. The pine tree was five times the size of her, and it was very crooked, much more crooked than all the other pine tree species found in the Huangshan. The weird crooked tree had branches that reached far out and they curled around each other. The leaves attached to it had blood drops all over that it was so hard to see any green underneath. On top of that, the mad pine tree had a dark smirk on its face. It laughed terrifyingly so loud that all the other peaks could hear the echo. Li An stuttered, backing away a few more steps.

The crooked pine tree sniggered and grew one of its branches towards Li An and quickly snatched her from the ground, fiercely and vigorously spinning her in circles, making Li An extremely dizzy. Yet, Li An managed to slice the branch with her sword before being smashed to the ground. Li An was nearly breathless with blood shed all over her face. Her vision was all blurry. Still, she vaguely saw that the branch that she sliced earlier had regrown into a full branch. How was Li An going to defeat this monstrous pine tree if it could regrow and regenerate? Suddenly, the lightbulb in her head exploded and she had a brilliant idea on how to defeat this beast: Chop at the trunk of the tree so the tree couldn't grow back.

Just as the tree was about to snatch her again, Li An regained her fighting consciousness and grabbed back her sword. She dodged the attempted snatch from the crooked tree and ran as fast as a leopard to the base of the tree. The wicked tree snarled at Li An as if saying: "Not so fast, you!" and blasted small rocks at her. The rocks were black, sharp like the edge of a knife and also all carried little mean faces with their tongues stuck out. Li An bolted from left to right to avoid these small devils. The crooked tree was bursting with anger, fire was practically rushing out of its top. Li An held her sword high into the air and light rays momentarily reflected onto it. She then with all her might sliced the trunk of the crooked tree. The tree screamed in agony and pain and collapsed entirely on the ground; its face in terror and tears. Black mist arose from the trunk giving a glimpse of a human skull in the air. Li An took a brief moment to realise what had happened and then celebrated cheerfully with her hands up in the air swaying left to right.

Li An excitedly ran to the bottle of mercury, faster and more determined than ever.

The Hidden Secrets Of The Mountains

Singapore International School, Lee, Kai Yee Megan – 11

Thick white fog enveloped the incongruous rocky cliffs of the Huangshan mountains, the towering structures overlooking the nature below. A sea of pine trees in a variety of shapes and sizes were scattered across the vast mountain range, draped with glittering pearls of frozen dew along the jagged edges of each leaf, making the Huangshan mountains look like a mystical heaven that one would only encounter in books.

Endless chasms between each mountain were concealed behind thin mist. The cliffs were caked in a thick layer of viridescent-coloured moss. The gorgeous hues of light fuchsia and saffron contrasted immensely with the vermilion semicircle of the blazing sun, rising over the horizon.

And on one side of the Huangshan mountains, a group of intrepid hikers, Conner, Sophie, August and his younger sister Anna, were in the middle of a hunt for an extraordinary plant. Recently, there had been rumours about a plant species that possessed the ability to cure cancer. Scientists had decided to look closer into that possibility and had conducted a study that turned the rumour into a reality. However, the plant only grew at the peak of the Huangshan mountains, where the conditions for the plant's very existence were perfect. Now Conner led his team in search of the plant that would make history.

The wind was building enough speed to knock the hikers off the side of the mountains but they were not discouraged. The hikers had come a long way and were determined not to go back empty handed. "Look!" Anna cried, upon making out the silhouette of the jagged mountain peak. Driven by how close they were to it, they only took one hour to reach the summit. Upon reaching, they began searching for the plant, looking high and low for it.

Finally, covered in a thin veil of ice, a small verdant-green plant revealed its face. The plant appeared deceptively ordinary but the edges of its large, teardrop-shaped leaves were dappled with tiny azure-blue spots. The discovery captured the attention of the hikers. No one could pull their gaze from it. "Is that the plant we're looking for?" Anna inquired, pointing at the plain-looking but significant plant. "I need to be sure. Hand me my book." Conner's racing heartbeat seemed to be pounding in his ears but he did his best not to show it.

August reached into his backpack and produced a small handbook about plants. He opened the handbook and hastily flipped to a bookmarked page scribbled in red letters: THE CURE. Then he passed it to Conner who had waited for what felt like an eternity.

Conner stared at the image of the plant on the page. Then he checked it with the plant before him.

"We found it," Conner announced triumphantly.

"We did?" questioned Sophie with scepticism in her voice.

"I'm certain." Conner reassured her.

"I can't believe we actually did it." Sophie said with disbelief.

"Just hand me the spade!" Conner said excitedly. Sophie thrust the spade to Conner, mirroring his excitement.

Conner dug into the soil, carefully freeing the plant by the roots. Then he brushed the excess soil off the plant and gently sealed it in a clear bag labelled 'The Cure'.

"Hey, you three! Look what I found!" Anna called out from the other side of the mountain top, standing next to a roaring waterfall.

"Good things do come in pairs! First we found our plant and now we find a water source just when we really needed it." Sophie exclaimed cheerfully.

Soon enough, the hikers started their ascent down the mountain. It was almost sundown and the hikers were halfway down the mountain, when August tripped over a twisted tree root. He rolled down the mountain and crashed against another tree. The others ran down after him and promptly stopped beside him to check for injuries. His right leg was broken and he could not walk.

"We need to set up camp now, before it gets dark." Anna said firmly.

Conner and Anna propped August up against the nearest tree, while Sophie offered him some water to drink.

"There's only one hour before nightfall and we're barely halfway down the mountain. We won't make it in time. It's hard enough in the daytime. How will we make it in the dark and with August limping?" Anna asked. They all knew it was true.

"Don't worry August. We will set up camp here tonight and continue our descent at first light." Sophie said with finality.

August nodded quietly. Conner, realizing everyone else was with Anna, agreed reluctantly.

"I suppose there's no other way." replied Conner. Everyone was spent and could not wait to catch some rest before the next morning. Camp was set up quickly and no time was wasted getting to sleep. In the morning, Anna and Sophie worked quickly to pack their things before resuming their descent. Conner was almost finished with his things and decided to check that he still had the plant safely in his backpack. He pulled out the sealed bag with the prized plant but discovered that it had wilted. He was devastated.

Conner stared at the lifeless plant in his hands, not knowing how to break the news to the rest. They were so close to finding the cure.

Maybe if he tried to make it back the laboratory on his own last night.

Or perhaps they could find it again if they tried going back to the peak.

If only August hadn't broken his leg.

Just then, a voice came from behind him.

"Conner!" August exclaimed.

Conner spun around. August was walking towards him, his right leg perfectly healed.

"But...how?" Conner asked.

Then Conner eyed the bottle of water in August's hand.

"The waterfall!" Conner uttered in disbelief.

New-Found Secrets of Huangshan Mountains

Singapore International School, Li, Cici – 11

Life had been unbearable for Olivia Strange the past eleven years. She was the so-called “nerd girl” / “walking Google” in school (due to her immense knowledge of facts) and kept getting bullied. Rumour was that she’d only been to three places: her house, library and school. She’d do anything, even go on an adventure to the Sahara Desert, to prove them wrong.

Now, Olivia was staring blankly at the old, shrivelled scroll in her hands. She rarely came across something she didn’t know, but the riddle on the scroll was so bizarre. She and her 18-year-old brother, Evan Strange, had found it in the attic and immediately became obsessed with the poem.

It read:

“Thirty-six strange peaks,

Immortals with black top knots.

Morning sun strikes the tree tops,

Here in this sky mountain world.”

With help from Evan, Olivia finally cracked the riddle. It’s part of a poem by Li Bai, describing the Mountains of Huangshan in Anhui, China. Then, something scrawled on the bottom of the scroll caught her eye, she squinted to read, "Reach the Lotus from the dragon’s cave, endangered Dweagles you must save!"

Evan murmured in disbelief, “We’re supposed to reach Huangshan and save ‘Dweagle-kind’?!”

“Goodbye nerd girl! Hello adventurer!” Olivia squealed.

Thirty minutes later, they were packed, ready to go. Evan left a note for their father, quite unnecessarily, he’d gone bonkers after divorcing their mother, completely forgetting his children. They were living with their housekeeper, who couldn’t care less.

Evan had booked two plane tickets with his credit card on the bus ride to the airport. Now, scampering through crowded corridors, they managed to hop on the flight just as the final call blasted through loudspeakers.

Four hours later, the plane finally landed in Huangshan airport, Olivia and Evan hurriedly climbed into a taxi and sped off to the mountains.

As they approached the mountains, Olivia stared at the Huangshan mountain map they’d found at the airport and decided to climb the “Lotus” peak. There weren’t many people around, mid-winter certainly wasn’t time to climb freezing mountains.

In the middle of the empty Lotus peak trail they met their first obstacle, two feet away.

Dragon.

A fully grown, ten-foot tall dragon, with deep green, shining scales and enormous wings, towering over them!

“Don’t panic,” Olivia thought, racking her brains to find information on fighting dragons. Truth was, she hated researching myths and nothing came to mind. With an ear-splitting roar, the dragon breathed burning gas that smelled strangely of pine-tree perfume.

Luckily, Evan had gone to self-defence class on hypnotising instantly. Concentrating, he snapped his fingers directly at the dragon. It slumped forward onto the ground, already in a deep sleep.

“Well done!” Olivia cheered, “I think it was guarding its cave, *the* cave.” They hurried into the darkness.

At the opposite side of the cave, Olivia spotted a dark shape. She walked closer and realised it was a well, covered in layers of moss and fungi, with acid-like water gurgling inside, smelling like month-old socks. “What’s this?” she asked, disgusted.

“Giant spider behind you!” Evan cried in response.

Olivia spun around, facing a two-foot tall spider.

Stay still. She had read from a science book that the largest spiders on earth (Goliath Bird-eater Tarantula), were afraid of predators like skunks. I’ll spray the spider with foul-smelling water, Olivia thought. Reach back, grab the rope-tied bucket, lower into well. Remain calm. She commanded herself. When the bucket was full, she pulled it up and dumped it onto the spider. At first nothing happened. Then, it burst into blue flames.

“Congratulations!” Evan gave Olivia a big hug.

Creak! A door opened. It was a very mystical creature. “I’m King Grandfather Dweagle VIII. And I too, congratulate you for making it here, the only ones for 1200 years!” He continued, “We’re cross-breeds between dwarfs and eagles, Dw-eagles. We live in mushroom domes, but Huangshan’s mists twist your vision into seeing normal houses. The well here is made from our ancestor, Dweagle the Great’s spit, sprinkled with mushroom dust, anyone who drinks it becomes a true poet. Only the bravest and humblest people can earn the right to have a sip. We’ll fade away if not remembered, and need someone to write a poem about us by drinking the water. Now, this might be hard to digest, but it’s 100% true.”

Olivia and Evan stared at the Dweagle, “We have to drink that?” Evan asked in disbelief, referring to the well.

“It tastes like chocolate smoothie, you’ll love it!” Grandfather Dweagle urged, producing a small bag of mushroom dust from his pocket and pouring the contents into the well. “The girl shall drink it, she found the well.” Olivia pulled up the bucket, took a deep breath and tried not to puke, and drank.

Sweet. It tasted sweet.

Olivia found herself craving for more. After half the bucket, she could feel her stomach bubbling with words. “Shalt I composeth the poem anon?”

“Thee speaketh Shakespearian now.” Evan grumbled.

Olivia began,

“On the head of Huangshan,

Holds someth hospitableth homes.

For that’s whither the Dweagles roam,

In their magic covered mushroom domes.”

“Brilliant! We’ll forever be grateful for your help. We’re afraid of light and can’t go outside to tell people ourselves.” Grandfather Dweagle said. “We gave an adventurer, David Strange, a poem and riddle about us and Huangshan mountain as souvenirs to remember us.”

“That’s our great-grandfather!” The siblings exclaimed, “It’s destiny for us to find you.” Evan smiled.

It had been a month since the adventure, Olivia and Evan had given the poem to officers of Huangshan as well as shown them the Dweagles, who were now safe. The siblings had become famous overnight, Olivia even got acceptance letter from Harvard to study poetry there.

“What a stroke of luck for me to have found that scroll in the attic.” Olivia murmured as a bunch of school girls crowded around her for autographs. She’s now the most popular girl in school.

The Mountain Chase

Singapore International School, Leung, Sze Long – 11

My eyes thronged with trepidation as I plunged down the serrated mountains of Huangshan. The elongated cliffs glowering at me pugnaciously as I plummeted further, the air piercing my skin. I stared, paralyzed at the man whom I once considered my friend. The only thing coursing through my brain of his perfidy. I floundered my arm in desperation, hoping for someone or something to be there to grab my hand.

“Accept your fate already. There’s no other way but down,” Abaddon denoted, grinning like a Cheshire cat, deploying his glider.

I had to ignore him. With apprehension cascading through me, and my blood flowing turbulently as if a tempestuous stream, I examined the surrounding area, spotting a colossal evergreen tree I could safely fall on. It was surprisingly serene. The seraphic peaks elongated over mankind, its azure rivers flowing tranquilly as if an eloquent melody and the glistening of could only be described as *euphoria*. If only I wasn’t plunging hundreds of feet to the ground.

Instantaneously, I fell onto the sawtoothed evergreen tree. Unexpectedly, the insurmountable amount of needle-like leaves seeped into my skin, with the tenacity of a wasp, and the same pain, before I fell leg-first onto the ground.

I unsheathed my azure blue scimitar from my satchel, knowing any minute that I was about to engage in a perfidious battle for my life. My battered hands could barely support the waist and practically every part of my body was bruised or dislocated.

“Do you have to be so adhesive for your life?” he alleged giggling as if amused that I was still able to stand.

The man whose ideals stuck to me, the man whose face would strike hope in the hearts of the despondent. I was about to be killed by *him*. Even though the weapon I was holding couldn’t withstand the might of his *Dao*, I still had to try...

He sneered at me before pouncing and we were locked into a duel. The herculean might of him could smoulder any opponent, and he had been studying how I fought for all these years. As we closed in, he threw an overhead slash and I attempted to parry the swashing blow, only for the *Dao* to shatter my scimitar and graze my skin. I leapt back, with no time to mourn the breakage of my sword which I had adorned for so many years. He left no room for me, thrusting and slashing at my skin unremittingly rendering me unable to gain my conscience.

“You’ll be dead before you know it, just close your eyes and embrace your fate,” he snickered.

“Yo- you monster,” I muttered, trying to hold onto consciousness.

“It’ll be one second, then you’ll finally be able to forbear the fruits of your labour,” he stated, laughing maniacally.

What a crude death.

All of a sudden, a burst of viperous liquid splattered onto the ground, intoxicating the air around the plains.

“May I benevolently remind you, Abaddon, that they may not be infighting within our group,” a mystified silhouette snapped sharply.

It was *Zhang Guolao*, one of the eight leaders in our organization.

“How can you prove to me that you would be able to save Alvis here? I have surpassed you and the other seven gods, you are but a frail old man to me,” Abaddon claimed, licking the blood on his *Dao*.

At once, the two men engaged. Abaddon led with his *Dao*, attempting to thrust his sword into Zhang Guolao’s skin. Zhang Guolao hastily cobbled together a liquid barrier to attempt to fend off Abaddon’s attacks, But the weariness of his age was not an equitable match for Abaddon’s barrages, and Abaddon threw a high blow, slicing Zhang Guolao’s face, his eyes wincing with pain.

“Give it up old man,” Abaddon gushed, sated by his power.

“Whatever you do, don’t harm him,” Zhang pleaded, desperation in his eyes.

“How can one kill if harm isn’t in the picture?” he declared, eager to kill.

He was the predator and I was the prey. He jerked forward, not yielding his *Dao*, and pierced my heart.

I felt my presence erode, and my body rendered an immobile husk. I felt the presence of *Death’s* tenacious hands grip me, and I accepted my fate.

Tales of the Gate to Heaven

Singapore International School, Lim, Aiden – 10

Around the year 3000 BC, it was foretold that there was a majestic mountain called HuangShan in eastern parts of China. The mountain was said to be the gate towards heaven, and anyone who reached its peak would be crowned ‘God of Rain’. The secret of the ‘God of Rain’ was told to be kept in heaven and the gate towards heaven was located at the peak of HuangShan. However, no one knew where the gate was hidden.

It was a dream for many people to climb this magical mountain, most of all a dwarf called Melvon. He lived in a tiny house carved into a small hill in a tiny farming village in China near that mountain. Detested by his fellow villagers, he was very selfish and mean. Arrogantly, Melvon thought he had an advantage over others as dwarfs were braver than most, and you had to be brave to find the gate to heaven. He always dreamed about claiming the title of ‘God of Rain’ as he wanted to live forever.

On a bright Monday morning, Melvon was at the base of HuangShan, ready to start his journey. He started walking up the trail slowly. After an hour, from the corner of his eye, he caught a glimpse of a huge creature that was red, and it had yellow eyes and its breath was very loud in a cave. Terrified, not knowing what it was, he stood still and heard the creature’s loud and gurgly breathing. Slow and steady, he approached the dark cave, to discover a Dragon’s fire breath which lit up the dark cave. Melvon stood there in awe, he was speechless! He was terrified and had never seen anything so horrifying! Shaken by the dragon's appearance, Melvon dashed out of the cave back on the muddy trail. Not long after, he met another human in the path. This was no ordinary human, as he was wearing a tall pointy blue hat with a matching blue robe. He was an old wizard who asked Melvon what he wanted to do in his life. Melvon replied saying, “I want to be a god who controls the rain and has immortality!”

The wizard then told Melvon that if he wanted to be a god, he had to be a loving, kind and sympathetic person. Melvon did not even look at the wizard before continuing his journey. A few hours later it began to get dark, Melvon found a nice flat rock that he could sleep on, and before he knew it, he had drifted off to sleep. The next morning the sun was shining brightly and Melvon quickly ate his breakfast and packed his bag and set off for another day of hiking. Suddenly, he started to lose his vision. There was fog everywhere! As he came to his senses, he realized he was in the famous ‘Sea of Clouds’ enveloping the mountain! It was a tough time walking through the clouds but he managed to get by. He was looking down on the path, watching his steps, when he found a red apple on the ground. He picked it up and his stomach was rumbling. He thought it would be better if he would save the apple for later as it would be a nice reward after completing his journey to the peak of HuangShan. He then put the apple in his pocket.

Finally, at sunset, Melvon reached the peak of the mountain. In the distance, he could see trees, rocks and mountains, painting a beautiful picture. He felt very proud that he had reached the peak and wanted to find the secret gate to the heavens. Then, he saw an old beggar sitting on the ground asking for food. After some hesitation, he reached into his pocket and took out the apple he was saving and handed it to the old beggar as he knew that being kind is the right thing to do.

There was a sudden clap of thunder. The beggar morphed into thin air and a disembodied voice boomed, "You are now the 'God of Rain!'" The old man explained that he was actually a god in disguise who was looking for a person to hold the title of 'God of Rain' and Melvon had met the requirement, being someone who had changed his true nature. Melvon was the only one who gave the treasured apple to the old man who had intentionally placed it near the peak of the mountain as a test. Nobody had ever passed this test in more than a thousand years. The old man reappeared and waved his staff thrice. Magically, a floating staircase made out of gold appeared.

Melvon looked at the smiling old man and started walking up the staircase. When he reached the top, he found 3 pills and a cup of water. The first pill had the ability to control rain, the second pill controlled immortality and the third controlled flying abilities and wisdom. After drinking the pills, Melvon headed back down the stairs, leaving the old man nowhere to be found. Melvon decided to test his flying abilities by flying back to his village. Surprisingly he felt very light and travelling back to the village did not take a long time. He quickly reached his village in half an hour. When Melvon finally reached his village, everyone greeted him with big hugs and cheer. A festival began as a celebration for Melvon being crowned 'God of Rain' The villagers brought out treats as they knew that they were going to have a very good harvest for many years.

Over many generations, Melvon taught the children of his village to change for the better as these qualities are the most important valuable traits for a human being.

The Search of Immortality on Huangshan

Singapore International School, Lin, Yushu – 11

The deep vistas of wispy fog rolled across the valley and circled the jagged blue peaks of Huangshan, which appeared as small islands covered by gnarled pines and rocks emerging from a sea of clouds. The sun peeked out above the horizon as the birds greeted its light golden rays with a melodious song. But Finn was not here to take photos with the oddly-shaped pines and rocks, he was here to find immortality.

He began his ascent up alongside hundreds of tourists. Soon, they stopped at the Black Tiger Pine Tree. The leader told the group that legend says a monk spotted a black tiger laying at the tree's base, but when he started looking around, the tiger disappeared and the only thing he found was an ancient tree with a blackish green crown. Apparently, the tiger is described by local folklore as a guardian that protects the mountain.

Next they went to the Exploring Ocean Pine, which has a long side branch tilting into the sea of clouds surrounding Huangshan, reminiscent of a dragon exploring. Legend says that a god was invited to a banquet at the top of the mountain. But he was so absorbed by the beautiful view of clouds snaking through the numerous peaks and valleys that he forgot about the banquet and decided to stay there. He turned himself into a pine tree, stretching out and 'drinking' the mist of the mountain day and night.

Finn listened to the stories half-heartedly, glancing around. While his eyes wandered, spotted a cave up ahead and decided to investigate. As he got closer to the cave, he saw mist curling from the tiny entrance and felt a shiver run down his spine. He felt a sudden pull attracting him to the cave, almost like a voice whispering to him. Finn hesitated, looking doubtfully at the pitch-black entrance. He glanced back at the sound of the noisy bustle of tourists. To his surprise, they moved on as if the cave was not there. The noise died down and before he realised it, he was sucked through the small entrance into the cave.

Pitch-black darkness swallowed him as he slid soundlessly down a smooth slope. At the end of the slope, he found himself in an enormous dark cavern. The only source of light came from the flickering green flames of what seemed to be a cauldron in the middle of the room. Finn could just barely make out the silhouettes of three dark figures circling the cauldron, their bony fingers fluttering above the cauldron. In his efforts to sit up, he made a gagging sound. "Argh!" Instantly, the three dark figures turned towards him, and he saw their fiery red eyes burning with madness. He tried to avert their gaze, but couldn't, and felt a searing pain through his whole body, causing him to scream.

“You seek our potion of immortality,” they cackled, “but you must first pass our test!” As their words echoed around the cavern, a swirling cocoon of mist engulfed and suspended him in mid-air; every cell in his body screamed in pain. He thrashed around wildly, hoping to break through the cocoon, but the mist was like a cage made of steel. Just let go, a voice said soothingly. Concentrating, Finn could make out the dark figures’ sneering faces through the mist. He took a deep shuddering breath, held it for a few moments, then exhaled. He focused on his breathing and tried to ignore the white-hot pain. After a few moments, he thought he felt the mist circling a bit slower around him, the pain a bit lesser. “Yes!” He thought. Soon, the mist slowly faded away and he landed with a thump on the ground, panting and sweating.

The dark figures loomed over him, their sneers replaced by looks of disdain. “You win this time! But our pet dragon will stop you!” In the distance, there was a slithering sound and a huge reptilian-like shadow rushed straight towards Finn. He rolled away just as a column of flames erupted beside him. The dragon, with surprising agility, weaved around the cauldron and shot out another column of fire. Finn stepped sideways and he felt the tip of his hair be singed. He retreated into a corner and fumbled for the knife in his bag, his fingers trembling. The dragon opened its mouth wide to shoot another column of fire. Finn stepped out from the shadows and found himself right in front of the dragon. Panic seized him and all his instincts told him to freeze in terror. Desperately, he threw his knife at the dragon. The knife soared through the air in an elegant arc, its blade gleaming silver, and went straight into the dragon’s open mouth. The dragon froze, then wobbled for a few seconds before crashing on the ground with a heavy thud.

There was a moment of stunned silence. The witches disappeared in green flames. Then, still shaking, Finn limped to the cauldron and peered inside. There was a transparent, smooth liquid inside. “This must be the potion of immortality!” Finn thought, grinning. Carefully, he cupped his hands and sipped some of the liquid. Immediately, his body turned as light as a feather and he felt as though he was walking on clouds. In a burst of golden light, he burst out of the cavern and stood on one of the peaks of Huangshan, looking at the mist and clouds of the mountain day and night.

The Tale of the Lotus Peak

Singapore International School, Or, Sui Yan Rachel – 11

Lotus stared out of the window. She could barely see the snow drifting down in the mist.

She clutched the locket tightly in her chest. It was a present from her father, who disappeared from the village years ago.

Thinking about her father gave her strength and fond memories.

The Immortal Dragon

“Dad, tell me the story about the Immortal Dragon,” Lotus used to ask her father. “Tell me how she saved our mountain.” Her eyes sparkled in anticipation. “Fine,” his smile twinkled in the evening light.

“A long time ago,” Dad began, “a dragon was in charge of Huangshan, also known as the Misty mountain. No fruits grew there, and all flowers wilted. The dragon tried but nothing worked.”

“Then an idea arose. Her ancestors had passed on a golden scale, giving her power and health. She decided to place it on the tallest tree on top of the mountain. Huangshan became beautiful, covered with flowers with all shades of colour.”

“Why did the mountain turn grey?” Lotus cried out. She stared at the infamous Huangshan, which now seemed like an old photograph, faded and turned grey as each day passed.

Lotus’s father sighed and continued.

The Lost Scale

The dragon was overjoyed and so were the villagers as Huangshan provided them with ample food and shelter.

But rumour spread that if a person had the golden scale, he could live forever. Villains came in search of it. The dragon tried to hide it but she became weak after giving the scale to the mountain. A villain finally discovered its hiding place.

Using her final strength, the dragon snatched it away from the man and fell into a deep sleep. The scale disappeared since and Huangshan slowly lost its shine.

Lotus felt sorrowful. "We have to find the scale and make Huangshan magnificent again," she thought.

The Adventure

The next morning, her head was spinning with thoughts. She stared up at the mountain. It would be a risky adventure, but she was determined.

She left in the middle of the night as she did not want to alarm her neighbours. She opened the door with a soft creak and stepped outside. The moon was extra bright and she began her walk to the top of the mountain.

She walked for days till her legs were numb from cold and fatigue. But she heaved her legs against the icy snow and was finally near the top when she reached a dark forest.

The Encounter

She glimpsed at a dark silhouette. Her heartbeat was racing. She rubbed her eyes as she was not sure. Resting against a trunk was an old man who smiled weakly at her. He seemed hurt and breathed heavily.

Lotus felt an urge to turn away and continue her path to find the golden scale. The old man needed help. Desperately.

"Are you okay?" Lotus asked nervously.

"Water," he croaked.

Lotus gave the old man her water bottle and last piece of bread. She watched as he savoured every drop of water.

"What are you doing here?" Lotus asked.

"I am waiting for the God of Sun," he replied.

"The God of Sun?" Lotus asked. Her mood immediately brightened as the thought of a new story lifted her.

The old man smiled.

The God of Sun

“The God of Sun was devastated that the dragon had fallen into a deep sleep. His tears dropped down the sky and became rain for mankind. He recovered the golden scale and secured it in the heart of the mountain. The God of Mist then took over Huangshan which is why the mountain has lost its colour again.”

Lotus felt sad and her tears fell on the locket. A sharp light blinded her as a scale appeared on her cupped hands. She gasped. It was golden and radiated a sense of warmth.

“The golden scale!” The old man’s eyes widened.

The Final Twist

Before Lotus could come to her senses, a cold hand snatched it from her.

“Give it back!” she cried out but the shadow already disappeared into the mist.

Lotus collapsed on the floor. She looked at the old man with despair. But the old man was smiling, “You have finally arrived.”

This was when she noticed a man with a familiar face standing next to her.

“Dad?” Lotus asked.

He touched the locket which flourished into the golden scale.

“But,” Lotus hesitated, “I thought the man snatched the scale away ...”

“I knew my brother, the God of Mist, would take any opportunity to steal the scale,” Lotus’s father laughed, “your tears unlocked the locket and I created a distraction to fool him.”

Joy of Life

The old man took the scale and turned into the Immortal Dragon with a golden scale at the end of the tail. Lotus gasped. Their eyes met and the dragon was smiling at her. A rainbow colour flower grew from the frozen ground.

“Lotus, I am the God of Sun. Take this flower and plant it at the entrance to our village before the sunrise,” Dad instructed.

She was shocked.

“Lotus, I want you to know it takes courage and bravery to defend what you love,” he whispered.

Lotus nodded. She ran as fast as she could and planted the flower at the village just as the first ray of sunlight emerged.

Bravery

She waited but nothing happened. And suddenly it started to pour. “It must be the tears of joy!” exclaimed Lotus. The mist cleared and the mountain became a sea of red azalea, yellow ginkgo and green bamboo.

Neighbours peeked out of the doors. The villagers were elated. They were dancing and shouting in jubilation.

The tale of Lotus was repeated by generations for her bravery. The tallest peak in Huangshan was named the Lotus Peak to honour her so that her story can live and pass down forever.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains: Huangshan

Singapore International School, Poureshagh, Yasmin – 10

Holly woke up on her birthday, excited for the day that lay ahead. Winter had arrived, and the villages and mountains were covered with a soft layer of white snow. Holly had always been fascinated with the mountain that lay in front of their home and today she was going to climb it!

She quickly dressed and headed into the cosy kitchen for breakfast. Her mother was sitting by the fireplace preparing their breakfast. Her mother wished her 'Happy Birthday' and reminded Holly to put on warm clothes.

As Holly headed out the front door of their family's shack, she felt a sense of excitement building up inside her. After a long climb, she was close to the summit! Her eyes surveyed the mountain top which was covered with snow. Wait! There was a village! She was sure it wasn't there before, yet the houses and little temples looked real!

She had heard her mother talking of the many myths about Huangshan, and one mentioned a village on top of the mountains, but she had never believed them until now. Holly slowly walked to the nearest house and lightly tapped on the door just as the door was yanked open by an old woman who stepped out of the doorway and crashed into her. Holly helped the old lady up and steadied herself.

"Who are you?" Holly asked.

"I think the real question is who are *you*?" the old lady retorted.

"I'm Holly, and I trekked up here from my village!"

"So, you're an outsider?"

"Y-yes?" said Holly hesitantly.

"Now, now....," said the old lady, softening when she saw how concerned Holly looked, "let us properly introduce ourselves. I am Grandma Wang, and I live here in Yuxi Village. This place only reveals itself to those who are brave. When such a person comes along, we welcome them, and they can stay here for as long as they desire, as time stops for them here.

"Wow! Cool!" Holly liked the idea.

"Yes, but on one condition: you must help protect our secret."

"What secret?" Holly asked expectantly.

“Well, a century ago, a man came here carrying a golden ball. He told our ancestors to never tell any outsider about this object. He said if they ever revealed the secret, a great tragedy would befall us. He left but never came back.

“Where’s the ball?” Holly asked quietly.

“Close by, in a secret temple. You should know though that a dragon has recently been sighted near here. We’re afraid that our secret has been leaked to the outside world. And there was a prophecy issued by the Ancient Oracle at the Temple of Wisdom a few days before you got here, which stated:

*Safety and protection shall the next Outsider bring,
Neither Strength nor Power shall they need
To defeat the Dragon King.
Fear they shall not, to perform a good Deed
In order for Peace and Tranquillity to once again ring.*

“What!? I don’t *know* anything about dragons and the prophecy might not be referring to me!”

“It must be referring to you, dear, because you see, you are the only outsider to have come here in my lifetime.”

“But...”

Grandma Wong cut her off.

“Child,” she said, “You have nothing to fear, I shall help you. First come and rest at my house as it’s getting dark.”

The next day, Holly woke up ready to face the dragon. After a hearty breakfast, Grandma Wong gave her directions to the cave where the dragon was thought to be.

“Ok, don’t panic” Holly thought to herself as she slowly headed into the woods.

She arrived at the mouth of the cave just as a huge figure landed in front of her. The dragon had red scales, a pointed tail and long wings.

“Who are you?” it growled.

“M-my name is Holly” she said.

“Are you here to disturb my quest?” was the dragon’s next question.

Holly was petrified, but even *she* was surprised at this question.

“What quest? Aren’t you here to ruin that village over there?” Holly exclaimed in disbelief.

“Of course not! I’m just looking for an object that was stolen from me. My senses tell me it was brought here!”

“So you aren’t going to kill me or anything?” Holly stammered.

“I wouldn’t even dream of it, ... unless you get in my way!” the dragon said, menacingly.

“Oh..... Tell me more about this object of yours, maybe if I told the village, we could help you find it!”

“Ok, it went missing about a century ago, stolen by a treacherous man.”

“Do you know who he was? Did you catch a glimpse of the thief?”

“I did..... it was a young man. I searched for him for years and finally found him, old and infirm. Sadly he passed away as he confessed his treachery but without revealing the exact location of it. Why?”

“How big is this object and what does it look like?” Holly asked.

“A dragon egg, perfectly round and golden.” Said the Dragon.

Holly’s heart sank as she realised where the egg might be.

“I might know where your egg is. Come with me.”

Holly brought the dragon into the village and the villagers looked horrified.

“*What is this dragon doing here? It will destroy the village!*” Holly heard a few people whisper fearfully.

“This dragon lost its golden egg to a young man a century ago, and has been looking for it ever since. I think you know what I am talking about.....The Golden Ball is an egg!” she said. “I need your help to return the egg to the dragon”.

The surprised villagers stood discussing among themselves until Grandma Wong stepped forwards and said

“Dragon, what was wrongfully taken shall be returned.”

Having seen the kindness of the villagers, the Dragon decided to settle in the village and protect it from danger.

On her return home, Holly never said a word about her adventure in Huangshan...

A Lost Dragon in Huangshan

Singapore International School, Shi, Sophia Lan – 10

As she sat on a boulder, idly swinging her legs, Stella lamented her rotten day. She had been brutally wrenched from the fuzz of a pleasant daydream by the cantankerous Auntie Fu. Accused of stealing Auntie Fu's store of fruits and set upon by her hellhound of a guard dog, Stella ran as fast as her skinny legs would take her and ended up here: on this boulder, away from the village and completely lost in the dense mountain mist. The damp water droplets clogged her nostrils and obscured her sight. It made the cold early spring air almost tangible.

She could never understand why the villagers chose to live here. Huangshan was the most disagreeable mountain - always covered in fog, with outrageously dangerous cliffs, hardly anything good to eat (aside from the peaches and hawthorn in autumn) and it was always filled with tourists getting lost and getting in the way. Surely the celebrated dragon-slayers could set up a village somewhere else – Tai Shan looked rather lovely from the discarded holiday brochures Stella once found.

Stella kicked a pebble. Her mindless wandering had taken her to a cliff edge hidden by the swirling mists. According to the village elders' stories, dragons were vicious and cunning, with lime green hides and gigantic red eyes. Gusts of wind blew through the thinning mist. A strong blast caught her squarely in the back, revealing a sheer vertical drop and toppled her, arms flaying, into the chasm.

The world spun around her like a giant kaleidoscope. She could discern the odd scraggy shrub clinging onto the cliff face amongst the granite blur.

FLUMP!

Stella hit something very hard. Rubbing her bruised bottom, she got up to survey her surroundings.

"Oouch!" A voice snapped underneath her. Stella appeared to be on the head of a giant beast. The creature started moving backwards, fitting itself into a ginormous cave. Stella started at the sight of the creature. Scales? Check. Big eyes with snake-like slits? Check. Wings folded on the back? Check. This was a dragon alright.

"Well?" Asked the dragon. "Shouldn't you at least say thank you that I've saved your sorry life?" Stella gulped wordlessly. The cave was dark, but the dragon had glistening black and silver scales and the gigantic peacock-blue eyes were looking at her. The spikes on his back were a silvery grey and his claws and wings were jet black.

"Bad enough getting lost - I'm already a laughing stock- now I'm being used as a landing cushion by a weedy human. This is just great!" The dragon muttered to himself, curled into a ball and ignored her.

Feeling surprisingly empathetic, Stella appeased him with lavish gratitude. "Thank you, thank you dragon. You have the softest hide. I hardly felt a bump. I wasn't having a great day myself either."

The dragon, evidently mollified, unfurled to look at her. Stella recounted her mistreatment at the hands of Auntie Fu with some energetic re-enactment of her evading the dog and rapid hurtling down the mountain. By the time Stella looked up again, the dragon was looking distinctly sheepish. Stella's eyes slowly travelled from the fruit peels and husks and pips scattered all around the cave floor to the creature pointedly staring at the ceiling.

The dragon's stomach let out a huge grumble.

"You ate all of Auntie Fu's store of fruits!" Stella sighed. Auntie Fu's fruit store was supposed to keep for the entire village going through winter.

"Got lost. And really, really hungry. Soz."

The dragon lived on Everest, the snowy peaks hid them from detection.

"With helicopters, modern technology, weedy humans were crawling all over the mountain. Only last week, I had to pretend to be an icicle! Those climbers really tickled my toes when they scrambled across them."

"What are you doing here then?"

"We got fed up. We're migrating! I was heading to a nice cosy volcano in New Zealand before I got lost in the mist."

Stella decided to help the dragon find his family but it was a long wait until dusk. Stella passed the time by telling the dragon about Huangshan. The mountain was full of legends and the mists that covered the peaks were mystical and beautiful. Clear streams flowed into rivers at the base of the mountain and when the sun shone, splendid views could be seen. Green bamboo hid the rock pools where fish leapt and animals drank. With the sunset, the dying rays of the burning sun reflected off the dragon's shiny scales, turning them into stunning shades of pastel pink, red, purple and yellow. Finally the first stars appeared. The sky turned a deep midnight blue, scattered with handfuls of twinkling fairy lights. Stella stood, squinting slightly as she looked for the stars she wanted.

"There," she pointed.

With a final "thank you and goodbye" accompanied by a smoke ring, the dragon soared into the sky with a flurry of wings and a ripple of starlight. Stella watched his shadowy figure until it was no more than a smudge.

The seasons passed and it was again a drowsy spring afternoon. Stella sat on a boulder, idly swinging her legs, daydreaming.

WHUMF! Hard fingers and fists boxed her ears.

“You fruit-stealing rascal!”

Stella stared at Auntie Fu’s reddening cheeks and bulging eyes and felt a tingling sensation of déjà vu. Her face slowly stretched into a grin and with all her hard won experience, she wriggled her way out of Auntie Fu’s grip and bolted towards the cave beneath the cliff.

Tales From China's Magical Mountains

Singapore International School, Soden, Andrea Paul – 11

"Beneath the never-ending clouds and the misty fog, a shadow arose at the bottom of the Huangshan mountain. His body was concealed in the misty fog, as if he was a ghost wandering through the ancient depths of the mountain. What happened here, no one knows. The shadow's head suddenly emerged from the clouds. There was a grim look of determination. It looked as if he were pushing himself to climb the mountain. Checking his watch, that grim expression suddenly turned into a smile that spread across his face. Looking at his map, he stroked his pen across the halfway mark. He was halfway there. Suddenly, a flash of light blinded him, his arms began thrashing frantically all over the place. Within a split second, where the man stood, now a menacing 60 feet long dragon towered over him! The dragon's roar shook the whole mountain. Trees shook and the wind howled. The dragon roared in agony. It was only a moment of time before.... "

"Ok everyone! Time to go! Pack up your bags!" exclaimed Mum, with an enormous grin on her face.

"Aww!" complained Dad. "I was just in the middle of my story!"

"Yay!" hollered all the kids.

They all trudged over to the taxi stand and while holding their bulky luggage, hailed a taxi. Their eyes gazed over the enormous landscape of pine trees, birds chirping, tiny white blossoms and many more. Their mouths fell wide open at the tens of thousands of steps that led up to the hovering houses above the mountain. The two six-year olds, Alvin and Chippy, were overly excited, jumping around, eager to reach the top of the mountain, while Frank and Mary tried to calm them down by gesturing with her hand. Frank took one step on the stone steps and immediately bounced back in amazement. Dust spilled everywhere, as ancient as it was. Mary sighed in desperation,

"How could we possibly get up there?".

All of them plopped themselves down on some rocks nearby. After half an hour, no one had a single plan. The adults were getting a headache trying to devise a plan for so long whilst the kids just sat there. They were all in the middle of discussing something, when suddenly a crack in the stairs appeared. The noise was like a ton of bricks crashing into the ground! They looked up, horrified by the huge crack chasing them at breakneck speed. They shouted and screamed for help, but all their screams seemed muffled. Suddenly, arising from the chasm, was a 60 foot tall shadow! The whole

family staggered back in bewilderment, not noticing that many more shadows were emerging from the wide and deep chasm. Their eyes were peeled wide open, staring at the huge giants rising from the ground. A head popped out from above the clouds, then another and it appeared as hundreds of heads emerging from the clouds!

“Unbelievable!” the two kids mouthed, as all the dragons swooped down from the sky. Sitting on one dragon was a person dressed black cloaks, with a bird clinging onto his shoulder. He waved his hand in the air, and beckoned the dragon to swoop down. As the dragon landed, the Chi family could finally make out the person’s face. His eyebrows were brown and he had a slick moustache. His narrow eyes indicated that he was Chinese. Getting down from his dragon he waved his hand to them and shouted, “There are nine types of ancient dragons of the Qing Dynasty!” He gestured to the dragons now surrounding him. “These are the dragons of Ancient China! First is Elliot, the Celestial Dragon, the royal dragon who guards the doors to the royal palace on Huangshan mountain. Second is Skyler, the Spiritual Dragon, who controls the sky, wind and rain. Thirdly is Krane, the Dragon of Hidden Treasures, the one who creates and destroys treasure that can kill anyone with one touch. Fourthly is Shade and Ash, the Underground Dragons, actually twins from the Underworld itself! They control Death and even The Dead themselves. Fifthly are Whoosh and Zoom, the Winged Dragons, the oldest of all the dragons and the only kind with transparent wings. Six, are Hercules and Heracles, the Horned Dragons, considered to be the mightiest dragons with their incredible strength. Seventh are Draco and Ocard, the Coiling Dragons, specifically water dragons, designed to drench enemies in numerous amounts of water. Eight are Sun and Moon, the Yellow Dragons, believed to defeat their enemies with their words. Their knowledge and wisdom is insanely strong, but their physical appearance and strength are weak. Their words can not only light up a person’s day, but they can also destroy as well. Ninth are Saphira, Eragon, Leviathan, and Pendragon, the Dragon Kings, rulers of Huangshan mountain. Saphira, rules the North. Eragon, rules the South, Leviathan, rules the East whilst Pendragon rules the West. These nine types of dragons are the only ones remaining in the whole world!” Most of the Chi family seemed uninterested, but the four year olds, Alvin and Chippy, were totally attentive, with their eyes and mouths hanging wide open, staring at the magnificent sight of the monstrous beauty of the dragons. One of the dragons surged forward as the man spoke “I am Li Bai, a poet since 724 A.D! My brother is Du Fu. I hear that you want to get up the mountain? Hop on!” He beckoned for the Chi family to follow him. They all hopped on to one of his dragons and then swooped up into the sky. Frank could feel the gush of air brushing against his coat, and while whistling a tune of Humpty Dumpty, they disappeared into the thick, harsh winds. As they got higher up the mountain, everyone started shivering uncontrollably as the wind got colder. At last, they made it to the top of the mountain. The Chi family thanked Li Bai repeatedly, before searching for their rented house.

The Dragons of Huangshan

Singapore International School, Yap, Sierra – 11

“Dad! Dad! Read me a bedtime story! Please?” I cried as I climbed into bed.

Dad checked his watch. “Okay, Emma. Choose a quick one, please.”

I got out of bed and skimmed through the titles on my bookshelf. Geronimo Stilton? No. Diary Of A Wimpy Kid? No. A gleaming spot of gold caught my attention. Bursting with curiosity I chose The Dragons Of Huangshan. I remember Ms. Lee teaching us about Huangshan, a mountain in China, full of mysteries.

This could be interesting, I thought to myself. Satisfied with my choice, I handed the book to dad and allowed our daily routine to begin...

“Once upon a time, in a faraway land, lived two dragons.” Dad read, in his clear, baritone voice. He continued, “With yellow almond shaped eyes, sharp teeth and claws, and red scales, these dragons were not your typical dragons. They lived at the peak of Huangshan. They weren’t always bad. Just a few decades back, they were possessed by an evil witch. She cast a spell on them, and only one, one act could break it. That person must be smart, strong, loyal and kind. That person was Mary. She lived at the bottom of Huangshan, in a small village built on stilts. Her life was a complicated mix of ordinary home and normal school, incessant food shortages and the constant presence of Japanese soldiers,”

“Dad, why was there Japanese soldiers in CHINA?” I asked.

“Mary must have lived during World War II. During that time, the Japanese occupied parts of China,” Dad explained, before continuing to read the book, “ One day, while at school, a catastrophic landslide hit. It buried entire village in mud and rocks. Mary and her mother were the only survivors. There was nothing left. They had nothing. To seek greener pasture, Mary decided to climb the Huangshan Mountain. Reluctantly, her mother followed. Halfway through their arduous uphill hike, Mary’s frail mother got tired.

‘Mary! We need to stop! I’m exhausted. We need to find a safe spot before sunset,’ Mary’s mother panted.

‘Okay mum, just a little more. It is not safe here. Just grab onto my shoulder. I’ll support you along the way,’ Mary replied with a gentle determination.

Slowly but surely, Mary and her mother started to climb higher and higher.”

“But they are heading in the direction of the dragon’s den, then!” I interrupted.

"Maybe she is, maybe she isn't. Don't interrupt. Listen to the story and you won't have to ask so many questions," Dad replied, with a hint of annoyance in his voice. "Mary's eyes darted back and forth as she became quietly desperate, looking for a place to spend the night, when she spotted a little cave. Perfect! This is where mom and I can sleep tonight! Mary thought. They stepped into the cave. Mary laid her mother down and scurried to gather some leaves and twigs to make her mother a cushioned resting area. Just then, Mary heard a low grumble that echoed out, from deep inside the cave. She stole a quick look behind her, looking out for any anomaly."

At that juncture, I felt the sensation of lightness, as if my spirit was being lifted out of my body. A faint and dreamy sound of the harp was heard deep in my consciousness. In a swift white flash, my body was transported to the Huangshan Mountain. I magically took over Mary's place and her character in the story.

My mother and I got comfortable. Just as we were about to rest, I found a small spike on the floor. Hmm, that's not right. The color is red... it can't be the quills of a porcupine or an echidna. What is this? I thought. For the first time since we stepped into the cave, I had the chance to take a good look at the environment. Sparkly colorful stones stuck on the uneven ceiling, steam rising from what looked like a pond, with a bubbling surface that seemed at boiling point, and that pungent stench, like fermenting seafood, stunk my nose and caused my eyes to water. It was amazing. Before I could wipe the tear off my eyes, I heard what sounded like a long didgeridoo exhaling short spurts of breaths. In no time, a pair of beady yellow eyes glared at me. I was flabbergasted. It's a... DRAGON?!?

I instinctively ran toward my tired mother as I knew she could barely move. Out of nowhere, another dragon emerged from the darkness. And a cloud of glittery gas choked me as if drawing air out of my lungs. I tried hard to wave off the fog of gas obstructing my sight. From the corner of my eye, I saw the dragons inching closer to my mother.

"Shoo... Shoo!" I gestured and screamed frantically, trying to confuse the dragons. Distraction was the only way I knew how, to keep the dragons away from mother. But it was two against one, and one dragon was creeping extremely close to mother. I panicked. Oh no, you don't! Time seemed to have stopped in my favor and in aid of my action. In double quick time, I lunged forward just as one of the dragons opened its mouth homing in on mother. An abrupt burst of fairy dust exploded in thin air and just like that, the spell was broken.

The dragons retreated with the endearing sound of a whimper. I got it! Filial Piety broke the spell! I was about to sacrifice my life to protect my mother.

I gasped. Soaked in sweat, I awoke to the sound of the door knob clicking and heard the fading sound of dad's footsteps. The Dragons of Huangshan on my bedside table.

Legend of the Phoenix Knight

Singapore International School, Zhong, Zhuo Ning Elizabeth – 12

Guided by a lit candle, Hannah scoured the lost, ancient library of Huangshan for artifacts, or perhaps something to read. She passed the 'History' section, and as if by fate, a book fell open in front of her. But it wasn't just any book, it was a collection of all of China's tales, legends and myths. When it fell, it flipped to a page with one of the oldest legends, 'The Legend of the Phoenix Knight'. Hannah took a seat on a somewhat rustic stool, thinking that it wouldn't break. Then, she started immersing herself in the old legend.....

"Ming Hua, wait for me!" Lee exclaimed.

"Oh fine," Ming Hua groaned, "but this will be the last time I wait for you. Why can't you just go faster?"

"I'm already going my fastest! Why can't YOU just go slower?! Anyways, I just came to tell you that Wang is finally back!" Lee panted excitedly.

"Wang?! As in the Dragon Warrior Wang?! He hardly ever visits his hometown!"

"I know! But he's visiting now!"

Ming Hua was shocked. The Dragon Warrior was always busy! He rarely came to visit his friends and family, because he was always out protecting the heavens, saving people, making sure the Timefire was always safe, keeping evil spirits away and all the other things. But the strange thing was, the second she saw the Dragon Warrior, she felt a strange tingling sensation and a voice, almost like it was telling her to do something. But she suppressed the feeling, and went to meet her idol, the Dragon Warrior.

Many fortnights had passed, and after the Dragon Warrior departed, Ming Hua still felt the tingle and heard the voice. So, she welled up her courage and decided to try and decipher the message the voice was sending. She walked to the garden, and meditated. As she concentrated on the voice even more, she could see faded pictures becoming clearer, and the voice saying something. She could see flashes of the Timefire, the fire that had the ability to mess with time, and a phoenix. But this phoenix was different. Instead of looking like a free spirit, it looked.....chained. Imprisoned, perhaps. Then the voice spoke, ominously: 'Ming Hua..... Phoenix..... Library..... Dragon Warrior.....' Then, she saw a library. A library which seemed quite familiar. Then it clicked. It was the Huangshan library, where the Timefire was supposedly stashed. So then she made the bold decision to go and find out what the pictures meant. Although she still pondered what the Dragon Warrior had to do with all this, she waited until night and started trekking the path to the secluded library.

After a day's hike, she stopped to eat at a small oasis. She then realised that all she had left in her satchel was a small portrait, an apple and a compass. She thought she could not survive long enough to see the mystical library, as the path still kept on going. Then, she barely noticed a sign, hidden in

the colour of the tree. It said that she had reached the library, and if she kept on following the path, she would eventually end up dead. So she looked around, trying to find the library's location. But she was too tired, and so she slept under the shade of a pear tree.

The next morning, she awoke to see that nothing had changed, except that she was now well rested. She took a bite of her apple, and started looking. She had looked for an hour, and by then, she had finished her apple. She had given up, and leaned on a rock, staring at the sky.

RUMBLE! The boulder started moving, and soon enough, Ming Hua was falling down a staircase. After she hit the bottom of the staircase she got up, and looked around.

"Woah....." She gasped. The library was humongous, and the shelves of books spiraled up into the never-ending ceiling. Just as she started to look around, she heard footsteps, and quickly hid behind a bookshelf. The footsteps became louder, and someone had stepped into the room. Ming Hua was speechless. It was the Dragon Warrior, but instead of a kind-hearted smile, the look on his face was a cold and cruel stare. As he walked through the library, so did Ming Hua. She was determined to find out what was going on. Then, the Dragon Warrior stopped. He looked around, barely missing Ming Hua, and opened a door that led to a secret passageway. As soon as he was out of sight, the door started closing and Ming Hua rushed into the tunnel. She followed the Dragon Warrior to a chamber, where she saw the trapped Phoenix, and the Timefire.....

A Tale from China's Magical Mountain

St Joseph's Primary School, Bo, Pak Kiu – 11

This is a legend about how the Yellow Mountain, a famous landmark, in China was formed. A long time ago, in ancient China, there were five magical and powerful dragons which were ordered by the Gods in heaven to protect a small kingdom called Chun, which was ruled by a kind and thoughtful king named Kung Lau. The dragons lived in Chun's Dragon Palace.

Kung Lau loved his people. He gave money to poor people in his kingdom, built many schools to children for study and enforced many different benevolent policies. He was also very intelligent leader. He would be patience to listen to the advice and comments of his officers to seek different perspectives before enforcing a law or making decision. He always made wise and correct decisions whatever the problems were complex. He always knew who committed a crime in a trial when there was a crime. Once, there were two farmers come to him to accuse each other stealing his cow. King Kung Law said, "If we are unable to determine who is the thief, we kill the cow and eat it now." The owner of the cow said immediately, "No, please. This is my only cow I have." Then, King Kung Law knew who was the thief and asked his officer to catch the thief and sent him to jail. All of his people were very appreciated and loved him.

The dragons each had a special power. Their scales were also in different colours of the rainbow. The colours were red, blue, pink, green and yellow. The red dragon was the dragon of war. He made the kingdom win countless battles for extra land. The blue dragon was the dragon of water. She controlled the water and no floods coming to the kingdom. The pink dragon was the dragon of harvest. She protected the land and provided sufficient nutrition to the land for farming to produce enough food to people. The green dragon was the dragon of fortune. He administered and managed the wealth and money of the kingdom. Finally, the last but the least, the yellow dragon was the dragon of landscape. He created valleys and pathways so that resources could be delivered throughout the kingdom.

In the north of the Kingdom of Chun, there was a kingdom called Cho. The king of Cho was brutal and autocratic. He did not listen to the comments and advice from his officers. He always seize the money and land from his people. He unleashed horrible tortures and killed the good officers and their family members whose advice was violate with his decision. His people hated him very much. Some of his people and officers even escaped from the king's cruelty and moved to Kingdom of Chun to seek a better life.

One day, the King of a kingdom called Cho saw the kingdom of Chun became stronger and stronger, richer and richer. He thought that Chun has become a threat to his kingdom and also desired to get their land. He immediately ordered an army of fifty thousand men to invade the kingdom of Chun. Cho's army took was mostly flat ground, they would arrive in two weeks. The king of Chun was simply terrified when he heard the news from soldiers as he didn't have enough men to fight back!

He immediately prayed with the Yellow Dragon and said, “ Yellow Dragon, we are in danger now. Cho’s army of fifty thousand is coming to seize our land and kill my people, Please help!” The Yellow Dragon had an idea. He decided to make a mountain so long and lofty that it would take the army at least five months to arrive Chun’s land.

The Yellow Dragon roared loudly with delight, “Ah ha!” and he quickly flew outside from Chun’s Dragon Palace to the place where the ground was completely flat. He slashed and shaped with his claws. Soon, he had created a series of high mountains and extremely long pathways. A year later, the army of Cho arrived but they were extremely tired and hungry after walking over mountains and mountains for a year with almost nothing to eat since they only had two tons of food for fifty thousand soldiers.

Kung Lau seized this chance to unleash a full attack on the army. They killed thirty thousand of Cho’s army, and the General along with the remaining of the soldiers surrendered.

When the people knew that they won the war, they were very happy and relieved that they were safe. They partied all night and went to the Dragon Palace to give offerings to the Dragons. Since then, all the Chun’s people named that mountain created by Yellow Dragan as the “Yellow Mountain”.

Nowadays, it has become a beautiful landmark of China which over thousands of tourists have gone to see its fabulous beauty. This landmark still has many legends that are fascinating and make us wonder how the Yellow Mountain was truly created and how it got its name.

The Extraordinary Adventures at Huangshan

St Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Chak Yan Ian – 10

Long ago in Anhui province of China, there was an outbreak of a deadly virus. Thousands of citizens suffered from incurable disease and many others lost their beloved ones. There lived a ruler called Emperor Yan. His name “Yan” means “Benevolence”, he was indeed a kind-hearted and courageous ruler. He decided to find medicine for his people at the most exotic, mountainous area in the province, Huangshan.

Huangshan was a legendary place, where ancient Chinese Emperor Xuanyuan (HuangDi) once practiced Alchemy there. He carried out secretive experiments that perfected metals into gold; the precious element was then transmuted into its superior form as “medicine for prolonged life”. Xuanyuan succeed in gaining prolonged life and became one of the Chinese Gods thereafter. The “medicine for prolonged life” was left at the Lotus Peak, a summit among the seventy-two peaks of the mountain range.

The Emperor and his men trekked along the trails, lumbered through the forest and clambered up the mountains for ten days. They trudged wearily without having a rest despite everyone was exhausted. In the middle of nowhere, the Emperor noticed a pointy rock upright. It looked like a man in a cloak holding up a hand in a didactic stance. “Look! We have arrived at the Immortal Pointing the Way Stone.”, “Legend says that it’s the place where ...” To his dismay, a strong man in copper brown skin appeared in front of them “Gen... Genie... The mountain Genie!” the Emperor came breathless with excitement and jumped up and down. “I’m sure he could give us a helping hand.” The team was exhilarated, they scuttled towards the Genie.

The Genie gazed at them as if a know-it-all, “I know why you are here, my dear friends. Before I show you the way to the Lotus Peak, help me to find the five dwarves, namely Gold, Wood, Water, Fire, Eart0h”, “They’re eating up the pine trees and trying to erode the magnificent granite peaks. You must stop them.” The Genie vanished in the seas of cloud mysteriously. The Emperor rubbed his eyes to get a clearer vision, but he could only see a statue, which resembled the face of the Genie, with one finger pointing to the east. The Genie sent five golden dragons to help Emperor Yan and his men. Without hesitation, the heroes rode on the golden dragons, jumped off from the cliff and glided high in the sky. The men were all shrieking with delight when they had a bird’s eye view of the seas of cloud beneath their feet. The scenery was picturesque with all the hues of blue and silver in the sky, the cloud was as crystalline as sea water that dazzled under the moonlight, the rippling lines of waves making Huangshan a wonderful sight.

In a distance, they could see the Pen Holder Peaks, where each dwarf dwelled at one of its five distinct summits. “I, Emperor Yan, come for the dwarves!” His voice roared out in the darkness, with

an echo. He roared out their names “Gold”, “Wood”, “Water”, “Fire” and “Earth”. Behind the echoes there came some tiny giggling sound. The tiny giggles grew to some shout of laughter. The frisky dwarves tip-toed forward and met the Emperor. Emperor Yan explained everything to the dwarves patiently, he made them promised not to damage the vegetation and erode the landscape anymore. The dwarves, however, requested the royal seal from the Emperor. The quick-witted Emperor commanded his men to made five mini-seals for the teeny creatures.

The Genie was so amazed when Emperor Yan returned to “the Immortal Pointing the Way Stone”. In addition to those golden dragons, Genie gave a magnificent sword to the Emperor. “Keep this Xuanyuan sword, it is the most precious weapon from the ancient Emperor Xuanyuan.” “You might need it in your mission for the medicine.”

The heroes set off their voyage to the Lotus Peak, riding on the back of the golden dragons again. They passed by the Rock Monkey Gazing the Sea, it hides a fairy tale about a bride who abandoned her bridegroom after she had discovered he was a monkey. The monkey bridegroom sat mournfully atop the Huangshan, waiting for his bride. They also passed by the Flying Over Rock, Turtle Rock and many more... all with legendary myths behind.

They arrived at the Lotus Peak, where the guardian creature was waiting for them, it was a Fenghuang (Phoenix). It squawked in protest when the Emperor and his dragon were hovering nearer and nearer the peak. When the Emperor’s men saw the gigantic bird, they all broke out in cold sweat and tried to ran for their lives. The creature gave chase.

The indignant creature opened its huge mouth and was trying to gulp Emperor Yan down. The Emperor saw its fangs, but he remained composed. Instead of stabbing the Phoenix with his Xuanyuan sword, Emperor Yan closed his eyes tightly. He whimpered to the Phoenix “I love my country, so does you love the Lotus Peak. I want to save my people with the medicine, I beseech your mercy, Fenghuang.” The Emperor was willing to scarify himself for his people only if the Phoenix could give way for the medicine. The Phoenix screeched at the Emperor at the top of its lungs. At that time, the lightning crackled as it flashed across the darkening sky, the thunder rumbled in the distance as the wind grew stronger. The summit of the Lotus Peak cracked open, a dazzling pearl glimmered atop the apex. “Look! It’s the medicine of prolonged life!” the Emperor’s men clamored. Without hesitation, the golden dragon swopped up the pearl in its hand.

The people of the country soon heard the good news. Jubilant crowds ran to the streets to celebrate the victory of Emperor Yan. The air in the country was again filled with much liveliness and laughter. With the “medicine of prolonged life”, the people lived healthily and happily ever after.

Chang's Epic Adventure

St Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Chi Him Kaden – 9

Once upon a time, there was a poor fisherman named Chang. He lived in a village in China. One day, while he was fishing, he noticed a glass bottle bobbing up and down in the river. He wanted to know what was inside the bottle, so he picked up the bottle and twisted off the cork. A map was inside it. It was not an ordinary map, it was a treasure map! When he got home, he discussed with his family whether he should go on a trip to find the treasure. After a brief discussion, Chang decided to go with his friend Tai, on an adventure to find the treasure.

First, they need to go in a cave, which was far from their village. A giant was awaiting them at the cave's entrance. They were astonished because they don't even know giants existed. The moment, the giant saw them, the giant's eyes turned bright red. Suddenly, the whole world stopped. They couldn't move. The giant started to talk, "You pesky humans shouldn't interfere in our business. I must kill you." After the giant spoke, he caught Chang in his hands, punched Chang with his fists and threw him in the air. Luckily, Chang landed in the river so he wasn't hurt. The giant did the same with Tai. However, Tai wasn't so lucky. He landed on a stone and broke his leg. Chang swam to safety then dragged Tai under a tree. Chang told Tai to go back to the village so he can heal his broken leg. Tai asked, "How will you defeat the giant?" "I will defeat him by my dagger" After listening that Chang had a way to defeat the giant, Tai left. Chang took out his dagger and tried to stab the giant but the giant dodged it. Even for such a big giant, he was pretty fast. He dodged all of Chang's attacks. Chang tried to use a bow to shoot him. Surprisingly, that worked! Blood, was now flowing down from his ankles. He growled in pain. "Bye, humans. I will kill you next time." The giant shouted. After shouting, the giant disappeared.

Chang walked into the cave and found a small room. A portal was in the middle of the room. Chang jumped in the portal and was teleported to a mountain. As stated by the map, He had to go around the mountain and go to a mansion but a dragon was on top of the mountain. It was no other than the rare fire-breathing dragon. He must fight it because the moment he teleported to the mountain the dragon started to breathe fire. Chang tried to stab it but when he approached it, it flew away. He even tried to shoot it but it simply dodged the arrow. He finally shot the dragon, the arrow pierced the dragon's wings so the dragon couldn't fly again. Chang immediately ran to the dragon and started to stab it's hide. The dragon tried to breathe fire but was too painful to do anything. Unexpectedly, a golden light shone around the dragon. Chang noticed that the dragon's wounds were slowly closing up. The dragon was healing itself! If Chang wanted to go to the mansion, he must slay the dragon before it fully recovered or else he wouldn't stand a chance against the dragon. He must think of a strategy. Just as he thought of strategy, his dagger turned into a diamond sword and his bow turned into a crossbow. Chang tried to shoot the dragon. This time, the arrow flew towards it at an incredible speed, even the dragon could not dodge such a shot. The dragon fell to the ground and started to

breathe fire at Chang. Fortunately, the fire only scorched his shirt and didn't actually hurt Chang. However, Chang pretended to be dead in the hope of finding an opportunity to slay the dragon. When the dragon noticed Chang, who was lying on the ground, it walked towards Chang then sniffed him to check if he was really dead. Just as the dragon approached Chang, he saw a cross on the dragon's head. He thought that the cross must be its weakness so he stabbed the dragon's head with his diamond sword. As a result, the dragon turned into dust and Chang continued on his journey to the mansion.

After Chang arrived at the mansion, he did not find any treasure. However, he saw that an old wizard was waiting for him. When the wizard saw Chang, he said, "Mister Chang, you are quite impressive, as you defeated my giant and my dragon. I have to reward you with a wish." "What will you want?" The wizard asked. "I want a box of gold." Chang replied. Abruptly, a box appeared on Chang's hands. "Bye, Chang! I will teleport you to your house now." Then, Chang suddenly appeared at his house. He used the gold to make his family rich and they lived happily ever after.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Kin Ting – 9

Breathtakingly beautiful mountains in China, such as Mount Taishan, Yellow Mountain, Mount Lushan and Mount Emei are renowned, with their sharp peaks, indigenous villages and floating clouds. The names of these mesmerizing mountains often commemorate people and things that happened in the past and each mountain has its different tales and stories. This time, let me introduce the legend of one of my favorites— Five Fingers Mountain.

Five Fingers Mountain is a symbol of Hainan Island, which is located in the middle part of Hainan. In the past, it was more commonly known as “Nashan”, but how was it coined the very captivating name of “Five Fingers Mountain”? According to the legend, there was a very touching and admirable story behind this seemingly hilarious name.

A long, long time ago, there was a Demon King of an evil mountain, who would eat people to restore its evil power. It often led a gang of Demons to the villages to do evil deeds towards the villagers, such as damaging their homes, and, in more than one occasion, inundate the fields by damaging the river banks. Terrified of the nightmare’s uninvited attacks, the villagers constantly lived under stress and fright.

However, there was a courageous girl called Xiao Mei who refused to bow to the horror. Living in a small village on the west of that evil mountain, Xiao Mei practised her sword skills daily to prepare for the worst. One unfortunate afternoon, her father was captured by a vicious Demon King to fill its insatiable hunger. The death of her father was indescribably agonising to Xiao Mei, but she decided to strive at the same time to heal her wounds and dry the tears of grief from the pain of bereavement. Vowing to avenge for his father and the other victims, she practised to fight with her sword in the backyard from day and night until she lost consciousness from exhaustion.

One day, when Xiao Mei was half asleep from her taxing work in the farm, she felt a shadow next to her bed and when she tried to open her eyes, she found a benevolent looking elderly man with beard as white as snow. “Little girl, I understand that you miss your father much, and you have to take revenge on the Demon King, and kill it, so that the villagers can get rid of the difficult time,” the old man said kindly, his voice echoing in the room. “What should I do?” sighed Xiao Mei. “I only can fight with a sword. With my ordinary power in comparison to the Demon King’s destructive ones, there is no way I can defeat it,”. “Now I will give you the power of lifting up a mountain and the advanced skills of fighting with a sword,” the old man replied with a determined yet warm smile. “Go to fight the Demon King bravely, little girl. I believe you can defeat the Demon King for you father and the villagers.”

After that, the old man tapped on Xiao Mei’s shoulder, and gave her a book about the strategy for achieving success for fighting. When Xiao Mei opened her eyes, she was full of beans and when she blinked again, the wise old man disappeared into thin air. She took that book with her and practised very hard every day. Finally, she can fight with the sword proficiently and to perfection.

Equipping herself with a battle suit which was sewn by her relatives and a sharp sword, Xiao Mei visited her father’s tombstone to ask for his blessing. Then she put away her sadness and farewelled everybody before leaving the village and went straight to the evil mountain.

When she ran up the evil mountain, a gang of Demons and ghosts lurked out from the black mist. Xiao Mei grabbed the sword and rushed towards them as fast as a cheetah, destroying them utterly with her accurate and powerful slashes. At the top of the evil mountain, that Demon King had been sitting on his throne and waiting for the tiny warrior. "I was just worrying about nothing to eat and here you come! Hah! Hah!" the Demon King laughed loudly, his wicked laughter thundered on the desolate mountain.

"Stop talking nonsense, I am here to avenge my father and the villagers who have been eaten by you. Let me kill you!" Xiao Mei yelled angrily, her eyes filled with the flame of determination.

Xiao Mei dashed towards the Demon King with her sword. She found she had become much stronger and taller in comparison to her old self. She jumped onto the Demon King's body and kicked its chest, then she used her sword to punch through its neck and deep down to its throat. It was so painful that the Demon King used its both paws to grab its neck and screamed loudly, "Ouch!" The green blood gushed out from the gaping wound of its throat immediately. At the same time, the Demon King grabbed Xiao Mei's foot and pulled her down to bury with it together under the soil. When the mist and dirt of the battle cleared, the peak looked as if it had not experienced the haunting fight. The only evidence were the five tiny fingers of Xiao Mei's exposed from the ground.

After that, whenever the villagers saw the five sharp stones like fingers on the evil mountain, they would recall Xiao Mei. In order to commemorate and advocate her admirable personality, people started calling it "Five Fingers Mountain".

With the mysterious tale of this mountain, and the picturesque scenery, a lot of tourists from all over the world are attracted to visit this glorious mountain and take photos there, making it one of the most popular tourist attractions in China.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Choi, Cheuk Fun – 10

Last Sunday night, I was awoken by some rumbling noise coming from the hallway. I went out and saw a glowing door that had a label on it asking me to go inside. Although being very frightened, I still went through the door as I was so curious to know what was inside.

After that, I found myself high up in the sky. Then, I saw an eagle beside me. The eagle squeaked, picked me up and offered me a flight. It then flew to a mountain with a gorgeous view. And I saw an old man standing there, looking very serious. He told me that this mountain was the magical mountain that tales were describing about. It was known as Huangshan.

He brought me to his cabin and he told me a tale about this famous and magical mountain.

In ancient times, Huangshan was known as Yishan after its blue-black rock. In 747, the name was changed by the legendary Huandi imperial order to Huangshan. The mountain was beautiful, with their sharp peaks, raised villages and floating clouds. But all of these were ruined by a gigantic dragon, the dragon kept hurting creatures living there.

After listening to the tale, the old man then gave me a wand and he pointed to the cave, where the dragon was living, on the map. Then, I followed the trail, it was a mysterious mountain where everything seems to be so magical. While seeing the blue trees and leaves rising from the ground, some fish were flying happily in the sky.

When I arrived at the cave of the mountain, I saw a gigantic dragon attacking a snake, it roared, "Where is my baby dragon?" the dragon busted a fire ball, the snake cannot move and became very weak. I was scared and tried to escape but the dragon spotted me before I could do anything. The dragon tried to step on me but it missed. I went to hide behind a tree. Luckily, I found some sharp wood nearby and tried to use it as a sword to attack the dragon but it didn't work. Suddenly, I remembered the wand that the old man gave me, I pointed the wand to the dragon and casted a spell, the dragon was defeated and was sent to another dimension. The dragon was gone and the mountain was peaceful again.

An old man appeared, he was just like the one I met before. He turned out to be a wizard. After the old man brought me to a safe place, he told me that in order to go home, I had to collect 3 lilies and 2 roses for him to make a magical portal to teleport back home. After I collected them, I went back to the cabin and made the portal. The old man said some magic spells and teleported me back to my home.

What an interesting adventure to Huangshan!

Quest for the Summit

St Joseph's Primary School, Choi, Pui Hin Adrian – 10

Long ago, there were two young men who loved martial arts, Wong and Shan. They lived in a village near the most famous mountain in China, Huangshan. One day, they heard a myth that there was an ancient book called “Summit” which contained the secrets of top martial arts skills. It was hidden in the Lotus Peak, the highest peak of the enormous Huangshan. Keen to improve their martial arts skills, Wong and Shan were determined to hunt for this book.

The next day, they eagerly set off on this magical adventure, not knowing what dangers lay ahead. After one hour of clambering up the humongous Huangshan, they were getting tired.

“How long do we still need to climb up? I am exhausted!” complained Wong.

“Lotus Peak is extremely high, so we still have a long way to go,” Shan just answered flatly.

Suddenly, there was a brushing sound coming from the bushes. “Could.....could it be the tiger?” Wong asked, his voice trembling. Shan bravely cleared the bushes and a tiny shadow soared to the sapphire blue sky.

“Arrgh!” shrieked Wong.

“Could you just calm down, Wong? It’s just a pheasant!” shouted Shan.

“But look, the pheasants we normally see have red and orange feathers, but this one is white with black strips!” said Wong.

“Then what should we call it?” asked Shan.

“Since it had white feathers, let’s call it the silver pheasant!” Wong answered.

“Good idea!” agreed Shan, and they continued climbing up the massive Huangshan.

As they walked, the sound of water drew near. Soon, it became a thunderous roar. When they found the source of the sound, they discovered that they were at a waterfall. Shan checked the map his father gave him, and he realized they were now at the legendary Nine Dragon Waterfall. It leapt down from the cliff, falling like silk embroidered with diamonds. Wong and Shan could only gape in awe in front of this magnificent view.

Out of the blue, “WHOOSH!”, a gigantic dragon leapt out of the water and growled, “How dare you invade my territory!”. The ferocious dragon then squirted out a powerful stream of water towards them but missed but a few inches.

“Looks like we could only fight it,” said Wong, clenching his sword with his two hands and dashed towards it. The dragon squirted another jet towards Wong but he skillfully jumped out of the way and wielded his sword with all his might, slicing its neck with one clean stroke.

“Kaboom!” the dragon tumbled down and with a much weaker voice, it asked, “Where are you going next, and why?”

“We are going to the Lotus Peak to find the “Summit” so we can improve our martial arts skills.” Shan answered.

“Good, now you could go,” the dragon said. “Although you have defeated me, there would be another challenge before you can lay your hands on the sacred book.” They thanked the dragon and continued on their journey.

“Shan, how much longer do we still have to climb? My legs are hurting so much!” groaned Wong.

“Quit complaining and just walk! If you do not want to continue, you can go back, but I won’t share the “Summit” with you!” Shan replied curtly.

“Fine, I will climb, I will climb!” answered a tired and grumpy Wong.

Two hours later, they were getting nearer to their destination.

“Look! We are passing through the sea of clouds and the sun is setting, how beautiful is this?” exclaimed Wong.

“Oh yes indeed, it is magical, it’s as if we are in a wonderland!” praised Shan.

With heavy legs, they clambered up to the Lotus Peak.

“Finally! We climbed up on to the top of Huangshan! I thought it would take forever!” said Wong, breathing a sigh of relief.

“Stop talking and let’s find the ‘Summit’!” Shan yelled.

“I found it already, it is over there on a stone!” Wong answered with a smirk.

He walked towards it, and as he was about to pick up the treasure, the stone shook violently and turned into a 10-foot granite monster! With a startled expression, they immediately drew out their swords.

“I am the guardian of the ‘Summit’, if you want it, you will have to beat me first!” the monster said.

Without hesitation, the two young men swiftly slashed their swords to the granite monster.....“CLANG!!” their swords bounced off, not hurting the monster at all.

“Shan, the granite is too hard, we can’t use our swords!” Wong said.

“Then what should we use? Our bare fists?” Shan responded in a frustrated voice. He turned to look at Wong, only to see that the granite monster shooting a series of rocks towards Wong.

“Wong! Be careful!” yelled Shan.

“Arrgh!” yelled Wong.

“Are you hurt?” asked Shan.

“It’s ok, just some grazes,” replied Wong, “we can’t give up having climbed all the way to the top, let’s defeat this monster with our secret weapon!”

Wong and Shan then unleashed the “supersonic punch”, and the granite monster was hit hundreds of punches in one second. The granite monster had no answer to the supersonic punch and fell down to the floor with a big thump.

“Stop! You two were the best I have faced. You have my approval and you can take the ‘Summit’, there you go.” the granite monster handed over the book.

Wong and Shan cheered, “Hurray! We finally did it!” and they grinned from ear to ear.

After years of practice based on the teachings of the “Summit”, Wong and Shan became masters in martial arts. Many people heard their reputation and went to Huangshan to become their apprentices.

“Wong, we have so many apprentices now, what shall we call our sect?” asked Shan. Wong thought for a few moments, then said:

“Let’s call it.....the Summit Sect.”

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Choi, Tsz Yin – 9

Once upon a time, a boy named Ching lived with his family in a shabby hut in a small village. One year, locusts destroyed the harvest. The locust invasion caused the villagers immense suffering and widespread starvation. There was a tale that a hidden treasure in the fabled “Challenge Mountain” had a miracle power to save the village, but the mountain was so dangerous. Pained by the events, Ching set forth to find the treasure. Ching knew that finding the treasure is no small task and is determined to succeed even if it means sacrificing himself. Before the journey, Ching’s father gave him a golden disc as a good luck blessing.

After an arduous journey, Ching found himself on the foothills just below “Challenge Mountain”. From a distance, Ching’s sight was obscured by the misty veil that cloaked the mountain. As he neared the entrance and all, he could see the white pillowy snow gently covering every nook and cranny of the mountain. As he inched forward, he could see the cliffs starting to pierce through the snow. The cliffs were sharp and jagged. It was almost like they resembled the pointed spears of great warriors. Ching stood in awe. At that moment, he was taken aback by the breathtaking surroundings because it was such a stark contrast from his rundown village.

As he started his ascent, the cool air filled his lungs. It was as if a snake was coiling itself around him. He had hoped that the feeling would subside, but it didn’t. He could visualize the desperate cries of the villagers and the look of disappointment from his family. Then and there, Ching mustered the willpower to push through the pain. He told himself that he must complete his quest to save the people he loves, so turning back wasn’t an option.

Ching arrived the forest. He was exhausted and sat on a boulder to rest. At this point, he was just grateful to be alive. A frail man appeared from the pine trees. The man faintly uttered, “I got hurt. Could you carry me to the temple?” Ching was lucid and hesitated initially, but realized that helping the man was the right thing to do. Suddenly, the golden disc given by his father in Ching’s pocket started to glow. The Old man’s eyes lit up, and he had a grin ear to ear. The man exclaimed that “only a wielder who’s heart is full can unlock the powers within.”. Ching was puzzled and disregarded the old man’s outburst and thought he was just senile. He then gently picked up the man and carried him to his destination.

Eventually, Ching and the frail man arrived at the temple. “Where are the others?” asked Ching. “I’m the only one here.” said the man. “I’ll stay here and help you,” said Ching. The next morning, Ching could not find the monk. Ching walked past the temple gate and was immediately confronted by a hot spring. He saw the monk laying down on a raft. Unprovoked, the monk laughed, and in an instance, the red water in the hot spring shot upwards. The monk turned towards Ching and said, “Do you know Kung Fu?” It all made sense to Ching now. The man was “Kung Fu Monk.” “I want to be strong to get a treasure to save my village. “Can I be your disciple?” begged Ching. The monk nodded and continued meandering around the hot spring on his raft.

Many moons have come and gone, and now Ching was ready for his final challenge. The old man told him that he would need to battle a ferocious dragon called “Josrik” to retrieve the treasure. The old man exclaimed, “Boy, you will need to use every fiber of your being to defeat Josrik.” Again, the old man was spewing his nonsense. All Ching knew was that he had to use all his training to overcome this obstacle.

Ching came to a bridge that was between two towering peaks. The wind howled furiously in Ching’s ears. The ice cracked. The bridge began to shake and could collapse at any moment. He was on edge. He couldn’t let the others down, so he had to keep going. Ching fear culminated when he heard a distinct roar coming from above him. “If you want to get the treasure, you have to defeat me first.” roared Josrik. “Never fear. I have to be brave to win this battle!” Ching said assertively.

The dragon breathed out the fire at Ching. He dodged and soared on a sharp rock. Ching tried to defeat the Josrik by bombarding it with the bow and flaming arrows. All the pine trees stretched out their branches as if they were hands trying to catch the arrows. Suddenly, a tree ignited and crashed on the bridge, destroying it in a matter of seconds. Josrik grew evermore restless decided to finish off Ching once and for all. The dragon swooped down and headed straight towards Ching. The mountain trembled.

Ching was paralyzed by fear. His body was frozen in place. Miraculously, the golden disc started glowing in Ching's pocket again. Ching grabbed and held the disc in his hand. The disc illuminated the area, engulfing everything in a sea of light. Ching closed his eyes, and his whole life flashed before him. His family, the village, and nature were all he could see. The ordeal seemed like an eternity. When Ching looked up, Josrik was nowhere to be seen. It was as if the light had banished him to another realm.

With newfound confidence, Ching boldly strode up the mountain. He was ready to claim the treasure that was rightfully belonged to the villagers. Ching Abruptly ceased all movement. Then he turned around and saw the old man smiling from across the bridge. Involuntarily Ching smiled back and finally understood what his master was trying to tell him all along.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Chong, Chi Ching – 10

Prologue:

A typical elf was hiking on a mountain, Huang Shan. His tummy moaned for food and he observed his surroundings, finding a damp cave. In the inky cave, he caught a glimpse of moving blood at the corner of his left eye. The elf slapped his forehead rigidly. It must be his imagination. Out of the blue, a pair of barbed talons gripped him as he struggled, beads of sweat trickling down his forehead. After having a good look at what was holding him, he shrieked. It wasn't his imagination at all, and it was not a lump of repulsive and moving blood, it was a blood-red dragon! The nightmarish and massive dragon devoured the terror-stricken elf into its mouth in one gulp mercilessly as a man wearing pitch-black robes let out a sharp cackle which cut through the misty air. "Soon, my faithful dragon, we will eradicate those so-called legendary poets, Li Bai and Du Fu."

Chapter 1: The demon's disguise

Frank Fu lived in an orphanage exceedingly close to Huang Shan. He was having a wearisome Chinese lesson with his tedious teacher, Mister Chan. Frank finally couldn't tolerate Mister Chan anymore, his eyes drooped and he let out deafening snores.....Boom! Smack! The almighty hero Batman threw a boomerang at the nefarious Rapper Zapper. Rapper Zapper thudded onto the ground with a thunderous crash. Batman can rise to level 2! Mister Chan's eagle-like eyes spotted snoozing Frank and stomped over to his table, his nostrils flaring, his face the color of a ripe tomato. Valiant Batman fought Terminator Gladiator at Level 2 and punched him in the gut. Mister Chan hollered in Frank's ears, "Frank Fu, wake up!" Frank woke up dreary-eyed and yelled "Go, Batman!" The whole class of orphans burst into fits of giggles.

Frank scratched his bristling hair in embarrassment as Mister Chan yelled at him, smoke rising from his hair. Mister Chan was growing more hideous at the second, Frank's eyes went so wide that his eyeballs were going to burst. Everything happened in slow motion,

1. Mister Chan morphed into an ill-looking demon;

2. A wisp of white vapor appeared out of thin air bolted at the demon, and (Mister Chan) dissolved into a puddle of bubbling poison.

The peculiar thing was that the other orphans looked as if they hadn't seen a thing, but they asked in unison, "Where does Mister Chan go?" Then, all the innocent orphans' eyes rolled back into their sockets and they mysteriously dispersed!

Chapter 2: The Messenger from the Famed Poets

Frank's brain was still whirling at hypersonic speed to process what had happened a few minutes ago. When a blinding flash of scintillating light materialized in thin air, a glowing angel was floating out of the resplendent porthole and declared "It's time, great grandson of Du Fu, for you to eliminate the notorious and dark wizard Ambispo and his scarce but iniquitous blood dragon in order to save the unsophisticated orphans. Many elves and dwarves have departed life because of them. Now, come with me to the enchanted clouds of the famed Li Bai and Du Fu." "What! Me? The great grandson of the prominent Du Fu?" Frank asked, absolutely fazed. Not only was he confused to the limit, his head was having a tough time in a whirlpool of ginormous questions. How did Du Fu own a dazzling angel as a messenger and a magical cloud island with his best buddy, Li Bai? Why did my parents never mention anything about Du Fu?

Chapter 3: The most extraordinary battle of all times

The gears in Frank's head clicked together and he announced heroically, "Very well. I, the great grandson of Du Fu, will help you demolish Ambispo and shatter his rotten plans in a thousand pieces!" He stepped into the shimmering portal with full confidence, and that was that. After a dizzying whole fifteen minutes in the heavenly portal, Frank arrived at a weaponry filled with life-threatening weapons in it. The fairy explained in a deep and gravelly voice that this was where Du Fu had given Frank a variety of spellbound weapons to decide which ones to use against Old Armpit (This is what Frank called him now because he thought he will stink of a gazillion socks). Frank opted for a pack of egg-shaped balls. Next, the angel transferred Frank to a mountain where Ambispo and his dragon currently lived. Subsequently, the angel was nowhere to be seen before he could clear up some 'junk' from his combusting head.

Exhausted, Frank clambered to the tip of the mountain with the last inch of his strength and took a massive gulp of distilled water from his water bottle. His eyes swiveled around the area and found a monstrous cave. He pondered for a while and thought out loud, meaning for Old Armpit to hear him, "I must say, your cave is a bit lousy." An abominable and crimson head poked out of the cave, followed by Old Armpit. The dragon blew a tornado of flames at Frank. Frank shut his eyes tight and thought to himself "I need a fireproof net!" These series of things only happened in a quarter of a second. One of Frank's golden balls zipped out of his stuffed pocket, morphed into a blue net and absorbed the tornado of fire without leaving a single mark! Frank suddenly realized that he could command these balls with his flawless imagination! He pictured one of the golden balls shooting an energy beam at the wicked dragon. The dragon glowed after receiving the energy beam and let out a mega explosion, also exterminating Ambispo. There were just a few burnt scales and a skull left. The angel emerged, "Congrats! You have defeated the most depraved wizard of all times!" and he vanished into the night sky. The poets arrived in front of Frank and asked, "Great grandson, how a

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Chung, Ching Hei – 11

Huangshan is one of the most distinguished mountains in China. If you have seen the breathtaking views from the summit of Huangshan, either from your own experience or photos, you will perceive that it is precisely a relaxing scene. It is not only well-known for the scenery but also regarded for its magical tales.

There once was an unimaginably sensitive and brilliant child. His mind was so nimble and lively that he could already speak in perfection by the age of two. At the age of four, he was already proficient of performing martial arts. He was unbelievably quick-witted. His parents treasured him and appreciated the bewildering brainpower that he possessed.

As the boy grew up, he sowed the seeds of a silk producer. In a few years, his enterprise grew more extensive, and he went through a prosperous life with his family. Sadly, disaster struck him as financial problems hit him one by one. He had no choice but to sell everything he owned, such as his house, farmland and silk to keep a living. Finally, he became empty-handed. He decided to go on a journey to search for God to help him to be prosperous again. He then bravely set off to Huangshan to search for aid.

For years, the boy scavenged the mountains for a sign of God. He trudged through the isolated, icy lands and treaded over glacial mountain peaks, but there wasn't any sign of humanity. One day, he ran out of food. He knew that he wouldn't stand a chance for survival, but he still kept on walking. In a few days, he was famished and collapsed in the pail. He laid there motionlessly, with his fragile body going to shatter at any moment. Luck stoke him, as he was about to shut down, a senior man went past him. His clothing was very filthy and dirty. He had a wrinkled and scratched face. He wore a smile on his face as he was walking, but then fastened his pace as he saw someone lying solidly on the snow. The elder certainly was a swell person. He brought up the boy, observed his feeble body for a moment and then kindly gave him a basket of fresh, wild fruits. The boy was malnourished by then, and therefore he quickly scoffed down the food. The elder asked him, "Why are you here in the mountains?" "I'm trying to find a God to help my family and me." The elder told him that he was a God himself. The boy was dazed. He fell to his knees and pleaded him to reveal him the secrets to living forever and to be rich eternally.

The elder warned him, "If you want to have magic powers, you will have to give up the love from your family, and not be able to see them again." The boy agreed that he would pay the price for having magic powers. However, he didn't believe that his family would be disappeared forever as it sounded very absurd. The elder finally agreed to tell him the secrets as the boy implored him and swore that he would not use the magic on other people. The elder taught the boy to make a unique medicine that could help people live perpetually. As the boy was very wise, he learnt to make it in just one day. He thanked the elder earnestly for his help to make him feel satisfied.

The boy brought his newly formed magical medicine out of the mountains. He rushed home and wanted to show it to his family, but he couldn't find them. He noticed that people's outfits were very different from his own. The boy couldn't figure out what was happening. He asked a man that walked by for the date, and realized that he had travelled forward in time for a thousand years! One day in the magical Huangshan, he thought, equals to a thousand years in reality! He kept searching for his family, suspecting that the man was lying to him, but he couldn't find anyone he knew. Day after day, the boy felt lonely and empty inside. Even though he had a magic medicine, he couldn't share his happiness with his family. The boy regretted his decisions. "I must find the elder and hope that he could bring me back in time." he thought.

The boy set off for Huangshan again. He walked through the familiar roads and arrived at the elder's cave. The elder asked, "Why did you come back?" "Sorry! I know that I am very greedy. Please bring me back a thousand years. I want my family back!" The elder looked at the boy sternly. He told him that it was his final chance to make a decision. The boy nodded and confirmed that he wants to be with his family for once and for all. The elder tapped the cave five times, and the mountains began to swirl around the boy. He braced for the impact, as the hills suddenly screeched to a halt. He opened his eyes and saw that the elder was slowly transforming into a stone statue, with one of his fingers pointing to a narrow road. The boy followed the direction and eventually arrived in his hometown. He found his family and was overwhelmed that they were still there. The boy vowed to work hard for them. Finally, after his years of work, he resumed his wealthy and joyous life.

There are various legends, heroes and tales in Huangshan. The characters in the stories may be considered lucky, but they have worked very hard to become a mythical character. There are no short-cuts in the world. The person who gets success and fame always lies to those who take their task or job earnestly.

Huangshan's Mystical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Chung, Jit Ho – 10

Huangshan is a mythical mountain range in China that is very gorgeous and renowned. My father has told me countless times about how stunning and breathtaking this mountain range is. Many people go sightseeing and hiking there just to capture the beauty of Huangshan. It is also famous for its mysterious ambiance. There are villages elevated at high altitudes and mystifying clouds floating leisurely everywhere. Each time after listening to his stories, I would be captivated and desperate to go and see the magnificent peaks for myself.

One ordinary night, as I was watching TV, I dozed off into a dreamy world and I was transported to an ancient temple in China and I was astonished when I saw an array of beautiful peaks beyond the temple gates. They were not very clear, but they were unmistakably Huangshan. Out of the blue, a meteor crashed into the temple and it was made out of jade and silk. It cracked open and I found a scroll in a box. The scroll said, "Go to the secret cave in Huangshan and you will be rich."

I was filled with shock and excitement. I immediately packed my bags and headed to Huangshan, determined to find the shiny treasure. I pondered, "Where could this secret cave be? It must be hiding somewhere." As I scratched my head in confusion, I looked around and noticed an eagle stalking me. I exclaimed: "Quit following me!" but a calm expression appeared on the bird's face and he said, "Don't worry, I am here to help you." I stared at the strange bird, dumbstruck. Why could it talk? It must be the magical powers of this mythical land.

I kept on walking, determined to find the rich treasure in the secret cave. It wasn't until I took a break that I noticed captivating the beauty of Huangshan. It's like a place that fairies and gods would live. Peaks of the mountain range poked through the veil of mist, surrounded by evergreen trees. The sound of birds singing and chirping happily in the woods was carried in the winds. A crisp, refreshing breath of air entered my lungs and I felt a coolness from the dew on my skin.

I heard footsteps and found a villager wandering about. I traded with him some water bottles, a magic carpet and a sword, just in case there were any monsters guarding the treasure. I walked until I saw a green rock that looked very different from the others so I pushed it with all my might and revealed a cave that was mostly concealed with shadow.

Suddenly, a dragon roared from the depths of the cave. I drew out my sword and struck a battle pose, holding my ground. The majestic drake opened its mouth and out shot a searing jet of flames. I ducked and luckily managed to escape the wrath of the blazing fireball of death. I ran across the dark room as the dragon blasted electrocuting lightning bolts from its claw tips. But that wasn't all. Laser beams were being aimed at me as I desperately tried to find a weak spot on the powerful dragon. I swung my sword as hard as I could and my sword lodged into the artery of its neck. It let out a dreadful howl and flew away as in a puff of smoke.

As I touched the treasure, the cave walls collapsed around and I suddenly felt like I was flying through the air. That I actually was. I caught a glimpse of a spear-like object flying towards me and realized that it was actually a tip of a peak. I took out the magic carpet and tried to evade the sharp tips. In the process, I saw the entire Huangshan mountain range flow past me. All of sudden, I glimpsed through history - Li Bai (李白) and Du Fu (杜甫) writing poetry there, the Yellow Emperor, also known as Huangdi (黄帝) brewing Sen Dan of immortality, shaping Huangshan's name from Yishan. After the flying adventure, I returned to the ground and Huangshan stood before me in its original form. It was one of the most stunning sights I had ever set my eyes on. It was then that I knew why Huangshan really plays an important role in China's culture, its myths and legends, and the country itself.

I jolted awake as I felt the whole dream world crumble. Huangshan's beautiful mountain peaks, its incredible foliage and its winding rivers are all a passing glimpse into the wonders of that magical site. I sat, and saw that I was back in my bedroom. I saw my parents feeding the talking bird and felt something cold in the palm of my hand. It was a small, round and coal-like pearl. Was this a souvenir from my wild imagination? Or was the Sendan of Huangshan closer than I thought?

In a nutshell, Huangshan transformed from an ordinary mountain to a major tourist attraction and numerous books are published every year about just how attractive Huangshan is. It also contains many tales and legends, such as “Immortal Showing the way”, which tells a story about an immortal who loved Huangshan. Another fan favorite is the tale of how Huangshan had its name molded. Huangshan is the heart of the amazing wonders of China. We must do our endeavour to immortalize the natural resources, historical evolution, myths and legends of Huangshan Mountain.

My Magical Adventure to Huangshan

St Joseph's Primary School, Ho, Ngo Ka Garrick – 9

I opened my eyes. “Where am I? Who am I?” I wondered. I was imprisoned in a dark wet cave. There were some ropes in a box. I walked towards the entrance of the cave where I could see the only bright light. I was stunned by the beautiful scene outside. Sharply high green mountains, extremely tall trees, and the wondrous view of the sea of clouds beneath the cave. There was no route to escape. I could see similar caves far away in other mountains. When I looked down to the sea of clouds, I suddenly felt full of energy. What secrets laid in this magical sea of clouds? Was there any magical power in this area? I quickly dismissed the ridiculous thought and fell asleep. On the next day, I heard a mechanical noise coming from the flip gate on the wooden door that suddenly appeared at the cave. A plate of vegetables, meat and a large cup of water slid in from the flap, seemed to be served by a robot. I quickly ate the food because I was starving. I tried to open the wooden door. No, it was useless, the door was locked. I sat down in my frustration.

After a few more days, I had a brilliant plan, “Aha! If I am in a mountain, then I will just climb out of the hole using the extremely long rope, and see if I could find any escape route!” I tied the rope on the rock that was sticking out and gave it a pull. Good, the rope was firm. I put my legs out of the cave, and glanced down the mountain. Big mistake. My legs jerked back quickly, I tried again. I dropped myself down the cave, still grabbing the rope, and slowly lowered myself down the mountain.

Ten minutes later, the rope started to break. I glanced down and forced myself to stay calm and think. If there were three or four caves on each mountain, there must be another one down there. After a while, I could see a large cave just under my feet, I let go of the rope and jumped in the cave.

The cave was exactly just like the one I was in. “Hello, anybody?” I yelled but nobody answered. Huh, nobody, I expected someone. I found a corridor next to me. I walked along the long corridor and entered a room filled with computers, monitors and screens. I passed by a large filing cabinet, and I saw the files for some famous politicians, scientists, scholars, including two of the greatest Chinese poets, Li Bai and Du Fu. The screens were zooming in and out of the different areas of the mountains regularly, and sometimes zoomed into the people visiting the mountain. A particularly big screen showed the sea of clouds.

“You are finally here.” I heard a voice from a very old man behind. He looked very weak and skinny. He wore a yellow silky coat with dragon patterns. He zapped me with a burst of light and after that, I could remember who I was. I was a famous herbalist. He said I do not need to know who he was. He explained that this was the centre of the magical place Huangshan. He was an alien that came from planet Quillus, and he had taken up an immortal human body. His job was to do research on the talented people that visited Huangshan. He controlled the sea of clouds to absorb the strength of the talented people, using it to power up a large spacecraft filled with alien soldiers in planet Quillus to invade Earth. With his magical power, he continuously turned Huangshan into a more beautiful place and attracted more talented people to visit. The energy tank of the spacecraft was halfway full now, and he must keep the sea of clouds in place to fully charge up the spacecraft. However, the immortal medicine that the human body took would expire very soon, and the alien would die in this human body.

The old man captured me because I was a famous herbalist. He said he had the ingredients of the immortal medicine and threatened me to take three herbs from the top of three mountains, including the Bright Top. He said if I won't take the three herbs he would imprison me forever. I accepted the mission.

After another adventurous journey along my way to get the ingredients of the immortal medicine, I took all the necessary herbs. Along the way, I also took many different kinds of special herbs too for my own collection, including the herb that could make people slowly forgetting things. I returned to the control room, and mixed the herbs into the immortal medicine. The old man took the immortal medicine. Instantly, his body began to heat up and gain back his muscles, and he took off his coat because the coat was too tight for his enlarging body. He was very happy. He said he would keep his promise. The last thing I saw before I fell unconscious was the printed name in the collar of his coat on the floor, Huang Di.

I was back in the hotel when I woke up. I did not know how he did it. I returned to my normal life.

All these happened one year ago. Just a moment ago, I learnt from the breaking news that the sea of clouds had disappeared for a few months already at Huangshan, and no scientist could explain that. I also saw another side-lined news that an old man in yellow coat was found wondering in Huangshan and had lost all his memory. I said to myself, “Yes! I did it.” What had I done? I could only tell you that I got rid of one threat to mankind, and I was a proud herbalist.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Huang, Tsz Tsun – 11

Long long time ago, there was a village hidden high up in the Yellow Mountains. Unlike other villages, this village was blessed by the God of the mountain, and people living in the village were granted with the water of immortality. As a return, they promised the God of the mountain that they would look after the environment and the mountain. They also agreed to keep the secret of the water within the village.

Surrounded by a canopy of trees, the village is hidden from the outside world. Standing at the entrance of the village, you could hear the rustling of leaves and the screeching of birds. The scent of wet earth and exotic flowers filled the warm, moist air. Looking out of the village, the breathtaking sight of waterfall cascading down a verdant and fertile valley, sunlight glistening from the distance, and an emerald, green forest covering the peaks would come into your view.

In the village, there lived Alvin the lumberjack and his family. Alvin and his family were known for their kindness. They shared their food with other villagers in need. Alvin once also risked his life to save a mother deer and her children from being hunted. He was praised by the other villagers for his brave act.

The villagers lived a peaceful and harmonious life for thousands of years, but it didn't last forever. Many years later, the promises were no longer fresh in their minds. They began chopping down trees, hunting animals for money. They even littered everywhere. Before long, the whole mountain was severely polluted, trees no longer covered the hills, crystal clear fountain water became swampy, the mountain was turned into an inanimate place. Seeing what was happening, the God of the mountain stomped his foot in exasperation. He was in rage and lashed out at the villagers. He warned them by ceasing the supply of immortality water and stopping the sky from raining for months. The drought struck the village. Animals and crops were dying. Fertile soil became hard and dry. The mountain became an inhospitable place.

Despite the dire situation, the villagers still kept on doing what they did before. Even worse, one day, some villagers suggested that they should sell the last bit of water of immortality to the outsiders in exchange for food. After hearing this, Alvin, his family and other villagers gasped, they shook their heads in disbelief. They dissuaded the villagers from breaking the promise, but the villagers all turned a deaf ear to them and decided that they would sell the water off anyway. Knowing their persuasion was in vain, Alvin was crestfallen, and tottered back to his home.

"Big news! Big news!", a villager hollered the next morning, "Three villagers have disappeared!"

"What!?", another villager uttered.

Since then, people in the village noticed that more and more villagers had gone missing, but still no one had figured out why they mysteriously vanished.

Little did they know that it was a punishment from the God of the mountain for breaking their promises. They were turned into rocks and became a part of the Yellow Mountains.

It was not until a couple of months later did Alvin and the other villagers finally realize that all the villagers who disappeared were those who agreed to sell the mythical water to outsiders. And the human shaped rocks that the villagers became, were always going to remind them of their deal with the God of the mountain.

Even up to this day, should you visit the Yellow Mountains, high up the hill above the clouds, you may see some wizened old men living in a tiny hamlet. And they must be the charitable Alvin, his villagers, their family and descendants, who are still keeping their promises of looking after the mythical mountains.

The Power of Love

St Joseph's Primary School, Kwok, Ching Tin – 12

San Bai fought back tears, picked up his backpack and went out of the door of his house. He was a child who was nine years old and his family lived in a small village called the Little River located at the foot of the mountain Huangshan. Life was very peaceful and quiet.

However, two months ago several 'evil men', as San Bai's father called them, ran into the village and asked for money. As his family was very poor, the men took away his mother and she was never seen again. Therefore, San Bai decided to go on a journey on his own to find his dear mother. He heard from one of the villagers that his mother was shoved on a car and it went to the top of the mountain and so one night he packed, left a note to his dad that read: 'Dear father: I am leaving. I know it sounds impossible but I am going to (at least try) to find my mother. I missed her a lot. Please do not worry.'

As it was nearly dawn, San Bai left his village quietly and began the long task of climbing the mountain. A few moments later, the glorious sun shone in front of him. 'This is breathtaking!' he gasped but deep down he knew that he must focus on the task first and he continued to climb. He walked for the whole day, only stopping for a few breaths. But then it started to rain and get cold, so he had no choice but to postpone the quest and run quickly into a cave he found nearby. Suddenly, he slipped and fell down a cliff! He yelled and could not believe this was the end! Then, he saw a shadowy hand reaching to his own hands and pulled him away from danger. He saw nothing. He had fainted.

When San Bai came round, it was morning again and he found himself lying in the cave, shivering. Wondering what on earth happened, he quickly looked around to find some clues of this mystery. To his disappointment, he saw nothing for the second time. Then, a chilling breeze ran through the cave and he quivered. Gritting his teeth, San Bai ran out and found some berries hanging from a tree. He climbed, took some and devoured them. Next, he walked for several hours but nothing special happened. Because it was dark again and there were no caves to rest nearby, San Bai had no choice but to sleep on the ground. He walked for a few days yet the shadowy hand never showed up.

Perhaps it was only his imagination, but San Bai always thought the shadow popped out during the rest of his journey. When he was trying to sleep for a few hours, when he was eating, when he was walking... Everywhere! It was like the hand was part of his body, following him everywhere. It was a bit irritating, but mysterious. One night, he finally gave in and yelled out loud, 'Who are you and what do you want to do with me?' A pair of eyes popped out at the back of the hand. It blinked for two seconds and vanished again. 'What the heck just happened?' San Bai thought to himself.

The morning after the weird mystery happened, he climbed higher. He met an old man on the way that told him he was already close to the peak. He walked for the whole day, and climbed rocks and boulders. He was bruised at the end of the day, but was finally reached the top. The first look he got was the men who took away his mother. They seemed like they had been celebrating and they looked a bit drunk. However, San Bai didn't want to risk it and quickly dived into a bush nearby. He waited until the men were finally asleep. Then, he came out, took out a knife he got from his house and cut down the ropes that were tying up San Bai's mother and the other women who lived in the same village. Suddenly, it rained and bolts of lightning cracked through the sky. The few men grunted and (to San Bai's terror) woke up. He wanted to run but deep down he knew that he must not give up the only chance to save everyone.

'Well, well, well. Look what we've got here. Three idiots.' the men that seemed to be the leader said coldly. Others cackled. Next, he punched San Bai in the mouth and he could taste the blood already. 'Kid, you learned something important today. You should never mess with us.' the man said and took out his hand-gun threateningly. San Bai can't do anything but watch, he was so paralysed with fear that he couldn't move a muscle. Then, a miracle happened.

All of a sudden, the shadowy hand drifted through the air. It slapped the men so hard that they all fell to the ground. 'Run!' it yelled in a deep voice and San Bai came back to his senses, took his mother on the shoulder and tumbled down the hill. The shadowy hand then rendered the men unconscious, and used something like psychic to control the rest of the captured people and somehow managed to teleport them back to the village.

After they returned, the villagers treated San Bai like a hero because they all thought it was him that saved the kidnapped people. Nevertheless, he would never forget the thing that prevented danger from happening. Not once, not twice but thrice.

Years went by and scientists still can't figure out what was the shadowy hand made of. Some others said that they have seen it on the mountain too. One old man that looked like a maniac when he gave an interview swore that he accidentally ate food that was poisonous and the hand held a bottle of antidote for him. Another claimed she saw it when she was in danger but she wouldn't tell anyone what it was. However, the scientists found out one fact that could not be denied: the hand always helps people who are in need. And that is why Huangshan is one of the most mysterious mountains in the world today.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St Joseph's Primary School, Lee, Chu Yin Anson – 11

Huang Shan is a mysterious place full of secrets and legends. It is towering and grand, in rich clothes of emerald green. Near the peak sits a turquoise lake --- the Lake of Health. Some tales say that Huang Shan is a place to many unique species, fairies and gods.

In ancient times, many immortal deities lived happily on Huang Shan. The deities were beautiful and elegant. Their immortality power came from the Lake of Health. The lake was crystal clear with myriads of colourful fishes. The deities had their own special pets, which were bizarre combinations of different animals, with each having a unique special power. For many centuries, they lived happily and enjoyed their simple lives.

One day, a man named Wang Yi went to Huang Shan to pick fruits from the trees. When he was picking berries from the trees, he saw some strangers, playing happily and enjoying the peace and bliss of Huang Shan. Wang Yi spied on the deities for a few days and realized that they were immortal deities.

Wang Yi became jealous of the deities' fruitful and enchanted lives, their immortality and their special pets. He felt a twinge in his heart – a huge tangled knot of greed. He decided to take over Huang Shan, so he could also live this enchanted life and satisfy his strong greed and desire.

One night, Wang Yi crept out of his shack, climbed the tallest tree in the forest and started throwing stones and fire sticks at the villages where the deities lived. The deities and their pets fought bravely with their powers. At the same time, Wang Yi poured water from the Lake of Health in a magical urn. As he drank the water from the urn, power surged through his body, and the magic of the Lake became his. The deities felt that their power and immortality started to ebb and fade away. With no choice, they were forced to flee. This was the perfect chance for Wang Yi to strike. He strolled into the village, where he anointed himself King. His mighty powers forced the pets to obey him. Wang Yi banished the deities to the darkest corner of the mountain. Huang Shan was then transformed into a place of destruction and despair. Terrible storms formed thereafter, as if Huang Shan was howling in misery.

Months later, a kind-hearted teenage girl named Ying Tsz went to Huang Shan to gather food for her family. As she was looking for food, she heard the mortal deities crying miserably over the loss of their powers, their pets and their land. At first, Ying Tsz was unsure of what to do, but they mourned so sadly she could not leave them in such a sorrowful state. So she went up and comforted them. After listening to their stories, she decided to help the deities.

Ying Tsz's plan was to take down Wang Yi by ambushing him. On the following day, the deities hid behind rocks and bushes at a place where Wang Yi would pass by every day. When Wang Yi appeared, the deities grabbed him from behind and trapped him in a net. They then immediately threw him in a pit that had many spiky vines and buried Wang Yi with dirt and soil. The deities clapped and they called Ying Tsz a heroine after killing him, or so they thought.

As Wang Yi had drunk the water from the Lake of Health and became immortal, he did not die and was only injured. Wang Yi was enraged. He jumped back up from underground and attacked the deities with fire again. The deities retreated as they could not beat Wang Yi. Ying Tsz, unaware of Wang Yi's powers, thought it was her fault that Wang Yi was still alive and began to lose her confidence. But the deities bestowed her with a gift! It was a magical potion that could make people fall asleep for over 1000 years.

Unable to think of a way to make Wang Yi drink the potion, Ying Tsz experimented on the potion and made it release an odour that could make people fall asleep. Ying Tsz put the potion on a trail that Wang Yi would walk through. When Wang Yi went off to hunt animals, he inhaled the odour and went fast asleep. Not to waste this golden opportunity, the deities jumped out and put a dagger in his heart, which was the only way to kill an immortal! Ying Tsz helped take Huang Shan back from Wang Yi and restored the deities's powers.

Ying Tsz was known as the goddess of Huang Shan after this victory. Because of their terrible experience with Wang Yi, the deities shrouded the mountains with fog, in hope that nobody would ever uncover the mysteries of Huang Shan and disrupt their peaceful lives again.

Huangshan Wonders: Rocks

St Joseph's Primary School, Leung, Kwan Ho – 10

Can you do magic? Magic can make things a little bit different. “Life is always full of miracles” has been a traditional saying for hundreds of years. But . . . does that ever happen to you? Magic, miracles, life . . . Mountains, mountains in the world, there is one, a huge one, a magical one, far far away in China, Huangshan.

Huangshan is a mountain range in southern Anhui Province in eastern China. It is well-known for its peculiarly-shaped granite peaks, oddly-shaped pines and strangely-shaped rocks. Its beautiful scenery attracted many people exploring the mountain. However, Huangshan looked very different thousands of years ago.

Long long time ago, Huangshan was a huge chunky mountain where there were no trees or animals. There was a big cave at the peak of the mountain and it was the home of three magical creatures, the dragons. The three dragons were a family. Sam was the father of the family. He was a fire dragon. He had a red body with four wings. He could blow out fire that burnt things down, absolutely everything. Judy was the mother of the family. She was a lightning dragon. She had a pink body and two legs with sharp claws. She could blast lightning balls that torn things apart, truly everything. They had a son called Jake. He had a golden body, two wings and four legs. He had not had any power yet, the unrevealed one.

One day, when Sam and Jake were playing hide and seek in the middle of the mountain, the ground suddenly shook violently. About a mile away, there was a loud bang and a large dragon came out from the underground. The dragon had a brownish body with six legs. Sam recognised that stranger was an earthquake dragon. He could move under the ground as fast as lightning. The stranger met Sam and Jake. He crawled to them at once and introduced himself to them, as Max. Max lived in a swamp where was thousands of miles away from Huangshan with his family and friends. His home was attacked by a shadow dragon, Taylor, the black dragon that had six wings and four legs with sharp claws. Max's great grandfather knew that there were powerful dragons living in Huangshan and told Max to come and seek for help. Sam was a very kind dragon. He promised to give Max a hand immediately.

Sam and Judy wanted to take Jake back home first and then Sam left with Max to save his family and friends. Suddenly, the sky turned dark and another loud bang coming from the air. A large black dragon came out from the darkened sky. Sam knew right away that was a shadow dragon. In the mean time, “O...Oh...that...er...that's Taylor,” Max stammered. Shadow dragon is one of the fiercest dragons because it moved the fastest of all in the world and had sharp claws that scratched things through, crazily everything. Sam kept an eye on Taylor at a distant and told Judy and Jake to leave in a flash.

Max couldn't believe that Taylor secretly followed him all the way to Huangshan. Meanwhile, Taylor was thrilled after all because he could finally catch Max and ended his prey hunt. Taylor was cautious when he saw Max was with Sam. He did recognised Sam, the fire dragon, the famous powerful mystic one. Without a doubt, he invisibled himself in the air to play safe. Max was stoned at the time when he saw Taylor there. He weeped and felt so sorry because if it's not him leading Taylor the way to Sam, Sam's home would not be in trouble. While Max was so into his thoughts without any alert, he just heard a big roar, “Watch out!”.

Taylor suddenly appeared at the back of Max and his sharp claws were about to scratch Max's back. Sam just blew out a fire ball in a second and the fire ball flamed towards Taylor's head at a light speed. Oh missed! Taylor was forced to move away from Max and disappeared himself again.

Sam searched Taylor around the area and suddenly flew rapidly towards a spot. Taylor saw Sam getting closer and closer to him, without a choice, he had to be visible reluctantly so as to run for his life. Sam kept chasing Taylor hardly and blew out numerous fire balls continuously. However, Taylor was moving too fast that all the fire balls were missed and most of them hit the mountain. The hugh mountain was on fire.

Taylor himself knew he could not match Sam, so he decided to retreat. He flew towards the peak of the mountain and seconds before leaving the mountain through the darkened sky, a strong yellow lightning shot towards him speedily from the peak of the mountain. Taylor dodged and tried his best to fly away. Unfortunately, the lightning had already circled around him and hit him badly on his back. Poor Taylor was torn apart into pieces right after he realised he got beaten up by Judy, the lightning dragon, another powerful mystic one in the world.

After the fight, the mountain was changed. Sam's fire balls melted some parts of the mountain and strangely-shaped rocks like Flying-Over Rock, Immortal Pointing the Way and Monkey Watching the Sea were formed. Taylor's body pieces were all over the place where old pines grew magically.

Sky got brightened and rainbow had come. Why would that be? The death of Taylor became new lives. Things were no longer be the same as before in Huangshan. From the magic to the miracle, how did the world go? Would it be a better one? Until then . . . yet to come.

A Poet's Tale

St Joseph's Primary School, Li, HaoLong – 12

To the left of the North Sea area of Huangshan, a lone hill stands upright from the mass of pine trees. Round underside and pointed on the top, it looks just like an overturned calligrapher's brush pen except for the striking ancient pine tree that grows on its peak. With its thick branches and leaves, it's easy to pass the pine tree for a blossoming flower. But such a peculiar scene is not just a natural masterpiece—behind this breathtaking scenery sits a famous legend.

During the Tang Dynasty, a young man who lived in Long Xi Cheng Ji was arranged with an essay. However, he wrote for hours and hours but couldn't finish it, nevertheless. Exhausted from the tiresome job, he dozed off in the middle of writing. Perhaps of wanting to complete the essay, he dreamt that he was still holding his pen, writing non-stop. All of a sudden, it gave a jerk. He hurriedly lost his grip and dropped the brush pen on his desk. By the time he looked back, its tip had bloomed a snow-white lotus flower. Instantaneously, countless sheets of paper fell from the sky, swishing as they landed right on his desk. Exhilarated, the young man grabbed his lotus-flower pen and tried to write with it, but what appeared on the paper were not ink marks but lotus flowers, similar to the one on his pen tip! While he wrote, his vision seemed to clear up, and the lotus flowers faintly shone. Then it shone brighter, brighter, and much brighter... until he couldn't open his eyes. Trembling, he woke up from his dream. Since then, his creativeness and literary talent increased rapidly, and this young man—Li Bai—became known as the 'god of poems', one of the most well-known poets in China, or maybe the entire world.

Many years later, when Li Bai was in his twilight years, he started on a journey. When he went to Anhui, he went straight to the famed Huangshan. As he stepped on the crumbling stone steps, he was awed by the variety of colors a place could contain. The grotesque rocks were grey, the age-old trees were green, the boundless seas of clouds were white... Watching such a magnificent view, he suddenly felt energized and couldn't help singing out, *"Four thousand ren high does Huangshan loom, on thirty-two peaks do flowers bloom..."* When he was chanting, a low, gruff voice interrupted him. "May I ask who you are?" Li Bai turned around and saw an old, weary monk. Astonished, he said, "My name is Li Bai..." Hearing the famous poet's name; however, the monk's face lit up with joy. Even his wrinkles seemed to unfold. Nudging Li Bai, he said, "Please come in! Please come in! Come and have some refreshments in our humble monastery!" It was then that Li Bai noticed a decaying red building not far away—a monastery, just as the monk has said. Carefully stepping inside, the first thing he saw was some monks meditating. "Hello?" he said, receiving no sign of notice. "Hello?" he said again. None of the monks except for the old monk reacted, who was smiling from ear to ear. Full of suspicion, Li Bai looked towards him, but he was gone. Soon he came back, but with an enormous bronze instrument—a *gong*. Before Li Bai could react, the monk swiftly drew out a long wooden stick, and pounded the gong with it so hard that sounds filled the small building. *DONG, DONG, DONG...* Eventually, the monks stopped meditating and stood up one by one. "There's no need to use *that* again," one of the monks grumbled, "Huh? Who's next to you?" Hearing the monk ask, the old monk beamed. "Let us welcome our guest—Li Bai!" "Is he really the renowned poet?" "Such an honor..." The monks murmured. Having such a guest, some monks prepared wine at once. The old monk poured some for Li Bai and himself. They both emptied the contents into their mouths and chatted congenially about poems and literature. Grateful and satisfied of the monastery's treatment, Li Bai wanted to pay the monks back, but he was left with little money after journeying for such a long time. "May I ask how I should repay you?" he asked the old monk. "Um... please leave some of your great calligraphy in our humble monastery, noble poet!" Li Bai quickly agreed to the request, therefore some monks prepared ink and paper and set them outside the monastery. Slowly, Li Bai stepped out the monastery, took a brush pen, and dipped it deeply in coal-black ink. As he wrote on the paper, he started to feel dizzy because of the wine he drank. However, Li Bai was not like any other; the more drunk he was, the better. It flipped a few times in the air and landed far away, overturned. When Li Bai was in a clear state of mind at last, he went to look for the pen, but it had sprouted something—a flower. Thrilled, he avoided the thick trees to look closer at the flower and recognized it immediately—a snow-white, lotus flower. Li Bai gasped in surprise. It had been nearly fifty years since he had seen a lotus flower bloom out of a brush pen. Then abruptly the pen grew

larger and larger, brighter and brighter, till it became as large as a hill, then gradually, lost its glow and turned into stone. As for the lotus flower, it became larger as the brush pen did, but unlike the brush pen, it transformed into a huge pine tree, towering into the clouds. In the meantime, Li Bai felt odd. He felt that his body was lighter by the minute, as though he was floating. His prediction was accurate. He floated higher and higher, towards the peak of the brush pen hill. It was there that the 'god of poems' truly became immortal.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Ling, Wing Him – 10

Long ago, there was a village hidden away in the mountains of China called Yu. It was a very peaceful village, and everyone lived in harmony. For years all was well.

One day, a merchant came into the village, proclaiming that there was a valuable treasure at the top of the mountains, ready for challengers to seize it. People were vying for the treasure, and many packed their bags and set off for the mountains, but they never came back. Finally, a man called Bon decided to go and find them. He said goodbye to what remained of his friends and family, and left for the mountains.

To get to the mountains, Bon had to cross a deep, dark and misty forest. His chest heaving, panting heavily, he plopped down at the base of a twisty tree and decided to take a break. Suddenly, the mist deepened and he could barely see his own hands. A wolf's howl sounded and soon, he was surrounded by wolves. They growled at Bon menacingly, and slowly, with drool dripping from their lips, they advanced. A wolf leaped forward, its claws lashing at Bon's chest. Bon flinched away, trying to run. However, he was greatly outnumbered. Suddenly, Bon remembered that before he left the village, the village elder had given him the treasures of their village — a silk lasso, and a box that contained a powerful item. Bon didn't see what use the lasso could do right now, so he popped open the box, and found some stones. He was surprised and furious "Weren't these items supposed to help him on his quest, what could some stones do?" He was so angry, he grabbed some rocks and threw them at the wolves. As soon as the rocks left Bon's hand, they exploded, and Bon was thrown back. He looked up and saw the entire forest in flames. Sensing the forest was about to roast him alive, he ran, straight ahead, believing that the forest would end at some point.

Stepping out of the woods, Bon walked for many hours, before stopping at a river in the mountains to catch some fish and refill his flask. When he dived into the water, he realized that the river was actually quite deep and he couldn't touch the bottom. Suddenly, something latched onto Bon's leg. Before Bon knew what was happening, he was dragged deeper and deeper, the surface shrinking and shrinking until it was nothing more than a small beam of light. Bon struggled and thrashed, and ended up hitting his head on a rock before passing out.

When Bon woke up, he was still underwater, but he discovered he could breathe. He was now in a giant cave. Whatever attacked him must have brought him here. Suddenly a giant squid dropped from the top and crashed into the ground in front of Bon. Bon reached for his bag but remembered that he had left it on the riverbank. He had nothing to defend himself from the squid! The squid squirted ink in Bon's face, then smacked him away. Bon crashed to the cave wall, wincing as the stone bit into his back. After smacking him about for a while, the squid wrapped one of its tentacles around Bon, and forced him to the ground, squeezing the life out of him. Bon was tired and he wanted to give up. But then he thought of his fellow villagers. They were counting on him. He couldn't give up now. He felt a sharp rock beside him, grabbed it, and stabbed the tentacle. The squid let out a gruesome scream, then swam out of the cave, disappearing into the depths of the river. Unnerved by the squid's attack, Bon was unwilling to stay any longer, and started swimming upwards, feeling his lungs burn as he resurfaced. The river was cursed, he decided, and grabbed his bag, determined to put distance between him and the river, before passing out due to fatigue.

After coming to, he hiked for hours and hours, day after day. Ten days had soon passed since he left for the mountains, and Bon was very tired, so he leant on a giant rock to rest. Suddenly the rock was moving and Bon immediately took steps away from it. The stone morphed into a face, and legs and arms popped out too. The stone monster didn't give Bon time to think, it charged towards his direction and swung its giant fist towards Bon's face. Luckily Bon had gotten a lot of experience dodging attacks from the giant squid and ducked to the monster's right. He backed away from the stone monster's attacks, while it was charging. If Bon hadn't ducked away in time, he would be dead on the ground. He frantically dug into his bag, hoping that there would be something to help in, and found a silk lasso inside one of the boxes. Bon didn't have time to hesitate. He swung the lasso at the monster, and with luck, it tightened over the monster's neck, squeezing hard. Hacking noises sounded, its hands grappling for the silk, until its head was squeezed off, its limbs tumbling off, separating into boulders.

More days passed before Bon finally reached the top. He stumbled in exhaustion, sweat glistening on his brow. Suddenly, a fire-red dragon landed in front of him. “Well done hero. I am the sacred dragon Tai-Lon. You have done well to complete my challenge. Now come forth and receive this treasure.” An open box of expensive stones landed at Bon’s feet. Suddenly, the dragon breathed out a plumage of smoke, and Bon couldn’t see anything, except a floating orb that glowed in front of him with a bright warm light. Enamored by it, he reached out a hand, and was suddenly home. The orb exploded and beams of light shot everywhere, turning into the missing villagers. Bon was welcomed back home like a hero.

The Search for the Magic Pen in Huangshan

St. Joseph's Primary School, Liu, Yan Lok Aaron Rafael – 9

One day, my teacher told me that I was nominated to join a writing competition. When I heard the news, I was thrilled since I had never been in a writing competition before. I began to think about what to write for many days but I had no idea at all. Suddenly, I remembered I once found a rumor on the internet that there was a Magic Pen in Huangshan. Whoever touches it gains magic writing power. So, I decided to go and search for it.

The next morning, I packed my notebook and pen and began my adventure.

After I reached Huangshan. I started to wonder in the mountains.

Suddenly, I saw a fairy.

‘Maybe he knows where the Magic Pen is,’ I thought.

So I asked, ‘Do you know where the Magic Pen is, Mr Fairy? I need it to write a good story for a competition.’

‘I know where it is but I will only give you the location if you can help me with three tasks,’ the fairy said.

‘Sure. What tasks do you want me to do?’

‘Firstly, you need to find my noisy rooster. Secondly, help me find my quiet monkey. Last but not least, get me my wet boot and dry it,’ he said. ‘Be very careful though, my boot is very heavy. Don’t drop it on your way back.’

So, I set off to begin the search.

I walked until the night fell but I still couldn’t find the rooster. Suddenly, I had an idea. I decided to rest first and wake up before dusk.

After a good sleep, I woke up and listened attentively. Right before dusk, as expected, I heard the rooster’s loud crowing.

‘I knew the noisy rooster would crow!’

I hurriedly followed the sound and found the rooster on a mountain. It was surprisingly large.

‘Are you Mr. Fairy’s rooster?’ I asked.

‘Coo... that’s right.’ the Rooster nodded.

‘Maybe the rooster knows where the monkey is’ I thought.

‘Do you know where Mr. Fairy’s monkey is?’

‘Coo... I will give you a hint but you need to solve it by yourself. The hint is this: the monkey is on a mountain looking down at the sea,’ said the rooster.

‘Can you come with me?’ I asked.

‘OK but I won’t give you any other hints though,’ said the rooster.

I started to search again.

‘The sea.....’ I mumbled as I walked, ‘but there isn’t any sea around Huangshan!’

I was baffled and tired. I looked up in the sky. There were a lot of clouds.

‘Ah, I know the true meaning of the “sea”!’ I said to myself. ‘I will have to find the tallest mountain that stretches into the clouds.’

After a while, I found a very tall mountain. It was gigantic! I climbed up the mountain and there, I saw a small animal sitting at the top. It was quietly crouching down and looking at the ‘sea’ of clouds. I immediately ran towards the animal.

‘Are you Mr. Fairy’s monkey?’ I asked.

The monkey quietly nodded its head.

‘Do you know where the fairy’s wet boot is?’

‘Of course I know. I will give you a hint but you have to solve it by yourself,’ the monkey answered. ‘The hint is this: the wet boot is hanging to dry somewhere in the woods right across this mountain.’

‘Can you come with me?’ I asked the monkey.

‘OK but I won’t give you any hints though,’ said the monkey.

I went into the woods with the monkey and the rooster. The woods was dark and gloomy. I felt very scared.

‘May be Huangshan has a frightening monster deep inside the woods,’ I thought whilst my body shivered with fear.

I walked deeper into the woods, taking every steps as quietly as I could. I did not want to wake up any monster! I really hated the feeling. I felt like I was stuck in an infinite loop of darkness.

Suddenly, I felt light! At first, I thought it was just an illusion since I was so tired. I didn’t want to move on but I told myself, ‘I am definitely close to finding the wet boot. It must be hanging where there is sunlight so that it can dry. I must not give up.’ And so, I continued to walk reluctantly. Then, I realized that the illusion was actually real. I saw a boot hanging upside down on a pole. The boot had water droplets dripping down from it. This was really the best place to dry the boot. There was sunshine everywhere. It really brightened my feelings to see the sunlight shine upon me. I also knew that I have finally accomplished all the three tasks for the fairy.

Taking the boot, together with the monkey and the rooster, I hurried back to find the fairy.

‘Mr Fairy, I have brought your rooster, monkey and boot to you. Give me my reward please.’

The fairy didn’t say a thing. He just pointed south.

I used all of my strength to rush to the south. There, at the southern-most end of the Huangshan region, I finally saw the Magic Pen standing proudly on a cliff! It was actually a huge pen-like rock which had a tree grown from its tip. I touched the magic pen wishing that it would really help me write a good story.

I went home happily and decided to write a story of my Huangshan adventure for the writing competition. I also did some more research about Huangshan and found out that the rooster, the monkey, the boot and the fairy, like the Magic Pen, were all famous rock sceneries in the Huangshan district!

Huangshan

St. Joseph's Primary School, Poon, Hin Lok – 10

Huangshan is one of the most popular and greatest mountains in the world. It is located in Southern Anhui province in China, with a range of different peaks. Some of the mountains are famous scenic spots attracting thousands of tourists every year, such as Lotus Peak, Bright Summit Peak and Celestial Peak.

There is a famous term called “four wonders of Huangshan”, they are the strange pines, grotesque rocks, “sea of clouds” and hot springs and other stuff.

Strange pines are actually pines grown in distorted but in weird shapes due to continuous natural phenomena in Huangshan, such as wind, clouds, smog and ice crystals. People pay attention to these pines partly because of their ability to survive in extreme conditions.

Apart from that, a large variety of these rocks are scattered everywhere in the whole mountain region, most of them are named by human imaginations by making up stories related to ancestors. One of the famous example is that one of the rock resembled a strong man hitting a tiger, and this story is also mentioned in ancient Chinese literature “Water Margin”. As a tradition, this rock has been called “Wusun beats a tiger” for a lot of years until today.

Besides all that, there are still many interesting and mysterious things there at Huangshan, this is a beautiful place for tourists and approved if wanting to take great views or wanting to know more about interesting myths and stories.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Ray-Smith, Henry Joseph Evelyn – 9

Two weeks ago, I was watching the movie Lord of the Rings, and saw a misty mountain range presented in front of me, so I searched the origins of these magical peaks and it turns out, the origins of these magical mountains are a mysterious place in eastern China, called Huangshan. I searched for some photos of it and it was extremely beautiful so, I decided to try and see if I could have an adventure on Huangshan.

Next, I searched how to get to Huangshan on the internet and I found out that I would have to take an aeroplane to Huangshan City and then, I needed to take a taxi to Huangshan. So I immediately booked a plane ticket for the next week.

Six days later, it was the day final day before the adventure, so I packed my equipment like extra shoes, some sunglasses, a camera, some bottles of water and some food, and I almost forgot to bring my passport. Then, at night, I had a good sleep, and, in the morning, I would head off to the airport. In the morning, I brushed my teeth, ate my breakfast, gathered my belongings, then, I headed straight to the airport by bus. After thirty minutes, I was at the airport, I quickly checked in, then, I got my plane ticket and boarded the aeroplane. After around five minutes, the aeroplane started to take off. I was scared, but excited at the same time because I really wanted to get to Huangshan, but I was a bit afraid because of the take off. By coincidence, the aeroplane's TV had Lord of the Rings, so I continued watching the Lord of the Rings. After approximately two hours, I arrived at Huangshan City I immediately walked to the nearest taxi station to take a taxi. When I was walking, I saw various types of buildings, such as modern houses, ancient Chinese pagodas and I even saw a skyscraper, it was magnificent! After around ten minutes, I arrived at the taxi station, I quickly got in a taxi.

I had arrived, I stood in front of the mighty mountains, I thought to myself, "I must have an adventure on these magical mountains!" When I looked up, I saw the famous Lotus Peak, it was fascinating. I then walked up some stone brick stairs. After about an hour of walking up, I was exhausted, but my mind told me that I must keep going to have a great view of Huangshan City on the Lotus peak. After another hour of tiring walking, I had arrived at one of the peaks with the best view, I was at Then Celestial Peak, I walked around the peak, it was amazing. I found the area to admire the view of Huangshan landscape below, the view was excellent! You could almost see the whole city in miniature below. After twenty minutes of taking photos, I headed straight to the destination I have been longing to visit, the Lotus Peak. I dashed to the peak I was so excited that words could not describe how exhilarated was to be finally there, probably the best part of the adventure. I stood in front of the view of a lifetime, it was so awesome, I was elated!

After all that hard work, I was exceedingly fatigued, so I decided I would take the cable car back down to Huangshan City. I immediately rushed to the cable car station as fast as my legs could carry me, so I could get a seat, but still I had to wait for another thirty minutes. Finally, I saw one, its number is thirty-two, which is surprisingly my lucky number. I swiftly got on the cable car, then, I rooted around for a seat, luckily, I found a seat, thirty-two really is my lucky number. I was looking around when I spotted some trees in the distance, it wasn't winter, but they were covered ice, they were gorgeous. Next, I saw a stone, when the cable car moved to a different angle, I saw some writing on the stone and some trees, I looked it up on the internet, and it is called the Welcome Pines. Suddenly, the cable car dropped a bit, I was scared half to death. After that, I spotted the area where the two poets Li Bai and Din Fu used to live. At that point I clearly understood why artists of all kinds, visiting over hundreds of years, had their imagination and creativity stimulated. After a few minutes, the cable car ride was about to end, I didn't want to leave, so I took my last photos of Huangshan.

After the long day, I went to a nearby taxi station, and got on one of the taxis. I was so tired that I almost fell asleep in the taxi. After the ride I checked in at the airport, got my ticket and boarded the aeroplane. When I got to my seat, I fell asleep instantly. After the two hours of sleeping, I left the aeroplane, took the taxi home and slept without even changing my clothes.

Last week's adventure was the best experience in my life, now I understand why so many poets and artists got inspired by the beauty of Huangshan, now I'm inspired to write a poem like all the other poets. Huangshan is the best mountain ever!

Lost

St. Joseph's Primary School, Shum, Ignatius – 9

Long time ago, attracted by the charm of Huangshan, an affectionate newly-wed monkey couple went there for honeymoon. Admiring the fascinating picturesque landscape and natural scenery, they decided to settle down in a small hut on the mountain. Being the apple in her husband's eye, the wife was deeply loved by him and they lived together happily. Yet, the husband was so lazy and bone-idle that he didn't even want to lift a finger, let alone did the boring and tedious household chores. The wife, who was kind and virtuous, never complained about her husband failing to lend her a hand. She took care of the family with all efforts and devotion.

At dawn on a misty day, the couple went to a steep cliff for fun where they picked the nits for each other as usual. "What about playing hide-and-seek, dear?" the husband suggested, winking. The wife beamed from ear to ear. "Sure!" she agreed in excitement, as she was overjoyed about her husband proposing to play a game in which running and chasing were expected. "I'll be the catcher!" The husband volunteered in a lopsided grin. The wife blindfolded her husband gently and carefully to ensure that he had no way to cheat in the game. She ran off to hide after she was done. "Twenty-four, twenty-three, twenty-two..." the husband counted behind the bushes. "...one! Here I come!" He shouted at the top of his voice to draw his wife's attention that he was approaching.

He was so impatient to uncover his blindfold and opened his eyes. He ran from here and there, peeping through the crevices of the rocks and jumping up to the apexes of the trees, to look for his wife but it was in vain. While he was thinking about other possible hiding places, a vortex came all of a sudden followed by an eerie silence. The husband was smart. He smelled a rat. He felt a surge of anxiety at this juncture. He recalled the mysterious stories heard about the Bermuda Triangle in the western part of the North Atlantic Ocean. His heart raced like a train. He dived into the sea of clouds at once and searched for his wife frantically from the Lotus Peak down to the valleys and back to the Immortals Bridge. However, to his great disappointment, his wife was nowhere to be found. His eyes watered. He screamed and called his wife hysterically until he lost his voice and fainted. Still, his wife didn't respond. Only echoes of his shouts could be heard.

He got back to the imposing cliff the next morning, sat down as still as a statue, awaiting his wife. It was agonising to find out that his darling had disappeared out of no reason. His heart was aching, his brain was spinning. He closed his eyes, but all he could think about was his dearest. He gazed at the vast, blue sea in front of him with silent tears freely flowed down his cheeks. A series of flashbacks to the days full of joy and laughter emerged from his mind. His wife's whereabouts was a complete unknown to him. Thinking that he might not be able to see his beloved again, he was in despair and let out a gigantic cry.

Ever since then, he was in distress day and night and refused to eat anything. As days went by, he became feeble and weak and finally reduced to nothing but a bag of bones. He was stiffer and stiffer and eventually turned into a rock left on the death-defying cliff facing the sea, watching desperately.

On a day hundreds of years later, a child played truant as he didn't want to take the exam at school. He sneaked into the mountain by himself, wandering around. Suddenly, he had an urge to wee. He looked around for a latrine but couldn't find one. With a smirk, he darted a glance at the bizarre rock. "Ah!" A light bulb went on in his head. His eyes lit up. He snapped his fingers and came up with a mischievous idea. He took off his pants before running over. Accidentally, he slipped on a banana peel and did a backflip when he almost got there. The wee squirted out landed on the rock at its bottom.

Right after the child had left for home, something strange happened to the rock. "Squish! Squish!" It rubbed its toes. Its feet trembled. Its arms shook. Its tummy wobbled. "Plop-plop!" Its heart beat. Its nose wrinkled and its eyes rolled and finally, its brain whirled. "Crack!" The "rock" came back to life! The husband patted himself from head to shoulders, knees and toes. He blinked his eyes, trying hard to regain his lost memory.

The husband was filled with remorse and shame about being so irresponsible and laid-back in the past. Firmly believing that his wife would be back one day, he was determined to turn over a new leaf and make his best endeavor to keep their sweet home clean and tidy. He worked hard every day planting nice and colorful flowers,

pruning branches of the trees, trimming the pines into beautiful shapes, sweeping the leaves off the ground, building the plank walkways along the cliff and managing well the crystal-clear hot spring areas. He seized the time in the small hours to do all these because he had to rush back to the cliff before daybreak, in the hope of his wife's return.

The Couple Pine on the back mountain is actually a gift for the wife by the husband, being a symbol of the everlasting love between the two of them. If you happen to bump into the wife during your visit to Huangshan, bring her back and tell her that her husband has been longing to see her again since her departure.

China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Tang, Austen – 11

Have you ever been to Huang Shan? With its sharp peaks and floating clouds it is a site that you ought to see. But along with its magnificent view and tranquil aura there is something peculiar, even magical about it. You might shrug it off as your imagination but there indeed is something magical hidden in the thick clouds. You might even be able to catch a glimpse of it if you're lucky.

Every morning, when the clouds thin, you may see dim lights moving within the clouds. If you want to catch one of those strange creatures, then you need to move fast as when the clouds thicken again, they'll disappear. "What are they?" you may ask. Listen to this story about a little girl named Jing Hua and find out.

Jing Hua lived in a village near Huang Shan. She was a curious little girl with an extremely creative mind, but her parents thought that her creative mind was somehow a burden. However, the other children in the village liked the stories she told, no matter how unrealistic they may seem. One early morning, she went to the park to play as usual when she spotted a speedy tiny thing buzzing around. She caught it and when she opened her palms, she found a tiny human-like creature with wings. It was a fairy! She always believed that supernatural creatures existed, but this was her first time seeing one. The fairy, eager to escape, flew out of her palms and swiftly flew away. Jing Hua was too shocked to recapture it. She rushed to the other children, "I just found a fairy!" However, all the children looked sceptical. "Oh, do you mean you were dreaming about fairies last night?" one child said, "Because fairies don't actually exist." All the children nodded in agreement. "No, I actually caught one just now," she insisted. Another child replied, "If there really are fairies, then show us." Jing Hua led the children to the spot where she found the fairy but, to her dismay, there wasn't a single one. The children were now convinced that it was just her imagination and continued playing. Jing Hua wanted to prove to the others that fairies did exist, so she decided to catch one.

The next day, she returned to the same spot and waited for the fairy to appear. Fortunately for her, there were multiple fairies flying around and she managed to trap one in a jar. The caught fairy popped out the jar and said, "You've managed to capture me so you may bargain with me. I can give you money, power, fame, anything you can dream of. However, you need to give me something in return and that is your memories, all of them. Don't worry though, you can still make new ones." Jing Hua didn't want to trade her memories so she said, "No way!" The fairy smiled and said, "Congratulations - you passed the test. Memories are what makes us who we are, without them we are just empty shells. Anyone who can't see that is a fool, and you are no fool." The fairy continued, "For successfully passing the test you'll get a trip to the Fairyland..." at that instant, Jing Hua felt dizzy and she went unconscious all of a sudden.

When she awoke, she found herself on a bus. It was not an ordinary bus; it was a flying bus! When the bus stopped, she was greeted by another male fairy. She was told that she could explore the Fairyland as long as she liked and by the time she wanted to leave, she could come back to him. Jing Hua's heart was pounding with excitement and started to explore the island enthusiastically. The Fairyland was situated in the clouds above Huang Shan that only a flying bus could reach. She saw lots of stunning things that she could hardly imagine and made some new fairy friends while exploring the island. Her new friends treated her very well and showed her lots of their magical power. They even treat her with magical fruits that Jing Hua had never seen in her life. Jing Hua was having the time of her life on the island! However she knew that she had to leave sooner or later as her family and friends in the real world would have missed her.

After a week or so, she finally decided to say farewell to her fairy friends. They gave her a bracelet as a sign of their friendship and said, "We hope you like this bracelet and please don't forget all the happy memories here in the Fairyland. We also hope that you can keep everything here a secret." After that, Jing Hua talked to the male fairy who greeted her when she first reached the island and she went unconscious again. This time when she awoke, she was back to the spot where she found the fairy and it appeared not even a single minute had passed. She looked to her wrist and the bracelet was still there, she smiled. Jing Hua didn't tell anyone about her fascinating experience in the Fairyland after that because she knew that no one would believe her after all. It didn't matter now and she'd rather keep this secret to herself, as long as she could think back on them throughout her years as an adult.

Wasn't that a nice story. Even though Jing Hua didn't tell anyone about her unusual journey, she always cherished the memories of her fairy friends and everything that happened in Fairyland. She learned that memories are precious as they always live on, even though the time goes by, our precious memories could never be taken away! Well, that's about it. I would like to tell you another story but it's getting late and I have some errands to run. So goodbye for now and I hope you could create some precious memories with precious people too!

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Tong, Shun Kiu – 10

Huangshan, one of the most famous mountains in China, is renowned for its heavenly scenery and landscape, but do you know what hides on top of these fascinating mountains?

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Fang who lived in a village under Huangshan with his lovely family. Unfortunately, when he was a young kid, his parents went up the mountain one day and never came back. That left only Fang's elder brothers and sisters looking after him.

Fang loved to go up to Huangshan to see the stunning views when he was a kid, but he always heard strange voices when he approached the top of the mountain. Time and again he wanted to look for whom made those noises, but when he almost reached the top the mist and fog was too thick for him to continue searching.

Fang gradually grew into a strong teenager being kind and helpful to his villagers. One day, when he went out to hunt for food for his family, he saw a young man in really nice costumes, riding a horse and trying to hunt some wild animals in a distance. Suddenly Fang saw someone hiding in the woods preparing to shoot that young man with an arrow! Fang immediately raced over and helped the young man to dodge the shot. When the hiding archer tried to escape, Fang helped chase him down and caught him. The young man came over and thanked Fang for saving his life, and revealed that he was the current emperor who came out for a casual hunting. The young emperor was pleased with what Fang did and invited him and his family to the palace. Fang became a good friend of the young emperor and became one of his close bodyguards.

Time flew, the young emperor ruled his country well with the aid of Fang, and after a long time both the emperor and Fang became old. One day at the palace, the old emperor heard from people that there was a mysterious medicine in Huangshan that could enable people to live forever. Amazed by this news, the old emperor sent his most trusted and beloved bodyguard to look for the medicine for him.

After leaving as a teenager, Fang finally came back to Huangshan, a place where he spent his childhood with many good memories. The village he used to live in was vacated and all neighbours were long gone. As he walked up the mountains, all the fascinating views and difficult trails have brought back his feelings from the past. Suddenly he heard that strange voice again and it became louder and louder as Fang approached the top.

Fang became anxious and rush to the source of the voice, and here came the mist and fog again blocking his way. Fang ignored the fog and tried to walk his way up, but as he was not as strong and agile as he was young he was tripped over by a stone on the road and almost fell down the cliff! Luckily a blaze of wind came and took him right to the top of the mountain when the strange voice faded away. He looked around and saw a temple in a distance, and when he walked over he saw two familiar faces welcoming him with open arms – they were his parents!

Stunned by this unbelievable scene, Fang became speechless and could not even think. His parents gave him a big hug and invited him into the temple, where he saw a lot of fairies making magical medicine. His parents told him this was a temple ruled by mountain fairies where they make magical medicine, and these fairies would only occasionally invite normal people, like his parents, to become part of this temple family and shared the medicine with them, which could help them live forever. The flip side of thing was once accepting this offer, one had to stayed in the temple forever to help make medicine and protect the people who might be in danger when visiting the mountain, just like what just happened to Fang.

Fang's parents sincerely invited him to stay and took the medicine to live with them happily forever, but Fang hesitated as he has promised his lifelong friend to bring back the magical medicine for him. What decision Fang would make at the end?

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Tse, Chun-Kiu – 9

My grandpa was secretive. I didn't know if he was just an awful storyteller or he was tremendously forgetful because each time I asked him about the symbol carved into the tree in our garden, he changed his story.

My curiosity grew each time I inquired about the symbol. I began to believe that the photo of Huangshan held the key to the symbol's meaning. I just had to know what grandpa was hiding from me.

One night, I spied at grandpa and saw him take out the Huangshan photo from his drawer. Out of the blue, I saw a blinding light. I took a closer look and saw that grandpa had vanished. Terrified, I quickly ran into my bedroom and tried to process what I had just seen. "Maybe I was just seeing things," I hoped. The next day at breakfast, grandpa reappeared as if nothing had happened.

The day after, while grandpa wasn't looking, I sneaked into grandpa's room and opened his drawer. I took out his Huangshan photo. Then I saw the strangest thing I've ever seen in my entire life. The clouds in the photo were moving! Suddenly, a gust of strong wind whisked me away. "This must be a dream," I thought as I struggled against the wind. Little did I know what happened next would change my life forever.

The wind finally stopped and I gathered enough courage to open my eyes. I was on a mountain, the picture of Huangshan still in my hand. I scanned my surroundings and glanced at the photo. Then the answer hit me like a bullet. I was in Huangshan! The view there was breathtakingly beautiful. There was fog slightly masking the view, making the mountains look like they were floating. As I trekked up the mountain, the view became increasingly stunning. The clouds were like sea waves and the rocks were strangely shaped. "Wow! This place is like heaven..." I pondered as I marveled at the beauty of the mountains.

Suddenly, I heard someone humming a delightful tune. I was so startled that I jumped into the direction of the sound and noticed a dragon-headed man.

"Who are you?" I questioned.

"I am the master of all dragons and the guardian of the wonders of Huangshan." The dragon-headed man replied proudly. "There are many tourists every year but no one seem to notice me. Only those with magic in their blood can see me. By the way, you seem to be lost. I will give you a staff which will guide you out of here."

Then, the dragon-headed man disappeared in a bright flash of light, and a staff, which had a hilt made of fine wood and a crystal ball at the top, appeared in my hands.

I continued to trudge up Huangshan. As the sun began to set, I started to worry. "Mum and dad must be looking for me. I must find a way out of here. But h—" A gigantic roar broke my train of thoughts. I turned around and caught a glimpse of a gigantic human-shaped rock plodding towards me. "I must be hallucinating," I reassured myself. When I realized that I wasn't, I tried to flee for my life. However, I was frozen in shock. When I regained my senses, I fled, until I reached a cliff. There was nowhere I could go. Unexpectedly, the human-shaped rock changed into a humongous ball and started to roll and sped towards me. I felt like I was a skittle and the rock was a bowling ball. "Freeze!" I yelled and my staff instantly glowed and the "bowling ball" came to a halt. I looked at my staff in astonishment and spotted a symbol of a rock engraved on it. "Wow! What is happening?" I gasped.

When I was too exhausted to carry on the tramp, I leaned against the closest tree in sight. I should have checked what tree I was resting on because the moment I leaned on the tree bark, the tree started to shake violently and twined its branches around my arms. I tried to pull away from the branches but I was overpowered. Then I remembered, "My staff!" I tried to do what I did to the monstrous rock but it didn't have much effect on the branches. I began to understand how the staff really worked. "Fire!" I cried. At a blink of an eye, the pine tree erupted into a column of flame. Fortunately, I was unharmed. Once again, I found a symbol engraved on the staff. It was a symbol of a strange pine tree.

I was still in shock when a monkey abruptly grabbed my staff and sprinted away. I darted after it in hot pursuit. Unfortunately, there was mist obscuring my sight. The monkey scurried left and right, throwing me off trail. "I need magic. But without my staff, I had no magic power unless I could summon my staff like Thor." I figured. I concentrated as if my life depended on it. However, I lost my concentration when I felt an intense heat of the hot spring hitting my face.

I didn't realize that the monkey lured me to a hot spring. The monkey was probably tired of the joke, so it dropped my staff. All of a sudden, I heard a rumbling sound. I saw a wave of hot spring crashing towards me. "Protect!" I shouted. An invisible force field surrounded me and luckily, I was uninjured. I looked at my staff and saw it glowing, engraved with the same symbol identical to the one on the tree in my garden. Without warning, a powerful gust of wind engulfed me and, the next thing I knew, I was standing in my bedroom. I heard my mother calling me for dinner. I smiled with the staff in my hand.

Huangshan can really bring one's imagination to the maximum.

Li Bai and the Elixir of Life

St. Joseph's Primary School, Wan, Ethan Ho Yeung – 11

Long ago, in ancient China lived a famous poet named Li Bai. Searching for inspiration, Li Bai travelled all over China exploring its wonderful and vast countryside and his travels were always full of mystery and excitement. Of all these adventures, the hunt for the Elixir of Life on the beautiful and mystical Mount Huangshan, was always his favourite one to tell.

The story began when Li Bai visited the picturesque and quaint Huang Zhen village located at the foot of Mount Huangshan. It was a popular destination among poets and painters, seeking the natural beauty of its idyllic lake, traditional houses, and the enchanting backdrop of Mount Huangshan with its jagged granite formations, misty mountain tops and trees and clinging to its rock faces.

One warm summer evening, while Li Bai was drinking wine and discussing poetry with his friends Du Fu and Meng Hao Ran in the Lotus Blossom Inn, as was his habit during visits to Huang Zhen, the old innkeeper told them the Legend of Mount Huangshan. Legend had it that the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) created the Elixir of Life and hid it on top of Mount Huangshan before ascending to heaven. It was rumoured that anyone who drank the concoction would obtain eternal life. Three sacred gates protected the potion and only answering a question correctly or reciting a beautiful poem would open a gate.

When the innkeeper finished his story, Du Fu and Meng Hao Ran erupted with laughter and dispelled the myth as a child's bedtime tale. Li Bai, as curious as ever, kept his interest silent for fear of sounding foolish. Nevertheless, at that very moment, Li Bai knew he would set off for Mount Huangshan at first light and search for the Elixir of Life.

It was still dark when Li Bai climbed high onto the first mountain ridge as dawn crept over the horizon revealing the black and grey silhouettes of the Mount Huangshan peaks. As the pale morning sun rose, he walked through a densely packed pine forest until a clearing appeared in the distance with, at the far end, the Pine Gate as tall and majestic as the innkeeper's story told. Made of two pine trees standing side by side with a door in the middle made of golden pinecones shimmering in the morning sun. Li Bai was ready to run at the door and knock down the pine cones when a deep voice asked 'What brings you here?'. Li Bai momentarily shocked by the talking door, composed himself and replied 'I search for the Elixir of Life.' After a long silence, the gate responded 'you must answer my question to pass. What is the name of my pine tree species?'. Li Bai thought and carefully answered 'The Huangshan Pine.' The Pine Gate opened and Li Bai walked through the first gate.

As Li Bai continued up the mountain, his surroundings changed from a lush green and brown pine forest to a grey, rocky and barren landscape. The air was getting thinner, and he began to notice strange rock formations, some with monkey's tail, others with a lion's head and even some with a human body. Soon, the Rock Gate appeared in Li Bai's path. It was made of two rocks in the shape of lion heads, blocking his way like an impenetrable fortress. As he approached the gate, it roared 'Answer my question, and you shall pass.' Li Bai replied calmly 'Ask your question!'. The gate roared again 'What is the most famous rock on Mount Huangshan?' Li Bai looked around and answered 'Flying Over Rock.' The two lions retreated with grating noise and allowed Li Bai to pass the second gate.

Li Bai climbed on until he found himself above the clouds. Before long, the Cloud Gate confronted Li Bai. Surprised by how far Li Bai had come, the Cloud Gate set him a very challenge task, 'write me a poem and you may pass.' Undaunted, Li Bai took out a bottle of wine from his bag and drank from it. After heartily drinking the wine, he picked up his brush, ink and parchment and began composing a poem. When Li Bai had finished writing his poem, 'Huangshan After Snow', he read it aloud.

"Over seventy summits, mapped and named, obscured by snow.

Vastly high, to rising sky, lined up, a thousand passes!

Weaponed suits, in furs, on armoured horse – no easy passes –

Battled armies halt: So huge their ride! How far to go!"

Stunned speechless by Li Bai's genius, the Cloud Gate had no choice but to let him pass.

When Li Bai finally reached the vial, he was exhausted. Drinking the potion immediately, and waited. And waited some more, yet nothing came, nothing in him changed. This was a lie! The legend was fake! As he threw the vial against the wall in blind fury, he saw a small piece of parchment lying on the altar where the vial had been. He went to it and read: "To you journeyman, if you are reading this it means you have passed the Cloud Gate. Well done on achieving eternal life. "Huangshan After Snow" will be humanity's treasure for centuries to come and through it, the great Li Bai will forever be remembered.

To this day, every child in China still learns "Huangshan After Snow".

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Wu, Chun Tin – 9

Huangshan is one of China's magical mountains. Huangshan is a mountain range in southern Anhui Province in eastern China. It was originally called “Yishan”, and it was renamed because of a legend that Emperor Xuanyuan once made alchemy here.

The area has diverse flora, where one-third of China's bryophyte families and more than half of its fern families are represented. The Huangshan pine (*Pinus hwangshanensis*) is named after Huangshan and is considered an example of vigor because the trees thrive by growing straight out of the rocks. Many of the pine trees in the area are more than a hundred years old and have been given their own names (such as the Ying Ke Pine, or Welcoming-Guests Pine, which is thought to be more than 1500 years old). The pines vary greatly in shape and size, with the most crooked of the trees being considered the most attractive. Furthermore, Huangshan's moist climate facilitates the growing of tea leaves and the mountain has been called "one of China's premier green tea-growing mountains. Mao feng cha ("Fur Peak Tea"), a well-known local variety of green tea, takes its name from the downy tips of tea leaves found in the Huangshan area.

Huangshan was formed approximately 100 million years ago and gained its unique rock formations in the Quaternary Glaciation.

During the Qin Dynasty, Huangshan was known as Yishan (Mount Yi). In 747 AD, its name was changed to Huangshan (Mount Huang) by imperial decree; the name is commonly thought to have been coined in honor of Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor), a legendary Chinese emperor and the mythological ancestor of the Han Chinese. One legend states that Huangshan was the location from which the Yellow Emperor ascended to Heaven. Another legend states that the Yellow Emperor "cultivated moral character and refined Pills of Immortality in the mountains, and in so doing gave the mountains his name. The first use of this name "Huangshan" often is attributed to Chinese poet Li Bai. Huangshan was fairly inaccessible and little-known in ancient times, but its change of name in 747 AD seems to have brought the area more attention; from then on, the area was visited frequently and many temples were built there.

Huangshan is known for its stone steps, carved into the side of the mountain, of which there may be more than 60,000 throughout the area. The date at which work on the steps began is unknown, but they have been said to be more than 1,500 years old.

Over the years, many scenic spots and physical features on the mountain have been named; many of the names have narratives behind them. For example, one legend tells of a man who did not believe the tales of Huangshan's beauty and went to the mountains to see them; almost immediately, he was converted to the same view. One of the peaks he is said to have visited was named Shixin roughly meaning "start to believe."

Much of Huangshan's reputation derives from its significance in Chinese arts and literature. In addition to inspiring poets such as Li Bai, Huangshan and the scenery therein has been the frequent subject of poetry and artwork, especially Chinese ink painting and, more recently, photography. Overall, from the Tang Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, more than 20,000 poems were written about Huangshan, and a school of painting named after it.

Misty mountains are presented as magical places in stories ranging from *The Lord of the Rings* to the *Avatar* movie. Yet many people don't realize that the concept comes from a real place: the Mountains of the Yellow Emperor in eastern China, now known as Huangshan.

The mountains are breathtakingly beautiful, with their sharp peaks, raised villages and floating clouds. Some of the pine trees are believed to be 1500 years old, and tens of thousands of stone steps may be just as ancient.

A pair of poets, Li Bai and Du Fu, lived on the mountains in the 8th century, and influenced Jack Kerouac and other “beat poets” of 1950s-1960s America.

Even today, the Yellow Mountains are still a huge, mysterious place. Scientists regularly find new species of animals here, and dinosaur bones found in these and other Chinese mountains are the reason that so many stories feature dragons living in secret mountain caves.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yam, Robin – 10

“The plane will be landing in 15 minutes.” That woke me up. I’m Miles Anderson, I’m 11 and I live in LA, USA. It’s now summer. A few weeks ago, my mom decided to put me in a summer camp in China, so here I am, finally in China. Now I just have to figure how to get to camp. On the bus, I met a boy called James. He was also from the USA, from New York and he was also going to my camp. We got along pretty well. 2 hours later. Now we are at the camp. There are about 24 children including us in the camp. The camp director is introducing himself now. I heard his name is old Wong. I don’t know what to think about him. He looks pretty friendly. Beside the camp is a mountain that was out of bounds.

The speech is finally over. “Pick a roommate, and pick a cabin.” There were 12 cabins, each one with a style of the Chinese zodiac animals. “Let’s team up”, said James. “Sure”, I said. What choice do I still have? We wandered around the cabins, trying to pick one, then settled down on the tiger cabin. We both thought it looked cool. We had some activities, like capture the flag with 12 teams, we won, obviously, because James hid our tiger flag 3 feet in a pine tree. The sun’s setting, we ate dinner, sang songs at the campfire and went to bed. In the cabin, James whispered, “Hey Miles”, I responded, “What”. “Let’s watch the stars at the mountain”. I was silent for a bit, then sighed and said, “fine”. Little did we know that that was a bad idea.

The mountain was HUGE. We were basically walking in circles. I started to get cold. “We should go back”, I said. “We’ve just been here for seven minutes!” James exclaimed. The bushes in front of us rustled. “Oh No”, I stuttered. At that suspenseful moment, a humanoid figure appeared in front of us. It had three bulging eyes and claws. I was too shocked to do anything. James said, “We’re done for.” At that moment, suddenly Old Wong appeared and shot a golden beam at the monster and the monster vanished. Old Wong looked gravely at us, and gestured to us to follow him.

We arrived at his office, with peculiar objects all around. He said, “The monster you just saw was very weak. There are even stronger ones out there.” My mind is now exploding from all the confusion. James said, “Wait, what was that monster, and how did you fire a golden beam from your hands? That was so cool.” Old Wong calmly replied, “The monster you saw was an ancient monster from historic China. These monsters ate people everywhere. They were rulers of the world. Until Elemental Warriors came to life. The Elements are wood, fire, water, gold, and earth. Each warrior had one element. I am the last golden warrior. The others went extinct. Until I met you two. You two give off an elemental warrior’s aura. I will test you two.” “Ooookay?”, James said. Then old Wong took a dusty pane of glass from his drawer. “This pane of glass will reveal your elemental power.” He studied us through the glass. “Interesting, Interesting,” he muttered to himself. “James? Is that your name? You are a wooden warrior. Extremely powerful elemental arts can be learned by you.” “Cool! But how can I learn powers?” “I will teach you later,” Old Wong replied. “How about me”, I piped out. My heart is beating strongly with anticipation. “You are very special.” Old Wong said. “You have the form of a water warrior but something hidden is still inside you.” I didn’t mind. Water was cool to me. “I will now teach you basic forms of elemental arts. To use the most powerful move of your respectful elements, you have to pass the Elemental Trial that needs you to perform your moves perfectly. Many have failed this test. The chance to pass is minimum and you can only do the trial once. Think wisely when to do the trial. Now go to bed.”

We woke up late next morning, our heads clouded with the words Old Wong spoke last night. The day passed by and we met up at Old Wong’s office by 10pm. He had already set up jars for us to break and cups to knock over. Old Wong taught me how to summon water and shoot it, and turning myself into water in wet places. He taught James how to summon pointy roots out of the ground and camouflaging himself. A few days later, we were ready for the trial. It was hard. We needed to perform all the things we knew on the mountain. We barely scraped through. But we did it. The final and strongest move came to us. We just could do it like we’ve done it hundreds of times. My move was “The striking tide” Water will appear everywhere and I could turn into water and re-form and strike over and over. James’s move was “guardian of the forest”. Thick, sharp roots will come from the ground non-stop to strike the enemy.

Next morning, the whole camp was gone. Even old wong. There was a slip of paper.
Come into the mountain to find your friends

“ Oh no”, James said. We had no choice. We entered the mountain. We defeated all the monsters that blocked our way. Then we reached a cave entrance. We heard voices and screams inside. “Our campmates and old wong should be in there!” We rushed inside the cave. It was littered with bones. It was horrible. At the end of the cave, we saw an armour-clad three-eyed monster. It was feasting on pork. The campers were in a bundle right beside him. “ Hey!” I shouted . “ Give our friends back!” The monster looked at us. “ HAHAAHAHAHA” He boomed. “You think I will give my prey away so easily ?” He grinned devilishly. “ You have fallen into a trap!”

Ferocious monsters appeared around us. I suddenly remembered what old Wong said about my hidden capabilities. I felt a burst of power. Suddenly, the five elements all surrounded me. “Elemental Blast!” Those words came to my head. A rainbow beam destroyed every monster, and I realised my eyes were glowing and I was levitating. “Wha-” The big goon said. “ Ultra striking tide!” I roared. The poor monster didn’t even have a chance. Poor guy. “That. Was. Amazing.” said James. We rescued old wong and the campers, which saw the whole scene, thanked me (and James) for rescuing them and old wong gave me and James a medal for bravery.

I have never forgotten this moment in my life. It was my most special day. I hope you enjoyed this recount.
Miles Anderson, out.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yau, Tsz Wai – 12

Mysteries are something stored behind the world, waiting for someone to search, study and look into. As time pass by, the mysteries become more and more valuable. Until present, most mysteries are discovered, but are all found? I don't think so. Lots of secrets are still hiding from the humans, and that includes: Tales from China's Magical Mountains.

The misty, mystifying, magical mountain, also known as Huang Shan, is a place well known for its secrets. Even though experts came and investigate this movie-like mountains, they only found some new species of animals and dinosaur fossils. But something that is arduous for scientists to discover is the past. What happened to the hills during the ancient days? Did a hurricane occur in the 18th century at the mountains? I guess that only what is left, could explain it all.

Li Bai, a famous poet among China and overseas, claimed that he has written thousands of poems, but what is left is barely a thousand. Out of a thousand, there were a few poems that described and 'drawn' Huang Shan. Li Bai exaggerated the description by mentioning the hill as 4000 inches tall. The water splashing down in the waterfall was plain sweet. Birds were chirping wonderful melodies on some weird shaped, pine trees that could be only found on the very top of the mountain. Its roots are tightened up into the large, hard, dry rocks.

Well, you might as well think that's not a secret that's just something you feel when you arrive at the very top of the mountain. But here's something that is weird: an oval rock that is standing up in the middle on a plain rock! Many people think that was a rock that landed from the endless sky. Others think that it was formed naturally. But I guess no one can know what is all the mystery behind this weird rock, as we have no clue either than its weird shape and position.

Well, after we've have explored these secrets, what do you think is the secret behind all of this? Maybe it's not the secret you thought, you expected. Maybe the secret is actually something that is shown obviously, the secret that only Li Bai and another few poet actually experienced, the secret that what this mountain is trying to tell us: the feeling on top of the misty mountain. Is that what Li Bai is hiding from his poems? It's wonderful feeling, it's peaceful atmosphere? Is that what the nature is trying to hide? it's beauty, it's refreshing surroundings?

I've never been there, but I think I could feel it. I could feel as if I'm on top of that spectacular mountain, looking far away into the distance of the horizon, feeling grateful that the secret is finally found.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yip, Cheuk Him Jonathan – 11

Far far away, in the misty, steep, mysterious Yellow Mountains, there lived a family of four in a tiny wooden hut. They were amazingly poor. While their ancestors had little money for them to inherit, they could only rely on the small amount of money the father earned from selling wood in the market miles away. Every day, the father carried the wood he chopped on his back and walked on foot to the market, so he could only receive insufficient income, barely enough to feed his family. The two children, one boy named Huang, and one girl called Shan, were amiable and sympathetic. They did their best to support the family, though they could only help their father chop wood. The family relied on natural resources such as fresh water from wells and fire to cook. Life was as hard as stone for this family, but yet they were still thankful for living.

One day, the children found an old woodcutter leaning against a tree when they were helping their father out. The children immediately cried out for their dad who he came rushing to them. Huang suggested, 'Dad, please take this poor woodcutter home. He is badly injured.' Dad agreed with his son, 'Please help me carry him home. I am proud to have a son so helpful and caring.' The three of them lifted the woodcutter back home. It was a tough journey, as there were mountains and mountains to climb. As soon as they got home, Shan fed a cup of tea to the woodcutter, and he said, 'Thank you, kind-hearted girl.' With the primitive equipment they made for themselves, Huang and Shan cleaned the woodcutter's wounds and gave him a chair to sit on. Though they were not professional, they did the job out of heart. They did not see how the woodcutter smirked with satisfaction while sipping the cup of tea. By the time Shan returned to the room, the woodcutter had vanished completely. Shan wondered, 'Where did he go?'

The next day, the hard-working children were helping in the woods again. 'You really need not to help me.' The two children both said, 'We would love to! We can only help little, but we will do our best.' Deep down in Dad's heart, he loved the children dearly and appreciated their diligent attitude. Out of surprise, the children spotted a farmer staggering on his feet, just like he was going to fall any second. The children could just let the farmer fall and die to save their energy and resources on offering help, but they had a responsible heart and they could not allow an old farmer to die in front of them. They dashed to the farmer and supported him as they toddled towards Dad. Like yesterday, they nursed the farmer at home and made him as comfortable as in his own home. Mum took care of the farmer and comforted him. The farmer thanked the family, 'Thank you so much for your aid. You are all helpful.' Afterwards, he stepped into the small washroom and closed the door. When the children opened the door, there was no one in it.

The day after, the children were walking into the endless mountain ranges as they heard a woman yelling. They found a chubby woman lying on the ground. They asked, 'What happened?'

The woman shouted, 'A robber hit me and stole my belongings!' Dad and the children lifted the lady home, which was a rather hard thing as the lady was quite heavy. All along the way, the lady yelled and shouted and roared, 'Walk more slowly! You are hurting me! Do not run! It hurts!' Back at home, the lady was still snapping, 'Where is the tea?! Where is the armchair?! Your house is terrible!!' The family did their best to satisfy her, but it was impossible. The more the lady complained and grumbled, the more Dad got frustrated. 'Why don't we just kick her out? I still have to walk to the market to sell my wood!' But the generous Huang and Shan disagreed, 'She may be grumpy, but we think we should still help her because she was robbed! We should do our best.' Dad nodded his head.

After they had helped the lady, she calmed down. She stood up and in everyone's amazement, transformed to an old man. He wielded a staff, with jewels, wore a thick red robe and had long, white beards. He was glowing and shining as he said, 'Thank you, all four of you. I am the guardian of the Yellow mountains. I was before, a member of the Yellow Emperor's close guard. He made me the guardian of these mountains you live in. Actually, the woodcutter, farmer and lady were all forms of myself. I transformed into characters to test your care and kindness. Although the lady was a bit rude, you all took good care of her and made her feel comfortable. To repay your kindness, I would present to you the golden cat statue. It has powerful abilities, if you need money, shake it and you will find bills at the bottom of the statue. You will never be poor again. Use this fortune to help others, as I trust you will. Good luck!' Then he vanished into the thin air.

After this incident, the family were never poor again. The parents did not need to work again. They often donated to charities to help children. The two children Huang and Shan both became teachers when they grew up. They were kind to students and helped many students to success in business. The family now lives in Shanghai, but they will never ever forget the place where they made their fortune, where they were brought up, where they helped numerous strangers - the misty, steep, mysterious Yellow Mountains.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yu, Chung Wang Ethan – 10

Have you ever travelled to the majestic Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) before? It has thousands of steep, jagged, magnificent peaks, all of which are extremely tall, reaching 1 kilometer tall, with several different species of native, unique trees and flora.

If you have travelled to Huangshan, have you ever noticed a small cave hidden in the side of one of the peaks? Legends say that it once was a temple with precious treasures inside, but also filled with traps and puzzles.

One day, a Chinese knight decided to reveal the mysteries of the cave for all humanity and prepared to descend into the mysterious cave.

That day, the sun was shining brightly, and the earth that was as moist as a wet sponge seemed to become scorched by the sun's strong rays. The brave, courageous knight, armed with a traditional Chinese spear and wearing a suit of shining copper armour, used a strong rope to hook onto the more stable rocks of the peak, and started to climb up the jagged rocks to reach the entrance of the cave, which was nestled on top of a wide platform of rock. The rocks of the peak crumbled and tumbled off the steep cliffs, but the keen knight focused on his quest and persevered until he reached a stable platform of rock to rest, or so he thought.....

All of a sudden, the platform started to break apart! The knight scrambled to climb up and away from the chaos, and miraculously climbed up towards the mouth of the cave! Panting and still out of breath from the incident, he sharpened his spear with the tough rocks and carefully walked into the cave. Inside was a flight of wooden stairs leading down into a large cavern. The knight, though, did not walk on the stairs. Instead, he used his rope to carefully descend down the shaft in the middle. Once his foot accidentally brushed the rough surface of the stairs, however, spikes suddenly stretched out of the stairs! The knight swung away from the spikes and never touched the stairs again.

Once he had descended to the bottom of the stairs, he carefully shifted forward. Right in front of him was a giant maze made of ancient terracotta bricks! Although he was smart and patient, the knight could not navigate the maze. He instead used his sword to break the highly decorated terracotta bricks, creating a passageway through the maze.

When he broke down another section of the maze, however, a void walker walked out! In Chinese mythology, void walkers were masters of darkness, capable of harnessing the energy of the earth to attack intruders! The knight backed away, but it was clear that the void walker was angry. In a flash, it summoned a stone tornado at him! The knight began swirling and swirling around the complex maze, shattering walls of terracotta along the way. But the knight didn't panic. He aimed his spear and shot it at the void walker. The void walker was instantly impaled, and the tornado soon disappeared into the earth. The knight pulled his spear back out and continued forward cautiously.

After passing through the maze, the knight glanced around. He saw entrances to three rooms, each one filled to the brim with treasures such as jades, diamonds, copper, silver, gold and amethyst. Hanging on the walls of the cave were beautiful Chinese landscape paintings, and delicate sculptures were laid next to the precious stones. Even the floors were made of jade! The knight was stunned for a while, then began to rummage through a pile of gold to find more valuable hidden treasures.

After a while, the knight found a dusty treasure box encrusted with jades, and when he opened it, he could hardly believe his eyes, inside were the legendary Pills Of Immortality! Pills Of Immortality were legendary pills that could grant the user a long life! All the Chinese Emperors have searched for it, but none ever succeeded. The knight could hardly believe that he found not only one, but three! He took one out and inspected it carefully, as if he thought they were fakes. But when he saw a flowing brown Immortality Water inside a pill, he instantly consumed one. Suddenly, he felt as if he could never die! He immediately stored the pills carefully in the box and took it with him.

When the knight reached the last room filled to the brim with treasures, he glanced at an ancient orb made of jade. When he polished it with his armor, he saw a hidden doorway open in the room! He immediately entered the hidden room and saw an ancient altar there. Out of curiosity, he put the ancient orb in a dent on top of the altar. It fit in perfectly. But as people always say, curiosity kills the cat.....

All of a sudden, a skeleton formed from a pile of bones! The skeleton attacked the knight, who, expecting the pill to be effective, aimed his spear at the skeleton casually. However, the skeleton impaled the knight with his bones! Somehow, the skeleton had also consumed a Pill Of Immortality! The knight, who was heavily wounded, knew that he was helpless, so, in an act of extreme valor, he stabbed himself with the pointed, sharp spear, and committed suicide.

After people knew of the death of the courageous knight, there was mourning throughout the world, for Earth had lost one of their children: one that revealed the secret of the cave hidden in Huangshan.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yu, Sin Ki – 10

"Wake up, Chan Ping! It's time to wake up!" Mum hollered at me. I woke up reluctantly because I was tired. After eating breakfast, I felt bored and had nothing to do. All of a sudden, someone knocked on my door. "Who is it?" I wondered. I opened the door and found out it was my friend, Wong Shing. He asked me excitedly, "Do you want to visit the Yellow Mountains with me now? I know that you have never gone there before. After all, we're having school holidays, I'm sure we can go there for our vacation." I was extremely thrilled and delighted as I jumped up and down. I replied, "Sure!" I immediately looked forward to visiting the Yellow Mountains. My family and I lived in a small village near the Mountains but I had never been there before.

I asked Mum, "Can I visit the Yellow Mountains with Wong Shing for a few days?" She agreed. I packed all the belongings and was now ready to go. I said "bye" to her and left home. While we were hiking in the Mountains, I noticed a lot of special rocks. They were in different shapes and I felt curious. When we went up higher, we rested in a pavilion. I gazed at a flock of beautiful birds flying in the endless sky and we even took photos of them. We then strolled leisurely to reach the top. At dusk, we arrived at our destination. We saw a [spectacular](#) sunset there. It was red and orange and the scenery was very attractive. We enjoyed it very much. At night, we stayed in a hostel in the Mountains and relaxed ourselves by bathing in the hot springs. They were called the Springs of Youth.

The next morning, we woke up early and planned to see the amazing sunrise. We stretched and ate some bun. However, the thick fog blocked our path. When it disappeared, something happened unexpectedly. Wong Shing disappeared. I felt nervous and shivers ran down my spine. My heart pounded in my chest and I cried loudly. I was miserable and nobody came to help me. "What should I do?" I pondered. I walked anxiously as my hands began to tremble.

Walking along the path, I came into a dark, creepy forest. I heard snakes hissing and it made me feel terrified. Suddenly, a boy was behind me and asked me frightenedly, "Who...Who are you? Why are you here?" I answered, "My name is Chan Ping. I am having a trip in the Yellow Mountains. But I lost my way and my buddy is missing." He shone a bright light into my eyes and I fainted. After a period of time, the boy nudged me and I was awakened. He said to me gladly, "How are you? I'm Li Ming. Do you remember me?" He was nice to me and used his magic carpet to take me around. I found that I was in a paradise on the Yellow Mountains. It was a wonderful and peaceful place. I could see abundant colourful flowers and green trees growing everywhere. Different kinds of animals played happily in a garden. Also, I could hear birds singing and see butterflies dancing in the air. People lived together in perfect harmony. After that, we played some ball games and chatted about our lives happily. Li Ming invited me to have lunch with him. He grew vegetables himself and they were so crunchy. More, there were fresh meat and fish and they were delicious. I certainly liked to eat the food.

After lunch, we rested near the pond. I found a treasure map accidentally. It was crinkled and yellowed with age. We looked at the map and followed the instruction carefully. Following the route, we went into a cave. Then we decided to explore it. The cave was pitch black and smelt earthy. The rocks inside were slimy and I could also hear the sound of water, drip-drip and drip. I noticed a baby dragon inside the cave. I was worried but Li Ming told me that it won't hurt humans. At the end of the cave, we found a big chest and we opened it without hesitation. It was a log of a poet, Li Bai. He recorded his life in the Yellow Mountains and wrote a lot of graceful poems about the Mountains. All the poems were not open to people and they were valuable. Li Ming grinned and said that it was a gift for me. I was astonished and kept it safely.

Surprisingly, I heard someone shouting "Chan Ping, where are you?" He was my friend, Wong Shing! I had to meet him and go back home as soon as possible. Although I wanted to stay in the Mountains longer, I missed my family very much. I said farewell to Li Ming and thanked for his help. He waved goodbye to me and said, "Our paradise is a secret place and no humans have been here before. Please promise me not to tell the others about our life." I nodded sincerely. I ran down the Mountains and tried to join my friend. However, I couldn't find him anywhere and I felt disappointed. I was exhausted, rested under a pine tree and fell asleep..... "Wake up, Chan Ping! Are you alright? Where have you been?" someone exclaimed. I opened my eyes and Wong Shing was in front of me! I could see him again and I was highly delighted. We darted back home and reached our village at last.

To this very day, I could still remember the unforgettable adventures in the Yellow Mountains. Whenever I read Li Bai's log, it brought me back to the days.

China's Magical mountains

St. Mary's Canossian College, Chan, Annabelle – 11

“Good morning,” The mountain grumbled.

The fog came over, “Hello, my friend We haven’t talked in a bit. Ever since the Emperor came, you’ve been silent.”

The mountain hurried to answer, “Forgive me, I’ve been thinking about important events.”

The fog moved closer, “What has troubled you, my friend? You seem more frustrated than you were in the Yuan dynasty.”

“I am not frustrated, and the Yuan dynasty was seventy years ago, it has been long past me.” The mountain muttered.

“Yes, remember the soldier in...which dynasty was it? Never mind. But I remember the Golden Sword of the Emperor, a mighty weapon, wasn’t it?” The fog continued.

“Of course it was.” The mountain mumbled absently. Suddenly, footsteps became clearer. The mountain peered through his chatty friend and saw a humans stomping up the rock stairs.

The fog intensified and obscured the mountain’s view. He bit back a rude comment and continued to sit still.

“This is where we’ll start digging.” A man barked, “Listen up! We’re going to try and find the sword here!”

The fog turned to the mountain. “My friend, I saw a woman travelling with men. How odd? They’re also holding enormous cases. I wonder what they are doing.”

The mountain ignored him and studied them. His friend was right, there was a young woman travelling with men. The mountain watched as she stepped forward to help, only to retrace her steps to lean on a tree. Her expression was unreadable so he focused on the people. They unloaded tools and started putting them on the dirt. He decided to send the fog to inspect them. His friend went at once.

The fog returned instantly floating with excitement, “They are searching for a specific item...a golden sword! Yes ,also, they are ar-chee-o-lo-gists.” The fog pronounced carefully, then returned to his chatter, “What is that? Humans these days, how amusing.”

The mountain gasped, “A golden sword? Is the sword the Emperor’s?”

The fog chuckled, “You are wise, friend. All those years have come into use, yes?” Then, both stayed silent until the fog spoke up.

“Oh! The Emperor’s sword, it was written on a sheet of paper.”

The mountain sighed and the girl’s head snapped towards their direction. They stayed still. She returned looking at the view afterwards.

They resumed talking, but controlled their volume so as to not let anyone know.

“She can hear us.” The fog stated excitedly. The mountain’s voice held a tone of disappointment, “Why are you excited?” The fog stopped talking all of a sudden.

“This isn’t the right place! This isn’t the right place to dig! The sword is a few miles away, I know for certain.” He exclaimed as the mountain shushed him.

“What are we going to do then?” The fog asked.

Just then, their old friend Wind flew by, greeting them as she went.

“I have an idea,” The mountain thought aloud and called their friend back.

“Why are we doing this?” Wind asked. The mountain and fog stared at each other in dismay. The wind laughed breezily, “Ah, stop. I’ll do it. Although, my schedule today...”

The fog interrupted, “You were saying?” The wind nodded and flew towards the group.

Both watched as the girl’s hat blew towards where the sword laid. The girl touched her head and smiled. She hurried to pick it up, only to examine the dirt for a moment and leave.

“I hope it works,” The wind said, startling the duo. “The girl has potential, it’s too sad for something so precious to be left in the dirt.” She gazed sadly at the girl who sat under a tree. When the girl examined the dirt once again, the wind had disappeared.

The next day arrived, and the mountain and fog had spent all night talking to each other about a plan.

In the afternoon, the pine trees shook towards the sword. The branches let the sun shine on the dirt. The fog had surrounded the other places. The mountain couldn’t do anything but watch. The oldest tree panted, “Is the girl even looking?” The girl turned as soon as he said that. Everyone’s hopes lifted, maybe she would notice after all!

When she turned around, the temperature seemed to drop. The mountain flashed the fog a look of distress. The pine trees sneered at the mountain, “Your plan was foolish. It made us all waste time, you better think it through the next time you ask me for help.” They returned to their inanimate state. The fog turned towards the mountain, “I’m sorry, but I’ll also be away for a while.” He said as he dispersed.

The mountain was too in shock to comprehend what happened in a few short seconds. He had never felt like this...hopeless. He was filled with guilt and anguish. For the rest of the day, he slept as to not think of his issues.

The mountain yawned, how long did he sleep? He wondered. “Everyone!” He heard a bark, it was the man. He slowly focused on the group huddled around him.

“We’re going to go back tomorrow and report to the others. Understood?” The people started conversing but the mountain focused on the girl. She looked dejected, just like the mountain when he was deserted by his friends.

‘No, no, no. I must tell her.’ The mountain thought to himself determinedly. As soon as the girl stood close to the mountain, he whispered, “The sword is buried between those rocks and pine trees in your northwest direction.” The girl immediately perked up and stared behind her, only to see grass swaying in the breeze.

The mountain prepared for the worst and returned his original form.

One...

Two...

Three...

The fourth minute went by, and the mountain began to lose hope. “That’s the Sword!” Someone screamed. Other people started shoving forward. “She’s got the sword!” “Who?” “The girl!”

The mountain almost shouted in excitement. “How did you...” The man stepped forward. The girl smiled, “I just needed a little guidance,” She looked directly at the mountain.

If mountains could smile, he would’ve smiled brighter than the sun and moon combined.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Mary's Canossian College, Pun, Phoebe – 11

Tim was a student studying at Joyful Elementary School. Today, his teacher gave a class assignment. “Yesterday, I came across a writing competition. I want all of you to participate,” his teacher said while giving out the application form. “You need to create an adventure story. Even if you don’t want to enroll in the competition, you still need to write the story since it would be graded.” The whole class groaned but did not dare to defy. For the whole lesson, Tim racked his brain for ideas.

When the school bell rang, Tim grabbed his bag and dashed home. After gobbling down his lunch, Tim rushed into his attic for inspiration for his story. Suddenly he kicked something in the room. “A mirror?” he murmured. Little did he know, that mirror was a magic mirror. Just then, the mirror flashed a gleaming white light. An unknown force tried to suck Tim into it. Tim tried to run for his dear life but was soon sucked back. The sucking felt like a weird sensation. It was like falling into a deep dark pit. “Ahh!” Tim let out a scream when he was thrown to the ground heavily. The centrifugal force was too much for him.

When he came to his senses, he found out that he was not in his house anymore. “Where am I? What am I doing here?” he thought. He then looked at the countless peaks around him, and the clouds and fog rolling on top of them. Of course, he could also notice the steep walls of the hills and little huts with no one living in them. “Could it be?” he thought aloud. These pictures seemed so familiar. He had seen them somewhere, perhaps in his class book... “Aha! I got it! I’m in the Yellow Mountains!” he was in awe of the natural beauty in front of his eyes. Apart from the occasional chirps from the birds, the whole place was still. It was like in a fairyland. Tim started to wander off and explore the place. As he was wandering, a giant hut caught his attention. The hut was covered with moss. Inside it, a whirring sound could be heard. Through the windows, he saw a lot of gadgets and devices. Tim leaned against the wall but accidentally pushed a button. The button made a loud beeping sound. “Who’s that?” the man in the house growled and opened the door. Tim quickly tried to dart behind a large rock near the house, but it was no avail and he had been found. The man wore a white robe, looked rather like a scientist. “Don’t come near!” he warned, staring at Tim with anger. “What...what do you want? Who are you?” Tim asked timidly with fear. The man replied darkly. “My name is Jullbooth. I’m a scientist. Originally, I keep my actions secret. But now that you’ve found me, I’ve decided to tell you my plan before I kill you! I planned to ruin the world with this paper-force-bomb!”

Tim asked curiously, “Why?” Jullbooth spat, “Shut up! Now, I give you two choices. You either become my apprentice and never leave this place or die here.” Tim screamed in desperation, “I’d rather die fighting here with you!” However, he knew that he had to do something, or else the world will be in ruins. So when Jullbooth wasn’t aware, he leaned forward and tried to tear the bomb. “You gnat! You gnat!” the scientist screamed. He took out a laser-shooting device and aimed at Tim with eyes full of menace and hatred.

“Pew!” An ear-piercing noise could be heard from miles away. There was a gleaming light. The scientist shot out a laser. Tim knew he had to duck, or he’d die. As he ducked, he lost his balance and was about to fall into the deep cliff. Hopelessly he reached out his hand. Luckily, he caught hold of a twig that stuck out of the cliff and pulled his body towards the edge. The scientist shot out another laser. Tim quickly said something to distract the scientist as his hands scrambled to find a gap in the rock surface. As he was in a panic, the scientist took advantage and aimed against his head. Suddenly it became misty, which gave a chance for Tim. Tim immediately yanked himself up on the edge of the mountain and knocked the laser device out of the scientist’s hand. With a mighty grunt, Tim seized it and threw it out forcibly. The scientist let out an angry growl. With a swipe of his hands, countless knives flew out. Tim ducked, dodged and slid. Fortunately, the knives missed and struck against some trees. “Think, Tim, think,” Tim muttered to himself. “You are no competition against Jullbooth. To save the world, you must use your smart brain.”

“Wait!” panted Tim. “What again?” Jullbooth spat. “I, um, have decided to be your apprentice!” Tim said. Jullbooth’s eyebrows shifted. “Sure, well then,” he replied. Tim smirked. “To be a good apprentice, I should love my master,” Tim began, “To display my love, I am going to give you a hug!” Then they both ran towards each other. However, the so-called ‘hug’ was a wrestle. “Ha! Silly guy! I will not let you destroy the world!” Tim shouted. Then with all his might, he started wrestling Jullbooth to the ground. As Jullbooth struggled to stand up, he lost his balance and fell off the mountain edge.

Suddenly, he felt that he was shaken violently, causing him to shut his eyes. When he opened them again, he saw his parents and his sister were standing around him. “Why are you sleeping in the attic? Are you fine? Go back to your room now!” They said. Tim muttered, “I’m fine.” But deep inside, Tim was more excited than ever. He just been through a vivid journey. Furthermore, he knew exactly what to write in his adventure story.

Why is Huangshan so misty at dawn?

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Chan, Chung Sze Josephine – 9

Once upon a time, there was a nocturnal dragon called Pao which blew mist. He lived in the forest of Huangshan and his duty was to blow mist into the air to keep the mountains humid so there would be no drought.

One day, the Jade Emperor and his courtiers came to earth to visit. While the Jade Emperor was bathing in the river, Pao was bored and suddenly he had a naughty idea! He blew a puff of mist onto the Jade Emperor's robe. When the Jade Emperor found that his robe was soaked after bathing, he was furious. "How dare you wet my clothes!" he roared like a lion. Pao was shocked as he did not know that wetting the Jade Emperor's clothes would get him into trouble. "You are sentenced to jail for a hundred years!" yelled the Jade Emperor. Pao sadly went to prison. "A hundred years is so long!" he sighed, "What will I do here?"

Without Pao's mist, Huangshan gradually turned arid. There were many droughts. Many people starved in a great famine. One day, a villager accidentally left some burning coal in the forest which caused a forest fire. The fire was so strong that the mountains almost burned up, the river dried up, and all the pine trees and granite stone pillars screamed for help! "We've been here for a thousand years! Please don't let us burn down!" they cried. They were so badly scorched that they turned into crooked shapes lining the mountains.

The Lord of the Rivers came up to the heaven to inform the Jade Emperor of the fire and the dried river. When the Jade Emperor looked down from his palace and saw Huangshan burning up, he changed his mind. He ordered the guard to take Pao to his palace and told him, "I'll set you free if you put out the fire." Pao nodded and said, "Yes, your majesty!" Pao flew to Huangshan and took a deep breath and blew out a torrent of mist at the fire, but the fire was so strong that the mist evaporated! Pao frowned. Putting out the fire was going to be hard!

Suddenly, Pao heard someone screaming. He turned around and saw a baby from the mountain village surrounded by fire! Pao flew to the baby and rescued him from the blaze. He took the baby to his mother, who was calling out to her baby. "Thank you!" cried the mother. Then she gasped, "Oh no! The fire is burning our houses!" Pao picked up all the villagers and animals and evacuated them to the bottom of the mountains.

Pao took a big gulp of water from the lake near Huangshan and dumped the water onto the fire. After several rounds of dumping the water from his mouth, Pao extinguished the fire. The villagers were very relieved and all thankful to Pao. They hosted a big celebration party. The noise and commotion rose up to heaven into the Jade Emperor's ears. The Jade Emperor descended to Huangshan again and he was satisfied to see that Pao had put out the fire. So he released Pao from prison and told him to keep puffing out mist every night. Since then, Pao has been puffing out mist over the Huangshan at night. When it goes to bed at sunrise, the mist begins to disappear.

Nowadays, when tourists hike up Huangshan at dawn, they always encounter lots of mist. But they do not know where the mist really comes from because when they arrive, Pao has already been fast asleep!

Visiting Huangshan for the First Time

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Ho, Ka Wan Alicia – 9

'We're here!' announced the tour guide, as everyone climbed off the bus. A gust of icy wind blew onto my face.

A breath-taking sight greeted me. A blanket of thin snow surrounded me. Only bits of grass were visible. There were frost edged around the crystal clear streams. Misty clouds were covering the peak of the Huangshan Mountains.

We followed the tour guide up the hiking trail. My parents were fascinated by the history of the Huangshan Mountains explained by the tour guide.

The tour guide led us to the entrance of Hushan Mystery Cave. We went inside together. It was cold and damp there. Water was dripping and the echo was bouncing off the walls. We took our flashlights out of our backpacks and turned them on. I gaped in awe, 'it's beautiful!'. Hanging from the ceiling were stalactites, and I was worried that they might fall. However, I just could not resist admiring them, the unique shapes and sizes.

At last, we got out of the eerie cave, the tour guide hiked up a trail and we followed him. I turned to my left to see how high we were. I felt a sudden dizziness. We were so high up that the tour bus down the hill seemed as small as an ant, and people down there were tiny black dots. The bright side was, the view was spectacular. As we crossed a bridge, I twirled around. The other Huangshan Mountains stood proudly together, and on top of them was a sea of clouds, and I pictured myself living up there, spending all my time walking on the clouds.

'Oi!' The boy behind me was fuming, he said, 'Walk faster, you dolt!'

Embarrassed, I did what he told me. Although I knew that that impolite person was making a face at me, I ignored him and enjoyed the scenery instead.

At first, I felt energetic and was bouncing around and humming to myself. Moments later, I was so worn out of hiking that my feet ached. I kept saying to myself, 'you're almost there! Don't give up!' I resisted the urge to groan and moan to my parents because I knew it would not do any good.

After what seemed like hours later, I saw a wooden roof. Then, more and more appeared. I could not hold my excitement anymore, I was going to shout 'I did it! We're there!' But then I remembered there was a grumpy person behind me so I stayed silent. I walked faster and faster until I was side-by-side to the tour guide. Dad and Mom probably thought I was interested in the tour guide's presentation as they clasped their hands together and murmured, 'our little boy is becoming more mature! He now appreciates stories about history!' I just rolled my eyes and focused on the walk.

At last, we came to a stop. The Huangshan Village was old-fashioned, and houses were made of wood and bricks. There were some farms, where wheat was just ready for harvest. I spotted the villagers. When they saw us, they ushered us to their house for tea straight away.

We were divided into different groups and each group had to follow one villager to his house. I went into a villager's house and it was warm and cozy inside. I took off my parka and rubbed my hands as a villager passed me a mug of Huangshan Maofeng tea. Mmm! I licked my lips. It was warm and scented with a pleasant aroma.

After a while, we departed the village and continued our journey to the peak of the mountain. Yes, I did feel better after a recharge in the village, but I was still exhausted. I wished I had bought a thermos bottle with me so I could sip some hot tea anytime. It grew colder and colder as time went by.

We walked and walked until we were a few steps away from the top of the mountain. As we reached the top, everyone whooped with joy. We made it!

I leaned against a signpost, astonished that we hiked up the Huangshan mountain in two hours! However, it was all worthwhile. I glanced at my watch. It was five o'clock. The magnificent sunset was happening right in front of me. The orange ball was slowly setting behind the mountains. It was a stunning sight.

'Hey,' It was the person who was behind me during the journey. He looked sorry. 'What do you want?' I asked, with a hint of annoyance. 'I'm so sorry I yelled at you just now. I was just too tired,' said the boy. 'It's fine. Nobody's perfect.' I comforted him. The boy smiled weakly, and I grinned back.

After half an hour of taking pictures and sightseeing, it was finally time to leave this beautiful place. We were divided into different groups again and hopped on peak trams. I sat on the same cable car with my parents. I fell asleep during the ride.

When the cable car stopped, I woke up with a start. We got off the cable and went into the tour bus. This time, I sat with my new friend, Paul. He was the person who talked to me earlier. We chatted and played games.

When we were back at the hotel, we immediately asked our parents if we could have dinner together. They agreed.

This was the best day ever. I did not only get to hike up the Huangshan Mountains for the first time, but I also made a new friend!

Tales From China's Magical Mountains

St. Paul's Convent School, Primary Section, Tang, Sze Nga Nicole – 11

The Yellow Mountains (Huangshan) is a world- renowned tourist attraction in China. However, I would never have expected that this special place could be related to me. You may be surprised once you hear my story.

My name is Bo Li. According to my father, I am the twenty-eighth generation descendent of Li Bai, the famous Chinese poet who lived during the Tang dynasty. My mother passed away when I was a kid and I was born and raised by my father in the United States. My father claimed that he was a writer back in China but he had to give up his writing after moving to the US. I adore writing essays and poems, but my father kept repeating that I could never survive as a writer. I suppose he had that idea based on his own bitter experiences, but I tried not to let him deter me from chasing my dreams.

When I studied at the university, my father sternly insisted that I should pursue my studies in Business rather than English. He wanted me to succeed as a well-off businesswoman rather than struggle as a poor poet. Finally, he reluctantly agreed to let me take my major in English. Unfortunately, just a few years later my father became sick and passed away. In his will, he wrote that I should make a trip to the Yellow Mountains to find not only my roots but also to learn more about my forefathers. I was told that he had grown up in a small village nestled high up on a mountain peak. I still remembered that whenever I asked my father about my grandparents, he would share with me the childhood tales he had heard from my grandfather. The memories of his soft voice and kind gestures are still fresh in my mind to this day.

After a long journey to the Yellow Mountains, I finally set foot on the steep trail of the mountains in the morning. The fog embraced me with a damp feeling that sent a cold shiver down my spine. Above me, the peaks of the mountains were like islands among an ocean of clouds. Later, the clouds were pierced by golden sunlight as bright as a gleaming sabre. Gradually, a clear view of the peaks was revealed. The pine trees were scattered across the gigantic peaks, their towering trunks standing tall in a show of strength against the mountains' steep slopes. I was amazed how those trees survived in such a challenging environment, growing and thriving no matter what hardships they faced. This was one of the lessons my father had tried to teach me since I was young. I need to be brave and persistent. I need to have the strength to face life's difficulties and not take the easy way out. As I walked along the path amongst the thickening fog, I felt like I was slowly ascending to heaven. One of the craggy paths near the peak eventually led me to an old village. I had arrived at my destination.

As I entered the village, I tried to find my father's old house. To my disappointment, I found that the village had become a souvenir destination crowded with tourists. Whenever I introduced myself as a descendant of the famous poet, Li Bai, to the villagers to try to look for some trace of my ancestor, they simply laughed at me in disbelief. Despite my efforts to tell them the truth, they continued to tease me as my story sounded completely absurd to them. Luckily, an elderly farmer volunteered to guide me to Li Bai's old home. Upon arriving at the site of his former house, it was to my utter amazement that I discovered it had been turned into a museum. I rapidly passed through the museum until I reached Li Bai's original ancient shack. It had a display of his pictures along with some of his works and the stationery that he had once used. Though they were very simple items, they provided me with a very sentimental feeling. I took a deep breath, savouring the spiritual and peaceful environment. It made me want to write down everything about my recent experiences and at that moment, I knew why my ancestors had chosen to stay in this special place. As I looked through some of the articles written by his descendants, I was stunned to find a piece written by my father. Tears silently formed in my eyes as I realized that my father really used to be a famous writer.

I finally understood why my father had wanted me to study Business rather than English. All these years, I had misunderstood my father as a person who only cared for money and wealth. In fact, after this heartfelt visit, I understood that he just wanted me to have a comfortable life. He was a good writer and he loved writing poems, but he decided to sacrifice what he loved just to take care of me. At that moment, I wished I could take back all the unpleasant conversations between us in the past. At the very least, I should have been more respectful of his views. I felt overwhelmed with shame as I assumed that he did not know what it was like to be a real writer.

After completing my tour of the museum, I descended back down the hilly paths until I reached my hotel. I decided that I should treasure what I had experienced on this trip and learn from it. I will continue pursuing my dream to be a writer. As I departed the Yellow Mountains I said, "Thank you, Dad. Thank you, Li Bai. Without you, I would not be who I am today. I have finally found my roots. I will forever remember the Yellow Mountains and you will always remain in my heart."

Maze Mountain

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chan, Sung Joon Neo – 11

Kay, a 41 years old archaeologist was sent to the Yellow Mountain in China. There was a maze that had been recently found in the mountain. The maze was presumed to be built in around 500BC and was full of ancient scripts written in Ancient Chinese characters. The scripts were key to solve the maze and mostly told locations of the two key blocks which would open the blocking gates and directions to the next gate. Most of the scripts were decoded by the research team but there was one script the research team couldn't find the answer to. The script was the key of 12th gate. That is why Kay was sent there. He was a widely known expert of Ancient Chinese graphics.

The other 11 scripts were in the similar pattern. 'East 8, South 17' was pointing the key blocks and 'Forward North, Turn West' was telling the path. When the research team pushed the two key blocks at the same time, the heavy gate moved slowly. The 12th script was telling the locations of key blocks but there were characters meaning 'Mind, Protect' instead of further direction. There also were some more characters whose meaning was not yet defined. The researchers had to find Kay to get help on the unknown characters before they could push open the gate.

Everyone was waiting to open the gate and excited to see what was hidden beyond the gate for over 2500 years. There was one person who was most anxious to see what's hidden in the maze. Tom, the notorious tomb raider had been having his eye on this maze since its discovery. He put a spy in the research team and the spy was reporting all the progress of solving the maze to the boss. Tom was seeing the chance to steal the treasure there might exist in the maze. He thought there must be an extraordinary treasure hidden in the maze.

It took a few days for Kay to analyse the scripts. First, he defined the meaning of the characters as 'Mind, Protect, Otherwise, Irritation, Collapse'. Then he tried to find connections between 11 scripts and the 12th one. He figured that the shape of the route resembled ancient Chinese Oracle Bone Script meaning 'Jade' which was a simple shape drawn with 4 strokes crossed. The route was stopped at the centre of the maze and the last script was telling to go on and mind not to irritate it.

Now the research team had to work on putting safety measures in case of any collapse of the maze. They needed to secure the way out if the maze were designed to be 'Collapse' in case of any 'Irritation'. They worked on the plan for day and night to build a secured route. It was a long battle between the creator of the maze and the research team throughout 2500 years of time difference.

Meanwhile, Tom and his spy who were counting on the treasure heard about that there might be hidden jade in the end of the maze. They made plans to push the last gate open and sneak in. As they also heard about the possibility of collapse of the maze, they waited until the research team built the secured route. Finally, the research team secured the route. It was designed to be kept open for enough time for everyone to escape from the maze in case of collapse. The media was coming to the Yellow Mountain with excitement of revealing the ancient secret.

At the dawn of the day of revealing of the maze, Tom and his spy took their plan to the action. They sneaked in and attempted to open the 12th gate. They spotted the two key blocks and pushed them. 2500 years of secret maze was solved by the hands of a tomb raider. They stepped inside and there was a mountain of raw jade rocks reaching 3m height. They took the precious rocks. They planned to use the secured route to escape from the maze and did it as they planned. They used the rail to convey the rocks out. But the secured route was designed to be collapsed when an invader was identified. This was secretly set as one of the safety measures as the place became too popular and dragged many tomb raiders' attention. There was another secured route for the true opening of the maze.

Next morning, Kay and the research team went into the opened gate and saw the mountain of jade rocks as well. It was huge amount of the best quality raw jade rocks. Kay breathed in and felt the air. He thought about the meaning of the last script 'Protect'. The jade mountain had been protected in there for over 2500 years and still glowing in the dark in subtle green. They took one of the rocks out from the pile and got out from the maze. There was no sign of collapse of the maze. All the news excitedly revealed the story of the maze throughout the world. Speculations had been made on the creator of the maze and the reason why the jade had been kept in it.

Kay just decided to join the research team for the further investigation on the area. He was hoping he would find more puzzle pieces of the great secret hidden in the Yellow Mountain. He was amazed by the feeling that he interpreted the message of the creator. When he came out of the maze, it was too bright outside to open his eyes. As he blinked, the Yellow Mountain came to his sight and it was beautifully glowing in the morning sun.

The Eight-Tailed Tiger

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chan, Anka Katrin – 11

Once upon a time, an ancient tiger lived in the Mountains of the Yellow Emperor in Eastern China. The tiger had fine sharp claws, bright white teeth and a deadly stare whenever one looked into its eyes. For many years, the tiger had been walking around an ancient cave high up on the mountain.

One day, a famous climber decided to challenge himself to climb this ancient mountain. The climber possessed brilliant climbing skills and had faced many challenges, and nothing could stop him.

When he got to the mountain, he settled at the base with his tent. He walked around to find the right place to start his climb. The mountain was always misty so no one could ever see clearly, but from the corner of his eye, he could see a flash of eight long elegant tails waving across the clouds. He was curious and decided to get a closer look, and with a sudden dispersal of the mist, he saw a fierce tiger with eight tails walking around outside a dark and gloomy cave. It was like the tiger was guarding something in the cave. The climber was excited and decided to start his climb to get a detailed view of what the tiger was protecting. He hooked his hock on a rusty rock and began his ascent. After a few hours of climbing, the climber was exhausted. When he got to a spot where he could have a safe rest, there he met the ancient eight-tails tiger standing there giving the climber a deadly stare straight into his eyes. It was like he was trying to tell the climber to leave. The climber was terrified, but even more so, he was curious, so he determined to risk his life by walking closer to the tiger. He inched forward. The tiger growled at him even louder. As the sun was setting, the mist got thicker each time the tiger growled.

The climber attempted to distract the tiger, but nothing worked. At last, he found a rope in his climbing bag and tied it around a big rock. He used the rope and tied it to a little stick. He swung the stick from side to side, trying to convince the tiger that the stick was a delicious treat. The tiger jumped up and down trying to grab the “treat” meanwhile the climber snuck into the mysterious cave. Once he got into the cave, he saw a treasure trove of ancient jewels, diamonds, gems and whatever you could imagine. He was shocked at what he saw and ran up and took as much gold as he could. Then he saw a shining emerald. It was reflecting the sunlight above, making it glow mysteriously. The climber took it straight away.

Once he got out of the cave, he looked around to see if the mystical tiger was still distracted, but strangely enough, the tiger was nowhere to be found. He searched and searched but couldn't find it anywhere. Then he saw some ancient Chinese writing on the upper wall of the cave. With his limited knowledge of Chinese, the climber deciphered the literal meaning of the Chinese phrase as: "IF YOU ARE NOT THE FISH, YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHETHER THE FISH IS HAPPY OR NOT". However, the climber did not know what the exact implication of the Chinese phrase was. He then left and returned to his base forthwith, but all of a sudden, he felt like something was scratching his throat, making him cough so hard that blood came out of his mouth. Simultaneously, an old man with a walking stick passed by and saw the climber who was almost suffocating.

The old man then said to himself, “So the legend is true! If you remove the treasure from the ancient cave, you will get a mysterious sickness which can only be cured by the green emerald that appears daily at dawn.” The climber looked pale after hearing what the old man had said, so he took out the green emerald but “POOF” it was gone. After the emerald had disappeared, he immediately felt like his body was being replaced by someone else's because he wasn't coughing anymore and felt much stronger than before. He was so happy and went back to his tent with the rest of his treasure.

The next morning he woke up and coughed and coughed again. He felt so sick that he decided to stay in his tent for the day, but the old man's words were ringing in his head, “Only the green emerald that appears at dawn can heal this mysterious sickness.” So he grabbed his stuff and went back to the mountain. With his last breath, he climbed back to the cave and saw the shining emerald blooming right there again. He walked forward and touched it gently. Then, “POOF”, it disappeared again just like the previous day. Since then, every morning, the cough came back, which forced the climber to go back to the same cave for magical healing.

It seemed that he had no alternative but to live in front of the cave, like the tiger, guarding the treasure inside the cave, in case anyone would come to take the emerald. Time passed and he finally realised why the eight-tailed tiger was guarding the treasure! Through the years, the tiger was relying on the emerald to heal its illness every day. But when the climber had found out the truth; it was too late. He had taken the place of the tiger and was now waiting for the next victim who would come to take the emerald and release the climber. And this is what the ancient Chinese phrase on the wall was implying.

Nowadays, people still believe in this myth. The cave has been left untouched, and no one is allowed to enter it; instead, it has become a popular tourist attraction where people take pictures in front of the mountain reminding themselves to be good but not greedy.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chen, Sze Ho Chelsea – 12

For eleven years, Alisa had experienced many different things in her life, some joyful, some terrible, but nothing beat this adventure.

An unknown virus started to spread throughout Alisa's hometown and many people died due to this. Nobody knew what the cure was, and everyone was panicking. Alisa came from a poor family, and now, her Ma sighed and frowned more often, and her Ba seemed to grow older every day. Alisa was an inquisitive girl and had heard many legends about their ancestors. She even read a book about it. Alisa remembered that there was a legend saying that the famous Huang Shan had a purple fungus growing there which could treat any disease and make people immortal. "Perhaps that is the cure," Alisa thought. She knew her parents wouldn't agree to let her go and find it, so one night, long after they fell asleep, Alisa put on her yellow jacket, packed her bag, wrote a note, and silently snuck out.

The cliffs of Huang Shan were so steep, and the rocky steps were so narrow. Twisted pine trees clung precariously to the rocks and Alisa's hands and clothes were full of dirt from holding onto the branches. "Keep going," she mumbled over and over again, until she finally reached the top, sweating like a waterfall. Her mouth instantly dropped. The peaks made of peculiarly-shaped granite rocks stuck out of the white mist and billowing clouds. Beautiful pine trees grew everywhere, and Alisa even heard the sound of the flowering waterfalls and bubbling streams. The golden sun beamed on her back as she stood savouring this moment.

"I must be standing on the Lotus Peak!" Alisa whipped out her book about Huang Shan and started flipping the pages and read: "It has been said that the rocks were carved out of water over a thousand years ago! And there were over 72 peaks... WOA!" She suddenly lost her balance and before she knew it, went tumbling down a vertical cliff. However, the fall wasn't fast. Instead, she felt as if a gust of wind made her float down, down into the layer of mist and landed on the ground all in one piece. She saw pine trees alright, but they were looming over her head. Flowers bloomed, birds tweeted, and the air was fresh like heaven. Everything seemed so joyful. In front of her was an old man sitting at a stone table.

He had greyish hair and a beard that grew down the length of his neck. His clothes were made of patches of rags that covered his knees. He had slanted, small eyes. On the stone table was a cup full of purple liquid. He was reading a thick book and the cover was torn and yellow. To Alisa's surprise, she actually knew him from the book she had read previously! While she was still deep in thought, the old man looked up.

"Who are you?" His voice was hoarse and deep.

"Aren't you... Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor)? The mythological ancestor of the Chinese people? The one who went to Huang Shan and found a purple fungus and used it to create an elixir of immortality? The one who after drinking it, rode a dragon to HEAVEN? How are you still alive? How old are you?" Alisa couldn't contain her curiosity.

The old man's eyes widened. "Yes, I am Huang Di. But you haven't told me your name."

"Oh sorry, my name is Alisa." Alisa answered. "Alisa... Alisa,"

Huang Di mumbled, stroking his beard. "How did you get here?"

"I fell off a cliff and this is where I landed," Alisa shrugged her shoulders, "nothing special."

"Very well. Come sit down and tell me why you have come to Huang Shan. Not many people come here anymore."

So, Alisa told him about the pandemic, and the purpose of her coming to Huang Shan. Huang Di listened in silence and thought for a while before answering, "I am indebted to you for having known so much about me. I will give the elixir to you. However, you must promise me something in return." His eyes suddenly sparkled mysteriously. "I have heard about the pandemic. Most people would be scared and lose their nerve during this time. If they continue with this attitude, they will never succeed in beating this virus. Do you know what your name means, Alisa?"

"No," Alisa replied, still confused.

“It has a beautiful meaning: great happiness. Your name is exactly what people need right now. So, promise me that you will maintain the spirit of happiness and spread it to your fellow citizens. No matter how difficult this is, being positive is always a solution.” With those words, Huang Di placed the cup of purple liquid into Alisa’s hands along with a piece of paper that had the word ‘optimistic’ written on it repeatedly. Before Alisa could look up, her surroundings had changed to a sandy path and pine trees and the old man had vanished.

Is that why the pandemic was getting worse? Because people were so pessimistic? Alisa thought about her Ma’s sigh, about her frown. She finally understood Huang Di’s words. First things first, she will tell the whole city about her adventure and then share the spirit of happiness with the citizens.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheuk, Sai Hei Christopher – 11

I am Christopher Cheuk, the world-renowned explorer. I have travelled the world and visited many interesting places, including the Pyramids of Egypt, the giant stone statues on Easter Island, the Mayan ruins in Central America. Each of these places are filled with their own legends.

This story records my latest adventure – a trip to Huangshan (the Yellow Mountains) in Anhui Province, People's Republic of China.

Huangshan is famous for its rocks, pine, peculiarly-shaped peaks, sunsets, hot springs and 'sea of clouds' and has the nickname of 'Earthly Fairyland' for its unique scenery.

Apart from the amazing scenery, Huangshan is also famous for its legendary tales, one of which is the story of Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor). Huang Di is the legendary emperor and the ancestor of the Chinese people, after spending half of his life fighting with and defeating other warlords, he spent his remaining years in Yuang Shan where he searched for the Elixir of Immortality so that he could live forever. People believed his efforts had finally paid off and he became immortal after taking the elixir. To commemorate Huang Di, the people named the mountain after him – 'Huangshan' (meaning Yellow Mountain).

I started off my adventure just like all the other travellers, finding myself in a hotel before setting off to explore the mountains. I could clearly remember it was a winter morning, I started my journey up the steep mountain along the twisting and turning path. I was enjoying the scenery so much that I was not really paying any attention to where I was going. After a few hours, I reached a ridge on the side of the mountain. In front of me was a vast sea of clouds. I had a very strange feeling that I had never felt before. There was this stillness like the time had stopped and I had entered into another dimension. My motion became slow and I could hear my own heart beating. I was unable to control my legs when I stepped forward and, for a moment, I felt that I was walking on an invisible bridge amongst the clouds. This feeling quickly evaporated as I started falling from the ridge. I still could not remember what caused me to fall to that day.

I was not sure how long I had blacked-out, but when I woke up, I could see and feel the soft grass and soil. It must have been the soft soil that broke my fall and saved me from certain death. Miraculously, I was unhurt. It was a little dark around me. When I looked up only glimpses of light were passing through. I immediately reached for my phone but there was no signal. I only had a small bottle of water and a pack of biscuits on me. I decided to try to find my way out, when I spotted something on the ground. It was a glowing stone about the size of my palm. Despite its glow, the stone was ice-cold.

I had no time to study the stone. There were no clear paths and I had to climb up bumpy rocks. I was able to keep my mind positive. All of a sudden, I passed through a narrow crack and reached open land. As the land in front of me widened, I could only describe what I was seeing as heaven! The land was vast and filled with fresh green grass, flowers and pine trees. It must have been nearly sunset, the sky was orange and red. The mountain-sides stood like black giant walls. I just stood there and admired the beautiful scene.

I walked towards a huge tree in the middle of the land to see if there were any fruits that I could pick. It was at that moment, I saw it! I saw it with my own eyes! It was a DRAGON! It was not exactly the same as what I remembered from movies like 'The Hobbit', but I was always fascinated by Dragons so I knew enough about them to identify them. To be able to see a real one was not something I could have ever dreamed of. The dragon had a gigantic greyish body covered in scales. It had a pair of wings that spanned fifty feet. It also strangely had a human-like feeling. I was in total shock but to my surprise, I was calm enough that I didn't pass out or cry. I looked right into the dragon's yellowish eyes, I held my breath and we looked into each other's eyes for what seemed an eternity, the dragon slowly came towards me and I started to step backwards bit by bit.

I was brave enough to talk to the dragon, "Hey, I mean no harm and I just wanted to go back up where I came from. Do you think you could help me?" The dragon didn't respond, so I kept talking, "I can give you everything I have, I have this bottle, biscuits, a jacket, oh and this stone..." right at the moment I put the stone on the palm of my hand, the dragon came towards me and I gave him the stone. He looked happy and circled me, he then put me on top of his back and we flew up into the sky. His wings were so strong that it took us only a few seconds to get to the top of the mountain where he dropped me off on a path. I waved goodbye to him and said, "Thank you Dragon, you are so kind!" before he zoomed off.

This was my story and I hope you will believe it. There are many miraculous events in this world and humans are just too naive to comprehend them all. I believe the dragon had actually evolved from Huang Di and that is why he could understand me and he had been protecting Huangshan all along!!

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Choi, Austin – 9

“Roar!!!” Chrysopelea, the guardian and protector of the Yellow Mountain, Huangshan in China tried to exhale fire. Huangshan was a serene, calm, tranquil and cryptic mountain, with lush green pines, sharp rocky peaks, clear springs and clear blue skies. Chrysopelea, a majestic serpent, had mighty white wings that could make trees bow to her in the flap of a wing. She also had golden scales and sharp white fangs. Her yellow eyeballs and green sclera were as hard as chrysoberyl. Breathing fire was Chrysopelea’s dream because if she could breathe fire, she would be able to maintain prolonged peace. Every time she tried to breathe fire, mist came out instead. This could explain why there is so much mist surrounding the top of the Yellow Mountain. Legend has it that the Yellow Mountain was named after the Yellow Emperor who had become a magical creature after staying in the Yellow Mountain for so long.

One day when she was soaring over the sharp rocky peaks, Chrysopelea sensed an evil presence arriving at the Yellow Mountain, but she did not know what to do, and panicked. Then, she discovered that an evil sorcerer named Zilan had released the seal that held the infamous nine-tailed demon fox, and was plotting to control the demon fox and take over the world. Her brain worked rapidly. Her green sclera and yellow eyes were glowing brightly. In the blink of an eye, she spread out her wings and took off for the magical Cave of Crystals.

Chrysopelea knew that the only way to seal the demon fox was to seal it into the magical crystal of sealing. However, when she arrived at the cave, Zilan was riding the demon fox, blocking the entrance to the cave. She landed and angrily questioned Zilan, “Why did you release the seal?”

Zilan started a boring monologue, “This world is imperfect, and I will destroy it and then rebuild it. Join me, guardian, or perish.” Of course, Chrysopelea refused to join Zilan and shot beams of rainbow energy at him. Zilan reflected them with his wand and sent them flying back at Chrysopelea.

Chrysopelea immediately dodged the attack and started to charge up energy in the crystal on her forehead. Zilan saw what she was doing, and with fear in his eyes, he tried to escape. Unfortunately, it was too late. Chrysopelea released the beam from the crystal, and it hit Zilan so hard that the shadowmancer got caught in the beam and died. The demon fox, having seen its master die, ran off swiftly in shock.

Chrysopelea entered the mysterious cave, decorated with glowing crystals that illuminated the cave. There was a small shrine holding the sealing crystal. Chrysopelea noticed the crystal as soon as she entered the cave and flew forward to retrieve it. Suddenly, Sphinx with blue eyes, a pharaoh’s hat and sand-coloured skin appeared saying “If you want to get to the sealing crystal, you must answer three riddles.” Chrysopelea agreed, and the Sphinx asked the first riddle, “What can fly without wings?”

Chrysopelea immediately answered, “Time,” and the Sphinx started to get nervous.

The Sphinx tried to think of a harder riddle. She then asked, “What gets taller when it is young, and gets shorter when it is old?”

Chrysopelea did not hesitate to answer, “A candle,” she said.

The Sphinx was so nervous that he started to sweat and tremble. He thought to himself, “If this snake answers the last riddle correctly, she will pass! I must think of a better riddle!” After some thought, the Sphinx asked the last riddle: “A cowboy rode into a town on Friday and left 3 days later on Friday. How is this possible?”

It was a hard riddle, but it only took Chrysopelea three seconds to answer. “The horse’s name is Friday,” she said. The Sphinx reluctantly let Chrysopelea pass, and gave her a mysterious red and orange plant. He said, “Take this, it will allow you to fulfil your dream of breathing fire.” Chrysopelea immediately ate it and breathed out huge flames of fire. She was so happy that she forgot about her mission, but luckily, the Sphinx reminded her.

Chrysopelea took the crystal, thanked the Sphinx, and flew out of the cave, but the demon fox was awaiting her. Before the fox could even attack, Chrysopelea simply exclaimed, "Seal!" and before the demon fox knew it, he got sucked into the crystal like a tree in a hurricane. Chrysopelea flew back home to the Yellow Mountain and hid the crystal, hoping nobody would ever find it again. Finally, she went back to the top of the mountain, happily soaring around the peak of the Yellow Mountain, living there happily ever after.

The Quest for the Summit of Immortality

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Kam, Kaitlyn – 10

Once there was a young wealthy merchant named Wang Fu, who was married with two children. He lived in Hongcun, a village near Huangshan. Wang Fu had everything but he was still not happy. His success only stimulated his insatiable desire to search for something more than what money and fame could provide. He wanted something that not even the Emperor of China could have, he wanted immortality.

Wang Fu discussed his desire with his great uncle. His great uncle knew that it was time to tell Wang Fu about the secret of Huangshan.

“What I tell you now was passed down to me by our ancestors. You must climb up the great mountain of Huangshan and find the ‘Elder’ who resides at the Summit of Immortality. Getting there is no easy feat.” said the great uncle.

“First, you’ll meet the *Greeting Guest Pine*.” He opened a small wooden box that was hidden below his bed and continued to speak, “Here, take these enchanted emeralds and cast them at the foot of the tree to show your respect. If you don’t, you will not be given the correct direction to proceed and will be lost in the forest forever. Then, you’ll run into the *Stone Man of Honesty*. All I can tell you is to be honest or you will be thrown off the cliff,” he said sternly.

The great uncle looked at Wang Fu long and hard. “Good luck. I hope you won’t have any regrets.”

After meeting with his great uncle, Wang Fu started his ascent up the mountain. The climb was steep and rigorous. Luckily, he was young, and his legs were strong and willing. He soon arrived at the Greeting Guest Pine. It was a ten meter high tree that grew like a man standing by the path stretching out his hand in a greeting gesture.

Immediately, Wang Fu tossed the enchanted emeralds at the foot of the tree. The soil swallowed the emeralds and released a green mist. Then, the tree took a bow and pointed to the direction he needed to go.

Wang Fu continued his hike up the mountain, but soon realised the path was becoming more arduous and his pace was slowing down. He was panting heavily, so he decided to stop and rest. That was when he heard a deep voice coming from the edge of the mountain. It was the Stone Man of Honesty.

“Answer my question truthfully or else I’ll throw you over the cliff!” said the giant stone man.

Wang Fu was perspiring profusely and his heart was beating fast as he didn’t want to make any mistake in answering the question.

“If you and your mother couldn’t swim, but you both fell into the ocean and there was only one lifebuoy, would you give the lifebuoy to your mother or keep it for yourself?”

Without hesitation Wang Fu replied, “Of course I would save myself!”

The Stone Man of Honesty chuckled and said, “Yes, you’re true to your nature. You’re a selfish man. Follow this narrow path and you shall reach your destination.”

Wang Fu got up quickly, and with renewed energy he continued his trek up the jagged slope. After a few hours, he finally arrived at a strange place and saw an old man. The old man’s beard was long and white, and so was his hair. He wore a long, shimmery, silk robe that flowed gently in the breeze. He sat on a huge flat rock under the shade of some tall pine trees.

The old man motioned Wang Fu to come closer. As he moved forward, he could see more clearly from the vantage point of where the old man sat. His spot was overlooking the vast view of all the valleys that surrounded the mountain. He could see various scattered settlements and farms in the distance, but what captured his attention next kept him mesmerised. It was the dramatic mountainous landscape consisting of numerous granite peaks, many over 1000 meters high, emerging through the perpetual sea of clouds. Wang Fu couldn’t tell if he was dreaming because what he saw was so surreal that he wanted nothing more than to stay there for eternity.

The old man snapped him out of his deep thoughts. “So, you’ve finally found me and the Summit of Immortality. Everything here never changes. You watch the seasons go by below, but the flowers always stay in bloom and the grass always remains green here. The air you breathe here will allow you to never feel hungry or thirsty. One day on the mountain is a decade for the world below. You’ll have all the time in the world to ponder about life.”

Wang Fu could barely hold his excitement of finding the ‘Elder’ at the Summit of Immortality.

The Elder asked, “Are you sure this is what you really want? Are you willing to give up your life, leave your family and wealth behind?”

Wang Fu replied confidently, “This is what I’ve been searching for all my life. My family will be fine without me.”

“Are you prepared to live in complete solitude?” asked the Elder.
“Yes, I am!” exclaimed Wang Fu.

Out of curiosity, Wang Fu asked the Elder, “What will happen to you?”

“I’ll pass in three days, but I’m looking forward to it,” said the Elder softly.

The Elder gently took off the shimmery robe and gave it to Wang Fu. Wang Fu was eager to put it on because what was happening felt like a coronation and he couldn’t have been happier. As the Elder slowly walked towards the path down the mountain, he turned back to look at Wang Fu one last time and muttered, “He’s much younger than I was when I came here. I think he’ll be here much longer than me, but that’s his choice and perhaps his destiny. Maybe in a few hundred years he’ll realise the cost of living forever is more a curse, than a blessing.”

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lam, Wai Ting Annabel – 11

Once upon a time, there wasn't a single mountain on Earth. Then, chickens that were as large as elephants came to rule the Earth. They ate giant mushrooms that were as tall as buildings and kept enormous dinosaurs as their slaves.

At that time, there were also birds on the Earth. Colourful feathers covered their bodies, and they had huge, pointy beaks that could bite through hard rock. Apart from flying, they could also swim in the sea like fish. They stole dinosaurs from the chickens and ate them.

Chickens and birds fought all the time because they always argued about who should own the dinosaurs. When the gods who created the Earth saw that chickens and birds were waging war, they got incredibly furious and threw some heavy, pyramid-like objects made from soil onto the Earth to separate the chickens and the birds. These pyramid-like objects were the first mountains on Earth, later known as the Yellow Mountains. These mountains killed all the dinosaurs on Earth by squashing them to death because they ran too slowly, and therefore the birds didn't have food to eat and died soon.

Millions of years later, a gigantic meteorite crashed into the gods' planet. The planet shattered into tiny firey pieces, making it impossible for the gods to live on it. They moved to the Yellow Mountains and used their powers to protect these mountains. Soon, they got bored of just watching the chickens eating and sleeping, so they decided to create a new species on Earth to entertain themselves. Therefore, they made a hole in one of the Yellow Mountains that could change anything into a "human" if they walked through it. At that time, all the chickens walked through the hole because they were curious about what was on the other side of the mountains and why the hole had suddenly appeared. All the chickens became the first humans on Earth, continuing to rule the Earth.

Unfortunately, there was an error in the hole: the two last chickens that went through the hole couldn't become humans; instead, they shrank and became the little chickens we see today. The gods felt so sorry and gave them a new food—sweet corn as an apology.

The humans got bored of just eating plain, wild mushrooms. Moreover, most of the mushrooms they ate before as chickens had become poisonous to them now, so they decided to eat the chickens' eggs and their meat, and some "weird" plants, known as vegetables and fruit. Luckily, the chickens' eggs hatched fast, and the chickens laid their eggs rapidly. Also, the humans at that time were cautious not to eat all the chickens which is why we can still eat mouth-watering chicken today.

The gods on the mountains pretended to be humans and moved to live in the little village houses on top of the clouds. The gods didn't want the humans to know about them, because the humans might fight with them to take over their place. That's why they cast a spell, and the humans lost their memories about the story of these mountains.

However, there were some mistakes during the spell, which allowed some humans, such as Li Bai and Du Fu, who later became famous poets, to remember the story of these mountains. Also, the gods thought that humans wouldn't be able to communicate with chickens anyway, so they didn't cast a spell on the chickens. However, as our technology improves, plus humans' desperation to discover the mysterious truth about the Yellow Mountains, one day, Google Translate might be able to translate chicken language into English for us to understand easily.

It seems impossible to find out more about the mysterious, misty, magical mountains in China. It's really difficult to know everything just by reading Li Bai and Du Fu's poetry, so there is only one way left: we have to learn how to speak or communicate with chickens and ask them to tell us the truth!

The Journey to the Jewel

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lam, Lucas – 9

I was once told that a mysterious Master on the top of the mountain of Huangshan could save us from any catastrophic damage. On July 22nd 2009, a total solar eclipse, which happens once every 300 years, was observed. Soon after, in the cradling darkness, my hometown was set on fire by the flaming breath of a humongous bird-like creature. Winston and I were both incredibly determined to save our beloved hometown so we left, and headed for the mountains.

In front of us were clouds with odd shapes and we wondered if a dragon was soaring through the sky, resulting in the odd clouds. Carefully, Winston and I ascended down the slippery stone steps, avoiding many twisty roots and dancing branches. Ominous silence frequented us until we arrived at the Yuping cableway. We were met by a tiny mushelf, an elf shaped like a mushroom. Deeply touched by our determination for saving the village, it decided to come with us. At that time, we had no idea how this little gleaming vegetable that whooshed and swirled excitedly around would help us.

It picked a path among the bubbling ocean of floating clouds, and soon after we were introduced to Pine Tree, the helper of the baffling mysterious palace. The elderly evergreen sapling looked like a person invitingly stretching out one hand to welcome guests, with another hand elegantly inserted in a trouser pocket. With a pleasant rustling of needle-like leaves, it said, "Welcome to Huangshan! How may I help you?"

"May we know how to find the Master?" asked Winston politely.

"We really need the Master's help!" I added hastily.

"Well, well, brave young boys. I'm always glad to help true warriors. You need to find the magical portal that leads you to the palace, and find the immortal Chinese emperor Huangdi." After expressing our gratitude to the helper, we were guided to the portal. It was radiating with queer lavender lights, hazing clouds and thick mist. Winston and I stepped over the translucent threshold into a long narrow corridor, glistening and glittering in sheets of gold as if we were in a billionaire's secretive treasure vault. Among the golden reflections, in the chair at the far end of the pass way, sat a figure cloaked with gold and masked with yellow.

"Come closer, my guests," the figure said. We instinctively knew he was Huangdi.

"We've heard the legend of you, please help us." I hurriedly exclaimed.

After a long pause, he replied:

“Top the dimple of my chapel

A bed for the Ruby red claw talisman

Centre the pedestal in village temple

A cure for the scorching Folkman

Bottom the heart of a true hero

A soul for the precious charm”

With eyes wide open, Winston whispered to me, for fear that his voice would irritate the intimidating emperor: “You have to exchange your soul for the talisman?” I didn’t answer, but I knew I was ready, ready to sacrifice my own soul to save hundreds of lives in the village. I begged Huangdi to make it quick.

In a blink of an eye, I found myself falling down automatically and my last conscious thought was that of our hometown being saved. The thud of me striking the cold floor woke Winston up from his stone astonishment, so suddenly that he started to cry madly.

Unexpectedly at this point, the yellow emperor laughed. It wasn't the laughter of evil, but the laughter of admiration as he said, "Do not be concerned young ones, it was just a trial to see if you have a pure and determined heart." He then walked to a wall that seemed to somehow peel itself layer by layer, until a crevice of light cut the last layer and burst out a beam so bright that our eyes were blinded immediately. When Winston gained his sight, the claw talisman was already floating in the air, straight to my heart. Waking up with the stone on my bosom, I didn't know why, but I felt as if I had never passed out. We had done it. We had obtained the talisman.

Right when we were warped back from the portal, the place it brought us to was not the same as when we entered. It brought us to a steep path, and worse still, the divine beast, Vermillion Bird stood menacingly blocking our way. It looked like the same bird that burnt our village. It wanted the treasure. By shooting fireballs in front of us and breaking the pathway, it stopped us from running on the path. We ducked and dodged to avoid the burning bombs and, at times, managed to attack the beast with stones, until eventually, Vermillion Bird forced us to the edge of the cliff. All we could see and hear was the growling sea, waiting to devour us. We knew that half an inch further, and we would be sucked in alive.

At this very moment, an enormous arm of needles picked up the Flying-over Rock and threw it at Vermillion Bird, crushing it to death. The miracle had taken place right before us. The mushelf asked the Pine Tree helper to assist us.

The village was still in shambles when we limped back with the precious stone. As fast as a shooting bullet, we ran to the centre of the village temple and placed the ruby red claw talisman on the pedestal. Within no time, a scarlet beam shot up to the sky, and reversed all the inextinguishable hell fires and chaos. Then grateful and delightful cheers burst among villagers and we two were welcomed with great acclaim. However, no one but me noticed that a vague bird-like shadow loomed in the sky...

The Huangshan Mountain

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Leung, Yan Nam Cerys – 12

We got out of the car and entered the gate. What we saw in front of us was the peculiar Huangshan Mountain. We walked in, and a tour guide appeared to show us the way. The tour guide said, "There are many scenic spots in this area. Let's take a look at the first spot. Here is a grand waterfall and there are a variety of flowers surrounding it. The soaring water flows down from a high place. It's very appealing! "

We went to the foot of Huangshan Mountain and looked up. The mountain looked just like a massive skyscraper. An icy wind blew from a distance. It was freezing. I couldn't wait to climb up, most of the rock stairs had been damaged over time. I was exhausted, and we were only halfway. I walked up desperately, leaving the tour guide and my parents far behind.

Into the fluffy clouds and thin air, a breath-taking sight came into view. I finally knew why the poets chose to live there. One after another, the Huangshan mountain range is closely connected.

I had been climbing and climbing. I couldn't see my parents or the tour guide anymore. I went up to the top and looked down. I shivered. On this rolling mountain, I seemed to be touching patches of white clouds.

You might not know that someone lives here, high above the mountains, in the village houses shrouded in clouds and mist for more than 100 days a year. The winding mountain mist wraps around this three-sided high mountain village all year round, with seas of forests and bamboo, and people in the depths of white clouds.

After visiting the exquisite Huangshan, we took a long-distance bus and went back.

Message Through Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Tong, Kristen – 11

“We’ll be learning about Huangshan this week,” Mr Stefano announced. “Let’s watch a video!”

As I watched, clouds started floating in the classroom. I glanced around nervously. Soon, my eyesight was beclouded by the directionless white mist. Once it had cleared up, I had been teleported to the mountains. It was beautiful! The mountains were perfectly textured. The clouds were thick and fluffy. The cliffs were sheer and beetling, amid the clear freshwater lake. I wandered around curiously and soon found myself lost. Suddenly, a scrawny three-foot, wide eyed monkey leapt from one of the gnarled and towering trees.

“I’m lost, can you help me?” Why could I talk to an animal so naturally? This isn’t my usual self. Surprisingly, it signalled me to follow it. I walked steadily, looking around in amazement. The faintly azure mist clutched at the elbow of the mountain as it passed. Finally, it led me to a huge, solitary tree. I walked closer and noticed that underneath sat a group of children and an old man.

“Hey!” I greeted. “I’m lost. Can you help me find my way out?”
The old man looked startled by my presence but replied cheerfully. “Sure!”

The generous elderly man led me through the forest and by the time we got there, the sun had already set.

“You better get home quickly, the attack will strike!” he warned.

“What attack?” The word ‘attack’ got me all petrified.

“Every night, when the sun sets, an unmerciful laser beam strikes on a dozen beings in Huangshan...”

“No! How can we avoid it?” my eyes widened.

“You can’t. A villager committed an unforgivable sin; the Gods were furious. It has been a curse to Huangshan ever since. Only one person can stop it. But we don’t know when this brave soul will arrive.”

“I hope he arrives soon.”

“She,” he corrected. “Legend says she comes from the future, that is our only clue.”

“So, tell me how you got here,” he questioned.

“I was watching a video-”

The old man gasped.

“What’s wrong?”

“Video. That is, from the future?”

“I think I brought my phone, I’ll show you,” I reached into my pockets. “It’s gone!” I wailed.

“Anything brought from the future will disappear. You must save Huangshan!”

“Me? I can’t even look at a cockroach without getting my pants wet!”

“You never know what you are capable of.”

“But how?”

“You’ll figure it out. Huangshan’s future is in your hands. I shall see you again soon, hopefully.” He turned and started walking away. The thought of citizens forcing themselves asleep unsettled me. I followed the old man’s path, leading me to the villages. It was awfully quiet. Suddenly, flaming red laser beams struck violently through the roofs of houses and musky forests. This was frightening and sorrowful, but it only made me more determined.

The next morning, I saw a group of people gathered together. I walked through the crowd and saw a strange-looking box.

“Nobody can unlock this box. Not even our strongest men.”

“What about girls?” They all burst out laughing. I walked to the box and unlatched it. Everyone gasped. I looked to see what was inside the box.

“There’s a scroll!” Everyone watched as I unrolled the scroll. It was a map. Then, I noticed that numbers were labeled on each landmark. Someone snatched the map.

“At the back,” he said, “There are some words. Possibly clues.” I examined it.

“I’m Ethan. This is Tom, Andrew, Markus, William, Oliver, and Ryan.” They waved. “And I wonder why there would be a map.”

“Well, an old man told me about a curse that I have to reverse. Do you think it has anything to do with this?”

"What curse? Did the man wear white robes and have grey hair?"

"Yes!"

"That's the wisest man. He's never wrong. Well, you can't do it alone, you'll need us."

"Then quit talking and start doing!"

After hours of exploration, we arrived at the first landmark. The map read:

1. Defeat
2. Survive
3. Reflect

We were outside a cave. It didn't look like there was anything to defeat. I was wrong. An enormous bear emerged from the cave. I pushed it fiercely, causing it to bang against the cave wall. Tom, Ethan, and William hit it with sticks which Andrew collected. Markus threw rocks. Oliver and Ryan held it off from harming anyone. Finally, we defeated it. We cheered. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

The next landmark was by the lake. When we arrived, the lake was churning and waves were starting to form.

"Just stick together." I reminded everyone. We sank as the water level rose. Lightning struck and rain poured. My eyes turned to a large boulder.

"Grab that boulder!" I jumped on and helped others. After some time, the storm ended. We all gave a sigh of relief.

The final landmark was at the top of Huangshan.

"We have to reflect now," I said. "Anyone have a mirror?"

"Maybe it's a self-reflection."

"That makes sense. Okay, along the way, we have been helping each other and working as a team- I just realized something!"

"What?"

"If you put our names together: Tom, Ethan, Andrew, Markus, William, Oliver, Ryan, Kristen. The first letter of each of our names spell TEAMWORK! That can't be a coincidence, can it?"

Someone was clapping. It was the old man.

"W-What are you doing here?" I was shocked! "He's the one who told me about the curse!"

"What curse?"

He laughed.

"The 'curse' never existed! I set everything up. Hopefully, you have learnt the importance of teamwork. Well done!"

"But the lake- the lasers?"

He put his finger on his lip then sighed.

"Unfortunately, you have to return. Remember, you are stronger than you think." In the blink of an eye I was back in the classroom. The video had ended.

"Today's assignment is a story about you visiting Huangshan," said Mr Stefano. And I knew just what to write.

The Mysterious Tower of the Huangshan Mountains

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Alexa – 10

There was a mysterious tower atop the great Huangshan Mountains. People who lived there often looked up at it, then shivered and quickly looked away. Legend has it that the tower was the home of lost spirits, and most believed so, for the tower was old and shabby.

Rose lived with her family in Huangshan; she was curious about the old tower up on the peak, but her parents were not. She was often reminded that the tower was full of ghosts, and clearly unsafe. Rose had to bite her tongue and prevent herself from rolling her eyes. As much as she wanted to go, her parents' 'NO's' were firm, so that was that.

One night, during dinner, whilst Rose and her family were eating, Rose's dad gave her the "reminder" again.

"Don't you ever wander into that dirty tower, you hear me Rose? There could be ghosts inside."

"Alright! I've heard enough of that silly reminder!" scowled Rose, glaring at her father. Her father immediately blazed with fury.

"Don't you *ever* cut me off like that again, you hear me Rose? A good daughter respects her dad even if she disagrees!" Rose finished her dinner in silence.

Later that night, she gazed thoughtfully at the tower through her bedroom window. Suddenly, a light turned on.

"Can ghosts actually turn on lights?" she wondered to herself.

That night, Rose couldn't sleep. She was intrigued by the tower.

"Then go! You want to know, right?" said a voice in her head.

"I can't. I'm not allowed to go out after dark," Rose said to the voice.

"Maybe there's something good. Besides, you will be able to sleep again." Rose sighed. The voice was right. If she wanted to find out, all she had to do was simply go to the tower herself! So Rose walked out of the house with a torch and a knife tucked in her pocket for self-defence. She walked through a winding, narrow path and soon found herself in front of the tower's door. With her heart pounding in excitement, she knocked. The door opened, but instead of ghosts, Rose saw a teenage boy with patched clothes.

"You're a bit young to be out in the dark by yourself, aren't you?" said the boy. "Come on in." He gestured Rose to the inside of the tower. The boy pulled out his rough hand, "Name's Jackson, and you?"

Rose hesitated, "Hi, I'm Rose."

Jackson smiled, "Nice to meet you, Rose. How did you find yourself here?"

Rose tugged at her shirt, "I was curious about this place," the words tumbled out of Rose.

"Very interesting," said Jackson, "This place is my restaurant..." he glanced around at the dingy surroundings. "I didn't have enough money to decorate the restaurant, but... hey, try some of my pancakes!" He offered with a smile.

"Mmmmm, these are good." She finished the pancakes quickly and asked for more.

"Only if you recommend my food. I never have any customers; I guess they were too spooked out." He shrugged.

"I'll spread the word," Rose grinned in Jackson's direction.

Rose slept well that night. She couldn't wait to tell her family about her discovery. When morning came, Rose jumped out of bed and into the dining room. Her parents were already eating breakfast.

"Good morning, Rose," said her mom.

"Hi mom, I have some big news for everyone!" said Rose. She suddenly felt nervous, "Don't get too mad okay?" Rose lowered her voice to barely a whisper. "I crept out last night, to the tower. Turns out it isn't a home for lost spirits; it's actually a restaurant and I met the chef!"

The family sat in silence.

Finally, her mom spoke, "You're grounded, Rose."

"But-"

Her mother suddenly turned from calm to outraged, "*DON'T ARGUE WITH ME!*"

"Now now, Sharon, let's make a deal. If Rose brings us to the restaurant, and the food is yummy, then she won't be grounded," her father rubbed his tummy and licked his lips. Rose's mother opened her mouth to protest, but her father wouldn't listen.

Later that day, Rose led her parents to Jackson's restaurant. "Here we are," said Rose. She knocked on the door, and it opened.

"Hello there," Jackson said.

"Hello, these are my parents," said Rose, "They came to try your food."

"Well come on in," said Jackson. "Pancakes?"

"Sure," said Rose's father.

"These are DELICIOUS!" Rose's dad said with a stuffed mouth.

"Indeed!" said Rose's mother. "But no one has ever come?"

Jackson shook his head, "Rose said everyone thinks that this is a home for ghosts."

"We can fix that easily; I can repair this place in no time," piped her father. "New chairs and tables, new wallpaper, and the door repainted."

"That would be great!" said Jackson.

The next day, the family set to work. Rose's dad brought along paint and wallpaper, while her mother donated some of their old furniture that was still beautiful. Soon, they were done repairing the restaurant.

Jackson gazed around. "This is miraculous," he gasped.

"Yes! Now all we need is customers," said mom.

Rose decided to invite her friend.

"Are you sure it is safe?" asked her friend Kayla.

"Yes," reassured Rose, "Invite your mom too." So all three of them made their way to Jackson's restaurant.

"Yummmmmmm!" Kayla munched on Jackson's pancakes. Before long, everyone was eating a delicious brunch.

Within weeks, the news broke through the whole town and everybody wanted to try the food.

"I want to thank you all, for this success. Especially you, Rose." Jackson's eyes fell on to her.

Rose nodded, "The tower was a mystery to me at first. Then I found out it was a restaurant; eventually I told mom, dad, Kayla and her mom about it, and they told everyone they knew, and word spread through the whole town."

Just then, there was a knock on the door.

"It must be another customer," Jackson said, grinning, "I'd better get it."

Living on the Greatest Mountain in the World!

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yao, Gabriel – 9

In 1935, I was born in the cracks of the smooth gray rocks, amidst a sea of clouds. All I could see was fluffy white cotton candy clouds as I peeked up at the sky. It was raining outside. I tried to absorb as much as I could and grab hold of the rocks with my little roots. I was born on the greatest mountain in all of China. I was born in the Yellow Mountains of China.

A few weeks after I was born, I started to experience life outside the ground. A crowd of plants gathered around me. They had layers of big long leaves, almost like banana leaves as I was told, but only much, much greener. This reminded me of my parents. It reminded me of my mother telling me stories of the outside world, of what I could start to see now. This also reminded me of my father basking in the sunlight with me, close to where those banana-like trees were. Not too far were the peculiar rocks piercing out of the mountain top blocking my view to the graciously clear blue sky ahead.

About nine years later, I could see part of the view beyond those rocks. The rocks did not move too much, but there were bamboo trees, pine trees, willow trees, plum blossoms and many more rocks on the other side of the mountain. My father told me that when I turn twenty, I will be able to see the entire mountain range. I couldn't wait for that day!

I turned twenty, and as father had said, I could finally see beyond those big rocks. I was shocked to see that there was a large city beyond the rocks, and there were several people walking about. Of course the city was far away, but I could still see it clearly. I wondered what it was like to live in the city, to live in the lower grounds. Soon after, I felt a shadow cast over me. A cable car was being built over the mountains, and more and more people were coming to see me with great interest.

Eleven years later, another cable car was built. Some more people climbed the mountain and enjoyed the splendid scenery and sunset alongside me. As I started to understand human behavior more and more, I started to feel a warm tingling sensation develop inside of me.

Usually during summer, there would be lots of sun and rain. We would try to reserve as many resources as we could, but in the winter things were a lot different. Very little sunshine and rain would appear, so we would spend nearly the entire winter sleeping. Apart from that, far away beyond the rocks, children would sing happy songs and enjoy playing in the snow. However, something bad happened.

In the recent spring time, people suddenly stopped coming to visit me on the mountain. That made me feel lonely and concerned. I also started to see lights from hospitals and crying noises at night. After a week like this, I could stand no more of it. I asked my friends what had happened, and they told me that there was a virus spreading across China, and the World. It had already infected many people in lots of different places. Hearing this, I became depressed. I did not know if the virus would last for a very long time, but deep down I hoped it would end soon. My friends also told me that the virus had been in existence since December, 2019. The people called this virus COVID 19. As I waited for the virus to end, my friends accompanied me, and together we remained safe.

One day, a laboratory was built next to me. Scientists would enter and leave the mountain for days at a time. The scientists were wearing thick white lab coats and heavy face protection. I wonder what this was about.

About a month later, people started coming back. I heard no more noises at night. I noticed that there were less trees, as more people started flocking back. Perhaps these trees were used to create the antidote for the virus!

The next morning, I saw scientists come to collect resin from pine trees. The resin had an antibacterial property which helped to combat the recent virus. They would return to the lab to heat the resin into a liquid by using a double boiler. They would then strain the resin to get out the dirt and bark. Finally, they mixed the resin with olive oil and beeswax. Everyone in the World received this special ointment, and the virus seemed to be under control.

That summer felt especially warm and happy. I had not felt so happy for a long time. One day, while I was relaxing in the summer breeze, a bright light shone on me, it was GOD! He told me that my friends and I were chosen by Him to help the people. The sap from our trees were the main ingredient for the antidote made in the laboratory. God promised that we would get a year's supply of ample sunlight and rainfall.

I am so glad that we have lived in the most magical and beautiful place in the World. I have seen time pass and people come and go. If humans could respect and take care of the beautiful trees and animals, mother nature would in return take care of humans. I continue to thrive in the Mountain with my friends and family to this day.

What a High Altitude Adventure!

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yeung, Yat Hay Hailey – 10

The time finally came for my adventure camp in the Yellow Mountains in China! In addition to my younger brother Mathis, I also invited my friends Valery, Cadence and Nicole to come along.

After landing at the Huangshan Tunxi International Airport, we met our instructor Jade, a lady with short hair and a sporty physique, as arranged by my parents. We piled into her car and dropped off my parents at a hotel before heading towards the Yellow Mountains. I could not wait to spend the next few days there!

After finally setting up our tents, we were all exhausted and fell fast asleep. Feeling thirsty in the middle of the night because of the low humidity, I woke up to search for my water bottle when I heard a faint rustling in the bushes and saw Jade sharpening a knife! Bewildered by what I saw, my pals all decided to investigate further in the coming days.

The next morning, I woke up earlier than the others to read my pocket-size travel book: “Located in the Anhui Province, the Yellow Mountains is renowned for its height and beautiful scenery. It did not get its name because the mountains were yellow but were named after the “Yellow Emperor of China”. It caught my attention that the Yellow Emperor’s hat and clothes were dug out of his grave and housed in his mausoleum as invaluable national treasures.

One vague thought crossed my mind, but I was soon disturbed by Jade’s loud voice, who suggested a day off on the first day of our excursion! Unbelievable as it was, we were nonetheless fascinated by the idea that we could do anything we wanted in the wilderness! Jade simply said she had some errands to run and would be back soon. Our curiosity drove us to follow her into a narrow alley, where she entered a little hut and disappeared after mumbling “down” three times. Imitating what she had done, we found the floor descending and soon entered a dark chamber where we heard Jade speaking.

“My dear teammates, after all the preparations, the day has finally come for us to break into the mausoleum for the Yellow Emperor’s treasures!” As she continued, I realised that what had crossed my mind earlier was actually true – Jade was the mastermind behind a tomb-raiding plan which was about to be carried out! Too thrilled to say a word, we hurriedly headed back to the campsite to avoid being discovered.

The next morning, Jade claimed that we were mature enough to handle ourselves and left us for another day of free activities. Knowingly giving each other a wink, we immediately followed her to a big truck. We managed to jump into the back of the cargo container just in time before the truck got going. It turned out that her crew of four had also joined her at the front, along with loads of high-tech equipment that were kept in the container. After a two-hour ride, the truck had apparently arrived at its destination. As Jade and her teammates opened the truck door, we took the chance to sneak out and hide behind the nearby bushes.

As we peeked out of the shrubbery, we finally realised that we were right at the entrance of the Yellow Emperor’s mausoleum.

“Why is it so quiet? There are no tour buses in sight, only a cleaning truck...” Valery murmured.

“Because this place is closed for maintenance on the first Monday in December every year, which happen to be today!” I exclaimed, sharing what I had researched on the web before the trip.

The pieces of the puzzle now began to fall into place: Jade had made use of her fake identity as an instructor to familiarise herself with the tomb’s surroundings. She had planned to rob the tomb that day as it was the mausoleum’s annual maintenance day! Even more striking was that the truck that transported us looked exactly the same as the cleaning truck while Jade’s team had all changed into their cleaning uniforms and looked like they were part of the cleaning crew.

“Time to call the police,” I said to Nicole. However, we soon realised that her phone had no reception as we were deep within the mountain. An alarm soon went off and we saw Jade’s team dashing towards the truck carrying several boxes, getting ready to flee.

Suddenly, the sound of the roaring engines turned to complete silence. Yellow haze soon filled the air. The shadow of an ancient man soon emerged and approached the truck.

“Nobody can take anything from my grave. You will be punished!” an angry voice cried aloud, followed by the swirling wind that blew furiously around the truck. The ghostly shadow then turned towards our hiding spot. “I realised that you attempted to call the police to save my belongings from theft. It was your phone that woke me up, and I want to thank you for what you did.” Unsure of what to say, we saw Jade running towards us with her knife, completely enraged while a strong thrust of wind suddenly hurled us apart

The next thing we knew, we were all comfortably lying in our beds in the hotel where my parents were staying.

“Look at all of you. It must have been quite a trip. You have all slept for more than a day!” We looked at each other and managed to offer our weak smiles. At one point, I wondered if what had happened was simply a nightmare.

But then I heard Mathis whisper, “The Yellow Emperor saved us...”. After we freshened up and went for our breakfast, I saw the newspaper headline, “Tomb Raiders Unexpectedly Turn Themselves In and Return Invaluable Stolen Pieces to the Police”. I am sure none of us would want to experience an adventure like this ever again!

Never Knowing

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yip, Po Yi Blair – 11

Standing below the knees of Wuzhi mountain, it's head looming over me. I stepped inside, darkness came, shadowing me from the real world, reality. But I had no choice. I had promised myself revenge for Jotsu, my dearest teacher, who taught us all there is to know about ghost and demon hunting. I had no choice. This was my fate, maybe the only good thing I had ever done in my life, I felt like the Monkey King, Sun Wukong, when he had been trapped under a boulder. In other words, when he was at his weakest.

Moments later, I plucked up the courage and stepped inside. Instantly, chills surrounded me. I felt like I was in the North Pole. Suddenly, a white object whizzed past me, I quickly took out my ghost-catching net and netted it. "Who are you, and why are you here?" I bellowed.

"I am a demon from Wuzhi mountain, don't you know? This was where the Great Monkey King was once trapped. I was killed by him."

When I heard the words "Great Monkey King" and "killed", my face turned white as paper and I ran out of the cave as fast as my legs could carry me.

And to my surprise, my partner Moko was waiting for me outside. But before I had time to think, I went through another annoying flashback. I was back inside Master Jotsu's training temple, trying to master the art of ghost-catching. He called us for a break. He went to his office, which would be the last time we saw him. Minutes later, when we came back from our break, we saw Sun Wukong waiting for us. He said, "It was because of your master I was trapped under a boulder. Now that he's gone, my worries have disappeared!" And then he vanished.

My classmates vowed that we would take revenge and fight to the death if we ever saw him again. I would have much more to say but then, "Wake up! Wake up!" Moko was shaking me. I jumped up. "Blair, you're having those flashbacks again, aren't you? Come on, you have to face reality, you vowed to take revenge, and HE is right on top of the mountain now, if you don't try, you won't have a chance to get your revenge. Don't worry, when you're in danger we'll protect you, go on."

So, with Moko's reassuring words, I plucked up the courage, checked my supplies and walked into the dark cave without knowing that I would actually succeed...

Legends of The Great Majestic Mountains of China

St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yu, Ming Ying Nicole – 10

In the past century, nothing about the Great Majestic Mountains of China has been discovered, spoken about, or written. In fact, the Mountains had almost become a myth, gradually shifting from a mysterious wonder to a faded legend. Fortunately, one young archeologist was about to change all of that. Astrid Griffin was an adventurous and intelligent teenage archeologist. She was the youngest professional archeologist in the world, and she was famous for her great sense of strategy and confidence.

Astrid worked for an archeology company, and she had recently been given the task of finding all the research she could get her hands on about the Mountains. Immediately, she went online and painstakingly read through every website she found, then went to numerous libraries to further research. She spent hours reading and taking notes. Astrid did this every day, from sunrise to sunset. When her task was complete, she submitted the form to her boss, Diana. Diana scanned the papers and soon skimmed through everything and was left speechless. This young archeologist was particularly serious about assignments, she thought. Finally, she came to a decision and announced that Astrid would be promoted from the Junior Archeologist section to the Senior.

Astrid's jaw dropped. This was such an honor! After thanking Diana, she asked if there was anything additional to the assignment she could assist with. An archeology company was sending five of their best archeologists to explore the Mountains. Diana asked if Astrid wanted to take this opportunity and she nodded enthusiastically. Diana approved and briefed her quickly.

A week later, Astrid received a package and opened it. She pulled out some electronics, a sturdy survival backpack with climbing gear and survival necessities, and a note with instructions. Astrid was reading through the instructions when, suddenly, a hologram materialized. Astrid listened as it described the route of the journey, the sights, mysteries and dangers they would encounter. Lastly, it reminded Astrid to always be aware of her surroundings and explained the objective of the mission: To reveal the secret of the Mountains to the public.

When she got to the airport terminal, she found 4 other archeologists waiting for her: Ally, Teresa, Cyrus and Ashton. They soon arrived in China, hailed a vehicle to drive them to the Mountains and laid eyes on the spectacular sight shortly thereafter. Tall, craggy peaks reached for the sky, silent rivers flowed in the valleys, twists of vibrant colour tinted the rock faces. Then Teresa spotted something imposing. A village was camouflaged in a deep crevasse on a peak. The village was assembled on strong wooden stilts and planks with traditional Chinese housing perched everywhere. The astounded teenagers ordered the driver to drop them off close to the mountain to begin climbing. Fastening themselves into advanced climbing gear, they began scaling the rock. It was easier than expected as there were many stones jutting out, which made footholds and handholds that were effortless to grasp. Higher up in the mountain, the oxygen started thinning out, so they put on oxygen masks and could breathe normally. Finally, they arrived at a giant tree stump.

Ashton's mind clicked when he recalled a memory in his past expeditions. He twisted the tree stump downward and the tree stump sank into a makeshift hole, and a slide materialized. Without hesitation, they hopped on. They sped down the sharp incline until the slide ended at the village. A sea of heads looked up and stared. Strangely, a warm aura continuously floated through their icy stares. Finally, Ally broke the silence and quickly introduced the group, explaining the purpose of their visit. A tall man wearing an imperial robe stepped forward and introduced himself as the chief of the Dragon Poetry Tribe, then explained the reason the tribe got its name was because the day their ancestors, the great Chinese poets Li Bai and Du Fu, discovered this crevasse, a dragon landed and stayed near the crevasse for as long as time has existed. It is still there, the chief explained, in the Well of Wishes, spending its days granting the wishes of all who dropped coins in. The chief also added that the archeologists are welcome to stay with them and gave them a tour.

The village was strewn with Chinese housing. In between properties, thriving gardens grew fresh produce, and livestock grazed everywhere. The chief guided them to a wishing well and knocked on a brick. A fine smoke wafted up from the well, followed by a long snakelike body. The dragon had splendid green scales. Her name was Atlantis, and she was a Dragon of Desires, and as a gift for their acquaintance she granted them one wish each.

While leaving the well, the chief shockingly announced that everything that they saw and heard must be kept a secret. Hearing this, Ashton couldn't hold it in any longer. He argued about how they were supposed to keep this a secret when their expedition goal was to report everything they saw to the public. How could they not do that? The world was expecting results! The chief pointed to his surroundings. He spoke of the secrets of the Mountains, how the world may react and alter this place if they let everyone know about it. How revealing the secrets will destroy their village and disrupt their traditions. Mankind would terrorize their property! He asked them if they understood what he meant, and the teens nodded, but on the inside they felt exasperated. The chief escorted them to the base of the canyon and bid them farewell.

Back in Canada, they got to work making up theories to replace their discoveries. A reasonable story soon came up and Cyrus made all of them memorize it for the upcoming interviews. In short, the interviews went as planned and protective explanations were set up around the Mountains to protect its resources.

And the tribe and dragon? Well, those were kept a forever secret.

Amazing Experience in Yellow Mountain

Sung Tak Wong Kin Sheung Memorial School, Fang, Angelina – 10

Eric and Peter are best friends. They were sitting in the living room. Eric was drawing a picture about Mountain. “Wow, this picture is marvelous,” said Peter. All of a sudden, they were pulled by a huge gravity. “What the-” gasped Peter.

They were on a mountain and an oddly-shaped pine tree stood in front of them. The world outside and the world in the picture of the mountain---they were exactly the same! “What happened to us?” asked Eric. “I don’t know,” said Peter. Eric stroked the pine tree. “Welcome to the magical mountain,” said the pine tree. “A talking tree?” Eric was shocked. “What’s the mountain’s name?” Peter asked. “It’s one of the most splendid mountains in the world called Yellow Mountain,” the old tree replied. Then a giant creature soared through the sky. “AHHHHH!” Eric screamed. “What?” said Peter.

“It’s a Pteranodon,” said the pine tree. “Fabulous!” yelled Eric. “The flying reptile lived in the Cretaceous period. They vanished 65 million years ago,” said Peter. “No, impossible! We couldn’t have landed in a time 65 million years ago,” said Eric. Suddenly, the incredibly big creature soared up high into the sky again. It had huge bat-like wings. “Wow, it’s a real live Pteranodon,” exclaimed Peter. “So that means we are back to the prehistoric past...” added Peter.

“Hi!” Peter stroked the pine tree again. “How can we find Pteranodons and the other dinosaurs? Are they dangerous?” “Please tap me three times with your finger, then the magic flute will appear. And I’ll take you straight to the dinosaur’s world.” “A magic flute?” questioned Peter. “The magic flute is going to help you. Playing this flute will deliver you from danger,” the pine tree replied.

“Thanks!” Then the pine tree they had touched quivered and wriggled. In the middle, a small hole appeared---it grew wider and wider. Peter took a magic flute and they stepped through the hole. And then the hole shrank instantly back.

“Amazing!” yelled Eric. Eric and Peter hurried past the leafy trees and arrived at the dinosaur’s world. The dinosaurs were incredibly big. “We are probably the first people in the whole world to ever see the real live dinosaurs,” yelled Peter. “Shh!” Eric put his finger to his lips. They hunched down behind a fat bush. “Oh!” Eric exclaimed.

“Peter!” Eric shouted. But Eric disappeared suddenly. Eric heard a deep bellowing sound. His heart was beating so fast that he could hardly imagine. Suppose where Peter is going? “Opps!” said Eric. Peter fell into the grass in full view of the dinosaurs! “Get back!” whispered Eric. Too late, the big dinosaur had spotted Peter. “Don’t panic. Think. Think. Okay! He took a deep breath.

“Peter! Play the powerful magic flute!” yelled Eric. Peter nodded and held up the magic flute. Music streamed from the silver instrument. The melody was simple, yet beautiful. Soon the dinosaurs became quiet. “They’re nice,” said Peter. “Are you invaders?” asked the dinosaurs. “We are not invaders. We are good humans from the other world. Can you show us around?” said Eric, feeling amazed that he could understand dinosaur language.

“Alex the Pteranodon, show them around,” called the leader of dinosaurs. And then, Alex led them to Dragon Market. Peter and Eric turned their head in every direction, they wished they had ten more eyes. Just then Peter spotted a dark shop with a sign saying “FLYING BROOMS”. “Wow, a flying broom!” said Peter. Dinosaur Alex said, “Ride on it.” “Fabulous!” Peter and Eric said in unison.

Suddenly, a brilliant idea lit up Eric. He said, “How about having a flying competition?” Then, Alex coasted down to the ground. What was Eric supposed to do? Climb on? “But I’m too heavy,” thought Eric. “Don’t think. Just do it!” said Alex. “That sounds thrilling!” said Peter.

Peter sat on the broom and rode on tightly to the flying broom. Eric stroked Alex's giant ear. Then he eased down onto Alex's back. He held on tightly. Alex moved forward. He spread out his wings and lifted off the ground. Alex steadied himself, then rose into the sky. It was amazing! It was a miracle. Peter felt like a bird, as light as a feather.

Peter kept his eyes squeezed shut and tried hard not to fall off from the broom. As they speeded across the sky, Alex guided Eric steadily in the Yellow Mountain. Peter opened his eyes, he began to feel more excited than scared.

Eric couldn't believe it. He was riding on the back of an ancient flying dinosaur in the Yellow Mountain. They sailed over the stream, over the ferns and bushes. The wind was rushing through his hair. The air smelled sweet and fresh. They whooped, they laughed. "This is great!" cried Eric.

Finally, Peter first arrived at a stop near the pine tree. Soon after, Alex carried Eric down to the base of the pine tree. "You win, you're such a splendid flyer!" congratulated Eric. "You're an amazing rider too," smiled Peter. Eric slid off Alex's back and landed on the ground. Then Alex glided into the sky. "Bye-Thank you," said Eric. Alex lifted his wings into the air, made a gesture of farewell. "Bye, flying broom," shouted both Eric and Peter. The flying broom vanished in the sky. Peter carefully laid the flute in a corner of the pine tree. "Good-bye for now," Peter and Eric said to the pine tree. "Thanks for everything!"

Seconds later, they opened their eyes. "We are back," whispered Peter. Eric was drawing pictures and Peter was looking at Eric's painting. No time had passed since they'd left. Then Peter said, "We took a trip to a magical mountain-The Yellow Mountain." "Yes, everything was very mysterious, the experience in Yellow Mountain did seem more like a dream," said Eric.

"Only this world and this time seem real," agreed Peter.

Yellow Emperor and His Mountain

Tai Po Old Market Public School, Kuang, Yu Chiu – 10

Prologue

Long ago and far away, in a land of dragons, there lived a famous emperor. This is the tale of that emperor and his mountain.

Chapter 1 Yellow Emperor (黃帝)

Yellow Emperor was meditating quietly in his corner of the cave just as he did every day. The cave was dark and cold. It was easy to make him focus his minds on the things thousand years ago.

He was thinking of his brutal enemies, Yandi(炎帝) and Chiyu(蚩尤). Now they were gone with the wind.

He was thinking of his beautiful wife, Leizu(嫫祖), who taught women how to breed silkworms and weave fabrics of silk.

He was thinking of his people Linglun(伶倫), who invented the five notes of the ancient Chinese five-tone scale (gong, shang, jiao, zhi, and yu 宮商角徵羽)

He was thinking of his minister, Cangjie(倉頡), who made Chinese Characters...

It was quiet in the cave.

True, he had once been a very powerful emperor, but those days were long ago.

‘All have gone.’ he thought.

‘I should be the one who teaches the descendants.

I should be the one who is always remembered.’

Chapter 2 The Fine Paper (宣紙)

Clump... Clump... Clump...

What was it? Thousand of years Yellow Emperor could hear nothing but birds’ songs and flowers’ whisper.

Yellow Emperor came out of the cave and saw a man cutting a tree.

‘Do I disturb you?’ The young man swept his head and said politely. ‘I am Kongdan(孔丹), the apprentice of Cailun(蔡倫), I am looking for some materials for the fine paper then I can draw my master’s portrait and keep it forever.’

The words shocked Yellow Emperor and he realized that he should write a book with all of his experience and knowledge then his descendants may know how to live a better life.

‘Yes, that would be my destiny.’ A strong voice lingered around his side.

Soon after the fine paper came out and the Book of Yellow Emperor came out.

Chapter 3 the Book of Yellow Emperor (黃帝秘笈)

Rumor spread secretly. In Mount Yi there lived Yellow Emperor. In Mount Yi there was a Book of Yellow Emperor.

Once you got the book, you got the knowledge.

Once you got the book, you got the music.

Once you got the book, you got the wealth.

Once you got the book, you got the power.

Once you got the book, you got the world...

Mount Yi was not quiet any longer.

More and more people came in Mount Yi but they never came back again.

Since then more and more oddly-shaped rocks had been standing on the mountain. Nobody could tell where they came from.

Since then more and more pine trees had been growing straight out of the rocks. Nobody could tell how they could rooted the rocks deeply and grasped the mountain tightly.

Since then thick and heavy fog had been rising from the foot to the mountaintop, from morning to night. Nobody would tell the way up the mountain.

Now Mount Yi was quiet again between the sea of cloud.

Quiet as ever till one day...

Chapter 4 Tang Xuanzong Emperor (唐玄宗)

A sharp and elegant flute was wafting through the air.

‘Who is it?’ Yellow Emperor murmured.

‘My Immortal, I am Li Longji(李隆基), a cult following of Taoism, a pilgrim soul in you.’

‘How can you be here?’ Yellow Emperor stared at the young man.

‘Follow my flute and follow my heart.’ Longji began to play his flute.

Yellow Emperor was moved by the melody and talked with him about the music, talked with him about Taoism and talked with him about his family.

Longji was the successor of Tang Dynasty. Yellow Emperor believed Longji would be a good emperor and invited Longji to stay up with him in Mount Yi that night. Just at that night Longji dreamed a dance music Nishangyuyi (《霓裳羽衣曲》).

It’s unknown if Yellow Emperor gave Longji his Book. But Tang Xuanzong, namely Li Longji, led Tang Dynasty to its golden age in the following decades.

Because of Yellow Emperor, Mount Yi was renamed Yellow Mountain by Tang Xuanzong. No access to the Yellow Mountain from then on. Yellow Mountain came back to quiet again.

Chapter 5 Li Bai (李白)

A rich aroma of wine was wafting through the air.

‘What is it?’ Yellow Emperor muttered.

‘Me? I am Li Bai, a Taoist.’ an extremely drunk man slurred.

‘How can you be here?’ Yellow Emperor stared at the intruder.

‘Follow the sunset and follow my heart.’ Li Bai began to recite his poems.

Yellow Emperor was moved by the verse and talked with him about the poems, talked with him about Taoism and talked with him about the wine.

Yellow Emperor thought Li Bai was a brilliant poet and invited him to stay for the coming sunrise. It’s unknown what they talked on earth. But somebody said that they were ascending to Heaven in the clouds that morning.

Epilogue

Time flied and another 800 years passed by.

Here came a young man called Xu Xiake(徐霞客) into the cave.

He saw a book on the desk...

The Sapphire Scorpion Mountain

Tai Po Old Market Public School, Lo, Tsz Chun – 11

Huangshan is a tourist attraction in eastern China. This gorgeous mountain range has many peaks. Lotus Peak is the most spectacular among them. It contains rare rocks that are magically colourful. Do you want to know the myth behind this highest peak and the stunning mountains?

Long ago, many strong men excavated iron nuggets, gold nuggets and diamonds out of stones from this dazzling mountain to earn a living. After two hundred years, all the stones were smashed, except one gigantic rock on top of the mountain being “unharmd”. People at that time were thirsty for this rock so they climbed the mountain eagerly. The men smashed the rock with their finest axes and the stone smashed. Tens of thousands of sapphires burst out of the broken rock. The rare materials covered the whole mountain.

Suddenly, the mountain moved as it shrieked. The men lost balance and fell on the ground. Unexpectedly, the villagers discovered that the mountain had two claws, eight eyes, eight legs and at the back of it, a deadly venomous tail. This monster was a scorpion covered in sapphires. The villagers were stunned and screamed. They ran in all directions.

A courageous wizard named Merlin tried to save the situation by using his magic. He cast a spell and a crash of thunder from the sky blasted out and hit the scorpion’s tail. To take a revenge, the furious arachnid grabbed Merlin with its claws. Out of his surprise, its tail regrew and jabbed at him. It then turned its focus to the panicking villagers. Its tail crashed on the ground and made a hole where hundreds of millions of small undead scorpions crawled out and soon scattered everywhere to chase after the villagers at an incredible speed. Some of the villagers, unluckily, died in this arachnid-human war.

To boost its power, an aura appeared out of nowhere and surrounded this mighty, ferocious scorpion. Merlin tried to stop this catastrophe by running towards the aura at his full speed but the aura knocked him off. Suddenly, a gleam of light shot from the top of the aura and hit the sky. As quick as a ninja, the blue sky turned dark and red, and evil. The atmosphere was chilling in a flash. The villagers screamed louder than before and attempted to dash home. However, every nook and cranny of their houses were stuffed with undead scorpions.

In a state of chaos, the aura rimming the monster gradually disappeared. All people sighed in relief, except Merlin, who was gazing at an even bigger, rejuvenated scorpion! One by one, the beast crushed the villagers with its claws and its legs squished them like ants when stomping around. The unharmd villagers wanted to escape but it was too late when they noticed that they were besieged by walls of undead scorpions. Those intimidating demons kept coming close to the fearful villagers and ate many of them to their bones.

The lucky wizard managed to escape, but he returned. He cast a spell and each of the villagers was sheltered by a magic bubble. The sapphire scorpion tried to pop those bubbles with its venomous tail but it failed. The bubbles took them all to a safe wood where they burst one by one. The villagers thanked their saviour but Merlin shook his head as he said it was not the time for that. He took out a magic book and found a page. ‘I can perform an ancient, the most powerful spell in wizardkind but I need your help,’ he began to talk to the villagers. ‘I need all of you to hide somewhere in the wood and protect yourself. Simultaneously, I must go to the Dead Valley to collect a zombie skull to be used together with the spell,’ he continued. The villagers obeyed and grabbed some metal tools and branches nearby to keep as weapons. They waited silently for their hero to come back and save them.

When Merlin stepped into the Dead Valley, many skeleton zombies rose from the earth and walked towards him as if they were sleepwalking. He then took a small bottle of potion out and spread it all over them. Those ogres stopped walking and fainted. When he returned to the wood with a zombie skull, he saw a whole floor of dead bodies and blood. Tears went down Merlin’s cheeks. He turned red and raged at the killer scorpion.

Merlin roared and put a final spell on the scorpion. A ball of light came out of his chest. The light was indeed his core that he needed to stay alive. Merlin started to fade, but he kept chanting, ‘Core and skull, please turn into the sword of justice that avenges the villagers’ death!’ Merlin used his last precious moment to climb on the creature’s back. ‘For the people that you killed!’ he thundered. The scorpion jabbed Merlin’s chest while Merlin turned his own core and the zombie skull into a deadly sword and stabbed it into the scorpion’s heart. The giant shrieked one last time and fell on the ground, dead.

A villager in the wood witnessed everything. He picked up the book used by Merlin. He followed what Merlin did before and chanted a few lines. Suddenly, the scorpion turned into a colourful mountain as it had always been. The villager who turned the scorpion back into the mountain was proclaimed to be the king of the village. To commemorate their fearless saviour Merlin, they built a giant sapphire statue of him holding a sword that saved lives. The statue sat on top of the dead scorpion mountain.

The myth about this wizard sacrificing himself for slaying a sapphire scorpion will live on through generations.

Tales From China's Magical Mountains

Tak Sun School, Cheung, Shing Fei Jeffrey – 11

Once upon a time, a dragon which loved playing hide n' seek moved in Huangshan in the 8th century. It lived above the clouds in the district. It lived alone when it lived in the district for the first year.

The second year, the dragon saw Li Bai below the clouds in the district. It started 'playing' hide n seek with Li Bai. It attracts the poet to find the mystery of it and writes different poems while he finds the mystery. It attracts Li Bai to go up the stone steps which were there 700 years ago. Li Bai stepped up the steps around the mountain carefully as he needed to prevent from falling off. The steps are magically floating in mid-air. The poet can't look down because when he looks down, he feels that he might fall down.

Up above the clouds, there are 4 village houses which have a diamond inside them. The diamonds are in different colours and each represents an energy. Red represents fire, blue represents water, yellow represents gold, brown represents wood and silver represents earth. The diamonds are the dragon's property. The dragon wants the poet to write poems about it, so it appeared in front of him once. The dragon appeared in my dream too! It told me that nature is the perfect enlightenment for writing and thinking. Thanks to the magical dragon, it improved my writing inspiration and made me a different person.

The Story of Huangshan and Huangdi

Tak Sun School, Choi, Manhon Aidan – 11

The ‘Yellow Mountains’, also known as Huangshan, is embedded in Eastern China, not very far from Shanghai. The mountains are shaped by peaks giving it a majestic look which seems to transpose one back in time. This is why there are many myths surrounding it which people are willing to believe and pass on.

Many people may wonder ‘Why is this mountain called “The Yellow mountain” when it is not yellow?’ Actually, the mountain’s name used to be ‘Yishan’, literally meaning the ‘Black Mountains’. It took on the name ‘Huangshan’ because of a myth. In the myth, Huangdi, the ‘Yellow emperor’ who is the ancestor of Chinese, went to Huangshan to look for ways to become an immortal. He ate a magical fungus which made him immortal. In the end he ascended heaven and became a god. This is what my story is about...

There was a magical fungus which grew only in the ‘Yellow Mountains’. It allowed people to travel anywhere, anytime to the future or to the past but no one knew this secret fungus existed until one day, a long long time ago, a mischievous baby phoenix took the fungus and dropped it into the nearby forest where the village children were playing together.

An intelligent child named Ying Ying stumbled upon this fungus and was mesmerized by how much the fungus looked like a crystal more than a plant. Ying Ying was a curious child who wondered about everything to do with the universe. Naturally, he was curious about the fungus so he took a bite. The fungus tasted crispy and sweet much like a ripe apple. To his amazement, the fungus grew back to the original form.

Suddenly, Ying Ying felt a gust of warm air wrapping around him and then he fell into a black hole which appeared out of nowhere. The next he knew, he was standing in front of a building he has never seen before. In fact, to him the building looked like it was from outer space. Ying Ying was actually teleported to another part of the world in the future. He never went back to the village as he was too fascinated by the knowledge of the people of the future. He became a great scientist who knew everything about the universe, he took the English translation of ‘Ying’ and named himself ‘Hawking’.

What about the story of Huangdi? How did he become an immortal? It has to do with the fungus too.

One time, Hawking wanted to observe the orbit of the moon in the future so he went to the year 3030. There he met a boy named Caesar. Like Hawking, Caesar was very intelligent and curious, but unlike Hawking, he did not care much about the universe but instead was very fascinated by the history of the world. Caesar and Hawking became such good friends that Hawking cut the magical fungus in half and gave one part to Caesar.

Caesar farewelled his good friend, took a bite and teleported to what he thought was the most beautiful place and time on earth. He went to the Yishan and took on the Chinese translation of Caesar, named ‘Huangdi’.

So, we now know that Huangdi is actually a person from way in the future. He became a legend of China and an emperor. Huangdi was known to invent a lot of things that would be very useful to human civilization such as wooden houses, carts, boats, the bow and arrow and writing using the knowledge from the future.

Huangdi’s greatest achievement was the use of his knowledge of economics from 3030 to set up a banking system. I wonder if human civilization would have grown so quickly if Huangdi was not from the future? But then, why didn’t he do more? He could have brought electricity and a lot more to this era. I believe it’s because he loved Huangshan. He did not want to ruin the beauty of it by the quick pace of human civilization. After all, he chose to stay at this time, at this place and be the emperor because he thought this place is much more beautiful than 3030.

Legend has it that Huangdi searched everywhere for anything that can make him have an eternal life. But we now know the ‘real’ story of who he really was and how he became an immortal.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Tak Sun School, Hui, Cruz – 11

Once upon a time, there was two teenagers named Chester and Terry. Terry loves photographing and Chester loves drawing. Both of them love travelling around. One day, they read a poem about Yellow Mountain, the poem mentioned that Yellow Mountain is one of the beautiful and mystery places in the world. During Christmas holiday, they went to Anhui Province in China to find the most beautiful place- Yellow Mountain.

While they had arrived at Anhui Province, Yellow Mountain appeared in their eyes. They found that there was breathtakingly beautiful, a lot of bushy trees made them feeling relax. Chester and Terry took out their camera and drawing pens immediately and got some amazing pictures.

After they had taken the pictures, they started hiking to the mountain side. The mountain was as cold as a fridge. Chester and Terry were frozen because of the strong wind. While the wind blew stronger and stronger, Chester and Terry walked harder and harder.

When they walked as tired as zombies, they saw two shadows which was tall and huge. Chester and Terry felt weird, so they tracked the shadows. The shadows seemed to be two big monsters which the whole body covered with soft white fur. 'Ye.....Yeti!' Chester cried. The yetis heard their voice and tried to catch them.

Chester and Terry were so scared because the yetis become bigger and bigger. They ran as fast as they could and finally they ran to the top of the mountain. Chester and Terry were amazed by the beautiful view of the mountain peak. Clouds were under their foot. They saw some antique houses. At this moment, the two big yetis caught up with the speed of Chester and Terry. 'Hu.....Huh, little boys, don't run!' the yetis cried. Chester and Terry were scared and they hid themselves into the cave to escape from the yetis. Inside the cave, they found a long waterfall. They also found lots of beautiful artworks such as Chinese brush painting, statues, Chinese calligraphy.....

'They hide in the cave.' One of yetis said.

Two yetis walked into the cave and shook their bodies, many snowflakes fell off from their bodies. Yetis disappeared and two elderly men appeared.

'Yetis are not yetis, they are two old men.' Chester shouted.

'Hi little boys, my name is Li Bai, this is my friend Du Fu, we are poets from 8th century.' Li Bai said.

'We were already 1300 years old!' Du Fu said. 'We asked you to stop running, because the snow of this iceberg was melting since the global warming was appeared so the mountain become very slippery. It is dangerous when you run, you will fall off from cliff easily.'

'Hey boys, look at these pictures, this is the scenery of Yellow Mountain in 1000 years before. Is it beautiful?' Li Bai said.

'Wow, it's amazing!' Chester shouted.

'Many people destroy the earth, they put the litter everywhere, they waste the nature resources, the global warming appear and the weather change.....The Yellow Mountain may disappear in the future.' Li Bai wept.

Du Fu taught Chester and Terry how to protect the nature in the future.

Finally, Chester and Terry went down the hill with a lot of beautiful pictures. They found this is a meaningful trip that they never had. They learned that how to protect the nature and educate their friends to do so. If we don't save the earth, a lot of beautiful places will be disappeared.

Tales from China's Magical Mountain

Tak Sun School, Lee, Man-Hei Joshua – 11

Once upon a time, there was a little boy living with his grandma in the village. His name was Hei. His parents passed away due to an accident when he was still a baby. Hei was very close to his grandma and they loved each other deeply. Although they lived from hand to mouth, they were very happy together.

When Hei was 17 years old, his grandma got a disease, that nobody could cure her. He was very scared of losing his only beloved grandma. He asked all his neighbours what he could do, but they all didn't know. One day, a stranger from another village passed by. He told Hei that there was a legend about a pearl protected by the dragon in the cave of the magic mountain. If he ground and then boiled it for 24 hours, it turned into a medicine that could cure any terminal illness. However, nobody had ever seen the dragon. All people knew that it was very dangerous. Along the path towards the cave, there were many bones on the ground. Nobody had ever returned from the cave. Hei considered it seriously. He worried that when he left for the pearl, nobody would take care his grandma. He also didn't know the way to go. He had never left his village in his life. However, he really didn't want to lose his grandma. After thinking for a whole night, he was determined that he would try to save her whatever he could do, no matter how difficult the way was.

Next day, he set off very early. He begged his neighbour to help taking care of his grandma. His neighbour sympathised them and promised to do so. He also tried to persuade Hei not to go. He said, 'It's so dangerous on the way to the mountain. And we don't know whether there is really a pearl over there. Your grandma probably doesn't want you to take the risk. If she knows that you are trying to get the pearl from the dragon, she may prohibit you to go and prefer dying in bed with your company.' Hei held his tears in the eyes and thanked his neighbour for the advice and his help.

He only brought a big bottle of water and a small amount of food with him. The path to the dragon's cave was very steep and narrow. Part of it was just over the cliff. It was very difficult and dangerous. He bore the pain and hunger on the way.

After three days when he only left a loaf of bun, he saw a dog approaching him. It was very skinny and looked hungry. The dog just stared at Hei. He pitied it and shared his only bun with it. The dog was very grateful. It then followed him at a distance. Hei got an accompany now. On the way, they searched fruits and caught birds to feed themselves. It was hard but they felt nice with each other.

A few days afterwards, they slept in a forest after a simple meal. In Hei's dream, he heard his dog barking. He woke up and found that it was real. Moreover, there was a pack of wild wolves surrounding them! His dog was so brave that it threatened away all the wolves. So amazing!

There were many obstacles along the way. Hei felt exhausted but he insisted to go. Finally, they arrived the cave and saw the dragon inside. Hei was very excited because he knew that it was not a rumour. He pleaded the dragon, 'My grandma was dying. I heard that your pearl can recover anybody even if he has died. Please give it to me.' The dragon lied, 'I don't have any pearl. This is a myth. Please leave me alone. This mountain is my home!' Hei didn't believe. He decided to slip into his cave and get it although he knew that stealing was shameful.

When night came, he asked the dog to keep silence and guard the entrance. He got into the cave and searched around. Suddenly, the dragon woke up and roared. It was furious and it attacked Hei. To his surprise, the cave lit up and there was a very beautiful fairy. She played magic to the dragon and it stopped moving. The fairy said kindly to the dragon, 'Why don't you give your pearl to this boy? When you lost your mother, you were so sad that you had cried for 30 years.' The dragon recalled the memory and it gave the pearl to Hei. He was so grateful to the fairy and the dragon. He promised he would always try to help others in his whole life if his grandma was healed.

On the way home, the path looked so easy as Hei was so excited to see his grandma again. Fortunately, his grandma was still there. She burst into tears when she saw Hei. He made the medicine immediately with the pearl. One week later, his grandma recovered magically.

The Tale from Huangshan

Tak Sun School, Lo, Yat Chit Cason – 11

Floating clouds, sharp peaks and rugged roads, all these are the characteristics of the most mysterious mountain in China -- Huangshan. Numerous attempted to climb up every year. However, most of them disappeared.....

‘Cough, cough, cough.....’ the King felt suffocated.

The doctors came and said ‘Your Majesty, we are sorry, you’ve got a strange illness. There’s no medicine to cure.’ The king felt hopeless, ‘I want to go to the town to see my beloved people. This is my last wish.’

‘Jane, it’s time to do to the town to sell wood.’ Jing said. They were brother and sister, poor orphans who could depend on only each other. Their rooftop was broken which water dropped during raining. What they were doing everyday were just finding wood to sell and sew their only piece of clothes which already had been ragged and shabby from time to time.

The King decided to spend some time in the town on his own. Suddenly, two robbers grasped the king to a back alley and took out a dagger. At this moment, Jing and Jane, who were on the way to sell woods walked by and saw this happening. Jane climbed up to Jing’s shoulders and wore the cloth that was used to wrap the wood up as a cloak. They looked like a giant and the robbers were shock to see such a big man, ran away immediately.

‘You two are very clever. Thank you. Nevertheless, my life is useless.’ The King murmured.

‘What do you mean, sir?’ Jane asked.

‘I am actually the King. I got a strange illness that no medicine can help.’

‘I remember grandpa once told me there was a flower Kadupul, from Huangshan, can cure all diseases. But there were lots of strange creatures.....’ Jing said.

Jane thought of a while, and told the King, ‘The whole kingdom count on you. We will help to take the flower. Trust us, we can do this.’

With the flying golden dragon Nong as a protector given by the King, they soon started the journey to Huangshan. It knew all smell of things. Trees were tall and blocked the sunlight. There wasn’t any road so they need to climb up.

Suddenly, from the middle of the misty web a huge spider Aragog appeared. Its venom could corrode anything. Aragog attacked them with its spider silk! Jing and Jane climbed to the tallest tree to hide. Jane jumped onto Aragog and used her vines to tie its hairy legs. Aragog couldn’t move and kept struggle. They tied its legs to a big tree with the vines. They eliminated it and kept climbed up to find Kadupul.

Some wind was blowing the trees. Leaves, branches and trucks are moving. They were lost in the dark forest. Abruptly, the trees moved like humans! They swung branches to attack. Nong spitted fire to trees but once those trees were burnt down, they grew again.

Sounds appeared from the floating clouds suddenly.

At this moment, a mysterious man with two wings and a sword fly to tree and cut down its root. The tree fell and did not grow up again.

‘My name is Jane! He is my brother, Jing. What’s your name?’

‘Face your enemy.’ he said.

‘How can this ribbon cut the strong roots? Why can you fly?’ Jane was a problem child.

He did not reply and fled to fight again. The man used the magical ribbon to wave to the root. Many of them were finally died. They continued their journey and explained to the man of mystery why they came. He remained silent, still.

Nong recognized that the man was a prince.

‘Which country does it from?’ Jane asked.

‘The cloud’s kingdom. Where my ancestors lived.’ Nong shedded a drop of tear, reminiscing the old days.

Before 7 centuries, Nong was still a child, living up on the clouds with his clan members. Dragon would not die unless being killed. They shared the cloud’s kingdom with the birdmen, who were able to fly. Due to the resources distribution problem, cruel birdmen assassinated all of the dragons, except Nong could escape fortunately. And the King took Nong in.

‘If wasn’t he can help the king, I will go straight to kill him right now!’ Nong said with anger.

They kept climbing up, and unintentionally they saw a big giant! The giant has a big meteor hammer.

The prince said 'He is protecting Kadupul. For him, spear, sword, arrow.....all nothing! But just one thing can make it afraid, Noni.'

'What's that?' Jing asked

Nong quickly stood up and started to smell for Noni. It was a kind of fruit. The biggest problem was they needed to put Noni to the giant's mouth. They discussed and had a perfect factice.

The prince flew to the clouds and let the clouds float to the giant's eyes so he couldn't see anything. Jane used the ribbon to tie his legs.

Jing was driving Nong. And Noni was in Nong's mouth. They flew to the giant quickly.

'Now!' Jing shouted. Nong spat Noni with some fire. The giant swallowed Noni when he was roaring! The next moment he already cried in pain and got knocked out.

They did it.

The prince flew back and disappeared, without anyone noticed, mysteriously, just like how he showed up. The siblings and Nong went back to the town and found King with Kadupul.

The kingdom became energetic once again. Everything seemed beautiful, like the adventure had never begun. Jane and Jing grew up and were now being teachers of an orphanage, telling the children about their story.

'Don't fool us Ms. Jane. A golden dragon doesn't exist.'

'Well, the truth is leaving for you to discover!' Jane said with a little smile.

Suddenly, there was a voice appeared from the sky.

'Jane and Jing, I need one thing, keep in mind that I have helped you before.'

'Tell us.' Both said without a doubt.

'Bring me the head of your dragon.'

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Tak Sun School, Pang, Lai Him Moses – 11

Once upon a time, there was a legend about the yellow mountain – Huangshan...

Once upon a time, there was a stonecutter. He lived in a hut at the foot of the mountain. He went to this mountain to cut stone every day. He had a peaceful life. One day, he walked across a rich man's house which is enormous and shiny. He looked for a while and went up to the mountain. Up on the mountain, He muttered to himself "I wish I have a gorgeous house like that house I just saw." Suddenly, the mountain moved itself. "What happened just now?" The stonecutter shouted. "It's me, the yellow Emperor who always talk about me. I will grant your wish." The deep voice was up on the top of the mountain. The stonecutter was frightened but he shouted back "I'm not scared of you! Do joke around, you are not the Emperor. It is just a legend!" When he went home, he was shocked about the conspiracy. His house is now very big, and the walls were full of gold. The stone cutter thought "Is there really the yellow Emperor?" He did not think last. After these days, His life was happy. Little did he know, this made him very greedy.

Next week, He goes to the mountain, but he has another idea. "If I talk to the mountain, I will tell it to give me a numerous amount of money, then I will be rich and I will have a lot of prosperity!" He laughed. The stonecutter is crazy. So, the stonecutter tried talks to himself again "I hope I have so much money! "I will grant you wish again." A voice came in nowhere again. The stonecutter went home. In his expectation, there is much money pops out. "yes, I will be rich" the stonecutter said excitedly!

One week later, he went to ask the Yellow Emperor for jewels. The Yellow Emperor thinks that he is very impulsive and arrogant so that he wants to teach him a lesson. "I need to eat his house so that he will become diligent again and he won't be greedy again!" the Yellow Emperor thought. When he saw the stonecutter, the Yellow Emperor pretended to grant his wish. When the stonecutter went back home, the Emperor made an earthquake. The house fell into the Emperor mouth.

The stone cutter said, "Hey, where's my mansion, did someone break it?" He saw a handsome man holding a scythe running away. The stone cutter is mad. He ran after the man and shouted, "Why did you break my house?" Then, the Yellow Emperor said, "If you want to get your things back, you need to be hard working."

The stonecutter angry with the yellow emperor. He did not work hard and keep on being lazy. The yellow emperor was as angry as a bull. he didn't think of anything and turned him into a beggar. And from now on, people heard this story, there are no people being greedy and selfish again.

Tales from China's Magical Mountains

Tak Sun School, Pang, Lai Shun Morton – 11

Once Upon a time, there was a young man who wanted to go to the yellow mountains to find treasure. He packed his belongings in a humongous backpack. Courageously, he set off for the trip. He doesn't know; the adventure was full of thorns.

When he got there, He was fascinated by the enormous mountains. He saw that the mountain was full of fantastic views. The yellow mountain pines are particularly hard, seeming to twist directly out of the smooth rock. The oddly shaped pines scattered around the peaks and ravines. The Yellow Mountains is also natural exhibition hall of rocks. These rocks are unique in shape. The big rock towers look like stone needles and towers. The smaller boulders have also caught the imagination of the human mind. Some look like animals, some look like various gods. The seas of clouds are splendid too. When the sun is shining, the peaks are bathed in sunlight, then a moment later they are shadowed by cloud. It is a splendid show, to which nothing can compare.

Next, the young man tried to climb to the summit of the yellow mountain. He saw that lots of people were trying to climb it too. The mountains are steep, it is like climbing a wall. The young man tried with all his might, but he cannot climb up it. Suddenly, he slipped on a smooth rock and fell into a cave.

When he looked up, he saw a smooth, white dragon watching him fiercely. It was like a cat watching a mouse. The young man was so scared that he shivered and almost frightened to death. Luckily, the dragon was friendly and asked him "What are you doing here?" The young man replied petrifiedly "I rolled down a hill and fell into here."

Then, the young man noticed that there was a golden light shining behind the dragon. he walked closely to it and saw that a pot was shining. The young man asked curiously, "What is in this pot?" The dragon replied, "Oh! it is the pills of immortality. Let me tell you about the story of the yellow emperor."

According to legend, when the Yellow Emperor was in power in the ancient times, the country was strong, politically stable, moralized, and the people lived a prosperous life, so he was loved by the people. Since the Yellow Emperor was obsessed with Taoism in his later years, he passed the throne to his grandson Zhuangzi, and then followed Rong Chengzi and Fuqiu Gong Xu to practice.

So, the three set out to find a quiet and peaceful landscape resort. They found out that the yellow mountain is majestic, the mountains are surrounded by clouds and mists, no scenes are better than this place, so it was the ideal place for practicing alchemy, so the three decided to stay in this mountain.

They climbed the mountain, overwhelmed with thorns and thorns, searched all the peaks of the yellow mountain, they finally found a suitable place. The three people-built houses here, Fuqiu Gong built alchemy platforms, and Rong Chengzi piled alchemy furnaces. Alchemy requires ten kinds of medicinal materials ninety-nine agrimony, ninety-nine ginseng roots, ninety-nine jade dew flowers It is not easy to find all these things!

Huangdi was determined to make the elixir, otherwise he would not go down the mountain. The seventy-two peaks of Yellow Mountain are extremely steep and difficult to climb. But the three of them did not fear hardships and went deep into every inch of the land of it, looking for the alchemy herbs they needed. After nine years of hard work, they finally found nine kinds of medicinal materials, but they lacked nectar.

One day, Huangdi went to the deep mountains alone to find nectar. As he walked, Huangdi felt very tired, so he found a large smooth rock by the stream and lay down to rest. Half asleep bursts of fairy music came from the forest, crisp and sweet. Huangdi followed the music and saw an old man with white beard in the forest, riding a white deer. Huang Di quickly got up and saluted and asked him where to get the nectar. The old man looked at him, smiled without answering, and threw down a square scarf before leaving. Huangdi looked at the towel under his feet and saw the word "nectar" written on the square. He suddenly woke up with joy, only to find that he was lying on the boulder. It was a dream. Huangdi intuitively felt that this was the immortal's guidance, so he went down to dig a well where the scarf fell in his dream. the digging progress was very slow, but the Huangdi was not

discouraged. He continued to dig and dug a well. The water was cold and sweet. It was indeed the nectar water he was looking for.

To make the pill as soon as possible, the three of them cut wood and burned charcoal every day. After another three years, all the trees near the alchemy platform were cut down, and Lord Fuqiu and Rong Chengzi had to cut wood from a distance.

On this day, Huangdi took care of the pill furnace in front of the furnace, seeing that the last firewood was about to burn out, but the two of them were still missing. Looking at the flame that was about to be extinguished, all previous efforts will be abandoned. When Huang Di was in a hurry, he stretched one of his legs into the fire, and the flame rose again. However, he did not feel any pain in his legs. Suddenly, there was a loud bang in the alchemy furnace, and golden rays were shot out from the fire, shining the entire mountain with golden light. Fuqiu and Rong Chengzi also came back. They saw that the golden [Pills of Immortality](#) had been made!

They each took the elixir. They are as light as a swallow, floating in the air. At the same time, a bunch of beads and a jade pot descended from the sky. The Huangdi opened it immediately, and the letter contained a crown and bead shoes, they also saw that they were changed into colorful clothes. At this time, the white dragon descended from the sky and floated away

Now the white dragon from the story, is the dragon which the young man met. The dragon saw that the young man was kind-hearted, so the dragon gave him the [Pills of Immortality](#) . After, the young man got the pill. He gave it to a man which suffered from incurable disease. The man was grateful about it. In the end gave all his fortune to the young man.

In this experience, the young man learnt that Giving is receiving, we should help people more and the world will be better. Being brave is also good too, we should not fear anything.

The Goat Dragon

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Chung, Lok Yin Benjamin – 12

Extremely mysterious and mystical, China's mountains with their trees, their waterfalls splashing into massive pools of water, the caves and vast caverns, and of course the mist surrounding them, portray that vibe where if climbing one, then one might feel like you are on a great, wonderful quest in some distant, far away world. Stories passed down from generation to generation tell of dragons that used to live in those mountain caves, but the chief known as Song Jin had each single one killed. But just because he had them killed, that doesn't mean that none of them survived, or that they will not rise again.

On the day that James decided to go hiking up the yellow mountains, he wanted to camp there for a whole week, and had brought supplies to last him the entire time. The first five days went without any issue, but on the sixth day, he realised that his food supply was running low, and wouldn't last him the next couple of days and the journey back. So, he decided that he would go fishing because, as you might know, there is nothing better than fresh fish that you caught yourself. So, James walked down to the lake with his rod and cooler, caught a few, and was starting to head back when he noticed the dark entrance of what looked like a huge cave. Keen to explore, he dropped his rod, and went forth.

The first thing he saw was the massive rocks and boulders; although he couldn't quite understand why most of them were charred, he decided not to question it. As he ventured deeper into the cave, it started to become more of a cavern, and he noticed even more charred spots. Once he got to the very depths of the cavern, to be seen was a very oddly shaped reddish rock. As he came closer, he realised that it was moving; it seemed to be some sort of creature, but what? As he stared in shock, bright red flames shot out of the creature's nostrils. He turned to run for his life, but blundered into and tripped over a rock and fell noisily to the cave floor. With a deafening roar, the creature woke up.

I'm sure that if you came face to face with a dragon, then you would be absolutely petrified, and that doesn't even describe half of how James was feeling. He calculated that maybe it wouldn't attack him if he approached slowly and didn't provoke it. As he first started walking towards the dragon, it became clearly angry and shot warning fire at James. Somehow, he managed to dodge those flames and continued approaching. And, as he came closer, the dragon subsided, not being used to such a gentle approach. Just as the two were bonding for a moment, they heard a loud clattering noise coming from outside the cavern.

James strode to the entrance to investigate; he saw some strange stone-faced man in tribal clothes.

'WHERE IS IT!?' the man shouted.

'Where is what?' James calmly asked.

'THE DRAGON! WHAT ELSE!?' The man was getting angry.

'I still don't know what you are talking about or who you are,' said James, lying to protect the dragon.

'YOU KNOW FULL WELL WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT! I AM JIANG JIN!' shouted the man, enraged.

'Okay?' said James 'I still don't know why you're looking for a dragon. They don't exist.'

He was beginning to realise that Jiang Jin was a descendent of Song Jin, the dragon hunter. Somehow, he had gotten wind that there was still a dragon in existence and he wanted it dead as a dodo. Having seen James enter the cave, and heard a roar, he had deduced that the dragon had been discovered.

'Well, as there IS a dragon in there, we have to go kill it!' Jiang Jin snarled.

'Why? If there really is a dragon in there, why do we have to kill it? It doesn't seem to have bothered anyone.'

James retorted.

'BECAUSE IT EXISTS!' screamed Jiang Jin.

Just then, they both heard another deafening roar coming from the cave. As they stared transfixed, expecting a fire-breathing dragon to come bursting out of the cave, they saw instead a hovering goat with glistening rainbow wool. James was astounded but as he froze in shock, with one loud bleat, the goat blasted Jiang Jin off the face of the earth. Still completely befuddled, James just stood there, transfixed.

Then he finally summoned the courage to say, 'W-w-w-what a-a-a-ar-re you?' he asked, expecting that the goat would respond. Instead, all he got was some loud bleating, but it seemed to be saying thank you. 'Uhhhh, thank you for what?' he thought out loud. Once again, more bleating.

James returned to his camp, and then went quietly home.

Later, he wrote a blog about his mystifying experience on the internet. Sadly, almost no one believed him. But one day, he heard something that would change everything for him again: a loud bleating noise.

White Creek Station

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Fong, Ching Yeung Aiden – 11

1

Stanley was just an ordinary citizen, living his ordinary life with an ordinary job.

Every day, he would wake up early and prepare to go on his hour-long commute from the town north of the mountains to the city in the south.

Today started out just as ordinary. His workday just came and went, and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Until...

Stanley was riding the bus home, brushing past trees and tunnels when the bus driver suddenly announced that the next stop was "White Creek Station."

He had ridden this route for years now and was pretty sure this stop didn't exist until now. *Must be some new stop*, he thought. *It's pretty dark now. I should wait until tomorrow if I'm going to explore.*

At least, he tried to. But his curiosity got the better of Stanley.

Stanley saw stairs leading up the mountain. He took a deep breath, alighted the bus, and began to climb.

2

The stairs stretched up the mountain, shrouded by trees, seemingly going on forever. They started at first as an easy-to-climb trail but soon turned into narrow footholds on the cliffside. Little sections of stair were littered here and there, with only little crevices chiselled into the rock face between them.

Add to the mix the fact that it was night, and this little 'exploration' had turned into a nightmare for this inexperienced hiker.

But then he saw a tiny house at the end of the path, sat perched on a ledge just the right size. It had an intricately tiled roof, white plaster walls, and round windows.

Stanley was about to step inside when a blinding flash engulfed him.

"Well, well. I've been expecting you." a deep voice sounded.

3

When the light disappeared, Stanley found himself in the same house, but a quick look at the window revealed it was daytime. He quickly spun around and found himself staring at the spirit of an old man.

"Well then, I guess... Let me introduce myself. I am The Halo, and I am the one who has called you here. I suppose you're very confused right now - I called you here because I have a bit of a problem. Recently, four monsters have appeared in the mountains. So naturally, I decided to put out a little *invitation* to see who would be courageous enough to come and help me. And you decided to accept."

"No! I did not sign up for this!"

"Fear not. You are perfectly prepared for this, you just don't know. This is a bag of weapons. It includes a fire blade, a trident of water, a spear of wind, and the club of electricity. Now come on. We have no time to waste."

"Um... *slight* problem though... are you sure I'm qualified for the job?"

"You chose to come here!" The Halo looked away.

"You still have to take care of these monsters to leave."

So they walked.

And walked.

Or maybe they didn't walk. The Halo just glided along, his feet floating some millimetres above the ground. He seemed to have remembered the route like the back of his hand.

But finally, The Halo stopped walking for the first time in hours. He stopped, looked at some trees and, with all of his energy, rotated one that had one big branch sticking out. A rock, which was embedded in the mountainside, moved away to show a dark tunnel.

As they walked into the unlit tunnel, he saw the mechanism that opened the passageway. A big stone gear, attached to the bottom of the tree, its teeth connected to grooves in the big rock.

After a while, they reached the top, and emerged onto a large open mountaintop, overlooking the mountains shrouded in mist. Immediately a tsunami of water forced them to retreat. "We're here."

5

The Water monster had decided to go first.

He took out his blade of fire and swung it at the beast, but the water put the fire out. Stanley rummaged through the contents of his bag. He took out his spear of electricity and tried to stab it at the monster. The spear didn't even touch him, but his tsunami conducted the electricity up to the beast. He fell to the ground in a smouldering pile within seconds.

A little more than 30 seconds later, a large gust of wind came and blew out the fire. The Wind had come. *Now, what should I use to slow down the wind?* He thought. Then he had an idea. He directed his trident of water onto the area above the mountaintop. It formed a giant cube of cold water, floating in mid-air. *That should have slowed the winds,* he thought. But then he heard a loud whooshing sound. The wind spirit had turned into a hurricane.

Trying frantically to slow the beast, he decided to use his fire spear and stabbed it at the beast. Somehow it worked, and the skies cleared.

But another 30 seconds later, the Fire had come. *Okay, this one should be easy.* He told himself. He thrust his spear of wind and it put the Fire out in no time. *That was simple,* he told himself.

Finally, the toughest enemy had come. The Electricity.

But then, he had a genius idea. He pointed the trident above the arena. Water poured down from the sky onto the Electricity. There were some zapping sounds, but they calmed eventually. Stanley had successfully short-circuited the Electricity. The four Elements were dead.

Stanley turned and faced The Halo. He had a very solemn look on his face.

“Stanley... You have done well. There will be more trials that lie ahead of you, but what you have achieved here today... is enough for now.”

“But... What do you mean by more trials? More battles?”

“Not just that. You will see.”

“Like other, harder trials? Can I refuse?”

“You will see. Later.”

There was a blinding flash.

Stanley was back at the bus stop.

Lost in the Yellow Mountains

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Li, Karina – 11

“Tasha, will you play hide and seek with me?” I looked up and saw my brother staring at me, eyes wide with a pleading face. I sighed and thought for a moment, I didn’t want to, but Mom would be furious if I didn’t. I nodded and Tyler jumped with joy and led me to the garden, “You’re it.” Little did I know that this would lead to an unexpected disaster.

I closed my eyes and started to count. When I reached 60, I shouted, “Ready or not, here I come!” I waited for the squeals and laughter, which usually gave Tyler away, but unlike before, it was so silent that you could hear a pin drop. Perhaps he had finally learned to keep quiet.

I continued to search everywhere, but there was no sign of Tyler! Right when I started to get worried, I noticed a mysterious hole in the garden that I never noticed before. At that moment, a dreadful thought formed in my head, maybe Tyler fell into the hole! I leaned over and checked the hole. Out of the blue, I lost my balance and felt my surroundings disappear as I fell to the dark depths of the hole. “Help!” I yelled, but no one responded. As I continued free-falling, I was so scared that I cried buckets of tears, I was too young to die!

All of a sudden, I realized I had stopped falling. What was this place? As I looked around, I spotted a figure. I looked closer, and there I found him. “Tyler!” I shouted, it felt as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. He turned around and ran towards me, we hugged like there was no tomorrow. I gazed around at my surroundings, there were oddly-shaped pines and rocks everywhere, clouds covered the clifftops, blocking out the rest of the world, it was as if we were trapped in a mythical sea of clouds. Suddenly, I realized where we were, this was the Yellow Mountains! I had read about this place in the World Heritage Sites Book. The Yellow Mountains were easy to identify, with its special features which distinguished it from other mountains. As Tyler and I processed the news, a discomforting thought formed in our heads. “How are we going to get back?” Tyler looked as if he was about to cry, “Hong Kong is miles away from the Yellow Mountains.” “Don’t worry, we will find a way,” I comforted him. That night, we found some shelter inside a dark and empty Buddhist Temple, where we decided to spend the night. It was spooky, but it was our only choice.

The next morning, Tyler and I woke up starving and cold. Suddenly, I remembered the Yellow Mountains were famous for its plum blossoms and hot springs, we decided to try our luck. Sure enough, the Yellow Mountains didn’t fail us, we managed to source some plums for breakfast and had a hot spring bath before we continued our journey. In the daylight, we managed to notice things we did not see the night before. The Yellow Mountains were the most beautiful place we had ever seen! Beautiful plants could be seen everywhere on the mountain, Chinese Primroses, Pear Flowers, Irises, each plant added an elegant touch to the beautiful scenery. Tyler and I made sure not to disturb any wildlife as we carefully trekked over the steep rocky cliffs and stopped in front of a cave. This cave looked different from the others, with a “Greeting Guest Pine” guarding it, almost signaling there was something magical inside. I gestured for Tyler to go in and he hesitated. I whispered some encouragement to him, “It’s okay, if anything happens, I will protect you.”

We stepped into the cave cautiously, looking around for any signs of danger. In the middle of the cave, we spotted a graceful fairy, dressed in a dazzling white gown, seated on a tall, golden throne. We were so surprised, all our lives, we had thought that fairies were mythical creatures. She gestured for us to come closer, “I am Citrine, queen of the Yellow Mountains. My job is to look after all of the plants and animals here. Who are you?” I stepped forward, “My name is Tasha and this is my brother, Tyler. We live in Hong Kong, but have somehow been transported to the Yellow Mountains through a deep hole. May we ask for your help to bring us back to Hong Kong?” Queen Citrine cleared her throat, “The deep hole is called the Traveling Hole. Its location changes every day and is a direct passage to the Yellow Mountains. Only special people are chosen to travel through the hole. I am the only person with the ability to return people to their homeland. I am happy to do that for you, but you must answer these questions correctly, to prove yourselves good-hearted people who are deserving of my help.”

Tyler and I agreed and proceeded to answer the questions. The questions were extremely difficult, they were about nature and how we should treat it. We exhausted our knowledge about preventing landslides, animal extinction and preserving forests, I was glad that I had paid attention during my GD classes. After we completed the quiz, I finally understood, if we wanted to have a good future, we must treat nature well too. We were delighted when Queen Citrine declared us as good hearted people who care about nature and agreed to transport us back to Hong Kong.

As Tyler and I fell through the hole again, I thought about the events that had occurred in the past two days. Even though it was totally unexpected, we had accomplished a lot and had managed to overcome numerous challenges. Throughout this experience, I had realized how grateful I should be to have a brother who loved and cared about me. Sometimes, all you need is a small challenge to realize how luck

Son of the Yellow Mountains

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Li, Luke – 9

Wonder grew up in the Yellow Mountain village. Ever since he could remember, Wonder had always loved to listen to the stories of the Yellow Mountain. He loved the stories from Grandma the most - his favorite is about the Huang Emperor. It was told that the Huang Emperor lived in the Yellow Mountain, together with thousands of immortals, undiscovered.

Just as Wonder waited for more stories about the Huang Emperor, Grandma fled away from the world. Wonder lost his favorite storyteller, the person closest to his heart. Wonder wanted to cry but decided not to lose hope... he would search for the person with the best stories of all - the Huang Emperor himself.

That evening after mom went to sleep, Wonder began to pack for his journey. Two bottles of water, one sandwich, and his dear map of the Yellow Mountain. The map was Wonder's precious birthday gift from Grandma. He decided to study the map once again... before dozing off.

Something woke Wonder up. "Time to go," he thought as Wonder put on his backpack, and went on his journey to meet the Huang Emperor and to listen to more stories about the mountain. Up as he went, Wonder followed the chirps of the birds. Suddenly he saw an odd stone and remembered from the map that it was called "Immortal Pointing the Way." The stone pointed to a hidden cave.

Wonder entered fearlessly. It was dark, slimy, chilly, and wet. The cave became narrower and Wonder began to crawl. Just as Wonder got many scratches on his hands and he thought he could not bear any longer, a beam of light appeared. Wonder was able to stand up gradually and walked out of the cave. He saw a group of strangers hunting a deer. They were all dressed in exotic clothes like leopard-skin skirts and leafy tops, with stone and sticks in their hands. Wonder was scared. He thought of running back towards the cave, but it was too late and the cave disappeared.

One of the locals noticed Wonder, "Who are you and what are you doing here kid?"

"I am from the Yellow Mountain village, on the other side of that cave." Wonder tried to point at the cave but it was nowhere to be found. "I am here... looking for... the Huang Emperor" whispered Wonder bearing little hope.

"Of course! Just go up five thousand steps and you will reach the Lotus Peak. It is shaped like a lotus and you cannot miss it. If you get lost, follow the direction of the pine tree which looks like a flying dragon. If you are quick enough, you can even join the Huang Emperor for lunch." The local pointed to a long flight of stone stairs to the sky. Another kind local handed Wonder a thick coat made of bear-skin for the cold weather ahead.

Wonder could not hide his excitement and raced on without saying good-bye. Path to the Lotus Peak was very steep. Wonder's hands were still bleeding from the cave, and now the brisk wind from the mountain top made the cuts deeper. There were many pine trees of various shapes and sizes, but none looked like a dragon. Wonder was not even sure if he was on the right track. His stomach started to sing and he knew it was almost time for lunch. He thought of the movie *Kongfu Panda*, which he watched with Grandma, and smiled. "It is a test of will," Wonder thought, "I am the son of the Yellow Mountain and I won't give up." Right at the moment, Wonder saw a gigantic pine tree growing off the cliff. Its branches reached out far into the clouds just like a flying dragon. Wonder knew he was close and hurried on.

A grand golden palace, shining under the sun, appeared in front of Wonder. He almost could not believe his eyes. To the left of the palace, there were a group of kids chasing a cloth ball. "Is this the ancient Chinese soccer invented by the Huang Emperor that Grandma talked about? Really hope I can play." But Wonder did not waste time on his favorite sport and entered the palace swiftly. There was an old man with a kind face sitting on a giant throne. The old man wore a bright golden silk gown and a golden crown with pearls on top. The old man turned his head and noticed Wonder.

“Wonder! Wonder!”

“Is that the Huang Emperor? How does he know my name?” Wonder was excited and shocked. He also felt a light touch on his shoulder.

“Wonder! Wonder! Wake up! It is time for school.”

Wonder opened his eyes and saw his mom instead of the Huang Emperor. The map of the Yellow Mountain was still in Wonder’s hands. He glimpsed at Grandma’s shaky handwriting on the side of the map “to my dearest grandson, *Son of the Yellow Mountain*”

The Mountain of Huangshan

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Tan, Edward – 11

One, Two, Three... Chen counted as he made steady steps up the Huangshan's steep hillside. He was a scholar who came here to visit the famed artists - the final part of his journey to become an imperial civil servant. At nightfall, Chen finally made it to the village. He arrived at the ancient inn, stumbled into a room, then drifted off to sleep.

At the crack of dawn, Chen prepared to explore the quaint village. During breakfast, he encountered an interesting local delicacy - hairy tofu. Chen was never a squeamish person, but the stench alone was enough to make him recoil. Eventually, bite after bite, he learned to enjoy the pungent smell and its crispy texture.

Soon after Chen packed provisions and began the next part of his journey. By nightfall, he was only halfway. He then camped near a hot spring. That night he heard wild beasts growling, yet he paid no heed and drifted off into a peaceful sleep.

After a simple breakfast of dried lentils, he stepped outside his makeshift tent. There he was greeted with a breathtaking sight. When the sun reflected on the creek, it created an illusion in which the surface looked golden. By the creek's side were young and crisp dendrobium orchids. Chen gazed at them for over an hour before moving on. As he strolled up the hill, he wondered what kind of wisdom Poet Li would bestow on him.

A few hours later he came across a shack. His curiosity drove him mad. He peeked in and saw a humble room. Suddenly he heard a shifting. Behind him, he saw a shady figure. The figure spoke, "What are you doing in my dwelling?" Chen replied in a shaky voice, "I was just curious." Only then Chen realized he was talking to the sage of poet himself. Chen dropped to his knees apologetically before him. Poet Li then said in a solemn tone, "Rise and we shall have some tea". While sipping the Fur Peak tea that Huangshan was known for, Poet Li asked, "Why have you come to seek me? Chen then replied, "My whole family has been imperial scholars, now my master has sent me here to hear your wisdom'. With a sigh Poet Li replied, 'I am none the wiser than any of you. I just see the world from a different perspective. For example, my poem, In the Quiet Night, speaks about longing and homesickness. Every person is just as wise as me'. That night when Chen continued the journey to visit the next scholar, he wondered the meaning of Poet Li's words and pondered the meaning of life. He fell asleep to the sounds of chirping crickets and the humming of his very own thoughts.

The next scholar on his list was Poet Wu. He lived in the most remote village in the whole of Huangshan. Once Chen got there he was greeted by hostile glances. He hurried through the town square and was eager to end the journey. He tried to ask the locals where the poet resided. Yet each time he attempted to approach a local, they hurried away.

At last, he found an old man crouching next to a brick building and asked where the great scholar resided. The old man replied, "I am the scholar". At first, Chen thought the old man was joking, but when he heard the old man's explanation, the truth was clear. The old man explained that in his youth he had been arrogant. He looked down on people because he wrote a few great poems. Eventually, people became fed up and banished him in his old age to live in this remote area.

On Chen's way to the final scholar, Chen swore that even in his old age he would stay humble and be connected to the people. The final scholar whom Chen wanted to visit was an ex-politician, inventor and a writer, Master Zhuge. After serving under Emperor Liu of Shu Han, Master Zhuge decided to retire to one of the most peaceful parts of China, the Lotus Peak of Huangshan. As Chen walked, he took the opportunity to enjoy the tranquil yet breathtaking sunrises and the sea of clouds. He wondered if he could be lucky enough to retire here one day after serving the emperor. That night he had dreams about him becoming the emperor's chief adviser, then the sound of a chattering monkeys broke his dream.

In the morning Chen made the last stretch of the climb to Master Zhuge. This time he was greeted by the master's students. They informed Chen that his scholar training was finally completed. Chen was taken by surprise. It turned out that the real trial was how Chen would scale up Huangshan from the foot of the mountains to their peaks. Master Zhuge continued, "China needs more people like you. People must be devoted to study against all obstacles for the future of China".

Many years later, this same Huangshan became an ancient Chinese heritage site. The area is well known for its granite peaks, pine trees, sunsets and hot springs. Several near-extinct species including the dendrobium flowers live there. Obviously, Chen's journey in the Huangshan mountains is fictional - Master Zhuge was serving Emperor Liu approximately 500 years before Poet Li was born. What is true is many acclaimed Chinese scholars like Li Bai and Du Fu drew inspiration from the majestic scenery of Huangshan.

Ren

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Tan, Tristan – 11

“We finally did it!” said one voice.

“It’s incredible, but what should we name it?” said another voice.

“Ren, name it Ren,” said the first voice rather firmly.

The voices surrounded Ren. He tried to move, but he couldn’t. “Erase its memory, only let it know its name is Ren.” said the first voice. At that time, Ren didn’t know what a memory was. All he knew was that he heard a loud whirring and then everything went black.

A few minutes later, he found himself awake again in the hillside of the Yellow Mountains. Something was beating repetitively in his chest nonstop, yet he could not touch it. He anxiously tried to stop it by pounding on his chest, yet that thing kept on beating harder until he felt so tired that he gave up. Then, there was this salty liquid that seeped out of his skin. That was when his lips started to crack and his mouth went dry, and he yearned for water. When Ren licked his sweat, he felt relieved, but his body craved for more. Suddenly he heard a loud, crashing noise coming from behind. After climbing over the boulders many times, he finally got to the noise. At the same time, his body told him to drink, to hydrate. He quickly gulped from the stream.

When Ren finally looked up from the water, he noticed that there was this enchanting creature. He was aware of its presence when he noticed a reflection in the mountain run-off. It had shining scales, gleaming white antlers, the head of a dragon, and a tail that vaguely resembled the tail of a lion. Even in Ren’s newly formed mind, he knew it was something of beauty. In his lonesome existence, he decided to reach out to the creature. Unfortunately, as soon as Ren stood up, the creature ran away.

When Ren walked away from the stream, his stomach was letting out grumbling noises. As his newly formed brain scanned the area for food, he found a large bowl of sticks sitting high up on a pine tree. As he climbed up the tree, he grabbed onto the sturdiest branches he could find. Inside the bowl were two pure-white ovoid objects. When Ren smashing on one of the objects, the white outer shell gave away to a yellow liquid. It had a smell that made Ren’s mouth water, a smell that urged him to taste it. Ren scooped a handful of the liquid into his mouth and then inhaled the rest of it.

By the time Ren was finished with the one ovoid object, he was no longer ravaged by hunger. As he looked curiously at the other object, he heard a faint squeak from inside. The top of the shell had a small crack, and then other cracks started to appear. Before long, there was a head that resembled the creature he saw by the stream, only instead of horns, this smaller version had two stumps. When it looked at Ren, the creature blinked. Instantly the misty surrounding of the Yellow Mountains cleared, and it became bright once again. Ren touched the creature’s head, it seemed to be quite fond of him. Then, a small cloud appeared next to the cracked shell, and the little creature climbed out onto the cloud. As the cloud grew bigger and bigger, Ren was tempted to touch it or even climb onto it. Whatever this creature was, it possessed powers unimaginable to anybody.

Witnessing all this, Ren could not help but smile. He felt a sense of giddiness, with a heap of warmth in his heart. Ren had no idea what the creature wanted from him, but the unsettling feeling in him told him to get away. As he ran, the creature ran. As he stopped, the creature stopped. Soon, Ren became less wary of the creature and began to slow down his pace. The creature had its tongue sticking out of its mouth, staring at him with watery eyes, wishing to be held and comforted.

Soon after, another cloud appeared right in front of Ren, but it quickly dissipated to reveal a bowl of rice porridge. The creature quickly devoured the bowl of porridge and then created a cloud of immense size. Just like the smaller cloud, this one dissipated as well. This time, a grand palace appeared. As the creature licked its lips, he ushered Ren inside the palace. There was an ample amount of food and drink. Ren’s hands were trembling as he felt the golden handrails, his foot felt grace when it went from hard, spiky, mountain terrain to soft velvety silk carpet. When Ren walked into the kitchen, he was overwhelmed by the platters of steamed buns, pan-fried dumplings, and rice porridge sitting on the counter. Ren stared at the creature in awe, then it leaped into Ren’s arms and licked his face. Like a flash of light, Ren felt awakened. It was almost as if the creature’s saliva gave awareness to him. Very quickly, Ren learned about himself and saw the boundless beauty of the Yellow Mountains.

A few months later, Ren noticed that the creature wasn't clawing at his legs with a ball in its mouth. "He probably grew out of it, nothing to worry about." Ren thought.

A few miles away from Ren, out of nowhere, the first voice said, "We have to take the Qilin away."

"Yes", said the second voice, "The Qilin is creating an imbalance in our controlled setting".

From that day on, Ren has not seen the creature. He missed his time with the creature - the one companion he had had in his life. Ren wished that the voices would come back and erase his memory so that he wouldn't feel this emptiness inside him, but the voices did not return. Ren had been left to convince others, as he believed they had the right to know, that Qilins were real.

The Pursuit of Elxir in Yellow Mountain

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Ye, Dexin – 11

It's Christmas Eve, Shyla and Aaron were sitting beside the fireplace in their house in Shanghai, "Last year, we were skiing at this time, but now, we can only stay at home," Shyla, the 11-year-old girl, said sadly.

"The Coronavirus has already infected 84 million people, we can't go abroad and have to wear a mask outside." added Aaron, her 14 years old brother.

"Anyway, let's read some books." Shyla held up a book called *"The Mystery of the Yellow Mountain"*.

"The Yellow Mountain is a mysterious mountain where the ancient Emperor Huang made elixir that can live immortal life and cure all kinds of sickness." Aaron was totally fascinated by the book. "Wow that's cool, maybe the elixir can cure the Coronavirus! We should go there and find it!" Shyla agreed.

"Wow, this place looks gorgeous!" Shyla exclaimed when they finally arrived. They saw high peaks poking into the clouds, and each mountain has a unique shape and size." They looked at the map, it said there were four wonders of the mountain: "beautifully-shaped pine trees, fantastic rock peaks, sea of clouds and hot springs" "I can't wait to see them all!" Aaron yelled.

After walking for hours, until they finally found a squirrel on the tree, so they asked, "Do you know where we could find the medicine left by Emperor Huang?" "I never heard of that," said the squirrel, "but you could ask Mr. Old Pine. He is already 1500 years old! He knows everything." They followed the squirrel to the Guest Greeting Pine. The tree heard the kids and said, "Ahh, the all-purpose medicine? It's 2000 years ago, you can ask my friend Mr. Stone Monkey for help. He's about 3600 years old! However, he is a bit grumpy since he lost his loving girlfriend." "Oh, poor monkey, is he gonna help us?" Shyla was worried. "I don't know, you have to find out by yourself. Take the pinecones and he will know you are my friend. It might help." The Pine Goblin signed.

Shyla and Aaron checked the map and decided to take the cable car. After, they hiked another 4 km until they got to the hot spring, and it was already night time. There were no hotels and they were hungry, thirsty, and exhausted. "Let's rest here and visit the Monkey tomorrow!" Shyla suggested. Aaron agreed.

As long as they jumped into the hot spring, they felt so relieved. "Ahhh, it's so comfortable, I wanna stay here forever." "Me too, we might not find the medicine, or maybe there is no such medicine at all! I want to go home." Soon they quickly fell asleep. In their dreams, Shyla and Aaron were sitting around their fireplace and enjoying a big feast. All of a sudden, they saw their friends, parents, and teachers were in the hospital infected, and pleaded with them for help. Their hearts were broken, and tears dropped out of their eyes. When they woke up, they finally made up their minds and decided to go on with the journey. It turned out that whoever got inside the hot spring became extremely relaxing and lost his or her desire and goal. But luckily, they passed the test.

The next morning, the kids hiked for another 8km. The steps were very steep and sometimes no step or road at all. Suddenly, the mist became thicker and thicker, and they couldn't see anything in front of them. It's hard to tell where the mountain is, or the ground or the sky. "Oh no, we are trapped in the mist, I can't see anything, even the compass is not working! What shall we do?" They bellowed and cried.

Suddenly a sound came up, "So you are the two kids looking for magic pills." "Yes! we are looking for the Stone Monkey, but now, we are lost." The Fairy of Cloud showed up with a smile, "there's no possibility for a human to climb up there. what I can do is to send you there safely." Swiftly, they were on the clouds and to the Monkey's.

"Dear Mr. Monkey, could you please tell us where to find the medicine that cures the Coronavirus? The world is suffering, please!" The kids showed him the pinecone and hot spring drop.

"Hahaha, you ain't gonna find it that easy. You have to solve my riddle first, Ready? I have cities, but no houses. I have mountains, but no trees. I have water, but no fish. What am I?"

Shyla thought deeply. Aaron didn't have any clue. The Monkey giggled, "you may give up! " Suddenly, the map fell from Shyla's hand, as long as she went to pick it up, Aaron had an idea, "Ya, that's it! The answer is map!"

The Monkey's face turned pale, he nodded and sighed. "Well , the medicine still needs one important ingredient to activate it." "What is that?" They asked eagerly. "True love," the Monkey stopped for a while, "One of you has to sacrifice and jump off the cliff, then the medicine will complete." "I'll do it," Shyla blurted. "No, I'm your brother, Take care of yourself and cure the world for me!" Aaron suddenly jumped off before his young sister reacted. A pearl showed up and dropped in the medicine, the elixir finally completed! "Aaron, NO!" Shyla cried, " The world is incomplete without you. Please come back!"

The echo sounds over and over in the valley. "Hi, silly girl" a voice came up. "Aaron!" Shyla looked at the person over the cloud, " I was saved by the Fairy of the Cloud, and a person, I'm not sure, looks like the Emperor Huang in the book. " Aaron smiled.

One month later, the whole world was back to normal. No one needs to wear the mask and no more lockdown. Shyla and Aaron, who saved the world, happily went back to school with their friends and planned for another trip which delayed one year.

The Retrieval of Li Bai Scroll

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Yow, Jocelyn – 9

This tale begins with an ancient scroll left behind by the famous poet Li Bai. Intertwined with China's history, the scroll had healing powers and could restore those worthy of it. It was housed under the roof of the Zheng Yi Temple, a structure cast in gold and silver that perched on the stony, icy mountains of Huangshan. Written in pure gold, Chinese characters danced gracefully and lyrically on the paper, accompanied by a crimson stamp marking Li Bai's authorship. Secured with a ribbon, it was placed on a marble podium, standing by.

Alan's father, the local butcher, fell ill one day. Running a high fever and squirming in discomfort, his distressing sickness was unheard of. In despair, Alan cried, "Please, sir, isn't there anything you can do to help my father?" The doctor mutely shook his head and put away his instruments. Even so, Alan thought to himself, "There must be a way." He was never one to be discouraged.

Carrying his father to the foot of Huangshan, Alan prayed, "Li Bai Scroll, my father is sick. Please grant me the power to retrieve you for his healing." He took a deep breath and gazed longingly at the mountain.

A natural climber, Alan could see the whole city lying beneath his eyes in no time. Just as he returned his attention to the mountain, a glitter-winged creature appeared. Alan saluted the mysterious figure and asked, "Hello! What is your name?" Her flutey voice chirped, "Greetings, I am Amber! What is your business at Huangshan?" At the end of Alan's recounting of his misery, Amber's face paled.

The butcher's son asked worriedly, "Are you feeling unwell? Your face has turned green!" "Your father seems to have caught *Gu Shi Bing*, a critical illness. Those who have taken ill usually come from a long line of writers." Amber explained. Alan immediately interjected, "Li Bai is my great-great-great grandfather!" Nodding, she continued, "Only an honest soul can access the Zheng Yi Temple and retrieve the remedy, so this will be an exceptional task!" With a look of determination, he promised, "I will still try my best to save my father!"

Amber's eyes lit up. She whispered, "I know what you should do. Continue to hike up the mountain and make your way from there. You will meet mythical beings like me to help you on your way. I'll leave you with this fragmented map!" With that, she flitted away.

Tucking the map into his belt, Alan bravely pressed on. A horse with a package strapped to its neck trotted next to him. After casually lowering its head and letting the parchment drop on his lap, the animal waltzed away. Without hesitation, Alan carefully unfolded the wrinkled note. Amazement overtook him. He cheered, "This is the next part of Amber's plan!" But little did he know, someone had overheard him.

It was Beauh, an envious and greedy shopkeeper. He wanted to profit from the Li Bai Scroll! After hearing Alan's cheer of happiness, Beauh thought, "I shall steal the treasure from Alan after he does all the hard work!" So, the shopkeeper started climbing, unaware of what was coming his way.

Soon enough, Alan met another magical creature. It was a dragon that stood on its hind legs and advanced with incredible speed. Upon handing Alan, a note, it climbed onto his back and transformed into a lively pattern on his cloak! Alan was slightly taken aback but carried on his journey. This time, with a new traveling partner!

"Dodge!" The dragon warned urgently. Alan stepped sideways and a rock soared, missing their heads by an inch. A few levels below, Beauh cackled. "He must have been knocked out! Nothing can help him now!" But to his surprise, a stern voice called out, "Beauh, stop your sabotaging ways!" Beauh snickered and thought, "The butcher's boy is trying to scare me! He would think I would back off? He has misjudged me!" Beauh continued with his pursuit of Alan.

After baking in the sunlight, panting and gasping for breath, Beauh made it to the same big rocky platform as Alan. The rogue was in disbelief! He cursed, "That horrid boy! How could he have come so far without resting? His skinny frame is no match for my burly body! He must have cheated! There's no other way!"

As soon as Beauh clambered out of the rugged deck, he saw Amber fluttering about. Beauh squawked rudely, "Ey! You over there! Fairy lady! Help me get that Li Bai Scroll!" He rubbed his hands with vile delight.

Amber eyed him with disgust, “You must be Beauh. I will never assist selfish people like you!” Red with fury, Beauh fumed, “How dare you! I am the local shopkeeper! I am far superior than that silly butcher! The meat he sold my family was inedible!” She retorted, “That was because your son burnt it!” Beauh, at a loss for words, bowed his head in embarrassment.

Cross and weary of the conversation, the winged girl thundered, “Get off Huangshan! Never return!” Petrified by the angry fairy, Beauh scrambled off the mountain. The foul man was never seen since.

Right then, Alan arrived at the polished, regal portals of the Zheng Yi Temple. The doors immediately swung open and the scroll hovered towards him! Everything came to Alan quickly. Granted, there was no time to spare!

Leaping over rocks and sliding off boulders, Alan rushed to his father and carefully unrolled the scroll. Hoping that he will succeed in treating his father, Alan attentively followed the instructions inscribed on the scroll. Upon placing a few rocks, he gathered from Huangshan on an herb-covered mat and reading aloud Li Bai’s poem, the engravings on the scroll gleamed and a blinding light shone. Before long, the butcher recovered, beaming with pride at his son.

Life fell back into its easy rhythm. What happened to the scroll, you ask? Well, it was put back in the Zheng Yi Temple, waiting to heal another honourable soul.